

## **Analysis of Strategies Used in the Translation of Figurative Language in the English Version of *Ngo Pa (The Romance of the Sakai)***

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### **Abstract**

This study seeks to identify figurative language and analyze the strategies applied in translating it in the Southern Thai literary work “*Ngo Pa*” (*The Romance of the Sakai*). *Ngo Pa* is a play originally written by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) in Thai while the English version was translated by Malithat Promathatavedi. The twelve scenes of “Kanang’s journey to the forest” to “Lumhap escapes with Sompla” as parts of the play written in Thai and the English translated version were selected as data for this study. The Knickerbocker and Renninger’s (1963) classification of figurative language and Mona Baker’s (1992) grouping of translation strategies were employed in data analysis. The findings revealed that figurative language appeared in 22 instances consisting of five types: simile 10 (45.45%), hyperbole 5 (22.73%), personification 3 (13.64%), symbolism 2 (9.09%), metaphor 2 (9.09%), while paradox and synecdoche were absent. Interestingly, it was also found that the top three translation strategies used in translating figurative language were: using a more general word 5 (33.33%), cultural substitution 4 (26.67%), and paraphrasing using related words 3 (20.00%), in descending order. Moreover, it was found that the translation of this literary work also employed strategies beyond Baker’s framework, particularly literal translation.

## **Introduction**

Literary translation is a branch of translation that requires sensitivity and careful consideration. It engages with literary works or texts distinguished by imagination, creativity, and unique uses of language. Consequently, a literary translator must have the knowledge and skills to faithfully convey the meaning and style of the original text, since literary translation cannot be achieved through literal rendering alone. To address such challenges, translators often rely on creative strategies, such as translating idiomatic expressions in literature or rendering poetry with its rhyme and rhythm. Among these challenges, one particularly significant issue is the translation of figurative language.

A central challenge in literary translation is the handling of figurative language. According to McArthur (1992), figurative language uses specific linguistic features to create an artistic effect. This makes it different from literal language. Newmark (1988) emphasizes that translators must carefully interpret figurative language and use creative strategies to maintain its style and cultural significance in the target language. Jakobson (1959) adds that literary translation is not just about changing a text from one language to another; it’s about recreating meaning and effect with equivalent stylistic devices.

In the Thai context, previous studies on figurative language in literature have been limited and mostly concentrated on specific works. (Shepherd, 2021), and simile used on translated work (Hayeesa-i and Maisarah, 2023), and translation strategies used in figurative languages such as (Khongbumpen, 2008), translated method on figurative words

in *Behind the Painting* (Duangloy, 2006), translated the short story *Dust Underfoot* (Jarumetheechon, 2003).

From King Rama II's play *I-Nao* (1807–1824) employs the vivid form of a metaphorical illness to portray the blinding effects of love. As these examples illustrate, figurative language, through its expressive forms, encourages readers to reflect more deeply and sustain their interest in a text, which consequently poses a significant challenge for translators.

Within Thai literature, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) made significant contributions, including *Far from Home* (ไกลบ้าน), *The Loyal Ceremonies of the Twelve Months* (พระราชพิธีสิบสองเดือน), *Royal Barge* (ภาพยนต์เรือ), and *The Divine Lineage* (วงศ์เทวราช). Among his literary works, *Ngo Pa* (*The Romance of the Sakai*) stands out as an excellent case study for figurative language analysis, as it vividly portrays the identity and way of life of the Sakai people while also reflecting the richness of Southern Thai cultural identity. The play also presents various aspects of culture, love, revenge, and nature through dramatic verse, making it highly suitable for figurative language analysis.

In the English translation by Malithat Promathatavedi, *Ngo Pa* becomes an interesting and challenging case study. Her translation demonstrates approaches to handling various types of figurative language, reflecting the transmission of Thai cultural identity and traditions through the speech of the Sakai people into English in a distinctive and engaging manner. This enables an analysis of her comparative translation strategies from Thai to English, examining the techniques and methods she employed to incorporate and preserve Thai cultural elements, maintaining the original value of the text while making it accessible to international readers.

In Thailand, although many scholars have shown interest in translation studies, research focusing on figurative language in Thai literature remains limited. For instance, the few studies that exist, Shepherd (2021) explored metaphors in *Khun Chang Khun Phaen*, while Hayeesa-i and Maisarah (2023) analyzed similes in *The Happiness of Kati*, carefully examining their types, frequency, and meanings to reveal how Vejjajiva's writing style connects with the novel's original story. However, no prior research has specifically focused on *Ngo Pa* or related Southern Thai literatures, which distinctly showcase the unique cultural identity of the Southern region.

Therefore, this research aims to analyze the translation strategies used in the English version of *Ngo Pa* (*The Romance of the Sakai*) and to examine how the translator handles figurative language. The findings are expected to provide academic value in the field of translation studies and practical insights into conveying the aesthetic and cultural values embedded in Thai literature through figurative language. Ultimately, this study also seeks to promote and support the recognition of Thai literature on the international stage.

Research Objectives (1) To investigate the frequency of occurrence of the figurative language in the selected scenes in the play, *Ngo Pa* (*The Romance of the Sakai*). (2) To analyze the strategies used in the translation of figurative language in the play, *Ngo Pa*, in the selected scenes. Research Questions (1) What is the frequency of occurrence of figurative language and translation strategies in the selected scenes of *Ngo Pa* (2) What translation strategies are used in translating figurative language in the selected scenes of *Ngo Pa*, and how frequently does each strategy occur?

Translation involves expressing words and meanings from one language into another. While this task might seem simple, significant difficulties often arise, particularly when dealing with literary texts. To manage these challenges, various translation theories and

methods have been developed. These frameworks help categorize translation problems, suggest solutions, and provide a structure for choosing the best translation approach.

Baker (1992) defines translation strategies as specific techniques used to handle different text types. This method is applied to evaluate all instances where meaning is equivalent or non-equivalent between languages. She also argued that translation challenges occur when the source language lacks a corresponding feature in the target language. Additionally, these difficulties often appear when there is no matching word unit in the target language, when the grammatical rules of the two languages differ, or when the sender and receiver of the message have distinct cultural backgrounds.

Baker (1992, pp. 23-41) classifies different strategies into eight types for translators to handle translation problems. These techniques include: (1) Translation by a more general word (superordinate): Using a broader term when there is no direct equivalent in the target language. (2) Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word: Replacing a term with one that is less emotionally loaded or culturally marked. (3) Translation by a cultural substitution: Replacing a culture-specific item with one familiar to the target culture. (4) Translation using a loan word or a loan word plus an explanation: Borrowing the source term directly, sometimes with added explanation. (5) Translation by paraphrase using related words: Explaining the meaning with terms related to the original concept. (6) Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words: Conveying the meaning through terms not directly related but still understandable in the target context. (7) Translation by illustration: Explaining a difficult-to-translate word or concept by using a visual or illustrative description. (8) Translation by omission: Leaving out a word or phrase when it is impossible or unnecessary to translate.

The selection of Baker's (1992) translation strategies framework is particularly suitable for this study, as the source text because *Ngo Pa* is a literary work that contains many culture-specific terms and local vocabulary words that have no direct equivalent in the target language, which makes literal translation unsuitable. Baker's theory is specifically designed to address these problems of non-equivalence at the word level, offering a clear strategy to solve problems of non-equivalence, such as translation by a more general word, paraphrase, omission, or cultural substitution. The theory is also flexible and can be applied to single words, idioms, or even poetic expressions. Therefore, using Baker's framework, which focuses on handling culturally loaded words, is appropriate and useful for analyzing the translation of this literary work.

#### Definitions and Classifications of Figurative Language

Figurative language is a literary technique that employs words and phrases to convey meanings beyond their literal interpretation. It generates imagery, comparisons, and symbolic significance to enhance the depth and emotional impact of a literary work (Inpok, Webb & Nimmannit, 2019). Consequently, possessing a strong understanding of figurative language is crucial for literary analysis, as it is vital to both artistic beauty and its complex layers of meaning.

For translation scholars, figurative language holds significant importance. As highlighted by Hatim and Mason (1990) in their work *Discourse and the Translator*, translation involves not just the transfer of linguistic meaning but also the expression of the concealed "ideology" and "discourse" of the original text, which figurative language frequently showcases. Likewise, Nida (1964), a key figure in translation studies, presented the idea of Dynamic Equivalence, which aims to evoke the same effect on the target audience as what is experienced in the original. Consequently, translating figurative language should strive to elicit a corresponding emotional and intellectual reaction, rather than simply providing a literal

translation. From this perspective, figurative language serves as a vital instrument for captivating readers, as it can express meaning directly, indirectly, or even in opposition.

In a similar vein, Ricoeur (1975) argued that figurative language, even when using completely new words for a comparison, does not distort the original meaning. Instead, it “creates new meaning” and expresses a “metaphorical truth” in a different form.

Finally, the core quality of figurative language that makes it so compelling is its emphasis on form and arrangement. As Jakobson (1960) stated, figurative language makes readers pay attention to the “form” of the message rather than its literal meaning.

According to Knickerbocker and Renninger (1963), figurative language can be divided into several categories, including simile, metaphor, personification, symbolism, metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, irony, sarcasm, allegory, allusion, and symbol. However, this study will focus on seven types of figurative language based on the theory of Knickerbocker and Renninger (1963): simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, paradox, symbolism and synecdoche, as these types are the most frequently used and are easier to identify and categorize, which will contribute to a more accurate study. (1) Simile, A simile is the comparison of two things with a shared quality, explicitly using connective words such as “like” and “as.” This type of figurative language helps to create clear and easily understood images. Example: “Her tears streamed down her face like falling rain.” (2) Metaphor, A metaphor is a direct comparison that equates one thing with another without using connective words. It creates a strong connection between two ideas to give a deeper meaning. Example: “His words were daggers in her heart.” (3) Hyperbole, Hyperbole is an extreme exaggeration used for emphasis or effect. Its purpose is not to be taken literally but to create a powerful image in the reader’s mind. Example: “The sound of the music was deafening, so loud it could be heard across town.” (4) Personification, Personification is the act of giving human qualities or actions to non-human things, such as objects, animals, or ideas. It makes a description feel more alive and relatable. Example: “The wind whispered secrets through the trees.” (5) Paradox, A paradox is a statement that seems contradictory or impossible at first but contains a hidden truth. It forces the reader to think more deeply about the meaning. Example: “This is the beginning of the end.” (6) Symbolism, Symbolism is when an object, person, or place is used to represent a larger, abstract idea. It gives a simple image a more complex meaning. Example: A red rose is a symbol of love and passion. (7) Synecdoche, Think of synecdoche as a mental shortcut. It’s when you use a small, significant part of something to represent the whole thing, or sometimes the other way around. It lets you create a strong, simple image instead of using a long description. Example: “We need to hire more hands.” (“hands” in this context means a part that represents the whole person.)

The play, *Ngo Pa (The Romance of the Sakai)* *Ngo Pa (The Romance of the Sakai)*, a poetic drama written by His Majesty King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), is widely celebrated as a masterpiece of Thai literature from the late Rattanakosin period. The play is particularly distinguished by its unique subject matter, it is the first Thai literary work to portray the life and culture of the Sakai (Maniq) people, an indigenous group living in the forests of Southern Thailand. The King’s creation was inspired by real-life encounters with a Sakai named Kanang, who provided him with knowledge and stories about his people, allowing the King to blend factual information with his own creative narrative.

The play’s main story is a sad love tragedy. The central figures are Sompla, a strong and brave young man; Lumhap, a beautiful woman many men want; and Hanao, Lumhap’s fiancé who was chosen by her parents. The trouble starts when Sompla and Lumhap fall in

love, because their relationship goes against the tribe's traditions. This love triangle leads to a tragic fight and the death of the characters at the end of the story.

The work is structured into four distinct chapters, a formal division that guides the narrative's progression. According to the 12th edition of the book published in 1971, the play spans approximately 130 pages and includes a special section on Sakai's Koy language, adding to its anthropological value.

The narrative begins with two young friends from the Maniq (Sakai) forest tribe, Mai Phai and Kanang, whose adventure in the forest leads them to meet the handsome and brave Sompla. This encounter becomes the catalyst for the central romance, as Sompla falls deeply in love with Mai Phai's older sister, the beautiful Lamhap. A significant obstacle stands in their way, as Lamhap is already engaged to Hanao in a match arranged by her parents. The conflict reaches its peak when Sompla, driven by his love, helps Lamhap escape from her wedding to Hanao. This bold act inevitably leads to a fatal confrontation between the two men fighting for her affection, bringing the story to its tragic conclusion and sealing the fate of the love triangle between Sompla, Lamhap, and Hanao.

In this study, the selected part for analysis covers the section from scene "Kanang's journey to the forest" to the scene "Sompla kidnaps Lumhap". The data in this study are taken from several important events in the story, namely Kanang's journey to the forest (p.20), the description of Ngo Dol and Sompla (p.25), Sompla teaching Kanang and Mai Phai (p.26), Sompla entrusting flowers to Lumhap (p.31), Sompla searching for a cave (p.33), Lumhap's journey to the forest (p.37), Sompla helping Lumhap (p.38), Sompla confessing his love to Lumhap (p.39), Yoban preparing Lumhap's wedding with Hanao (p.47), the groom's procession (p.52), the wedding ceremony of Lumhap and Hanao (p.62), and Sompla kidnapping Lumhap (pp.72–78). The source for the division of episodes and scenes is *Ngo Pa* (*The Romance of the Sakai*), Thai novel edition, published by Nang Rak Warapakan (pen name: Jor Kobut) in 1971.

According to studies analyzing the use of figurative language in Thai literature, few scholars have conducted research on figurative language in literary works. Hayeesa-i and Maisarah (2023) conducted a study to explore the link between an author's storytelling and their writing style by analyzing the similes that appear in a novel. The researchers used a descriptive analytical approach to identify similes in sentences and phrases that include the connecting words 'like' or 'as'. The work was based on the theoretical models of Richards (1936) for analyzing similes and Fromilhague (1995) for semantic analysis, specifically examining the role of similes in the text. The findings revealed a total of 78 similes in the novel: 63 explicit similes (68%) and 25 implicit similes (32%). The study found that the frequent use of explicit similes makes the novel highly suitable for its target audience of children, as it is easy to read. This also helps make the writing engaging and relatable to readers outside of the target audience.

Similarly, Shepherd (2021) also investigated the translation of figurative language but focused exclusively on metaphors, unlike the study by Hayeesa-i and Maisarah (2023), which examined similes. Shepherd's research explored the use of metaphors and other figurative language to reflect the *life-journey of Khun Phaen* in the classic Thai-English literary work *The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen*, aiming to examine conceptual metaphors related to belief, emotion, transformation, and destination, as well as to identify the most frequently

used figurative language in the story. The findings revealed that similes were used 117 times (39.37%), metaphors 103 times (34.92%), hyperbole 37 times (12.54%), and personification 30 times (10.17%). The study concluded that similes were the most frequently used device because they make it possible to communicate a sense of an event, portray a character's traits, and convey emotions in a clear and engaging way.

In the part of translation study, Khongbumpen (2008) studied the application of Baker's taxonomy in a case study of an article in *Focus Bangkok*. The strategies employed are translation by omission, it is used 46 times (43.81%). Translation by a more general word is used 18 times (17.14%), translation using a loan word 13 times (12.38%), translation by cultural substitution nine times (8.57%), translation by a more neutral/less expressive word eight times (7.62%), translation by paraphrase using unrelated words six times (5.72%), and translation by paraphrase using related words five times (4.76%). The project concluded that the translator mainly focused on the target reader, often using omission (leaving words out) to simplify and streamline the text. This was a practical choice for a tourist magazine *Focus Bangkok* published by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, as the main goal is to give clear, direct, and accessible information to a wide range of international visitors.

Likewise, Duangloy (2006) studied the translation methods in Chapter Nineteen of Siburapha's novel *Behind the Painting*. Duangloy also used Baker's (1992) strategies, focusing on words that had no direct equivalent in the target language. The finding showed that the most common translation strategy in that chapter was omission (leaving words out) at 37.38%. Next was using more neutral or less emotional words (16.16%), paraphrasing with related words (15.15%), paraphrasing with unrelated words (14.14%), using a more general term (12.12%), and using loan words (5.05%).

In addition, Jarumetheechon (2003) examined the strategies used to translate the short story, *Dust Underfoot*, from Thai into English. Jarumetheechon also adopted on Baker's (1992) framework and calculated how often each strategy was used. The study found seven strategies: omission (28.7%), cultural substitution (23%), loan words plus explanations (16.1%), addition (13.8%), using more general words (10.3%), paraphrase using unrelated words (4.6%), and using more specific words (3.5%). The study also noted that the strategies of addition and using more specific words were not part of Baker's original list. The findings from these studies suggest that translators often used omission because Thai novels frequently use language that is redundant or repetitive. Furthermore, the translators' main goal was to find a way to translate that kept the meaning of the original text clear in the target language.

To summarize, this research originates from the researcher's interest in translation and the aim to present the cultural value of Southern Thai literature to a global audience. *Ngo Pa* was chosen as it reflects southern identity, including nature, traditions, and ways of life, and has an existing English translation for analysis. The study focuses on how the translator handles culture-specific terms in some contexts that cannot be translated through literal translation, with a particular focus on figurative language. Plus, the study will analysis the strategies used and present the results in percentages, ranking them from the most to least frequent.

## Method

This research employed a mixed-methods design combining quantitative and descriptive qualitative approaches. The quantitative component focused on identifying types of figurative language and translation strategies used in selected scenes and calculating their frequencies and percentages, while the qualitative analysis explained the reasons behind

the translator’s choice of strategies. The data were drawn from two versions of *Ngo Pa* (*The Romance of the Sakai*): the original Thai poetic drama composed by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), published in its 12th edition in 1971 by Nang Rak Warapakan (pen name: Jor Kobut), and its English translation by Malithat Promathatavedi, published in the fourth edition in 2002. The study focused on selected scenes ranging from *Kanang’s Journey to the Forest* to *Sompla Kidnaps Lumhap* (pp. 20–264 in the English version), as these sections represent the core of the play, including character introduction, emotional expression, narrative turning points, and the culmination of dramatic conflict, while also containing rich and culturally nuanced figurative language. Data collection began with a thorough reading of the bilingual text to gain an in-depth understanding and to identify chapters with abundant figurative expressions, followed by a systematic documentation of each figurative expression in the English translation alongside its corresponding Thai source text. Data analysis was grounded in two theoretical frameworks: Knickerbocker and Renninger’s (1963) classification of figurative language and Baker’s (1992) translation strategies. Figurative expressions were identified, categorized, and recorded according to seven types—simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, paradox, synecdoche, and symbolism—while translation strategies were analyzed using Baker’s eight categories, including translation by a more general word, a more neutral or less expressive word, cultural substitution, loan words with or without explanation, paraphrase using related or unrelated words, omission, and illustration. To address the research questions, the analysis was conducted in four steps: collecting and classifying figurative language, identifying the translation strategies applied, providing qualitative explanations of the translator’s choices and their effects, and calculating the frequencies and percentages of each type of figurative language and translation strategy to determine the most frequently used strategies.

## Results and Discussion

As the previous chapter explained the methodology of the study, this part demonstrates the result of the classification of figurative languages from selected scenes in both the Thai version and English version and applies the translation strategies used in figurative languages in the literature. In answer to the research questions, the results were as follows. Figurative languages in the selected chapter of “*Ngo Pa*” were categorized into seven types following the framework of Knickerbocker and Renninger (1963).

**Table 1: Translation in Figurative languages from the Thai version to the English version**

Types of Figurative Language	Thai version	English version
Simile	ล้วงเหล็กไฟในโกที่ออกออกติด้อย เหมือนหิ่งห้อยแวววันจับชดจ้อง (P.60)	Producing some flints from his loincloth pouch, Mai-Phai struck them together until sparks flew <u>Like fireflies, burning the tinder.</u> (P.61)
	มีกำลังวังชาองไว ขึ้นต้นไม้แกลวกล้ำเหมือนวานร (p.66)	Strong and agile, he was able To climb trees <u>as swiftly as monkeys.</u> (p.67)

	ลำสันสมชายทั้งกายกร เหมือนภมรหมุนคว้างกลางมรคา (p.66)	Muscular and sturdy, He <u>seemed like a swirling bumblebee</u> . (p.67)
	คิดพลงทางเทเวชแสนทวี ตั้งอัคคีจ้อใจไม่วายวัน (p.68)	As he kept thinking, his sorrow increased, <u>As if his heart were burning day after day</u> . (p.69)
	แข็งขี้ง ูรูปผายผึ่งทั้งกายา <u>องอาจดั่งไอยรา</u> (p.80)	Strong and dignified was brave Som-Phla Sturdy and muscular, manly in appearance. <u>He</u> <u>was as bold as an elephant in rut</u> , (p.81)
	ตองไห่สรวมลัมชมชาน แล้วร้องบึ้นเผ่นทยานดั่งลมพัด (p.80)	Hitting the tiger's shoulder this time It staggered and roared, and <u>as swift as the wind</u> (p.81)
	เสียงเหมือนน้ำเพชรรัตนจรัสกระจ่าง (p.114)	For her voice, <u>as clear as a sparkling diamond</u> . (p.115)
	อันบุรุษสตรีนี้เหมือนมด(p.144)	<u>Man and woman are just like ants</u> , (p.145)
	จะรักต่อกันไปนานปานทิวา(p.212)	Your love will <u>last as long as the birds</u> . (p.213)
	เหมือนสกุณาในไพรสาณห์สำราญริง(p.212)	<u>May you be happy like birds in the forest</u> ." (p.213)
Metaphor	มีธุระกึ่งวกลลโตเหวย(p.50)	<u>What wind has blown you here, pray tell me</u> . (p.51)
	ซึ่งเมตตามาช่วยชีวิตไว้ มิให้มอดม้วยเป็นผี (p.120)	that you have been so kind <u>to save me</u> <u>from the clutch of death</u> , I thank you (p.121)
Personification	ดวงจันทร์นั้นยังมีอาทิตยปอง เดินพบพ้องบางคราวเมื่อเช้าเย็น (p.96)	<u>The moon has the sun</u> as its counterpart, _ And sometimes they <u>meet</u> morning and evening. (p.97)
	เรไรหมู่กู่แมลงหมีมีสำเนียง (p.108)	<u>Cicadas and bumblebees buzzed in concert</u> (p.109)
	ข้าขอบใจมาลีที่เบิกบาน ส่วนอาวรีมิให้เรามาเก้อ (p.112)	To see you flowers; <u>thanks for blooming</u> , And not letting me come here in vain. (p.113)
Hyperbole	กุคิดถึงเพื่อนรักจะขาดใจ(p.50)	And I miss you so much that <u>my heart aches</u> . (p.51)
	สอดลูกบิลาลาผลาญ สंहารยับนับพันเออย (p.78)	While loading the darts <u>That killed thousands</u> . (p.79)
	เล็งหลิวแลสำคัญ แม่นลั่นลูกถูกทศคราเออย (p.78)	His aims were as steady as could be, And <u>hit bull's-eye every time he shot</u> . (p.79)
	รูปก็แกร่งแรงก็หนัก <u>ให้กอดารักจนเป็นบ้า</u> (p.86)	Possessing both handsomeness and strength May he attract girls to fall madly for him. (p.87)
	<u>จะปลดปลงเสียด้วยงามเพราะความรัก</u> (p.88)	<u>I will certainly die of my love for you</u> . (p.89)

Symbolism	อีกดอกสาปองงามตรู (p.92)	And also some beautiful <u>red flowers</u> , (p.93)
	เด็ดใบไม้ใถื่อนั้นมาห่อว่าแม่พอไม่ให้จะพาหนี (p.92)	<u>The flowers</u> were wrapped up in a leaf. Meaning he'd take her by stealth, if thwarted (p.93)

The result of Table 1 revealed that there are only five types of figurative were found among the 22 identified items. The most frequent figurative language types were simile, ten items (41.67%), followed by hyperbole five items (33.33%), personification three items (12.5%), and metaphor and symbolism two items (9.09% each). This showed that the literature *Ngo Pa* mainly uses figurative language to create vivid imagination for readers by comparing human elements, such as body, feelings, and actions, with natural elements, such as fire or animals, as well as techniques to personify natural things, giving them life, actions, or hidden meanings to capture readers' attention.

Overall, the use of these figurative expressions enhances the literary beauty of *Ngo Pa*, reflecting the author's skill in using language to evoke readers' emotions and imagination. Through consistent use of figurative devices, readers can visualize the scenes and perceive how various comparisons with elements of nature create a sense of unity throughout the story. This demonstrates that nature is deeply connected to the central theme of the work, appearing harmoniously in many parts of the narrative.

The following table 2 presents the results of classifying 22 instances of figurative language that were identified and categorized according to Baker's (1992) translation strategies. It shows how each type of figurative expression was classified based on the translation approaches applied in this study.

**Table 2: Translation Strategies in Figurative Language (Baker, 1992)**

Types of Strategies of Mona Baker (1992)	Types of Figurative Languages	Thai version of <i>Ngo Pa</i>	English version of <i>Ngo Pa</i>
1. Translation by a more general word	simile	แข็งจึง รูปสยดึ่งทั้งกาย องอาจตั้งโอชา (p.80)	Strong and dignified was brave Som-Phla Sturdy and muscular, manly in appearance. <u>He was as bold as an elephant in rut.</u> (p.81)
		จะรักต่อกันไปนานปานพิชา (p.212)	Your love will <u>last as long as the birds.</u> (p.213)
	symbolism	อีกดอกสาปองงามตรู (p.92)	"And also some <u>beautiful red flowers</u> " (p.93)
		เด็ดใบไม้ใถื่อนั้นมาห่อว่าแม่พอไม่ให้จะพาหนี (p.92)	<u>The flowers</u> were wrapped up in a leaf. Meaning he'd take her by stealth, if thwarted (p.93)
	personification	ดวงจันทร์นั้นยังมีอาทิตย์ป้อง เดินพบที่้องบางคราวเมื่อเช้าเย็น (p.96)	<u>The moon</u> has <u>the sun</u> as its counterpart, And sometimes they <u>meet</u> morning and evening. (p.97)

2. Translation by more neutral/ less expression word	hyperbole	คิดถึงเพื่อนรักจะขาดใจ (p.50)	And I miss you so much that <u>my heart aches</u> . (p.51)
3. Translation by cultural substitution	metaphor	ซึ่งมดตามช่วยชีวิตไว้ มิให้มอด ม้วยเป็นผี (p.120)	that you have been so kind <u>to save me from the clutch of death</u> , I thank you (p.121)
	simile	ลำสันสมชายทั้งกายกร เหมือนลมรหมุนคว้างกลางมรกต (p.66)	Muscular and sturdy, He seemed <u>like a swirling bumblebee</u> . (p.67)
	hyperbole	เสียงหิวแลสำคัญ แม่นลั่นลูกอุกทุกคราว (p.78)	His aims were as steady as could be, And <u>hit bull's-eye</u> every time he shot. (p.79)
	personification	เรไรหมู่แมลงหวี่มีสำเนียง เสนาะเพียงขับสามบรรสานพิณ (p.108)	<u>Cicadas and bumblebees buzzed in concert</u> , As if in accompaniment to a harp. (p.109)
4. Translation by paraphrase using related words	simile	สว่างเหล็กไฟในไฟที่ออกออกดีด้อย เหมือนหิ่งห้อยแวววับซุดจ้อง (P.60)	Producing some flints from his loincloth pouch, Mai-Phai struck them together until sparks flew <u>Like fireflies, burning the tinder</u> . (P.61)
	hyperbole	รูปก็แกร่งแรงก็หนัก ใ้ห้กอดรักจนเป็นบ้า (p.86)	Possessing both handsomeness and strength <u>May he attract girls to fall madly for him</u> . (p.87)
		จะปลดปลงเสียด้วยเพราะความรัก (p.87)	<u>I will certainly die</u> of my love for you. (p.88)
5. Translation by omission	personification	ข้าพอบใจมลิที่บิกบาน ส่วนอรวิมิให้ธามาถือ (p.112)	To see you <u>flowers; thanks for blooming</u> , And <u>not letting me come here in vain</u> . (p.113)
	simile	เหมือนสุกอบในไพรสาณที่สำราญรัง (p.212)	May you <u>be happy like birds in the forest</u> ." (p.213)

The results of Table 2 revealed that the translator employed just five translation strategies to translate the figurative language in 15 items, and the other seven items did not correspond to any of Baker's (1992) translation strategies. The most frequently used were translation by a more general word five instances (33.33%), followed by a cultural substitution four instances (26.67%), translation by paraphrase using related words three instances (20.00%), translation by omission, two instances (13.33%) and the least applied strategy was translation by more neutral/ less expression word one instance (6.67%).

And the translation strategies that did not appear in the figurative language in the selected scene were translated by paraphrase using unrelated words, translation by illustration and translation using a loan word or a loan word plus explanation. To provide a more detailed explanation of how the translator employed these four strategies, the researchers presented an analysis of each strategy and its effects on the translation. One or two representative examples from each category are selected to illustrate the application of the strategies below.

### 1. Translation by paraphrase using related words

Example

Type: Hyperbole

Original text: จะปลดปลงเสียด้วยงามเพราะความรัก (p.87)

English version: I will certainly die of my love for you. (p.88)

Analysis: In this passage, “จะปลดปลงเสียด้วยงามเพราะความรัก” was translated as “I will certainly die of my love for you.”. The figurative language used here is hyperbole, as the passage in the literal sense means “I will beautifully end my life because of love.”. It is a dramatic way of saying one would sacrifice themselves for love, and it already carries a strong emotion within the passage. The translator applied this translation strategy, the translated passage conveyed a simpler interpretation of the original text while keeping its core meaning.

### 2. Translation by a more general word

Example

Type: Symbolism

Original text: อึคคอกฮอปองงมทรู (p.92)

Translated passage: And also some beautiful red flowers, (p.93)

Analysis: In the example “อึคคอกฮอปองงมทรู” (p.92) translated as “And also some beautiful red flowers” (p.93), the translator employs a strategy from Baker’s (1992) framework. The culturally specific item “ฮอปอง” from Koi language, which refers to local red flowers in the southern part of Thailand and symbolizes the meaning of “love and passion”, is rendered through a more general word as “red flowers”. Because English does not have an exact word or meaning, the translator chose this method to keep the sense of symbolism and preserve both the cultural term and symbolic meaning, while avoiding confusion for readers who may not know the local culture.

### 3. Translation by a cultural substitution

Example

Type: Metaphor

Original text: เล็งหลิวแลล้าลัญ แม่นลันลुकถูกทุกคราเอช (p.78) English version: His aims were as steady as could be, And hit bull's-eye every time he shot. (p.79) Analysis: Meanwhile, the phrase “ลันลुकถูกทุกคราเอช” (p.78) is rendered as “hit bull’s-eye every time he shot” (p.79), making use of an English idiom that conveys accuracy in shooting. This choice exemplifies cultural substitution, since “bull’s-eye” is a culturally embedded metaphor more familiar to English readers than a literal rendering of “every shot hitting the target.” By replacing the local image of traditional dart-shooting with a Western idiom, the translator adapts the expression to fit the cultural context of the target language while preserving the metaphorical sense of precision and skill. This strategy helps maintain the naturalness and readability of the translation without losing the original meaning.

### 4. Translation by omission

Example 1

Type: Personification

Original text: ข้าขอบใจมาลิตีที่เบิกบาน ส่วนอริมีให้เรามาเก้อ (p.112) English version: To see you flowers; thanks for blooming. And not letting me come here in vain. (p.113)

Analysis: In this passage, “ข้าขอบใจมาลิตีที่เบิกบาน ส่วนอริมีให้เรามาเก้อ” was translated as “To see you flowers; thanks for blooming. And not letting me come here in vain”. The figurative language is personification. The emotional tone of the passage is kept after translating into English; the original passage expresses a tone of gratitude for the flowers that bloom for the character. It

gives life and a sense of good fortune, but it remains very little in the English version. The omission of “ล้วนอริ” means all are kind/generous in the Thai context. The translated passage skips this phrase, opting for a more direct idiom, “And not letting me come here in vain”. The omission is successful because it has a more natural and idiomatic flow in English while maintaining the core meaning and tone of the Thai passage, to produce a text that is more concise and legitimate.

#### Exampe 2

Type: Simile

Original text: เหมือนนกยูงในไพรสามซ้อสำราญรัง (p.212)

English version: “May you be happy like birds in the forest.” (p.213)

Analysis: In the example “เหมือนนกยูงในไพรสามซ้อสำราญรัง” (p.212), translated as “May you be happy like birds in the forest” (p.213), the translator applies Baker’s (1992) strategies of omission. They condensed the word ไพรสามซ้อ simply into “the forest”, to ensure naturalness. The phrase “ไพรสามซ้อสำราญรัง”, which evokes the image of birds joyfully nesting in the forest, is paraphrased into the more concise “in the forest,” thereby simplifying the scene to make it comprehensible. The translation maintains the core metaphor without burdening the readers with overly flowery detail, for the sake of clarity and conciseness.

#### 5. Translation by more neutral with less expression

##### Example

Type: Hyperbole

Original text: กุศลถึงเพื่อนรักจะขาดใจ (p.50)

English version: “And I miss you so much that my heart aches.” (p.51)

Analysis: In the example “กุศลถึงเพื่อนรักจะขาดใจ” (p.50), translated as “And I miss you so much that my heart aches” (p.51), the translator uses Baker’s (1992) strategy of translation by a more neutral or less expressive word. The original Thai phrase expresses deep emotional pain and intensity, while the English translation softens the tone by using the gentler expression “my heart aches.” This approach helps to convey the sentiment of longing in a way that sounds natural and emotionally appropriate in English, avoiding excessive dramatic tone.

### Discussion

In the analysis of the frequency of figurative language in the selected scenes, it was found that only five types of figurative language appeared, total 22 instances. The most frequently used type was simile, with ten instances (41.67%), followed by hyperbole, with five instances (33.33%), personification, with three instances (12.5%), and metaphor and symbolism, with two instances (9.09%). These findings are consistent with Shepherd (2020), who reported that simile, hyperbole, and personification were the most frequently encountered types in literary works as well. These types of figurative language are often used in literary works to produce clear mental pictures and stimulate the readers' feelings, particularly Simile, because Simile involves the explicit comparison of one thing to another using linking words (such as 'like' or 'as'), which is the best way to create mental images and simplify complex ideas.

In terms of the analysis on the translation strategies used, it appeared that five strategies were applied in the translation of *Ngo Pa*. The most frequently used strategy was translation by a more general word (33.33%), the second frequently used strategy was translation by cultural substitution (26.67%), the third was translation by paraphrase with related words (20.00%), the fourth was translation by omission (13.33%), and the least frequently used strategy was translation by a more neutral or less expressive word (6.67%).

The most frequently used translation by a more general word. First, using literal translation many times could make more detailed and complex information for the readers, such as the specific names of animals or flowers. By employing a more general term, the translator allows the reader to comprehend the text more easily without being burdened by excessive detail. Differently, the result of Jarumethechon (2003) also found that this strategy applied in translated short story *Dust Underfoot*, was the fifth frequently used in her study (10.30%) due to there being no exact word in target language as that in the source language.

The next strategies were translation by cultural substitution. In cases where a term in the source text had no direct equivalent in the target language, this translation strategy was selected by choosing expressions with similar characteristics so that the readers could easily understand and perceive emotions or feelings close to those in the original text. The findings here differ from previous studies, as Khongbumpen (2008) revealed that this strategy was the fourth most frequently used (8.57%), because the information of the year system in both source and target languages are different. Apart from Jarumethechon (2003) similarly found it to be the second most frequently used (23%)

The third translation strategy was paraphrasing with related words. This strategy was necessary because the source text contains many terms specific to Thai culture that might not be understood naturally by the target audience. As a result, there were several instances where both sentence structure and word choice were changed in the English version to help the reader more easily grasp the meaning of concepts from the source language. Although this strategy does not use the most direct translation for every word, the core understanding transmitted to the reader does not change, and it also allows the reader to understand the text more naturally. These findings contrast with those of Khongbumpen (2008), who found that the paraphrase using related words strategy was the least frequent at 4.76% due to the royal vocabularies in Thai are difficult to replace in target languages.

The fourth was translated by omission (9.52). Only two instances of this type were identified, involving the omission of short words, namely "รัง" (nest) and "ใจดี" (kind-hearted). It was observed that although these words were omitted, the surrounding context was retained and translated the remaining source text completely. Therefore, while minor elements were left out, the reader's overall perception of the image or meaning was not significantly altered. This finding is markedly different from the research of Khongbumpen (2008), which stated that translation by omission was the single most utilized strategy at 43.81%

Finally, the strategy found least often in this analysis was translation by a more neutral/less expression, which appeared in only one instance (6.67%). The translator chose milder wording to convey the original text's meaning without carrying over its emotional intensity or exaggeration. This strategy helps the English translation feel natural and culturally appropriate for the target readers. Although this strategy was rare, it shows the translator's careful effort to select words that fit naturally and are not out of place in the reader's culture, while still maintaining the core of the message. Similarly, in Khongbumpen's (2008) study, this strategy was also ranked as the third least frequently used.

In summary, the strategies of using more general words, cultural substitution and paraphrasing with related word were most frequent because they are highly relevant to the translation of literary works containing specialized or culturally specific language, such as the story of "*Ngo Pa*" These strategies prioritize conveying the essence of the source language in a way that is accessible and fluent in the target language, allowing the reader to have a natural reading experience even in a translated version. These results reveal both differences and some similarities compared to Khongbumpen's (2008) study, which also applied Baker's

framework in examining the translation of articles in *Focus Bangkok*. A comparison shows that the most frequently used strategies in their study were the opposite of those in ours; that is, the strategies that appeared most often in their research were the least frequently used in ours, while the strategies we used most frequently were the least commonly employed in theirs. However, three translation strategies were not found in the play among the 22 instances. These include: 1) translation by paraphrase using unrelated words 2) translation by illustration, and the last one was 3) translation using a loan word or a loan word plus explanation.

Based on the findings, it can be inferred why these four strategies were not used. First, the type of translation by paraphrasing using unrelated words was not employed because the translation mainly aimed to preserve and convey the source language, preserving the original Thai literary style and nuances of *Ngo Pa* rather than producing translations that would be easily understood by foreign readers through Western-style figurative language or cultural expressions. In addition, it is assumed that the interpreters of the text intended for foreign readers to understand figurative comparisons in the traditional Thai style, providing insights into Thai culture, lifestyle, and differing perspectives. Similarly, in Thongbumpen's (2008) study, this strategy was hardly used as well, appearing only as the second least frequently applied strategy at 5.72%. Second, translation by illustration was not applied. The original text of *Ngo Pa* is a literary work presented in verse (“กลอนบทละคร”) with strict metrical patterns and a limited number of words per line. Preserving the original verse structure is therefore essential. Illustration-based translation requires additional explanation to depict images and details, which is unsuitable for verse translation because it would exceed the ideal word limit, normally not more than three extra words per line. Likewise, Thongbumpen's (2008) study did not find any use of this strategy.

Finally, translation using a loan word or a loan word plus explanation was also avoided because transliteration alone could confuse readers. For example, terms such as “อ้ายกรรมา” (monkey) or อุจ (feces) would be incomprehensible if only transcripts, firmly causing confusion. Therefore, this strategy was often replaced with the more general word technique, which helped readers understand the meaning more easily while maintaining overall comprehension. In contrast, Thongbumpen's (2008) study found that this strategy was used as the third most frequently applied, at 12.38%.

To sum up, how a translator works depends on the type of writing. For the play *Ngo Pa*, the translator aimed to preserve the original feeling and style. To achieve this, they often used the top three most frequently applied strategies: using more general words (33.33%), cultural substitution (26.67%), and paraphrasing with related words (20.00%), which helped convey the text with the closest possible words, meanings, and emotions. On the other hand, a tourism article about the Vimanmek Mansion Museum needed to be clear and easy to understand. For this text, the top three strategies were translation by omission (43.81%), using more general words (17.14%), and loan words plus explanation (12.38%).

These findings indicate that the type of text significantly influences the translator's objectives. For creative writing, translators tend to preserve the original culture and style of the source text, while for informational writing, they prioritize clarity and readability. However, the strategy of using more general words was still among the most frequently applied in both types of texts.

In addition, from the analysis, it was found that several instances of the translation did not fully correspond with Baker's framework. The first point is the verse “มีพระกัณฑ์ใดเหว” was rendered as “What wind has blown you here, pray tell me”, which reflects idiomatic substitution. This

figurative and poetic expression cannot be clearly categorized within Baker's taxonomy but effectively creates coherence and appropriateness for the target readers. The second point is that, in six out of seven cases, the translator used literal translation, meaning they translated word-for-word to keep the original meaning intact and allow the reader to interpret the text themselves, just like the original poem. For instance, the verse "มีกำลังวังชาอ่องไว ขึ้นต้นไม้แก่วิ่งเหมือนวานร" (strong and agile, able to climb trees as swiftly as monkeys), เสียงเหมือนน้ำเพชรรัตนจรัสกระจ่าง (For her voice, as clear as a sparkling diamond) and the comparison "อันบุรุษสตรีนี้เหมือนมด" (man and woman are just like ants). Overall, the findings show that the translator used methods beyond Baker's list. Because the original Thai poem uses very descriptive language and older poetic words, the translator relied heavily on direct, literal translation. Additionally, since literary translation is an art form, the translator sometimes used Western idioms to give the foreign reader a similar enjoyable reading experience. Therefore, the results suggest that to effectively translate literature, we should study other strategies, especially the use of literal translation, which is key to preserving the original text's integrity for the reader.

## Conclusions

This study shows that the simile was the most frequently used figurative language in the play. The research question is answered by pointing out translator's conventional style of interpreting texts in order to enhance reading comprehension for the readers in the target language. Next, the translator applied each strategy in suitable contexts for the phrases to depict the Sakai community and their simple way of life. Our analysis from Malithat's translated texts, it was found that most of the translations emphasized conveying meaning clearly from the source language to the target language. The findings reveal that the most frequently used strategies were translation by a more general word and literal translation, the latter of which lies beyond Baker's (1992) theoretical framework. These results indicate that the translator aimed to allow readers to experience the culture and linguistic identity of the source text as closely as possible.

Furthermore, the study supports the idea that although Baker's (1992) theories present various strategies for handling different types of translation, they cannot fully account for all translation situations. Each type of translation possesses its own unique characteristics, and every writer has a distinct style of expression. Therefore, it is necessary to study multiple translation theories to gain a deeper understanding of how to produce accurate, appropriate, and effective translations, thereby improving the quality of translators' professional practice in the future.

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