

On the Translation of Thai Culture-Specific Terms of Address into English

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Abstract : This article focuses on the strategies in the translation of terms of address for both referential and vocative functions from Thai to English from a cultural perspective. The discussion concerns the culture-specific ways in which Thai people use address terms that depend largely on social and conventional contexts, including pragmatic factors, for example, relationships between people, levels of formality, and attitudes. Examples used to illustrate the problems and proposed solutions were drawn from the media, the internet, the novels and the language used by Thai native speakers in expressing Thai address terms. The terms used in this area show very well not only the differences in language but also the different cultures and world views of the speakers of Thai and those of English. Thai has developed its own set of address terms, particularly kinship terms for non-relatives and the Thai royal terms. Some of Newmark's procedures (1995) are used in the article to illustrate the task of translating Thai terms into English, a language that embodies a very different culture with its own set of address terms. However, no one strategy can be applied to serve all purposes and to translate all the intended senses. One particular term can be translated by several strategies, and which strategy to choose depends largely on one's purposes and what requirement one needs to fulfill.

Keywords : translation, terms of address, Thai-English translation, Thai culture-specific terms of address, translation strategies

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