THE TRANSFER OF EXPRESSIVE MEANING IN THE TRANSLATION OF SYNAESTHETIC METAPHORS FROM THAI TO ENGLISH

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Abstract

Synaesthetic metaphor is a conceptual phenomenon in which a linguistic expression (or linguistic metaphor) encodes a primary sense modality through a secondary sense modality to convey emotions or feelings. To illustrate, the cross-modal mapping between the auditory domain and the tactile domain is manifested through such synaesthetic linguistic expressions conveying a sense of anger as /khra?1thxxk2 siiang4/ ‘hit-sound’, /siiang4 khxng4/ ‘sound-hard’, and /siiang4 riap2 jen0/ ‘sound-smooth-cold’. Crossing sense modalities in synaesthetic expressions (Ullmann, 1962; Williams, 1976; Day, 1996; Yu, 2003; Shen & Gil, 2008; Takada, 2008) reveals both universality and variation in the ways in which perceptual experiences are conceptualised in different languages. The present study therefore explores Thai synaesthetic metaphors and their equivalent English counterparts to find whether Thai synaesthetic expressions are translated into English with the same senses or not. The data were gathered from five famous Thai novels and their English translations. It was found that, in Thai synaesthetic metaphors, the auditory domain as the primary sense was mostly encoded through the tactile domain as the secondary sense. The co-occurrence pattern supports Ullmann’s (1959, 1962) proposal that the auditory domain is the predominant target domain for primary sense and the tactile domain is the predominant source domain for secondary sense. The results also showed that the Thai synaesthetic expressions were similar to the English ones in terms of co-occurrence patterns of senses (Wongthai, 2009; Chancharu, 2012). However, some Thai synaesthetic expressions do not share the same translated English synaesthetic expressions, and some were not translated into English synaesthetic expressions. The data appear to show that some synaesthetic expressions are language specific and are motivated by different conceptualisations of senses.

1. Introduction

The use of metaphor is generally to treat one thing as if it were in some way another thing. Metaphors have been explored in the study of language, thought and communication. It also refers to the transference of meaning; that is, a mechanism for deriving a figurative meaning of a word from a literal one (Leech, 1969). With the realisation that human languages reflect the conceptualisation of experienced abstract entities such as emotions, feelings, and other bodily experiences, spatial relationships and natural phenomena, the paradigm of metaphor

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1To ease the process of transcribing Thai phonetic transcription for computer input, we used the phonetic transcription of the Linguistic Research Unit of Chulalongkorn University (LRU) system (Schoknecht, 2000: 329-336). The system deviates from IPA: 4 changes in the consonants, i.e., ng=/ŋ/; c=/tɕ/; ch=/tɕʰ/; ?=/ʔ/; 4 changes in the vowels, i.e., =/ɯ/; q=/ɤ/; x=/ɛ/; @=/ɔ/, and double letters represent length of vowels. Numbers 0-4 are used to mark the 5 tones, i.e., 0=mid, 1=low, 2=falling, 3=high, 4=rising conforming to the traditional names of Thai tones.
shifted towards the cognitive approach and the notion of conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Conceptual metaphor is thought to be one of the cognitive mechanisms that help to structure human knowledge as well as experience (Rodriguez, 2010: 21). According to this view, two analogical concepts, the source and the target, are embodied in a particular language and result in linguistic expressions. For example, the mapping between the source “ANGER” and the target “FIRE” in the conceptual metaphor “ANGER IS FIRE” is realised through a number of English expressions such as “anger burned inside her” and “I was burned up!” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Johnson, 1987; Kövecses, 2002). Other examples can be drawn from the Chinese and the Thai expressions as in (1) and (2).

(1) Chinese
他 滿 腔 怒 火
Ta man qiang nu-huo
He full cavity angry-fire
“His thoracic cavity is full of angry fire.” (Yu 1998: 53)

(2) Thai
โกรธ เป็น ผื้น เป็น ไฟ
khroot1 pen0 fvvn0 pen0 faj0
angry be fuel be fire
“To be angry as fuel in the fire” (Tawichai 2006: 68)

A major concern in conceptual metaphor research is the notion of universality and the variation across cultures, and the way in which metaphors reflect thoughts among people from different cultures through language use. Universality can be illustrated by the ANGER concept in terms of CONTAINER schema, e.g. “ANGER IS (HOT) FLUID IN A CONTAINER” as in English, Hungarian, Japanese, Chinese, Zulu, Wolof, Polish, and other languages (Kövecses, 2010). However, variation can also be observed with the concept of ANGER among different cultures. In Japanese, the stomach 腹 ‘hara’ can be the container for the hot fluid corresponding to ANGER, distinguishing the Japanese ANGER conceptual metaphor from the one in English and other languages (Matsuki, 1995).

Another area of research into conceptual metaphor has explored the conceptualisation of sensory modalities such as auditory, visual, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile. It has focused on how such sensory modalities are used metaphorically to express emotions and feelings as in “Her face was bright with happiness.”, a linguistic instantiation of the conceptual metaphor “HAPPINESS IS LIGHT” relevant to the visual experience (Kövecses, 2000 cited in Stefanowisch, 2006:83-84). The question is, therefore, raised as to whether or not the senses of perception in metaphors are the same or different among different languages and cultures.

This present research is focused on synaesthetic metaphor which involves the transfer of meaning from one sensory domain to another (Ullmann, 1959, 1962; Leech, 1969; Williams, 1976). Day (1996: 1) provided the examples “sweet smell” and “dark sound” to demonstrate how one perceptual mode or concept can be linguistically related to another [different] perceptual mode. Since one sense modality as the primary sense is evoked by another secondary sense modality, such mapping is realised through synaesthetic linguistic expressions. They therefore encode a sense modality through another sense modality. Examples of English expressions include “sweet voice” or “the statue had a cold smell.” The former expresses an auditory concept “voice” in terms of a gustatory concept “sweet” to convey the meaning of sound pleasing to the ears, whereas the latter expresses an olfactory concept “smell” using a tactile concept “cold” to describe the smell of a statue in the cold
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weather (Werning, 2006: 2365). Synaesthetic metaphors can also reflect expressive or emotive meanings. To illustrate, the cross-modal mapping between the auditory concept and the tactile concept from the expression “voice hardens” conveys the sense of resentment, dissatisfaction or stubborn refusal, involving the resemblance between the physical and emotional effects of being hit by a hard object (Takada, 2008).

The aim of the present study is hence to investigate the co-occurrence of sense modalities in Thai synaesthetic metaphors. That is, it will explore how different sense modalities are put together and realised through Thai synaesthetic expressions. Another aim of the present study is to find out how the meanings of these expressions are transferred into English in the translation of synaesthetic metaphors from Thai to English. The study focuses on the meaning equivalence found in the translation of Thai synaesthetic expressions into English and whether the Thai synaesthetic expressions and the translated English expressions are motivated by the same senses or not. In this study, synaesthetic metaphors are defined as the conceptual metaphor according to the cross-domain mapping of sensory modalities, while synaesthetic expressions are the linguistic expressions of any synaesthetic metaphors.

2. Research Design

The data were collected from five Thai novels with the English translation including (1) /wee0 laa0 naj0 khuat1 kxxw2/ by Prapassorn Sewikul and its translated version “Time in a Bottle” by Phongdeit Jianphattharakit and Marcel Barang; (2) /khaang2 lang4 phaap2/ by Siburapha and its translated version “Behind the Painting” by David Smyth; (3) /tu0saan4/ by Khampon Boonthavi and its translated version “A Child of the Northeast” by Susan Fulop Kepner; (4) /phra?1chaa0 thip3pa?1taj0 bon0 sen2kha?1naan4/ by Win Liawwarin and its translated version “Democracy, Shaken and Stirred” by Prisna Boonsinsuk; and (5) /khwuam suk1 kh@@ng4 ka?1 thi?3/ by Jane Vejajiva and its translated version “The Happiness of Kati” by Prudence Borthwick. Thai source language texts were selected based on the popularity of the novels and the availability of the English translation.

The data selected were linguistic expressions in which the sensory words of the primary sense modality co-occurred with the other sensory words of the secondary sense modality. In addition, the primary sense and the secondary sense modalities within the same sensory domain were not selected. The criteria for sensory words included:

1. Words belonging to 5 senses of perception i.e. tactile, gustatory, olfactory, auditory and visual domains
2. The semantic domain of sensory words adapted from Thai Lexicon by N. Panthumetha (2001) and the Royal Institute Thai Dictionary (1999) including:
   2.1 Words of sensory organs e.g. /huu4/ ‘ear’ /taa0/ ‘eye’
   2.2 Sensory adjectives e.g. /jen0/ ‘cold’ /waan4/ ‘sweet’ /suung4/ ‘high’
   2.2 Perceptual verbs e.g. /chap1/ ‘touch’ /daj2jin0/ ‘hear’ /duu0/ ‘look’
   2.3 Production of sensory organs e.g. /siiang4/ ‘sound, voice’ /klin1/ ‘smell’

The framework of analysis was based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). That is, Thai synaesthetic expressions were analysed in terms of the co-occurrence of the primary sense modality and the secondary sense modality, regarded as the source domain. Later on, the target domain, which is the expressive meaning, was analysed based on the source. The English translated expressions corresponding to the Thai data were
then identified manually, and data files were created in MS-Excel. As for the translation analysis, Thai synaesthetic expressions were compared to the English translated expressions to explore whether there were the same co-occurrence patterns of sensory modalities between Thai and English. Since the English data were collected from English translations performed by professional translators, it was assumed that the expressive meanings in the English target language were the same as those of the Thai source language due to meaning mapping between two languages. The translation analysis was adapted from the translation processes proposed by Nida (1964), Newmark (1988) and Larson (1984).

3. Findings and Discussions

3.1. Thai Synaesthetic Metaphors

The structure of the identified Thai synaesthetic metaphors consisted of the co-occurrence patterns from at least two different sensory modalities where the primary sense was described in terms of the secondary sense(s), and the cross-modal mapping within each pattern was realised through synaesthetic expressions. It was found that the expressions conveyed an expressive meaning including emotion and sensation. The former included the basic emotive concepts i.e. ANGER, SADNESS, HAPPINESS, and FEAR (Johnson-Laird & Oatley, 1989; Wierzbicka, 1992; Kovecses, 1998). The latter was relevant to the sensory perception judged subjectively by attitudes of the speakers towards VOICE QUALITY, COLOUR, SMELL, TASTE and TEMPERATURE.

To illustrate, the emotive concept ANGER arose from the cross-modal mapping between the auditory concept as the primary sense and the visual concept as the secondary sense as in (3).

(3) ขึ้นเสียง

\[ \text{kheun}_2 \text{siiang}_4 \]

\[ \text{up sound} \]

“To raise the voice”

The upward directional verb \(/kheun\)/‘up’ from the visual domain co-occurred with the auditory domain \(/siiang\)/‘sound’ depicting the high volume of sound by an angry person dissatisfied with people and/or an undesirable situation. The attribute of upward verticality [higher in dimension]\(^2\) was mapped onto the features of the angry voice [louder in volume, intense emotion]. The example in (4) was derived from the SADNESS concept which came from the cross-modal mapping between the visual concept as the primary sense and the tactile concept as the secondary sense.

(4) แววแห่งความทุกข์จับอยู่ในดวงตา

\[ \text{wxwx}_0 \text{hxng}_1 \text{khwaam0thuk}_3 \text{cap}_1 \text{juu}_1 \text{naj}_0 \text{duuang0taa}_0 \]

sign of misery catch ASP\(^3\) in eyes

“The sign of misery remains in the eyes.”

The attributes of touching \(/cap\)/‘catch’ as the act of human [touching, sticking to the hands] were mapped onto the vision of unforgettable misery [seeing, remaining in the eyes].

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\(^2\) The bracket \([\text{__}]\) is used for providing attributes or features of the concept.

\(^3\) Some grammatical categories are marked using abbreviations: ASP for ASPECT, RLTV for relative pronoun, DEM for Demonstrative, PAR for PARTICLE, QPAR for QUESTION PARTICLE, RECIP for RECIPROCAL, COMP for COMPLEMENTIZER “that”
With regard to sensation, for instance, there was the cross-modal mapping between the gustatory concept and the tactile concept as in (5).

(5) รสละมุนละไม
taste gentle
“mild taste”

Here, the attributes of the gentleness in terms of touch [good, soft touch] are transferred to the gustatory TASTE [good, soft taste]. In addition, the co-occurrence between the taste word /waan4/ “sweet” and the touch word /lxxm4/ “acute, sharp” in the expression /waan4 lxxm4/ literally “sharply sweet” indicated that touch extended its meaning to become more intensified for the purpose of describing a specific kind of sweetness. /lxxm4/ “acute, sharp” therefore acted as the intensifier for /waan4/ to refer to “very sweet.” The metaphorical mappings between the expressive concepts and the co-occurrence patterns of sensory modalities found in the study were exemplified as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expressive concepts (TARGET DOMAIN)</th>
<th>Co-occurrence patterns (SOURCE DOMAIN)</th>
<th>Examples of synaesthetic expressions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANGER</td>
<td>AUDITORY VISUAL</td>
<td>/kheun2 siiang4/ “up-sound”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AUDITORY TACTILE</td>
<td>/khra?1 txxk1 siiang4/ “hit-sound”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VISUAL TACTILE</td>
<td>/saaq4taa0 jen0 chaa0/ “sight-cold-unclear”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADNESS</td>
<td>AUDITORY GUSTATORY</td>
<td>/naam3siiang4 khom4 kheun1/ “tone-bitter-nauseous”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AUDITORY TACTILE</td>
<td>/naam3siiang4 thi2 puaj1 raaw3/ “tone-RLTV-pained-cracked”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AUDITORY GUSTATORY+TACTILE</td>
<td>/naam3siiang4 pxxp1 paa1/ “tone-pained-tasteless”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAPINESS</td>
<td>AUDITORY VISUAL</td>
<td>/waew0 haen1 khaaw0tuuk3 cap1 paa1 nai0 dwaaj0taa0/ “eye-of-misery-catch-ASP-in-eyes”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAR</td>
<td>AUDITORY TACTILE</td>
<td>/siiang4 waan4/ “sound-sweet”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOICE QUALITY</td>
<td>AUDITORY TACTILE</td>
<td>/siiang4 chavv2/ “cold-tasteless”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGHT AND COLOUR</td>
<td>VISUAL GUSTATORY</td>
<td>/si4 chom0puu0 waan4/ “colour-pink-sweet”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VISUAL TACTILE</td>
<td>/sxxn4dxxt1 ?@n1/ “sunshine-soft”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMELL</td>
<td>OLFATORY VISUAL</td>
<td>/klin1 khaaw0khaaj0 riw3 riw3/ “smell-fishy-line-line”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OLFATORY GUSTATORY</td>
<td>/klin1 priiaw2/ “smell-sour”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASTE</td>
<td>GUSTATORY TACTILE</td>
<td>/waan4 lxxm4/ “sweet-acute”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOUCH</td>
<td>TACTILE GUSTATORY</td>
<td>/jen0 chaw2/ “cold-tasteless”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The metaphorical mappings between the expressive concepts and the co-occurrence patterns of sensory modalities

It can also be observed that the co-occurrence of Thai sensory modalities in this study aligns with the findings of Ullmann (1959, 1962); Williams (1976); Day (1996); Wongthai (2009); and Chancharu (2012) in that the predominant source, the secondary sense, belongs to the TACTILE domain while the predominant target, the primary sense, is the AUDITORY domain in the synaesthetic cross-modal mapping.
According to Table 2 below, the most frequent domain is the tactile domain as the secondary sense modifying any other senses (165 out of 205), while the auditory domain shows the highest number in terms of the primary senses modified by any other senses (154 out of 205). It can also be inferred that the sense of touch is the experience-based sensation that is most easily perceived by the language users and hence more concrete than the sense of sound. The auditory sense, however, requires other concrete sensations to describe (Sukrasorn & Prasithrathsint, 2011; Wongthai, 2009) and can be regarded as the most abstract sensation dependent upon the interpretation of the language users when experiencing a stimulus or an object (Ritchie, 2006; Cavallaro, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary Modality</th>
<th>AUDITORY</th>
<th>VISUAL</th>
<th>OLFACTORY</th>
<th>GUSTATORY</th>
<th>TACTILE</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUDITORY</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLFACTORY</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUSTATORY</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TACTILE</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: The co-occurrence patterns of sensory modalities in Thai synaesthetic metaphors

It can also be noted from Table 2 that the auditory domain can be described by many composite co-occurrence patterns with two other sensory modalities, i.e., the gustatory and the tactile. These two senses are used to describe the auditory concept, for example:

(6) เสียง แคน อ่อน หวาน
siiang4 khxxn0? @@n1 waan4
sound folk musical instrument soft sweet
“The soft, sweet sound of folk musical instrument”

According to (6), it is indicated that the auditory concept is considerably complicated and it needs to be modified by a number of different senses. Additionally, the auditory sense is perceptually salient in terms of conveying the expressive concepts as below:

Words have meanings that are intersubjective, but they also have affective meaning determined by context and experience. Likewise, conceptualisation of sound is determined by a particular situation and previous auditory experiences…sounds have various affective meanings which are the product of individual and socio-cultural experiences.

(TAKADA 2008: 112)

3.2. The Translation of Thai Synaesthetic Expressions into English

As regard the translation of Thai synaesthetic metaphors into English, the Thai synaesthetic expressions and the English translated counterparts were taken into consideration. Thai synaesthetic expressions are strikingly similar to those in English. The co-occurrence patterns of sensory modalities in the English translation exhibited that many of the English translated expressions were equivalent to Thai, the source language. In Table (3), the expression /khvvn2 siiang4/ literally ‘up - voice’ was comparable to the English expression “raise (the) voice,” defined as “to speak loudly or shout at someone in anger” (McGraw-Hill Dictionary of
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American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs, 2006). The upward verticality concept suggested intensity of sound, especially when a person expressed something out loud because of anger. It is also noticeable that the sudden change of state or quality by means of the angry person’s voice in both languages was in accordance with the conceptual metaphors “MORE IS UP” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) “INTENSITY OF ANGER IS HEIGHT” (Stefanowitsch & Gries, 2006) and “EMOTION IS MOVEMENT” (Goatly, 2007).

Table 3: The equivalent Thai-English translation of synaesthetic expression

As in the Table (4), /h@@m4 ?@@n1 ?@@n1/ glossed as ‘fragrant - soft - soft’ was equivalent to English translated expression “soft scent” in that the good smell of the flower was described in terms of tactile sensation. The softness concept was metaphorically related to the meaning “mild and pleasant” (Thesaurus of English words and phrases, 1852).

Table 4: The equivalent Thai-English translation of synaesthetic expression

The other example of the same conceptualisation of sense modalities between English and Thai revealed that the co-occurrence between the taste word /waan4/ and the word of the auditory domain /siiang4 “voice” was translated with the same domain as in English from Table (5). Experience with food contributed to the metaphorical concept “PLEASANT IS SWEET” (Ritchie, 2013). Association between the sweetness judged by most English and Thai speakers as “pleasant” or “good” mapped onto the sound was therefore realised through the expression /siiang4 waan4/, resulting in the reduplicated expression “sweet, sweet voice” in English.

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4 According to the figure, ST stands for Source Language (Thai) while TT stands for the Target Language (English)
The use of some English translated expressions was, however, dissimilar to those in Thai despite the same co-occurrence patterns. In Table (6), the expression /nam3siiang4 khom4 kheun1/ literally ‘tone - bitter - nauseous (taste)’ conveying the RESENTMENT concept with the co-occurrence between the auditory domain and the gustatory domain was translated into English as the predicative construction “(his) voice was bitter”. The semantic doublet /khom4 kheun1/ ‘bitter - nauseous’ was translated using only one word “bitter” in English. That is, the word /khom4/ was translated while /kheun1/ was omitted. The translation still transferred the same co-occurrence pattern of senses from Thai to English and reflected the sharing concept between Thai and English in terms of the attitudes towards bitterness based on the metaphorical concept “UNPLEASANT IS BITTER” (ibid).

Moreover, one of the most significant results from the translation came from the case of weight /baw0/ ‘light,’ applied to the sense of hearing. The word /baw0/, appealing to the tactile domain, was mostly translated using the different word “soft” or “softly” which, in turn, belonged to the same tactile domain as in English. The expressions /song1 siiang4 khraang0 baw0 baw0/ literally ‘send - sound - moan - light - light’ and /siiang4 baw0 khang0waan0 phaj0r@?3/ literally ‘sound - light - loud - melodious’ are translated as “moan softly” and “(her) soft melodious voice,” respectively. The weight concept in /baw0/ was frequently transferred into the haptic sensation, softness, as in “soft, softly.” The two expressions were so-called dead metaphors which have lost their original imagery through extensive use (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Schmid & Ungerer, 1996), meaning that contemporary language users are “hardly conscious of the image” (Newmark, 1988: 106). Hence, /baw0/ and “soft” underwent different translations according to the conventionalised or popular use in each language.

However, some Thai synaesthetic expressions were not always equivalent to the English ones which either employ different synaesthetic expressions or do not use such expressions. To illustrate, /klin1 priaw2/ literally ‘smell - sour’ where the olfactory domain was described in terms of the gustatory domain became “sour, sharp scent”. The word “sharp” from the tactile domain was added to modify the scent showing the higher degree of smell. Another case in point arose from /?@@n1 waan4/ literally ‘soft - sweet’ translated into “sweet”. That is, the sweetness concept was only transferred while the haptic concept was not transferred. This expression was the exocentric compound referring to “gentle, beautiful” (The Royal Institute
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Dictionary of Thai, (1999) and was used to modify the characteristics of sound or a person’s personality. Interestingly, in both languages, the word /waan4/ or “sweet” itself can represent something pleasing to mind or feelings. According to the use of different synaesthetic metaphors, the translation is assumed to depend on the translator’s choice of the English expressions that best consolidate the imagery in the target language.

In the cases of not using synaesthetic expressions in English, there were four translation patterns, including using other metaphorical expressions, metonymy, literal meaning, and omission. The use of other metaphorical expressions was found most. For example, the DISAPPOINTMENT expressions /kham0phuut2 fvvqn1 fvvqn1/ ‘speech - bitter and harsh - bitter and harsh’, /hua4r@?3 fvvqn1 fvvqn1/ ‘laugh - bitter and harsh - bitter and harsh’, and /nam3siiang4 plxp1 praal1/ ‘tone - pained - unpalatable taste’ were translated using other metaphorical expressions including “laborious chitchat”, “force a laugh”, and “strained voice”, respectively. The translated expressions carried the meaning in the domain of force, supporting Kövecses’ (2000) discussion of the major conceptual metaphor “EMOTION IS FORCE.” As for another concept, the ANGER expression /khra1txxk2 siiang4/ ‘hit, crash-sound’ translated as “snap (back)” constituted the metaphor “AN ANGRY PERSON IS A FEROIOUS ANIMAL (Lakoff & Johnson, 1987). Since the word “snap” was previously more associated with the meaning of animals biting, it has now become “mean people making angry outbursts” and that this change occurred around the 1970s according to the Oxford Etymology dictionary (1989). The DISAPPOINTMENT concept was exemplified in Table (7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>ป้อม</th>
<th>ชายา</th>
<th>ต่าย</th>
<th>แห่งเพลิง</th>
<th>แปลง</th>
<th>ป่าแตร</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pom</td>
<td>ask</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>/nam3siiang4/</td>
<td>plxp1</td>
<td>praal1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>แวริเล็ก</td>
<td>/jen0 chvvt2/</td>
<td>/duaj2/</td>
<td>/p@@m2/</td>
<td>/thoam4/</td>
<td>/duaj2/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/wvxpm2mg1/</td>
<td>/phom4/</td>
<td>/hen4/</td>
<td>/ww0tht0aao/</td>
<td>/phit1waang4/</td>
<td>/praal1/</td>
<td>/khv2/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>บน</td>
<td>ดูดวง</td>
<td>ที่</td>
<td>เซิร์ฟ</td>
<td>/tht2/</td>
<td>/khem2khvng4/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/hon0/</td>
<td>/duang0tht0aao/</td>
<td>/tht2/</td>
<td>/khem2khvng4/</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>eyes</td>
<td>RLTV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>She asks with a strained voice... For an instant, I see a flicker of disappointment in her unyielding eyes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: The case of not using synaesthetic expressions in English in the translation of Thai synaesthetic expression into English

The use of metonymy can be observed in the translation of /jen0 chvvt2/ ‘cold - tasteless’ into “stone cold” evoking the image of a dead body which is as hard as stone and which has a cold temperature (see Table 8). The word /chvvt2/, belonging to the gustatory sense, was not transferred into English, but replaced by “stone,” a very hard object. “Stone cold” therefore conveyed the meaning of the dead body physiologically having a cold or inadequate temperature and unable to move, and was regarded as metonymy since there appeared to be no cross-domain mapping between the tactile domain and the gustatory domain. The contiguity of “stone” metonymically belonged to the same domain as “cold” since it partly represented the hardness and coldness, the tactile domain of the stone.
Table 8: The use of metonymy in the translation of Thai synaesthetic expression into English.

A few of Thai synaesthetic expressions were translated into English as literal expressions. For example, the expression /waan4 lxxm4/ ‘sweet – acute’ was translated as ‘sweeter and better’ using the denotative meaning as the image of having a sharp point or tip when touching from the word /lxxm4/ was not transferred to English and was replaced by the use of the construction with the comparative degree of adjectives instead. Lastly, there was an omission of Thai synaesthetic expressions translated into English as in Table (9).

Table 9: The use of omissions in the translation of Thai synaesthetic expression into English.

It can be argued here that the transfer of expressive meaning in the translation of Thai synaesthetic expressions into English is largely metaphorical. The high frequency of using linguistic expressions for translation (both synaesthetic and non-synaesthetic expressions) into English reveals that an emotional state or a subjective sensory perception has a so-called elusive or transient quality and is hence difficult to express with literal meaning or language. The use of metaphorical meaning or language might be a suitable choice to convey the quality and/or the intensity of a particular state (Ortony & Fainsilber, 1987).

In addition, some synaesthetic expressions are traceable to conceptualisations which are universal, whereas others are traceable to language specific conceptualisations. Some co-occurrence patterns are shared in common between Thai and English, such as /siiang4 waan4/ and “sweet voice” or /siiang4 suung4/ and “high sound”. The cross-modal mappings between the sound and the taste or the dimension concepts, in fact, are found universally and have been described in a number of studies of different languages, such as Chinese (Yu, 2003), Bahasa Indonesia (Shen & Gil, 2008), Japanese (Takada, 2008), Spanish (Barcelona, 1998), Hungarian and French (Ullmann, 1959), and Modern Hebrew (Shen, 1997), and others. On the other hand, some senses in Thai are conceptualised differently from their English translations, for example, the concept of /fvvqn1/ ‘bitter and harsh’, belonging to the gustatory domain and mapped onto the sound of a sad or disappointed person, is not transferred into English. The concept of /fvvqn1/ actually denotes the strange, fairly bitter taste causing unpleasant aftertaste (The Royal Institute Dictionary of Thai, 1999). In English, there is not an equivalent word that best suits this Thai word. The same case arises from /khiiaw4/ ‘green’ which modifies /siiang4/ ‘sound’ or /taa0/ ‘eyes’ and denotes the ANGER concept as
it represents the furious manner of the speaker (The Royal Institute Dictionary of Thai, 1999). The concept of greenness to denote anger in Thai does not exist in English where greenness refers to ENVY i.e. “green with envy”, so it is not transferred into English translations.

It can also be argued that some synaesthetic expressions in both languages are language-specific. For example, Thai synaesthetic expressions have the semantic doublets denoting the secondary sense as in /nam3siiang4 khom4kheun1/ literally ‘sound-bitter-nauseous’ or /siang4 plxxp1prraa1/ literally ‘sound-pained-tasteless’. The semantic doublets, /khom4kheun1/ and /plxxp1prraa1/, convey the sense of taste and touch and then are mapped onto sound. The nature of the semantic doublet is similar to compounding representing a certain degree of similarity, sometimes having alliteration regarded as the poetic feature (Poonlarp, 2009). It is also interesting that such expressions represent a degree of intensification to emphasize the expressive concept, SADNESS. However, in English, synaesthetic expressions are not expressed by semantic doublets based on the observation from the previous studies of English synaesthetic metaphors including Ullmann (1959), Williams (1976), Day (1996), and Bretones Callejas (2001). Thai synaesthetic expressions with semantic doublets are therefore translated without a one-to-one correspondence, resulting in different translation patterns. Another case in point of language specificity arises from the phrasal construction. That is, Thai synaesthetic expressions can be represented by the Head-Modifier construction, i.e. /siiang4 ?@@n1/ ‘voice-soft’, but when translated into English, the construction is changed into “soft voice” which is the Modifier-Head construction.

4. Concluding remarks

The study has shown that the 205 Thai synaesthetic metaphorical expressions found in the source texts of five Thai novels and their 205 equivalents of English expressions in the target translated English texts are quite similar in terms of co-occurrence patterns of senses. However, some of the Thai expressions are not equivalent to the English data set. They display either different corresponding synaesthetic expressions, or a lack of such metaphorical expressions entirely. It can be concluded that some synaesthetic expressions in Thai and English languages share some universal features, and some exhibit the language-specific feature. This must have been motivated by similar or different conceptualisations of senses found in the two languages and the constraints in terms of the translation of expressive meanings in the source and the target languages.
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References


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