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Semantic Features of the Vietnamese Translation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

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ABSTRACT

Translation has never been an easy task for translators, who can be remarkably good at languages, and speak rapidly in communication, but find themselves in difficulty even it is intralingual or extralingual translation. To have a good translation, there are both objective and subjective conditions affecting translators. This study, by applying the theories of translation strategies and translation procedures suggested by Peter Newmark, Mona Baker and other scholars, has compared and contrasted the similarities and differences as well as the changes in terms of semantic features between the Shakespeare's English and the Vietnamese translation of *Romeo and Juliet* by Dang The Binh. It is found that Omission is the most typical strategy used while other strategies appeared with different frequency, which objectively affects the quality of the Vietnamese translation of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Keywords: Translation, Strategy, Procedure, Equivalence, Omission, Paraphrase, Hyponym, Modulation, Superordinate

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1. Introduction

Translating semantic features, according to Newmark (1988: 22), 'is a mode of text transfer which involves using the bare syntactic and semantic constraints of the TL to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the author'. This study discusses the differences in the semantic features at word level of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and its Vietnamese translation of Dang The Binh. By applying a combination of qualitative, quantitative, descriptive and contrastive methods, as well as using the translation strategies suggested by Baker (1992) and Newmark (1998), this paper has compared

in total 63,030 words of the two texts to establish the typical translation strategies used in the Vietnamese translation and the problems which result. In addition, the study will sum up with analysis of the frequency of occurrences (translation strategies) illustrated by a table. Finally, this study will evaluate objectively the positive points and limitations in the Vietnamese translation of *Romeo and Juliet*.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Translation procedures/strategies and methods

The terms "strategy" and "procedure" have not been distinguished clearly by any translation scholars. John

Kearns (cited in Baker, 2005), states that those two terms can be used interchangeably to describe the ways of translating units smaller than text. According to Krings (1986), translation strategy is defined as 'a translator's potentially conscious plans for solving concrete translation problems in the framework of a concrete translation task'. Seguinot (1989: 40) discusses three global translation strategies that are usually employed by translators:

- (i) translating without interruption for as long as possible;
- (ii) correcting surface errors immediately;
- (iii) leaving the monitoring for qualitative or stylistic errors in the text to the revision stage.

Translation strategy in the definition of Loescher (1991: 8) is 'a potentially conscious procedure for solving a problem faced in translating a text, or any segment of it'. Loescher believes that consciousness is the key feature to distinguish strategies used by translation practitioners. On the same line of thought, Cohen (1988: 4) adds that 'the element of consciousness is what distinguishes strategies from these processes that are not strategic'. In addition, translation strategies are classified clearly into two groups: global strategies which deal with the whole text and local strategies which cope with text segments (Bell, 1998: 188). Venuti (1998: 240) sees translation strategies which 'involve the basic tasks of choosing the foreign text to be translated and developing a method to translate it', in two different aspects: domesticating and foreignising. In the opinion of Jaaskelainen (1999: 71), strategy is considered as 'a series of competencies, a set of steps or processes that favor the acquisition, storage, and/or utilisation of information'. He continues that strategies are 'heuristic and flexible in nature, and their adoption

implies a decision influenced by amendments in the translator's objectives'. In 2005, this theorist came back with a new view on the process and product of translation by categorizing strategies into two major types: the ones relating to what happens to texts are called product-related strategies which set fundamental tasks of choosing a SL text as well as finding the method to translate it (2005: 15), while the others corresponding to what happens in the process are named process-related strategies which 'are a set of (loosely formulated) rules or principles which a translator uses to reach the goals determined by the translating situation' (2005: 16). Sharing the same thought with Bell (1998), Jaaskelainen (1999: 21) also classifies strategies into global and local. He mentions that 'global strategies refer to general principles and modes of action and local strategies refer to specific activities in relation to the translator's problem-solving and decision-making'.

According to Delisle *et al.* (1999), translation strategy basically refers to the translator's approach and plan when working with a given text, translation procedure deals with sentences and smaller units of text. Nida (1964: 241-247) describes translating procedures as below:

I. Technical procedures:

- analysis of the source and TLs;
- a thorough study of the SL text before making attempts translate it;
- Making judgments of the semantic and syntactic approximations.

II. Organizational procedures:

Constant re-evaluation of the attempt made; contrasting it with the existing available translations of the same text done by other translators, and checking the text's communicative effectiveness by asking the TL readers to evaluate its



accuracy and effectiveness and studying their reactions.

This study stands on the point of view that sees *strategy* as the overall mission to finish a task while *procedure* as the tactic to solve detailed problems in that task.

2.2. Newmark's translation methods

Peter Newmark (1988) suggests translation methods to investigate the equivalence of the whole texts, and translation procedures used for sentences and smaller units of language. He lists the following methods (1988: 45-48) and procedures (1988: 82-92):

Transference: it is the process of transferring an SL word to a TL text. It includes transliteration and is the same as what Harvey (2003) named "transcription". It is also called *Borrowing*, *Transliteration*, or *Loan word* (Delisle *et al.*, 1999). For example, the Vietnamese language borrows many French words like *pedal*, *guidon*, *accus*, *artichaut*, *amateur*, and *ampere*, and so on.

Naturalization: it adapts the SL word first to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology of the TL. It is also called *Direct transfer* (Delisle *et al.*, 1999). For example, *anglais* is pronounced *ăng-lê*, *acide* → *a-xít*, *ballet* → *ba-lê*.

Cultural equivalent: (it is called *adaptation* according to Vinay and Darbelnet) it means replacing a cultural word in the SL with TL one. For example: *He met her in the pub* → *Il l'a retrouvée dans le café*.

Functional equivalent: it requires the use of a cultural-neutral word. For example: *Baccalauréat* → *French secondary school leaving exam*.

Descriptive equivalent: in this procedure, the meaning of the cultural-based translation (CBT) is explained in several

words. For example: *nước mắm* (in Vietnamese) → *a kind of fish sauce*.

Componential analysis: it means 'comparing an SL word with a TL word which has a similar meaning but is not an obvious one-to-one equivalent, by demonstrating first their common and then their differing sense components' (1988: 114).

Synonym: it is a 'near TL equivalent' (p.84). For example: *personne gentile* → *kind person*; *conte piquant* → *racy story*;

Antonym: it is an opposite expression but the meaning in the ST is reserved. For example: *il fait non de travaille* → *He is unemployed*.

Through-translation: it is the literal translation of common collocations, names of organisations and components of compounds. It can be called: *claque* or *loan translation*. For example, the following words are translated from English to Spanish: *skyscraper* → *rascacielos*, *football* → *balompié*.

Shifts or transpositions: Transposition, or shift as Catford calls it, reflects the grammatical change that occurs in translation from SL to TL. According to Newmark, it involves a change in the grammar from SL to TL, for instance, (i) change from singular to plural, (ii) the change required when a specific SL structure does not exist in the TL, (iii) change of an SL verb to a TL word, (iv) change of an SL noun group to a TL noun and so forth.

Modulation: with Newmark, it occurs when the translator reproduces the message of the ST in the SL text in conformity with the current norms of the TL, since the SL and the TL may appear dissimilar in terms of perspective. For example, double negative for positive: *Il n'a pas hésité* → *He acts at once*, positive for double negative: *sallow* → *pocoprofondo*; abstract for concrete:

sleep in the open → *dormir à la belle étoile*;
cause for effect: *you are quite a stranger* →
On ne nous voit plus; active to passive (vice
versa).

Recognised translation: it occurs when the translator 'normally uses the official or the generally accepted translation of any institutional term' (1988: 89).

Compensation: it occurs when loss of meaning in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part. Hervey and Higgins (1992: 38) illustrate this example: 'Voilà cequeveulent dire les viriles acclamations de nosvilles et de nos villages, purges en fin de l'ennemie' and its English translation 'this is what the cheering means, resounding through our towns and villages, cleansed at last of the enemy' to show that the translation compensates the sound in the ST to maintain the rhetorical effects in the TT.

Paraphrase: in the procedure, the meaning of the CBT is explained. Here the explanation is much more detailed than that of descriptive equivalent.

Couplets: it occurs when the translator combines two different procedures.

Word-for-word translation: or *close translation* in which the SL word order is preserved and the words translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context. For example, *he works in the house now* is translated into French *Il travaillé dans la maison maintenant*.

Literal translation: in which the SL grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest equivalents, but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context. For example, word-to-word translation: *a beautiful garden* → *un beau jardin*; collocation-to-collocation: *make a speech* → *faire un discours*; clause-to-clause: *When my father works* → *Quand mon pere travaille*; sentence-to-sentence: *I*

ride bike in the street → *Je fais du vélo dans la rue*.

Faithful translation: it attempts to produce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the TL grammatical structures.

Semantic translation: which differs from "faithful translation" only in as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value of the SL text.

Adaptation: which is the freest form of translation, and is used mainly for plays (comedies) and poetry; the themes, characters, plots are usually preserved, the SL culture is converted to the TL culture and the text is rewritten.

Free translation: it produces the TL text without the style, form, or content of the original.

Idiomatic translation: it reproduces the "message" of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialism and idioms where these do not exist in the original.

Communicative translation: it attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership.

2.3. Baker's translation strategies

Another popular translation scholar whose work on translation practice is widely adopted is Baker (1992: 26-42) who points out 8 strategies for dealing with non-equivalence at word level.

Translation by a more general word (superordinate): this is one of the commonest strategies for dealing with many types of non-equivalence, particularly in the area of propositional meaning. It works equally well in most, if not all, languages, since the hierarchical structure of semantic fields is not language-specific.

Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word: this is also one of the



commonest ways to set the equivalence between two or more languages by using a word or phrase to get the general meaning.

Translation by cultural substitution: this strategy involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a TL item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader.

Translation by using a loan word or loan word plus explanation: this strategy is particularly common in dealing with culture-specific items, modern concepts, and buzz words. Following the loan word with an explanation is acutely useful when the word in question is repeated several times in the text. Once explained the loan word then can be used on its own.

Translation by paraphrase using a related word: this strategy tends to be used when the concept expressed by the source item is lexicalised in the TL but in a different form, and when the frequency with which a certain form is used in the ST is significantly higher than would be natural in the TL.

Translation by paraphrase using unrelated word: if the concept expressed by the source item is not lexicalised at all in the TL, the paraphrase strategy can still be used in some contexts. Instead of a related word, the paraphrase may be based on modifying the superordinate or simply on unpacking the meaning of the source item, particularly if the item in question is semantically complex.

Translation by omission: this strategy may sound rather drastic, but in fact it does no harm to omit translating a word or expression in some contexts. If the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translators can often

do simply omit translating the word or expression in question.

Translate by illustration: this is a useful option if the word which lacks an equivalent in the TL refers to a physical entity which can be illustrated, particularly if there are restrictions on space and if the text has to remain short, concise, and to the point.

2.3. Other strategies

Baker (2005: 188) defines that ‘a translation strategy is a procedure for solving a problem encountered in translating a text or a segment of it’. Depending on the micro or macro level of problems, translation strategies can be seen in two categories: local when dealing with text segments, and global when coping with the whole text (Bell, 1998). On a different classification, translation strategies can be divided into *general strategies* which deal with different types of text, and *specific strategies* which focus on the aims or purposes of translation (As-Safi, nd.). There are different sub-categories in *specific strategies*:

Domestication strategy: this strategy is also called naturalization or nominalization which bridges the cultural gaps to make the translation readable, natural, and comprehensible (Venuti, 1995). Venuti defines domestication as ‘an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bring the author back home’ (1995: 20). In other words, this strategy is used to adapt the ST with linguistic and cultural changes following the purpose or function of the translation. In order to familiarise the translation with its readers in the TC, literary translators often domesticate suspicious original words, concepts, and images in the ST. Baker (1992) reveals that domestication strategy must have been used since ancient Rome when many Greek texts were translated into

the Roman present by Latin poets, such as Horace and Propertius.

Foreignisation strategy: Baker (1992) confirms that Foreignisation strategy was first mentioned in German culture in the Romantic periods by the philosopher and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, whose famous lecture *On the Different Ways of Translation* introduced his opinion on the demand of having a translation that could reflect the original background culture; for example, a translation from Spanish or Greek to German can help readers guess the Spanish and Greek behind the text. Venuti chooses this strategy as his favourite in translation theory. He is against the theory of domestication strategy because he believes that domestication relates to 'an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to [Anglo-American] target-language cultural values' (Munday, 2001: 146). To support his point of view, Venuti (1998: 242) defines that foreignisation strategy 'entails choosing a foreign text and developing a translation method along lines which are excluded by dominant cultural values in the TL'. Venuti (cited in Neubert and Shreve, 1992: 4) argues that a foreignisation strategy produces 'something that cannot be confused with either the SL text or a text written originally in the TL'. Besides, Venuti (1995: 20) supports that this strategy is 'an ethnovevant pressure on [TL culture] values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad'. In other words, foreignisation, according to Venuti, is to protect the original identities in the ST from 'the ideological dominance of the TC' (1995: 147). Venuti (1995: 148) emphasises that both domestication and foreignisation are not the 'binary opposites', but the 'heuristic strategies' which 'deal with the question of how much it rather signals the differences of that text'.

Different viewpoints for or against using domestication and foreignisation strategy all root from different perspectives. Both strategies have advantages and disadvantages. While domestication besides helping readers understand the translation more easily, cannot maintain the naturalness and smoothness as well as cultural and stylistic messages in the ST, foreignisation besides keeping the formal style and original cultural images conveyed in the ST, causes difficulties for readers to familiarise with unnatural cultural images in the translation. In general, it is hard to say which strategy is better because both of them entail losses.

Compensation strategy: Hervey and Higgins (1992: 248) define compensation strategy as 'the technique of making up for the translation loss of significant features of the ST approximating their effects in the TT through means other than those used in the ST, that is making up for ST effects achieved by one means through using another means in the TL'. According to these two scholars, this strategy includes four sub-categories.

Compensation in kind: this is to use a different type of textual effect in the TT to express the untranslatable particular text in the ST, normally in terms of vocabulary. For example, Vietnamese language often has words at the end of an utterance, such as *à, u, thê, nhi*, etc. which show the feeling of speaker. These words seem to be untranslatable when translating into English. To maintain the original effect, translators sometimes use explanations as additions to clarify the feeling in their translations of Vietnamese text.

Compensation in place: this strategy is to gain what was lost in a particular place, for example, a word in a line of a poem, in a different (normally later) place in the translation. This kind of compensation



helps to keep the original content in the ST even though they are put at different places in the TT.

Compensation by merging: this is to use a short expression in the TT to translate a longer stretch in the ST.

Compensation by splitting: differing from the above strategy, compensation by splitting uses longer expression as the equivalent translation of a shorter stretch in the ST.

Compensation by addition: sometimes, there are inevitable losses in the translation in terms of rhythm and poetic style. This strategy uses metaphor or idiom which has no counterpart in the original in order to compensate for loss.

Strategy of Elaboration and Explication: if the ST is strange to readers and the TC, this strategy helps to explain the ST in a more detailed translation.

Strategy of Approximation and Compromise: some aesthetic and cultural values in the SL can be acceptable or unacceptable in the TC. In order to maintain the natural and acceptable rendition, the translators use this strategy to keep the equilibrium or balance of those values.

3. Methodology

This study is carried out with a considerable concentration on mixed methodologies, including qualitative method, quantitative method, descriptive method, and contrastive method.

Qualitative method, according to Silverman (2001), can present the insights behind the numbers and facts to clarify different layers of meaning conveyed by the speaker. In linguistics, applying qualitative method tends to be the most appropriate choice of language researchers, who use it as the tool to encounter the multiple meanings as well as the value patterns that quantitative method cannot express (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The qualitative

method in this study is expressed in analyzing the semantic changes due to the translation process between the English and Vietnamese translation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Rasinger (2013) states that quantitative method deals with different mathematical types, such as numbers, charts, graphs, and statistics. Quantitative method is applied to measure 'how much' and 'how many' of the case study (Rasinger, 2013: 10). The quantitative method in this study is firstly used in counting the frequency of occurrences of translation strategies. Table will be used to illustrate the popularity of all strategies.

Qualitative method always goes with descriptive method that is neutrally used when comparing the ST and the translated text (Toury, 1995). The descriptive method in the study is firstly used to describe the semantic features of English and Vietnamese translation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* when comparing equivalents.

According to Johansson and Hofland (1994), contrastive analysis is objectively used together with qualitative method and descriptive method when comparing two or more languages. The contrastive method in this study is expressed in comparing the similarities and differences, in terms of semantic features of equivalence between the English and Vietnamese translation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

4. Analysis and Discussion

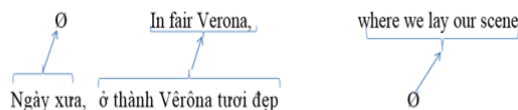
4.1. Omission

Baker (1992: 40) states that omission seems to be 'drastic' since it is forced by semantic, syntactic, or lexical issues, and causes losses of meaning of the ST in the TT, but in some contexts omitting a word or an expression that is not 'vital enough' to develop with explanations and

guidance in the TT is acceptable. This strategy appears with the highest frequency throughout the translation with 156 occurrences and occupies nearly a half of the proportion of all strategies with 47.3%. Omission can be full or partial in terms of losing the meaning of the original, which as a result reduces the effectiveness of the original and changes the original meaning. The following are some typical examples of Omission found in the Vietnamese translation.

Opening the Prologue, in terms of semantics, the translator has carried out two actions *addition* and *omission* at the same time:

Two households, both alike in dignity	Ngày xưa, ở thành Vêrôna tươi đẹp,
(In fair Verona, where we lay our scene),	Có hai nhà thuộc dòng thế phiệt trâm anh



(BT: *Once upon a time, in beautiful Verona*)

The translator omits the relative clause *where we lay our scene* in his Vietnamese translation, and adds a new adverbial phrase *Ngày xưa* = *Once upon a time/long time ago*. This replacement affects the original meaning in the way that the Vietnamese translation brings the audience to the scene directly with the sense of a legendary story, while the story-teller we in the ST is still there attracting the attention of audience. In this case, the Vietnamese translation within its addition and omission makes the text smooth, and magically, turns the time back to a real period in Verona.

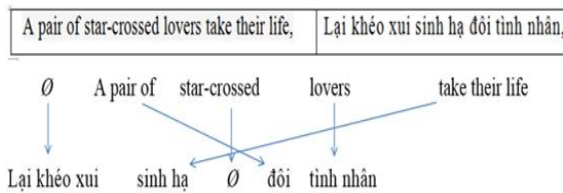
In this Vietnamese translation, omission sometimes accompanies with another strategy as a *couplet* (Newmark, 1988) to solve the problems of equivalence. For example, in the following line:

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes	Số phận éo le, thâm thù hai họ
From forth the fatal Ø loins of Ø these two foes	Ø Số phận éo le, Ø thâm thù Ø hai họ

(BT: *star-crossed fate, two families' hatred*)

The translation uses two strategies, omission and expansion. Besides the omission of the prepositional phrase *From forth*, the verb phrase *loins of*, and determiner *these*, the TT also expands the meaning of *fatal* which in Shakespearean language embeds the fate with ominous and mischievous foreboding by adding the adjective *éo le* = *troublesome*, as well as *foes* that Shakespeare uses to describe the two prejudiced families by the adjective *thâm thù* = *feuded*. The word *thâm* (in *thâm thù*) means *penetrated, long lasting* which in some ways expresses a partial meaning of the missing *loins of*. Perhaps this is the cultural effect on the way the translator uses less expressive language because Vietnamese people rarely express their feelings directly even in happiness or sadness (Goldman, 2009). Viewing the translation at a stage performance, the audience observe the murmuring conflict between the two families which can be embedded in the word *thâm thù* as well.

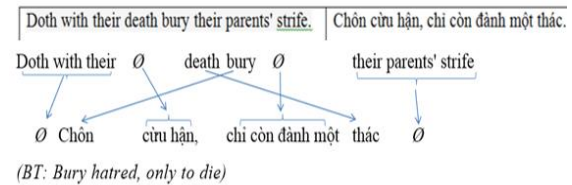
Omission can be full or partial, which affects the ST meaning at different levels. If key words in the ST, nevertheless, are omitted, the translator damages both the ST and its translation, since the important key message that the author wants to imply is not described and expressed to the audience. This can be seen in the following line:



The translator adds new verbal phrase *Lại khéo xui* = *wisely incite* which does not exist in the ST. Besides this, he also omits the adjective *star-crossed* which describes the tragic fate in love of the couple. This loss becomes more serious because the missing of the key adjective *star-crossed* erases the tragic fate of the young couple in love, which makes the translation more direct in a rather less convincing way for the TT audience. Language and historical situation might be considered as the barriers preventing the translator from achieving a full equivalence of meaning in this sentence. Firstly, in terms of language, credible dictionaries such as the OED and the Oxford Advance Learners' Dictionary all support the fact that *star-crossed* is Shakespearean language and rarely used by different writers. This might be the primary difficulty for the translator because he could not find the meaning of *star-crossed* in any other writings and authors. Secondly, in terms of historical situation, the war with the Americans and later diplomatic relations between Vietnam and the United Kingdom which were established on 11/09/1973, ten years after the first introduction of *Romeo and Juliet* in Vietnam, might be the other difficulties that eliminated opportunities for the translator to approach Shakespearean English earlier than his translation. Besides this, the Vietnamese language does not have an exact equivalent of this word. Even in the present day, modern translators also

find it difficult to find a Vietnamese equivalent to *star-crossed*.

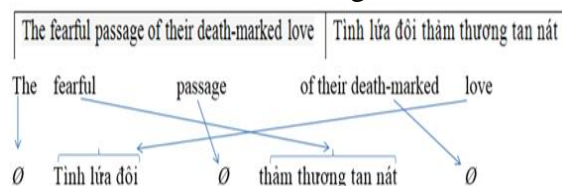
In the following case, the translator omits almost all of the original meaning of the ST:



The Vietnamese translation only keeps two equivalents *death* = *thác* and *bury* = *Chôn* while the two following phrases *Doth with their* and *their parents' strife* are omitted. The translator replaces the missing phrases by two other unrelated (both in meaning and structure) ones in which *cừ hận* = *extreme hatred* and *chỉ còn đánh một* = *only one thing* diversifies significantly from the original meaning. The whole meaning of TT explains that the lovers have to choose the death and carry the hatred to their tomb. Alternatively, Shakespeare's English says that the death of the young couple ends the feud between their families. Besides, the old words used in this translation *cừ* (in *cừ hận*) and *thác* (*die*) belong to Chinese-Vietnamese called *Nôm* language used in fourteenth century, that no longer exists in daily use or even in present dictionaries. Therefore, ancient words plus omissions and unrelated additions prevent the audience from understanding the TT.

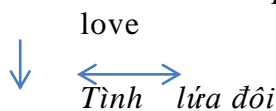
Omission should be the last choice whenever there is no suitable solution for finding equivalence in the translation. If omission is abused, the translation will lose the message and the soul of the ST. Nida (1964: 131) emphasises that 'adherence to the letter may indeed kill the spirit'. Nida continues that the spirit, not just the letter is the truest message to be translated for the audience to *feel* the ST (1964: 132). He considers the spirit is one of the four basic

requirements including (1) making sense, (2) conveying the spirit and manner of the original, (3) having a natural and easy form of expression, and (4) producing a similar response, that help to reduce the conflict between the content and the form of a translation. In the following line,



(BT: Couple's love is tragic and ragged)

The translation has three omissions in which the missing of the following two important words *passage* and *death-marked* loses the key meaning of the English original. Love between Romeo and Juliet, despite proceeding young and innocent hearts, is controlled by a tragic fate that is cursed with death. The Vietnamese language does not have any equivalent for *death-marked love*. Besides this, the translator paraphrases and expands two words with *fearful* = *thảm thương tan nát* (*thảm thương* = *tragic* + *tan nát* = *ragged*) and *love* = *Tình lứa đôi* (*Tình* = *love* + *lứa đôi* = *couple*):



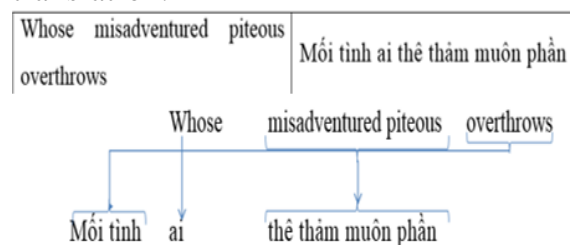
While *fearful*, however, describes meaning for *passage*, *thảm thương tan nát* functions as the adjectival phrase assisting *love*. The love of this young couple is *marked* by *death* right from the time it was in 'embryo' form. In addition, *passage* in this case is the passing by of people or the passing away. In general, the Vietnamese translation loses most of the expressive meanings of the ST.

4.2. Paraphrasing

According to Baker (1992), paraphrasing is a procedure in which the translator uses unrelated words, more neutral or less expressive words, or more general words to clarify the ST's words for which the TL does not have close equivalents. The translator, depending on the availability of equivalence in the TT, will choose which way is the most appropriate. In this case, the translator cannot express the true meaning of the ST by using an exact equivalent in the TT. Using this strategy is to help the audience understand some parts of meaning of words or phrases in the ST.

In the Vietnamese translation of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Translation by using Paraphrasing* is the second most used choice with 32.7% among the translation strategies used. The following are some typical examples of using paraphrasing with discussions about its effect on the original meaning of the ST.

In terms of lexicon, English language singular and plural forms of nouns are distinguished by adding 's' at the end the word. The Vietnamese language, however, does not have the same formula to form a plural noun as the English. In doing so, Vietnamese has words to express the plural meaning no matter whether it is countable or uncountable. The following line is a typical example of how the translator keeps the plural meaning in his translation:





The translator uses unrelated word *Mối tình* = *love* to set the equivalent for *overthrows* which in Shakespeare's language is the destruction and defeat. The translation, however, illustrated mathematically by multiplying the misery of this love affair described in the two adjectives *misadventured* and *piteous* through *thê thảm muôn phần* in which *thê thảm* = *misadventured/piteous* and *muôn phần* = *numerous times*.

Translation using unrelated words sometimes expresses the original meaning of the ST in a different way which brings the audience to the original message of the writer. The following line, for example, has changed nearly all the original meaning:

What here shall miss, our toil shall strive | *Sức mọn tài hèn, chúng tôi xin*
to mend. | *gắng trở.*

What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.
Sức mọn tài hèn, chúng tôi xin gắng trở

(BT: *Tiny ability and bad talent, we try to perform*)

There is no equivalent between the TT and the ST. Firstly, the translator uses unrelated words *Sức mọn tài hèn* = *Tiny ability and bad talent* as the equivalent for *What here shall miss* which means that the detail which the story has not mentioned yet. This translation, however, is a normal expression in Vietnamese culture in which people are often self-deprecating in order to receive the sympathy of listeners or audience in case of any mistakes (Tran, 1996/2006). Secondly, the Vietnamese translation omits the key information in the phrase *our toil* (it is *toil*) because only the word *our* has its equivalent *chúng tôi* = *we*. Thirdly, by comparing the phrase *shall strive to mend* and its translation *xin gắng trở*, the translator

again uses unrelated words that do not convey the presuppositional meaning of the ST. Except the word *strive* = *gắng*, *Xin* = *please* does not appear in the English and *trở* has its English equivalent *perform* while *mend* supports the *miss* in the previous phrase.

According to Baker (1992), the key function of *translating by using unrelated words* is to replace the lexicon that does not have an equivalent in the TT. Despite using a different word, the meaning should be superordinate or at least revealing the meaning in the ST. *Using unrelated words* in the Vietnamese translation of *Romeo and Juliet* nevertheless leads to the conclusion that this choice is just to amend the translator's misunderstanding or under-ability to translate the ST faithfully even if at some points it matches the TC. All of these problems occur in the following line:

SAMPSON	XAMXON - Kệ! Tao phải ray tay bạo chúa mới được. Tao sửa cho bọn đàn ông xong thì bọn đàn bà con gái liệu will cut off their heads.
'Tis all one. I will show myself a tyrant. When I have fought with the men, I will be civil with the maids. I will cut off their heads.	ông xong thì bọn đàn bà con gái liệu hồn. Cứ gọi là không còn sót một á!

The clear-cut and angry attitude of Sampson in the phrase *'Tis all one* which means *it's all the same* is translated intelligently by using only one Vietnamese word *Kệ* = *I don't care/mind* that expresses exactly the same emotion and feeling as the original language. The following translation, however, has some ambiguities because the translator paraphrases and omits the original meaning. The back translation is below:

Vietnamese	Back translation to English
Tao sửa cho bọn đàn ông xong thì bọn đàn bà con gái liệu hồn. Cứ gọi là không còn sót một á!	(When) I have finished teaching/ fixing/ correcting/ repairing the men, the women/ maids will get their turns. It shouldn't miss anyone.

In comparison to the ST, the word *sửa* cannot be the correct equivalent for *have fought* because it has many different but unrelated equivalents, such as *teaching/ fixing/ correcting/ repairing*. Besides, the ironical style of speaking is not maintained because, in the ST, Sampson says that he would be gentle to the Montague's maids but then he would cut off all their heads. This kind of contradictory expression emphasises the feud between Sampson and Montague's people. In the TT, this contrastive saying is not maintained because the translator omits the whole clause *I will be civil with the maids*. In addition, the anger of Sampson in the phrase *cut off their heads* is reduced to a lower level with *không còn sót một á = don't miss anyone*. The word *á* in the Vietnamese language also refers to women in an informal situation with a contemptuous attitude.

GREGORY	GRIGÔRI - Không một á nào còn sống áy á?
The heads of the maids?	
Vietnamese	Back translation to English
Không một á nào còn sống áy á?	Is none of them alive?

The back translation shows that the TT paraphrases the original *The heads of the maids* has the meaning that all Montague's maids would die. Shakespeare's pun, however, in the ST is really a challenge because the writer intends to combine *head* and *maid* into *maidenheads* which means the *virginity*. This translation cannot convey the ironical idea of the speaker, and leads to misinterpretation by using an unrelated word in the next line.

SAMPSON	XAMXON - Hay là còn nguyên.
Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads.	Muốn hiểu thế nào thì hiểu.
Take it in what sense thou wilt.	

While the ST is quite clear with the expression of Sampson *heads of the maids* or *their maiden heads*, the TT *Hay là*

còn nguyên = or still intact still keeps the image of the heads or the lives of the Montague's maids.

One of the typical concern for the translator in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is the way Shakespeare mentions sex (Cash, 2013). In fact, Shakespeare's servant characters such as Sampson, Mercutio, and Nurse often use bawdy language to express sexual jokes and sexuality, which the TT does not successfully describe. This limitation is expressed in this line:

SAMPSON	XAMXON - Tao mà còn đứng vững thì tao
Me they shall feel while I am able to stand, and	còn cho các á ném mùi. Tao là tay có sừng
'tis known I am a pretty piece of flesh.	có mỏ chứ có phải vừa!

The misunderstanding in the previous lines leads to systemic misinterpretation because the translator only uses semantic translation which can demonstrate the denotative meaning of words but cannot convey the irony and implications of the writer. He re-uses the Vietnamese equivalents *đứng vững = stand*, *ném mùi = feel* to describe a man (Sampson) who is ready to fight and let the Montagues' maids *taste* the pain while the words *feel*, *stand* are mentioning sex. Besides, the phrase *a quite piece of flesh* also has the meaning of sexual desire but the Vietnamese translation *có sừng có mỏ* is completely different. The imagination of a violent scene causes the unrelated equivalent choice because *có sừng có mỏ* is equal to *have horns have beaks*, which often describes the person who has weapons or a band with many people around him to protect him, or has reputation in a mafia society.

4.3. Modulation

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) propose seven translation procedures including calque, loan, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and



adaptation. Among them, modulation is the variation of changes of viewpoint or perspective. Vinay and Darbelnet suggest some different ways of modulation, such as a positive for a double negative, double negative for positive (this is equivalent to antonymy), abstract for concrete, cause for effect, one part for another, and active for passive. In this Vietnamese translation of *Romeo and Juliet*, modulation is not a typical translating procedure, but the way the translator *negates* the ST in his translation is strict. I, therefore, give another name to this translation procedure: Negativeness. The following are typical examples of modulation in the Vietnamese translation.

In the following line, The translator uses ‘**negativeness**’ of meaning in his translation, which intellectually still keeps the original idea of the character:

MONTAGUE Thou villain Capulet! Hold me not. Let me go.	MONTAGHIU - À tên khốn kiếp Capulet! - Bỏ ta ra nào, đừng giữ ta lại nữa!
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In this line, this procedure appears twice: the positive for the negative (1) and the negative for the positive (2):

- (1) Hold me not → Bỏ ta ra nào = Let me be free
- (2) Let me go → đừng giữ ta lại nữa = do not hold me anymore

The way the translator uses a positive to describe a negative also appears in Line 264 – Appendix in which the translator uses *đứng lặng* = *stay* as the equivalent for *do not move*:

JULIET Saints do not move , though grant for prayers' sake.	JULIET - Các nữ thánh thường đứng lặng , nhưng vẫn là ứng chuẩn.
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The line below uses the same method, in which the translator uses a positive expression to present the negative idea in the ST:

ROMEO

I am too sore enpierced with his shaft
To soar with his light feathers, and so bound,
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe.
Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

RÔMÊÔ - Tôi đã bị trọng thương vì mũi tên của Kiupit rồi, còn muốn đôi cánh nhẹ của hán mà bay sao được. **Số mệnh đã buộc tôi không thể tránh được cảnh khổ não.** Gánh nặng của Ái tình đè lên tôi nặng trĩu.

While the ST says that Romeo cannot lift him up even *a pitch* above his *dull woe* (*I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe*), the TT explains that Romeo has been tied to *dull woe* by his fate: **Số mệnh đã buộc tôi không thể tránh được cảnh khổ não** = The fate has tied me to dull woe. In the following line, the ‘negativeness’ strategy is used in the phrase *locks fair daylight out* = không cho ánh hồng đẹp tươi lọt vào:

MONTAGUE

Many a morning hath he there been seen,
...
Shuts up his windows, **locks fair daylight out**,
...
Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

MONTAGHIU - Nhiều buổi sáng người ta đã bắt gặp nó ở đó,
..., đóng chặt cửa, **không cho ánh hồng đẹp tươi lọt vào**,
... Nếu không khéo khuyên giải cho tiêu tan nguyên nhân sâu muộn đi, thì e sẽ nguy hại đến thân.

Vietnamese	Back translation to English
<i>không cho ánh hồng đẹp tươi lọt vào</i>	Not to let beautiful pink light in

Within the same meaning, the two different ways of expression between the ST and the TT introduce the same effect in terms of conveying the original message. In this case, the Vietnamese translation seems to be more poetic because the language used is slightly different: while the ST is *fair daylight*, the TT is *ánh hồng đẹp tươi* = beautiful pink light.

4.4. Hyponym and Superordinate

To deal with many different kinds of non-equivalence, hyponym and superordinate are the two popular translation strategies used (Baker, 1992). The translator often applies part-whole category to produce a similar or general image of the ST in the TL. For example, the word *house* is the superordinate while other words such as *cottage*, *bungalow*,

apartment, flat, etc. are considered as the hyponyms. Because of not being able to give a full equivalent term, hyponym and superordinate can describe a partial meaning of the ST. They belong to the most popularly used strategies in the Vietnamese translation of *Romeo and Juliet*. The followings are some typical examples of this type.

In the following line, semantic translation and hyponym create an ambiguity for the TT audience.

<p>ROMEO Tis the way To call hers exquisite, in question more. These happy masks that kiss fair ladies' brows, ... Farewell. Thou canst not teach me to forget.</p>	<p>RÔMÊÔ - Như thế sẽ chi càng làm nổi bật thêm sắc đẹp tuyệt vời của nàng thôi! Hãy xem những mặt nạ được điểm phước hôn vùng trán người đẹp: ... Thôi chào anh, anh không thể dạy tôi quên được.</p>
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While the English explains that the beauty is more attractive when it is hidden behind *black masks*, which in the jealous and envious eyes of Romeo, are so lucky to *kiss fair ladies' brows*, the Vietnamese is *hôn vùng trán người đẹp = kiss the fair ladies' forehead* and *chúng đen nên càng nhắc nhở ta rằng chúng che những gì trắng muốt = they are black (marks) to tell us they hide the white things* in which the contrast between *black* and *white* does not refer to any idea of the fair beauty that is in the original. Besides, the translator also uses superordinate word *vùng trán = forehead* as the equivalent for *brows*.

The translator uses a more literary image to reveal the presuppositional meaning implied in the ST. This method is applied in this line:

<p>BENVOLIO - At this same ancient feast of Capulet's Sups the fair Rosaline whom thou so loves With all the admired beauties of Verona. Go thither, and with unattainted eye Compare her face with some that I shall show, And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.</p>	<p>BENVOLÍO - Đây là buổi dạ yến theo tục lệ cũ của họ nhà Capulet. Có nàng Rôdalín xinh đẹp, mà anh đang chết mê chết mệt, cũng tới dự. Lại thêm đủ mặt hoa khôi thành Vêrôna nữa. Anh hãy tới dự đi, rồi đem con mắt vô tư mà so sánh dung nhan nàng với vài dung nhan khác mà tôi sẽ chỉ cho anh. Anh sẽ phải công nhận với tôi rằng con thiên nga của anh thực chỉ là con quạ.</p>
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Instead of using the correct equivalent of *face = khuôn mặt* in the Vietnamese language, the translator uses a superordinate to enhance the word to a different level of meaning *dung nhan = beauty*. In Vietnamese culture, *dung nhan = beauty* is the superordinate of body, shape, and face. Besides using superordinate, hyponym is also used in the TT. For example, in this line:

<p>LADY CAPULET Well, think of marriage now. Younger than you Here in Verona, ladies of esteem Are made already mothers. By my count, I was your mother much upon these years That you are now a maid. Thus then in brief: The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.</p>	<p>CAPIULET PHU NHÂN - Con ơi, bây giờ là lúc phải nghĩ đến chuyện nhân duyên rồi. Nhiều người còn ít tuổi hơn con, ở ngay thành Vêrôna này, mà toàn là những người được trọng vọng cả, cũng đã tay bồng tay mang. Tính ra thì bằng trắc tuổi con bây giờ mẹ đã sinh con rồi, vậy mà con thì vẫn còn là con gái. Thôi để mẹ nói vắn tắt cho con hay: Chàng Parit tài năng muốn hỏi con làm vợ đấy.</p>
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While the ST uses the image *mothers* as the whole picture describing the ones who have babies, the TT takes one part of the body *tay = arm* to refer to that image. *tay bồng tay mang = one arm holds, one arm carries* is a Vietnamese expression for a woman busy with many children. Despite not giving an exact equivalent to the ST *mother = mẹ*, the translator brings a more attractive and more familiar image to the Vietnamese audience. In the line below, the translator uses a superordinate to change a neutral to a more attractive image:

<p>ROMEO (gives APOTHECARY money) There is thy gold, worse poison to men's souls..... Farewell. Buy food, and get thyself in flesh..... To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee.</p>	<p>RÔMÊÔ - Vàng trả anh đây. ...Thôi, chào anh, mua cao lương mỹ vị mà chén cho đây. ... Hãy cùng ta tới mộ Juliet, đó là nơi ta phải dùng đến người.</p>
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While the ST uses *food* with a general meaning of something to eat, the translation upgrades it to *cao lương mỹ vị* that means *ambrosia* – special food for kings and gods. This change, besides beautifying the language and bringing an attractive image to the audience, creates a positive effect on the target audience.

After studying 63,030 words both in the Vietnamese and the Shakespeare's English *Romeo and Juliet*, using the



translation strategies suggested by Newmark and Baker, It is found that there are seven strategies most used and their frequency is illustrated in the table below:

Table: The occurrences and percentage of semantic strategies

Strategy	Tokens	Percentage
Translation by using omission	156	47.3%
Translation by paraphrase using a more general word/ less expressive words	64	19.4%
Translation by using cultural substitution	56	17%
Translation by paraphrase using unrelated word	34	10.3%
Translation by using hyponym or superordinate	10	3%
Translation by using modulation	7	2.1%
Translation by using compensation	2	0.9%
	330	100%

In the data, the strategy “*Translation by omission*” appears 156 times and takes the highest percentage with 47.3%, while the two strategies *Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word/a more general word*” and “*Translation by using cultural substitution*” are on the second and third with 19.4% for 65 occurrences and 17% for 56 occurrences.

In the fourth and fifth places are the two strategies “*Translation by using unrelated word*” with 10.3% for 34 occurrences and “*Translation by using Hyponym or superordinate*” with 3% for 10 occurrences.

In the sixth and seventh places are the two strategies “*Translation by using modulation*” with 2.1% for 7 occurrences, and “*Translation by using compensation*” with 0.9% for 2 occurrences.

By examining the frequency of these 7 strategies, the strategy “*Translation by omission*” is the most frequently used with nearly a half of the total. It is wondered whether half of the ST was omitted and the ability of the translator is also in question. Omission is an acceptable solution only if the omitted words do not convey the main information of the ST. In addition, the abuse of the use of omission confirms that the TT

is not overt to the ST. The omissions can be justified if the translator applied compensation, but this is rarely used in the TT with only 2 occurrences (0.9%). The TT is not an overt translation (House, 1997) because the translator uses 10.3% of unrelated words in his translation. On the other hand, the TT is not a covert translation (House, 1997) because only 3% of superordinate and hyponym is used, which shows the limitations of the vocabulary of the translator. Cultural transplantation is an outstanding feature of the TT in which the translator tried to adapt the SC to the TC to make the audience familiar with the story. With 19.4% of using cultural substitution, it is again shown that the TT is just partly covert. In general, it is possible to conclude that right from the start the translator did not clarify his type of audience, whose level of education and background knowledge will decide whether the translation should be overt or covert.

5. Conclusion

In general, the translation of Dang The Binh is, in my opinion, a great success because although it was produced more than fifty years ago when the political, social, and economic conditions of Vietnam were extremely difficult in war, the translation basically conveys the overall meaning of the ST with many domesticated translations that make the TT friendly and familiar to the Vietnamese audience. It is the war that caused limitations and did not allow the translator to produce a better translation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Life has changed so much since the National Reunion Day 30-04-1975. My evaluation and analysis into the semantic features of the Vietnamese translation of *Romeo and Juliet* is not a stereotyped view of finding the mistakes but with respect to the translator and an objective approach to the translation. I

sincerely believe that the development of the country in all aspects of life has brought many opportunities for literature in general, and translation in particular, which creates advantages to carry out a total evaluation on the translations of Shakespeare's works in Vietnam in order to honour the contributions of previous translators, as well as to produce new translations. As Mounin (1976 : 171) suggests that:

la traduction d'une grande œuvre théâtrale doit être refaite tous les cinquante ans: non seulement pour profiter de toutes les découvertes et de tous les perfectionnements des éditions critiques - mais surtout pour mettre l'œuvre au diapason d'une pensée, d'une sensibilité, d'une société, d'une langue qui, entre-temps, ont évolué, ont changé.

[the translation of a great theatrical work must be redone every fifty years not only to take advantage of all the discoveries and improvements of critical editions - but especially to work in tune with a thought, a sensibility, a corporation, a language which, in the meantime, have evolved, have changed]. (My translation).

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