

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A STUDY ON STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY TRANSLATORS WHEN TRANSLATING RELATIVE CLAUSES FROM ENGLISH TO SINHALA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the strategies adopted in translating relative clauses from English to Sinhala. Data were gathered from ‘The Village in the Jungle’, ‘Grass for my feet’, ‘The Road from Elephant Pass’ and their Sinhala translations based on three types: sentences with relative clauses introduced by relative pronouns, relative adverbs and reduced relative clauses. The data organised as a parallel corpus with 95 sentence pairs were analysed using the qualitative, content analysis. The common issue in translating relative clauses from English to Sinhala was structural complexity. The translation of relative clauses occurs in two ways: structure-based and non-structure-based. Structure-based translations have been formed converting the relative clause into an adjectival clause, an adjectival phrase or an adjective. Two strategies have been adopted in translating relative clauses by converting them into adjectival clauses: literal translation and translation adjustment. Splitting, omission, alteration and several other methods have been employed in non-structure-based translations.

Keywords: Adjectival Clause, Relative Clause, Strategies, Translation, English Relative Clause (ERC), Relative Clause (RC)

1. Introduction

Relativisation is the syntactic process of embedding a sentence within another one (Mukherjee, 2007, pp. 3-4). Relativisation in English has been examined by many language scholars. RCs are the clauses that function inside the noun phrases as modifiers (Park, 2000; Yule, 2000). It is the subordinate clause which provides more information about someone or something mentioned in the main clause. RC is placed immediately after the noun which it describes. English basically follows the structure of RC being introduced by a relative pronoun or relative adverb. In Sinhala there appears to be a process of relativisation by which sentences embedded in noun phrases form prenominal modifiers (Fernando, 1973, p. 98). As stated by Henadeerage (2002), “In the relativisation of Sinhala, the verb changes to a verbal adjective, and as a modifier precedes the relativized noun” (p. 47).

[මම ඊයේ තැපැල් කළ]ලිපිය

The letter [which you posted yesterday] However, studies on Sinhala relativisation have not been conducted adequately. Practically, literal translation is more applicable for translation taken place

between two languages belong to same language family and languages that share the same culture (Walinski, 2015, p. 60). Even though the language pair, English and Sinhala, belongs to the same language family: Indo-European, they are members of two sub-families. English is a member of the Germanic sub-family whereas Sinhala is a member of the Indo-Iranian sub-family (Weerakoon, 1982). As a result of that, the structure of the two languages is different from each other. Thus, literal translation is not always possible for the translation taking place between the two languages English and Sinhala. Translators employ different strategies to translate ERC. Thus, this research investigates the strategies adopted in translating RCs from English to Sinhala in the selected chapters of three English novels and their Sinhala translations.

2. Methodology

The main data analysing technique employed for the present study was the qualitative content analysis. Data analysis spiral that can be applied for most qualitative methods presented by Creswell (1998) was employed for the content. The sentence pairs extracted from three English novels and their Sinhala translations were used as primary data of this research. English novel: 'The Village in the Jungle' (1981) by Leonard Woolf and its Sinhala translation: 'Bæddēgama' (1988) by A. P. Gunarathne, English novel: 'Grass for my feet' (1935) by J. Vijayatunga and its Sinhala translation 'Mā Payata Thana Nilla' (1970) by Newton Jayasena and the English novel: 'The Road from Elephant Pass' (2003) by Nihal de Silva and its Sinhala translation 'Alimakada Sita' (2007) by E. M. G. Edirisinghe were the three pairs of source texts and target texts that were used to collect data. The 95 English sentences with three types of RCs were collected from the English novels: RCs introduced by relative pronouns, RCs introduced by relative adverbs and Reduced RCs. The respective Sinhala translations of the said English sentences consisted of only 89 sentences because 14 were untranslated. For the convenience of the analysis, they were manually recorded in word files as pairs to create a parallel corpus.

3. Results and Discussion

Translating sentences with RCs create issues for translators owing to the fact that relativisation is not a prominent phenomenon in Sinhala compared with English. By analysing the parallel corpus of sentences, it was revealed that the complexity in the structure of sentences containing RCs is an issue for translators. A simple sentence which contains only one clause turns into a complex sentence with the embedding of a RC into the sentence. The complex structure of the sentence which consists of an independent clause or main clause and a dependent or subordinate clause makes it difficult to translate when compared it with the structure of the simple sentence. This issue could be illustrated using an example taken from the data set as follows:

1. He had the meat at home.
2. He had the meat at home which he would dry and take Kamburupitiya and sell in the bazaar.
(The Village in the Jungle, p.25)

The sentence (1) is a simple sentence with one clause. It can be translated directly without any issue. However, the sentence (2) is structurally complex because it contains two clauses. Hence, it cannot be translated directly into the target language.

3.1 Strategies used in translating relative clauses from English to Sinhala

Findings of the present study demonstrate that the strategies used in translating ERCs into Sinhala with special reference to literary sources can be divided into two categories. The following flow chart graphically represents the classification of the strategies employed in translation of RCs. Observing the data set of the structure-based translation category, it was identified that when translating

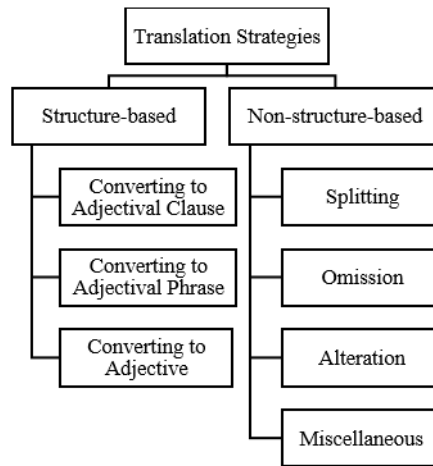


Figure 1. The classification of strategies adopted in translating RCs from English to Sinhala Structure-based translations

sentences with ERCs into Sinhalese the RC in the English sentence turns into an adjectival clause (AC), adjectival phrase, or adjective in the translated Sinhala sentence. The RC in [1]EN has been

Table 1. Categories of Structure-based translations

[1]	Converting to Adjectival Clause	Relative clauses turn into adjectival clauses when they are translated into Sinhalese.	[1]EN	They smell the scent of water in the great wind that blows in from the sea. (The Village in the Jungle, p.7)
			[1]SI	මුහුදු දෙසින් හමා එන තද සුළඟේ වතුර ඉවක් මවුන්ට දැනේ. (Baeddēgama, p.7)
			[2]EN	He was more silent than the leopard and more cunning than the jackal: he knew the tracks better than the doe who leads the herd. (The Village in the Jungle, p.3)
			[2]SI	මහු දිවියෙකුට වඩා නියොල්මත් ය. හිටලෙකුට වඩා කපටි ය. රැළක නායක මුවකුට-නැටියකුට වඩා හොඳින් මහු වනායේ මග හොට දැනී. (Baeddēgama, p.2)
			[3]EN	His expression was curiously virile and simple; but his brown eyes, which were large and oval-shaped, swept it at moments with something soft, languoutuos, and feminine. (The Village in the Jungle, p.27)
			[3]SI	මහාගේ මුහුණෙහි පිරිමි ගතියක් ද නිහතමාන වාමි ගතියක් ද පිළිබිඹු වී තිබුණි. එහෙත් මහු ගේ විශාල, වටකුරු, දුඹුරුවන් දෙනෙතෙහි යොමු වී තිබූ බව බැහැරවූ පෙනුමක් ඇතැම් විට මතු විය. (Baeddēgama, p.35)

introduced by the relative pronoun ‘that’ and it modifies the noun phrase ‘the great wind’. It has been taken as an AC in the Sinhala translation and placed before the noun phrase ‘තද සුළඟ’. The Sinhala verb ‘හමා එනම’ which is used to replace the English verb ‘blows’ has taken its participle form ‘හමා එන’. The clause has been translated considering the literal meaning.

The RC in [2]EN: ‘who leads the herd’ which describes the noun ‘the doe’ is translated into Sinhala as ‘රැළක නායක’ in [2]SI which has taken the form of an adjectival phrase in the Sinhala translation. The RC in [3]EN, ‘which were large and oval-shaped’ is reproduced in [3]SI as couple of adjectives: ‘විශාල, වටකුරු’ which convey the precise meaning. Two different ideas expressed in the relative clause being translated as two separate adjectives suggests that this method is applicable

even for more complex cases with several ideas. Non-structure-based translations Translations which fall under this category have been done focusing on the contextual meaning rather than preserving the structure.

Table 2. Categories of non-structure-based translations

[4]	Splitting	The relative clause is separately translated by splitting the sentence into two or more.	[4]EN	So that my welcome takes the form of a juicy pineapple freshly plucked which I can hardly wait to have peeled. (Grass for my feet, p.10)
			[4]SI	එසේ පැමිණීමට තැත්කර ගන්නා ඇ එවෙලේම ගසින් කඩා ගත් අත්තාඩි ගෙඩියක් මා ඉදිරියේ තබයි. එය කපා පෙනී ගන්නා තුරු මට නම් ඉවසුම් නැත. (Mā Payata Thana Nilla, p.20)
			[5]EN	Coming from Aunt Georgiana’s house, as we reach the high road, on our left is the house of the aunt whom we call Pare Gedara Auntie - the Aunt of the House by the Road. (Grass for my feet, p.20)
			[5]SI	ජෝර්ජියානා නැන්දාගේ ගෙදරින් නික්ම මහ පාරට ආ විගම මම පැත්තේ ඇත්තේ, පාරේ ගෙදර නැන්දාගේ නිවෙසය. (Mā Payata Thana Nilla, p.35)
			[6]EN	He would disappear for days together into the jungle, living upon roots and the fruit of jungle trees, and anything which might fall to his gun. (The Village in the Jungle, p.26)
			[6]SI	වන මුල් වන එළ හෝ කිසියම් දඩයමක් ලැබුණොත් එයින් හෝ යැපෙමින් ඔහු දවස් ගණන් ගත කළේ වනමේ ම ය. (Bæddēgama, p.34)

The RC in [4]EN: ‘which I can hardly wait to have peeled’, which describes the noun phrase ‘a juicy pineapple freshly plucked’ has been segregated from the main clause and translated as a separate sentence in Sinhalese. To refer to the antecedent, the pronoun ‘එය’ has been used as the subject of the second sentence in [4]SI.

Comparing the two: [5]EN and [5]SI, it is clear that the RC has been omitted when translating the text into Sinhalese. In the source text: [5]EN, the RC: ‘whom we call Pare Gedara Auntie’ is paraphrased in the last part as ‘the Aunt of the House by the Road’. If it is translated as it is, the same idea would be repeated twice in the Sinhala sentence: [5]SI. To avoid the idea being repeated in the Sinhala sentence, the RC is neglected in the translation.

The RC in [6]EN: ‘which might fall to his gun’ is altered and the idea is expressed in a different manner in the Sinhalese translation [6]SI. To replace the clause a single term is used in the translation as ‘දඩයමක්’ which is equivalent to the idea given by the clause. It is because the translator has been focused on the meaning rather the structure.

4. Conclusion

As conclusion the findings imply that the common method of translating an ERC into Sinhala is converting it into an AC. Secondly, it is indicated that, despite the commonly used method, several other strategies have been used in cases where the common method is not flexible enough to convey the idea expressed in the clause. Thirdly, the findings signify that the clause structure is insignificant in the process of translation in which more attention is paid on preserving the clarity of meaning.

Table 3. The frequency and the percentage of cases in which the different strategies were adopted in translating RCs

Translation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Literal Translation	23
	Translation Adjustment	33
Splitting	9	10
Omission	6	7
Alteration	9	10
Miscellaneous	9	10
Total	89	100

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