

## Investigation on the influence of Transposition as a Translation Strategy in the Field of Online Journalism in Sri Lanka

Harsha Amarasinghe

*Department of Languages, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka*

**ABSTRACT:** Translation has become such a crucial part of journalism, and online journalism in particular has placed high value on translation given diversity of the readership. There are number of translation strategies utilized during the process of translation, and this research focuses on the translation strategy – transposition, and its influence on online journalism, as the prime objective. A case study was employed having recognized four news websites in Sri Lanka through convenience sampling and content analysis was used to analyze the data. The results indicated that the translation strategy – transposition is heavily applied in online journalism, but the implementation of transposition has resulted in a huge amount of errors in the translations including factual errors, grammatical errors as well as semantic errors.

**KEYWORDS:** *Translation, Translation Strategy, Transposition, Online Journalism, Sri Lanka*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Transposition is one of the translation strategies, which is central to Oblique Translation – one of the eight Translation Methodologies described by Peter Newmark (1988). However, most of the translators rarely recognize transposition as a method of translation in comparison to better-known strategies such as borrowings, adaptations, omissions or additions. Yet, transposition is frequently utilized in number of fields except for legal translation in which translators are encouraged to follow Direct Translation approaches. On the other hand, the concept of world becoming one global village has placed high value on translation as a form of communication among communities of different languages. In the modern era, online sources such as websites have become a leading resource in communication. Transposition is a feature that is often associated with online journalism as a lot of digital media organizations look to convert the text from one language to another preserving the semantic value of the text, but translators of this discipline, barely make any attempt to carry the grammatical characteristics and structures of the source language into the target language as producing a quick translation is also a significant aspect of present-day online journalism which demands translations to be completed in such a short period of time due to the overwhelming competition in the particular field. However, whether the transposition in online journalism is a success or not remains to be a problem, hence the prime objective of this research is to assess the impact of transposition in online journalism. This research will be significant to all the digital media organizations in Sri Lanka to review the outcome of the translations carried out in their respective websites.

### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Translation

Catford (1995) claims, that translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL). The language to be translated is called the source language (SL), and the language to be translated into is known as the target language (TL). The translator needs to have good knowledge of both the source and the target language, in addition to a high linguistic sensitivity as he should transmit the writer's intention, original thoughts and opinions in the translated version as precisely and faithfully as possible (Osman, 2017). Further, an Owji (2013) states, that translation is a complicated task, during which the meaning of the source-language text should be conveyed to the target-language readers. Further she has defined translation as encoding the meaning and form in the target language by means of the decoded meaning and form of the source language. Different theorists have stated various definitions for translation.

#### Translation Strategies

The term translation strategy is also known as translation principle, translation method or translation technique, but the ideal term is translation technique as they treat specific translation problem such as how to overcome lexical gap, how to translate metaphors, how to translate cultural terms, or how to deal with ambiguity. “Translation Strategies can be used to solve the problem of non- equivalence. Different kind of non-equivalence require different kind of strategies (Baker, 1992, p.20).“Strategies of translation involve the basic tasks of

choosing the foreign text to be translated and developing a method to translate it. Both of these tasks are determined by various factors: cultural, economic, and political.” Strategies work on foreign text and cease obstacles to cross cultural understanding divide strategies of translation into two large categories as Domesticating strategies and Foreignizing strategies. Mona Baker (1992, p. 26-42) has proposed eight strategies that can be used in the translation process to deal with the problem of non-equivalence at word level.

**Transposition**

An experimented translator uses various techniques in order to obtain great results. There are plenty of methods that make the text sound better in the target language. One of the most important translation techniques is called transposition. The term might seem familiar, as it is used in many fields, but this article will explain the role of transposition in translation. Transposition is the first technique or step towards oblique translation. Oblique translation is another term for free translation where the translator exercises his/her freedom to attain equivalence. It operates at the grammatical level and it consists of the replacement of a word class by another word class without changing the meaning. From a stylistic view point, the transposed expression does not have the same value, but the meaning is the same. Transposed expressions are usually more literary in character. What is the most important is to choose the form that best fits the context (Grassilli, 2016).

**Online Journalism**

The term ‘online journalism’ means publishing journalistic content and news stories—in all their sorts—on the Internet. Oxford Dictionary of Journalism by Harcup specifies that ‘online journalism’ includes various kinds of news that are disseminated via websites, social media, RSS channels, e-mails, newsletters and other forms of online communication. Online journalism, being in sharp contrast with the more traditional ways of journalistic information dissemination related to the press, allows the producers to present news in a non-linear way; the recipients are able to choose when and how they want to receive the news. (Višňovský and Radošínská, 2017)

**III. METHODOLOGY**

The research focuses on assessing transposition as a translation strategy in the field of online journalism in Sri Lanka and hence it was decided that the qualitative approaches would be ideal to conduct the study. Translations from four news websites – News First, Lanka News Web, Ada Derana and News.lk were selected in line with convenience sampling which is a form of non-probability sampling. Since translations of news items are not available in certain news websites, convenience sampling was utilized to select the sample. A case study was employed to evaluate the effectiveness of transposition as a translation strategy in this discipline as four translations from each selected news website were observed and then content analysis method was put in place to analyze data. News websites have traditionally been carrying up-to-the-point news items which are small in quantity and occasionally restricted to one or two sentences, and the selected sentences were analyzed with content analysis.

**IV. RESULTS**

The analysis depicted how the transposition has influenced the selected translations observed in the News First, Ada Derana, Lanka News Web and News.lk websites as mentioned below.

News Website	News First
SL Text	The Navy, on Tuesday, seized a haul of narcotics valued at Rs 12 billion, 463 nautical miles off the Southern coast of Sri Lanka.
Translation	ද්‍රව්‍යල්මලයන දස දහසකට අධිකවන කම්කරුයන් මිනිස් තරගයක් ගැඹුරු මුහුදකේළ වැටීමකදී සමය ගත්බව නිවකනුමුව පවසයි

**Table 1: Translation observed in News First Website**

This translation from English to Sinhala demonstrated in Table 1, clearly indicates how the transposition is associated with news websites as grammatical and structural changes have been applied to the target language text, but in the process, the translator has made considerable mistakes as ‘12 billion’ has been translated as ‘මිලියන දස දහසකට’ while the word ‘seized’ has been translated as ‘සමය ගත්’ and in addition to that certain parts of the source text such as ‘on Tuesday’ and ‘Southern coast’ have also been omitted. Transposition has also seen the use of certain other translation strategies in the target language text in order to carry the meaning of source language text as the phrase ‘463 nautical miles’ is translated to a closest equivalence ‘ගැඹුරු මුහුදේ’ and the addition of ‘කළ වැටීමකදී’ in the target language are fine examples of this.

News Website	Ada Derana
SL Text	The Tokyo Olympics, which were postponed due to the global corona virus pandemic, will be held from July 23 to Aug. 8 in 2021, the games’ organizing committee said Monday.
Translation	ලොවුපුර පැතිර යන කවිඩ් 19 වර්ෂය පැහැදිලිවේ කල්දීමෙන් 2020 වර්ෂයේ ලිමිට් කළ ලෙ නුවන පවත්වන

දැනට පිළිබඳ රිසෝල්ටුවලයාගේ නව දේශය කළයේ ඒ අනුව ටිකේසයේ ජීවිතයක් දළලෙකු වන අයුරින් වන්නේ 2021 වසරේදීය
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**Table 2: Translation observed in Ada Derana Website**

Table 2 also depicts the complete change in terms of structure in the target language text as a result of transposition. The source language text contains one sentence, but the translation is consisted of two sentences. The translator has then used the term ‘ඒ අනුව’ in order to make a connection between the two sentences. The idea of ‘රිසෝල්’ being used to translate ‘Monday’ and ‘නව දේශය කළයේ’ as the translation of ‘said’ is justifiable. The use of ‘කමිනි 19’ as a borrowing which is a translation technique often linked to online journalism was also observed within the translation. However, the translator has completely missed ‘July 23 to Aug. 8’ from source text which is a major error and completely against the transposition concepts that demand key factors to be translated despite grammatical and structural changes.

News Website	Lanka News Web
SL Text	Spain has become the third country to confirm more cases of coronavirus than China - as its number of deaths rose by 812 in a day to reach a total of 7,340.
Translation	අද දැනට ජීර් න වන කමිනි 19 මරණ 812 ක් සමග සිප්පයේ ජීවිතය අඩුවී යමින් තිබේ වසර ගණනාවකට බිලිව රටක් ලෙස ලකේසියාගේ ලේකුණ වන්නේ

**Table 3: Translation observed in Lanka Web News Website**

Table 3 also shows how transposition has been used heavily when translating text from the source language to the target language, but in doing so the translator has made some major errors in this translation. To begin with the word ‘third’ from the source language text has completely been dropped and without the particular word, the translation doesn’t make sense, and it has only been worsen as the translator has also missed total number of cases ‘7,340.’ ‘අද දැනට ජීර් න වන කමිනි 19 මරණ 812 ක් සමග සිප්පයේ ජීවිතය අඩුවී යමින්’ is an inaccurate representation of facts as Spain has gone past China only in terms of confirmed cases, and not by number of deaths as per the source text. Meanwhile, ‘බිලිව රටක් ලෙස ලකේසියාගේ ලේකුණ වන්නේ’ doesn’t really represent the source language text ‘Spain has become the third country to confirm more cases.’

News Website	News.lk
SL Text	The Police had apprehended the main suspect who allegedly organized the suicide bomb attack on the Zion Church in Batticaloa on Easter Sunday in 2019, said the Police Media Spokesperson SP Jaliya Senaratne during a special press conference held at the Government Information Department today (29).
Translation	දියුණු දැවිලි ප්‍රධාන මරාගෙන මරණයට පත්වී ඒ ජන රජයේ ලෙස බලවේකයක් මෙහෙයවී ඇති නිසා කනුරු අපරධ පිරික්සීමට පොලීසිය විසින් අත්අඩංගුවට ගෙන ඇති බව පලිභූමි මධ්‍යස්ථාන කොමසාරිස් ජනරාල් ජලියා සෙනරත් රත්න මහතා පවසයි. පලිභූමි මධ්‍යස්ථාන කොමසාරිස් ජනරාල් ජලියා සෙනරත් රත්න මහතා විසින් රිසෝල් (29) රජයේ මාධ්‍ය විකේන්ද්‍රයේ විශේෂ මධ්‍යම වාර්තාවක් මගින් විකේන්ද්‍රයේ

**Table 4: Translation observed in News.lk Website**

Table 4 depicts how the transposition has been used in the translation as it contains two sentences in comparison to the only one sentence in the source text. The two sentences also meant that ‘පලිභූමි මධ්‍යස්ථාන කොමසාරිස් ජනරාල් ජලියා සෙනරත් රත්න මහතා’ needed to be mentioned twice within one paragraph which is against the journalistic principles. The term ‘දියුණු’ is a borrowing which is a translation technique, but in the process of translation terms ‘allegedly’ and ‘Easter Sunday’ have been omitted which is a big mistake because ‘මරාගෙන මරණයට පත්වී ජන රජයේ ලෙස බලවේකයක් මෙහෙයවී ඇති නිසා කනුරු’ does not really reveal the facts accurately as the source language text clearly reads ‘allegedly organized the suicide bomb attack,’ so Sinhala translation is confusing because the alleged main suspect could have organized the whole operation but as per Sinhala translation, the suspect has only handled the bomber.

**V. DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of analysis, it is crystal clear that the transposition has been used predominately in the field of online journalism. However, in changing the source language text grammatically and structurally, the translators have made significant errors which are unacceptable as hundreds and thousands of readers rely on these websites in the modern era. Since websites are easy to access in comparison to newspapers, many readers consider news websites as one of their main sources of information, hence such mistranslations certainly doesn't help the cause.

The study also shows that transposition though is a translation technique, the translator needs to be very careful when implementing concepts of transposition because as per the translation indicated in Table 1, Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 translators have forgotten or dropped key facts of the translation which has led to incomplete translations.

Not only facts, but as shown in Table 1, incorrect figures have also been observed in the translations; most notably translating 12 billion as '፲፪ ሚሊዮን ዶላር' which has to be caused by complete lapse of concentration by the translator.

The whole idea of transposition is preserving the meaning of the source text amid all the changes, but as depicted in Table 3, the translator has failed to carry the meaning from source language to target language which is a major failure.

Overall, this study has provided sufficient evidences which demonstrate that transposition is a technique that is definitely associated with online journalism, but it also demands translator to be accurate with facts, however as per the results, the translators seem to have failed in that particular aspect.

## VI. CONCLUSION

According to the Table 1 there was a clear mistake in figures which makes it a poor translation, but it appears to be a human error rather than anything else and therefore one recommendation is to be very focused during the course of translation especially when the technique transposition is implemented.

Each translation also indicated how translators have forgotten or dropped key facts within the process of translation and it is actually understandable because when the technique transposition is applied the translator looks to change the source text grammatically and structurally in order to present the meaning in the target language. So, one simple recommendation is always to stick to the 'five Ws' (John Kroll) in journalism. In addition to that the translator could also underline the key facts in the source text in order to ensure it is being carried in the translation.

Overall, the research has provided evidences to suggest that transposition is frequently utilized in online journalism, but it has led to series of mistakes as indicated throughout the Results and Discussion, therefore avoiding transposition could technically reduce the number of mistakes as well.

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