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Problems of Using Google Translate for Translating Business News from English to Thai

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Abstract

The purposes of this research are 1) to identify the satisfaction on translating business news from English to Thai used Google Translate, and 2) to study problems in translating business news from English to Thai by using Google Translate. The participants of the study were 111 undergraduate students of Business English program. The results showed that the students were satisfied with the use of Google Translate due because of time saving. However, they were unsatisfied with its efficiency. In addition, six problems found in business news translation by using Google Translate were (1) vocabulary and idiom, (2) lack of knowledge about news context, (3) wrong context, (4) incomplete translation (5) mistranslation and (6) structure and grammar. When the students faced the problems in translation, they tended to use their knowledge and ability to translate and to solve the problems, along with dictionary and Google search. The findings also indicated that most of the problems caused in translation were not only from the use of a translation tool like Google Translate but from the translator's knowledge and ability as well.

Keyword: Google Translate, Problems of Translation, Business news Translation



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Background of the Study

Technology has been adopted into the daily use of human beings to facilitate our lives in many ways, including transportation, education, business, and communication. Since people from different areas communicate in different languages, translation inevitably plays an important role. Translation is a science that makes it easier for non-native speakers to understand information and content in other languages (Saibua, 2007). In 1990, technology was introduced to help translators translating only at the word and phrase levels. Still, it couldn't translate well in syntactic form (Wongprom, & Thitthongkam, 2018). Since then, tools or technologies for translation have been developed continuously. Today, it can be said that translations are easier. This is because tools for translating different languages have become more practical and diverse. The translation tools available are such as Microsoft Translator, Line Dictionary and Google Translate.

Google Translate, one of translation tools, was released in 2006 with the aim of helping to translate various languages. In 2016, Google switched to Neural Machine Translation (NMT) using deep learning techniques to translate longer sentences. It makes translated contents more natural by memorizing from the users' translation (Morph, 2021). Although there are many translation tools, the translation ability is not as successful as it should be. The problems may be caused by misunderstanding of the original texts (Katephan & Sripetpun, 2016, pp. 80-81).

Most of the problems in the translation of news are not caused by the nature of the original language but other limitations such as culture, original format (Pooritanasarn, 2016, pp. 170-198). Different news tends to have different target groups and media types. In other words, the translation of each type o has different problems. Business news is no exception, and when using translation tools along with it, many errors can be seen (Pooritanasarn, 2016).

However, Google Translate is still a popular tool among translators in this news area. For example, the investigation by Ismail and Hartono (2016) showed the errors made by Google translate in the Indonesian to English translation of news. For this reason, this paper aims to identify the satisfaction of the target users translating English business news to Thai



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2.3 Three interview questions were used to ask these participants to report their problems they had encountered while translating English business news to Thai, solutions, and how this tool could help the translator. The interview questions were listed in the following:

- What problems did the translators face most in translating business news using Google Translate?
- What methods did the translator use to resolve translation errors?
- In what ways did the translator think Google Translate would help the translator?

3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

3.1 Divide 111 students into groups. Each group consisted of 6-8 students to translate business news from English in Thai language using Google Translate. These students were asked to make a video recording while using Google Translate.

3.2 Distribute business news translation task, entitled “Thai Airways posts huge loss” from Bangkok post to the students. They had to bring the news content in each paragraph to translate in Google translate and analyzed whether they were satisfied with the content retrieved or not. If the students were not satisfied with the results of the translation, the students could fix the translation and added their own translated version in the Professional Translator column. Then

3.3 Study participants' satisfaction, problems and solutions for translating business news by Google Translation from the task and also transcribe from the students' recorded videos in Google Meet.

3.4 Online Interview with 19 groups asking them to report their problems and solutions (see Research tools).

3.5 Analyze the students' satisfaction on using Google Translate satisfaction based on Laongpol's study (2018). For the problems in using Google Translate for translating English business news, these were categorized according to Mounngam's criteria (2012).

3.6 Summarize the overall results and conclude the results of the study.

For data analysis, the collected data which were obtained from the questionnaire asking the students' satisfaction on using Google Translate were analyzed by using frequency,



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Example 3 Acting president Chansin Treenuchagron

Google Translate: รักษาการประธานบริษัท ชาญศิลป์ ตรีนุชกร

Professional Translate: นายชาญศิลป์ ตรีนุชกร รักษาการ กรรมการผู้อำนวยการใหญ่

(The translators were not sure about the name and title. They solved it by searching Google.)

3. Wrong context is a translation that uses words that are not appropriate for the context and situation.

Example 4 limiting air travel worldwide and keeping foreign tourists away.

Google Translate: จำกัดการเดินทางทางอากาศทั่วโลกและกั้นนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติออกไป

Professional Translate: การจำกัดการเดินทางทางอากาศทั่วโลกและการหลีกเลี่ยงการรับนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติ

(From the news content, the translators thought that the translation was too literal, so they adjusted the text to fit the context. They edited by using the knowledge of the translators themselves.)

4. Mistranslation is a translation that is stick with a dictionary than a contextual translation.

Example 5 Thai Airways International planes sit idle at Suvarnabhumi airport.

Google Translate: เครื่องบินของการบินไทยนั่งเฉย ๆ ที่สนามบินสุวรรณภูมิ

Professional Translate: เครื่องบินของสายการบินไทยจอดไว้โดยไม่ได้ใช้งานที่สนามบินสุวรรณภูมิ

(Google Translate mistranslated. Translators then corrected them by searching in dictionary)

5. Incomplete / under translation the result of missing the main word

Example 6 Most of those arrived in the first quarter, before the virus closed tourism

Google Translate: ส่วนใหญ่มาถึงในไตรมาสแรกก่อนที่ไวรัสจะปิดการท่องเที่ยว



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Professional Translate: นักท่องเที่ยวส่วนใหญ่เดินทางเข้ามาในช่วงไตรมาสแรก ก่อนที่ไวรัสจะทำให้การท่องเที่ยวถูกปิดตัวลง

(Incomplete translation, resulted in incomplete news content and lack of meaning. The translators used the knowledge of the translator to adjust the news content.)

6. **Vocabulary and idioms** are unable to choose the meaning of words that have many meanings and cannot compare words from English to Thai Laongpol, J. (2018).

Example 7 before the virus closed down tourism.

Google Translate: ก่อนที่ไวรัสจะปิดการท่องเที่ยว

Professional Translate: ก่อนที่ไวรัสจะทำให้การท่องเที่ยวถูกปิดตัวลง

(The translators were reluctant to choose the right word.)

Example 8 Tourism is a key driver of the Thai economy

Google Translate: การท่องเที่ยวเป็นตัวขับเคลื่อนเศรษฐกิจไทย

Professional Translate: การท่องเที่ยวถือเป็นหัวใจหลักในการขับเคลื่อนเศรษฐกิจไทย

Discussion and Conclusion

The discussion was divided into two parts: their satisfaction on using Google Translate for translating English Business news, and their problems and solutions. For the first part examining the students' satisfaction on using Google Translate, the results of the study showed that their level of satisfaction on using Google Translate for English business news because it was time saving and allowed them to choose suitable word. Our results were consistent with the previous studies (e.g., Ismail & Harto, 2015) when using Google Translate in translating English to other languages. When comparing our results, our results were different from Wongprom and Thitthongkam's study (2018), showing unsatisfactory with Google translate and it should be improved in terms of translation format, vocabulary, and idioms.

In the second part discussing the problems and solutions in using Google Translate for business news, the most common problems were grammatical errors and specific terminology when translating English business news to other languages. This may be caused



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by the nature of language difference. In addition to translating vocabulary, the students also reported that words with various meaning made them hesitant in choosing word choice. Therefore, the best solution for them was making their own decisions by double-check the definitions found in Dictionary and Google search. Then, they rearranged the translated texts to match business news contexts based on their understanding.

Regarding Incomplete translation, this refers to translate and lose the main idea. Our results support previous studies (e.g., Mounggam, 2012), indicating that Google Translate is unaware of the essence of the text resulting in words or main ideas interpretation. Relying solely on word systems, Google Translate may sometimes use incorrect words without considering the context. Aside from that, these students also reported that there was no clear boundary where the sentence ends in Thai language. Unlike English, punctuations (. and ?) are used to signal the end of the sentence. Consequently, it makes Google Translate unable to find the ending of each sentence, causing problematic translation in terms of grammatical structure.

For the accuracy and the nature of language, both require higher translation skills and experience. However, the problems encountered in news translation also depend on the type of news (Pooritanasarn, 2016). To sum up, the results of the study provides a guideline for English language teacher to students suggests that translators should prepare or improve their translation skills to produce good translation work along with using translation tools to make their work more efficient.

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