Panel 25 : Culture and Language

Three Regions, One Indigenous Language, Two Vitality Assessments:
The Higaonon In Mindanao

Venus R. Parmisana

Asst Prof IV
Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Mindanao (MSU-IIT), Philippines
E-mail: vparmisana@gmail.com

Abstract

The increasing rate of the world's indigenous languages becoming endangered or losing chances to survive over the past decades has caused concerns from researchers and ethnolinguists. The present study aims to look at predictors to reversing language endangerment. Anchored upon ethnolinguistic vitality theory, this on-going study assesses vitality of *Higaonon*, an under-documented indigenous language in Mindanao, Philippines. The sociolinguistic data will be collected through a modified and researcher-made survey questionnaire that key informants in three regions- Lanao del Norte, Misamis Oriental and Agusan del Norte- believed to have the least number of Higaonons, will answer objectively and subjectively. To be chosen by stratified-probability sampling, the *Higaonon* informants will be grouped as the *In*-group (indigenous community residents; *n*=120) and the *Out*-group (urban residents; *n*=40), who will be determined by age, gender, education and place of residence. The study employs the experimental combination of two typologies of language vitality assessment using Giles, Bourhis and Taylor's (1977) ethnolinguistic vitality framework and the UNESCO's 9-Vitality Criteria. Objective and subjective assessments rest on the hypothesis that just equally important as the In-group's subjective vitality assessment is their own objective assessment, both may result to speakers' perceived language vitality, language beliefs and attitudes, and the extent of language use. Using quantitative and qualitative methods in data analysis, the results will reveal predominant predictors of vitality (high, medium, low) that may correlate with either language survivability or language shift. Recommendations shall be carved for language maintenance or revitalization efforts and the pursuit of linguistic diversity.

Keywords: Language Vitality Assessment, Higaonon Indigenous Language, Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory, UNESCO Vitality and Endangerment Assessment, Language Shift and Maintenance, Sociolinguistics

Verse translation of Sunthon Phu's *Nirat Phra Bat* in English

Gritiya Rattanakantadilok

Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand
E-mail: gritiya.r@psu.ac.th

Abstract

The original text, *Nirat Phra Bat*, belongs to a literary genre *klon nirat* in Thai, penned by a renowned poet, Sunthon Phu (1807). This study analyses the translation that is rendered into an English verse form entitled *Journey to Phra Buddhabaat* by Sawanee (2015). Looking beyond Thai and English poetic traditions, the translator sought a form that allowed the semantic material to take its own unique poetic shape as the translation developed. The systematic translation pattern, based on regularities identified in the translation, is established. Because of the differences in phonological rules, morphological patterns and syntactic rules between Thai and English, the translator found what was possible in the target language and some meanings were sacrificed in her verse translation.

Keywords: Literary translation, poetry translation, verse translation

| Proceedings of 12th International Conference on Humanities & Social Sciences 2016 (IC-HUSO 2016)
14-15 November 2016, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University, Thailand

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1. Introduction

In the opinion of the renowned linguist William Gedney (1997, p. 17):

The quality of much of this work [the corpus of poetry composed in traditional verse forms in Standard Thai] is superb, often entrancing for its elegance, grace, and vitality. One cannot help feeling that this body of traditional Thai poetry is among the finest artistic creations in the history of mankind.

However, various characteristics of traditional Thai poetry, such as conventional poetic synonyms, puns, and alliteration, have made translation into English very difficult. According to Gedney (ibid., pp. 19-20), the few translations of Thai poetry that exist are in general disappointing because they scarcely give a glimmer of the beauty and high craftsmanship of the originals and he concludes that traditional Thai poetry may be simply untranslatable.

Jakobson's conclusion (1959/2012, p. 131) that "poetry by definition is untranslatable" contrasts sharply with translation practice; the untranslatable has been forever translated. The translatability of poetry is discussed by linguists and many translation theorists because poetry represents writing in which content and form are inseparably linked. The translators who aim to translate poems as poems produce translations that aim to transfer both content and form.

Bassnett (1998, p. 74) asserts that poetry is not what is lost in translation, it is what we gain through translation and translators. Translating Thai poetry into English requires knowledge of the Thai and English languages, literatures and cultures. *Nirat Phra Bat* is a complex and culturally involved text and researching into the translation by contrastive analysis of the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) in terms of linguistic and stylistic features will reveal poetic effects of meaning and form or the lack thereof.

At the age of twenty-two, Sunthon Phu penned *Nirat Phra Bat* in late 1807 (Chonlada, 1986, p. 50). As a royal page, he followed Prince Pathommawong to Phra Phutthabat Temple in Saraburi Province after having a row with his wife, Jan, spent four nights and returned to Bangkok (ibid.). After his return, he started composing *Nirat Phra Bat* while he lived alone because he and his wife did not yet make up (ibid.). Chonlada (ibid.) surmises that Sunthon Phu's drinking habit and his womanising caused the marital problem. In spite of that, they stayed together and in 1820 he and Jan had a child (ibid., p. 51). However, a year later Sunthon Phu and Jan parted ways after he met another woman, Nim (ibid., p. 53). Many years later Jan divorced him and remarried (ibid.). Chonlada (ibid., pp. 68-69)concludes that he loved Jan more than any wives of his because after she left him, Sunthon Phu still pines for her in many *nirat* poems, such as *Nirat Suphan* and *Nirat Phra Prathom*. In *Nirat Phra Bat*, Jan is the (sole) object of his affection. He also expresses the fear that she might leave him. He narrated his journey as a royal page, saying that he rowed the boat himself during the journey to Phra Phutthabat Temple (ibid., p. 50). After traveling by river, he disembarked and traveled further by an elephant until he arrived at the destination (ibid.). He returned with the royal barge and the journey took only one day and a half (ibid.). According to this *nirat* poem, before he traveled to Phra Phutthabat Temple, Sunthon Phu and Jan lived apart for about a month because Jan was angry at him.

Nirat Mueang Klang is the first *nirat* poem Sunthon Phu penned (Damrong, 1922/1986, p. 8). Chan surmises that his first *nirat* poem was composed in 1807 (ibid.). Damrong believes that Sunthon Phu penned his first two *nirat* poems, *Nirat Mueang Klang* and *Nirat Phra Bat* during the reign of King Rama I (ibid., p. 12). Damrong concludes that Sunthorn Phu composed nine *nirat* poems altogether, the first two in the same year (1807) (ibid., p. 44). All *nirat* poems were completed within one *samut thai*[1] manuscript book (ibid.). Damrong lauds Sunthon Phu for his excellent poetic skills in penning poems in *klon suphap* (กลอนสุภาพ) or *klon paet* (กลอนแปด) metre (ibid., p. 48).

The literary genre 'nirat', referring to poems composed during long journeys (Manas, 1972, p. 138), was popularised by Sunthon Phu during the reign of King Rama III (ibid., pp. 152-157). Manas (ibid., p. 151) claims that the greatest innovator of the literary genre *klon nirat* (กลอนนิราศ) is Sunthon Phu. He was born on 26 June 1786 during the reign of King Rama I and passed away during the reign of King Rama IV in 1855 (Jittaphat, 1999, pp. 13-14). Sunthon Phu composed almost all his *nirat* poems in *klon* (กลอน) verse form, rather than employing *khlong* (โคลง) verse form like *nirat* poems composed during the Ayutthaya era (Manas, 1972, p. 162). The essential feature of a *nirat* poem is the theme of love-longing and separation (ibid., p. 157). The poet finds means to express his feelings and to proclaim his melancholic desire for love (ibid.). A technique of 'pun' and 'transfer' is employed to associate a place name he chooses to mention in his itinerary with his beloved object (ibid.). Flora and fauna are also used in the same way (ibid.). It should be noted that possessive pronoun 'his' is intentionally used because *nirat* poems were all penned by male poets.

The complete translations of works composed in traditional Thai poetry can hardly be found. Apart from *The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen* by Baker and Pasuk (2010/2012), which is mainly rendered into prose, verse translations[2] of Thai poems into English were recently produced by Sawanee Nivasabutr. She chose to translate four narrative poems by Sunthon Phu. Her translations are bilingual editions in which one Thai stanza is laid out on one side and the translation on another. *Journey to Petchburi* (2013), *Journey to Muang Klaeng* (2015) and *Journey to Phra Buddhabaat* (2015) were translated into English verse. The last poetic work in the series by the same translator to be published is *Nirat Phukhaothong* (Aphirak, 2015, p. 5). Sawanee, the translator of these *nirat* poems, attempted to preserve Sunthon Phu's literary style by rendering it in "simple, rhymed, and rhythmic English verse" (ibid.). Each poem is about 240 stanzas long. This study will examine the translation of *Nirat Phra Bat* seeing as the translator had previously published two translations of *nirat* poems, assuming that Sawanee has established a translation pattern for *klon nirat* genre.

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[1] *Samut thai* (สมุดไทย) are made from a long sheet of black or white paper folded into around thirty strips, each around 8 x 22 centimetres, written on both sides.
[2] Other translations of Sunthon Phu's *nirat* poems include English translations of *Nirat Mueang Klang* by Prem Chaya published in 1984 and *Nirat Phra Prathom* by Montri Umavijani published in 1986.

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2. Method

The translation *Journey to Phra Buddhabaat* (2015), the target text (TT), will be compared manually with its source text (ST), *Nirat Phra Bat* (1807), for contrastive analysis. The main tool is the 'formal matrix', one of the five textual matrices proposed by Hervey and Higgins (2002) and Holmes's (1988) forms of verse translation.

The most relevant matrix for the analysis of *Nirat Phra Bat* is the formal matrix at phonic/graphic level. Hervey and Higgins borrow some fundamental notions from linguistics, hierarchically ordered series of six levels of textual variables, in assessing formal properties of texts. They propose six layers of textual variables: (i) phonic/graphic level, (ii) prosodic level, (iii) grammatical level, (iv) sentential level, (v) discourse level, and (vi) intertextual level (Hervey and Higgins, 2002, p. 5). A bottom-up approach, from phonic details to intertextual matters, is recommended and the text should be scanned level by level to see what textual variables of the ST are absent from the TT and vice versa (ibid., p. 76).

Looking at a text on the phonic/graphic level of textual variables means to consider it as a sequence of sound-segments or phonemes and a sequence of letters or graphemes (ibid., p. 77). The repetition of sounds is classified for the analysis at this level into alliteration and assonance (ibid., p. 78). Alliteration, assonance, and rhyme are exploited more in the less purely factual text, and the most obvious example is poetry (ibid.). The authors stress that marked phonic features have thematic and expressive functions, especially sound-symbolism, which utilises phonic echoes and affinities (ibid., pp. 78-79). They remark that to create textual effects the written texts also depend to some extent on their visual layout (ibid., p. 82). Hervey and Higgins elaborate on the graphic level much less than the phonic level because they believe that "the *shapes* are less commonly a source of textual effects" (ibid.). In carrying out textual analysis, the ST and the TT will be examined at both phonic level and graphic level.

Apart from Hervey and Higgins's formal matrix, Holmes's work on poetry translation will complement the analysis. Holmes (1988, pp. 23-24) asserts that verse translation, "interpretative in intent", "determinate in length and subject matter", makes use of verse as its medium and "aspires to be a poem in its own right", thereby creating a 'metapoem'. The verse form to be used has to be made at an early stage because it will determine the nature and sequence of later decisions (ibid., p. 25).

To retain poetic effects, Sawanee translated the poem into a verse form. The chosen verse form will be described by the terms Holmes introduces. Holmes (1988) proposes four traditional approaches to rendering a poem into a metapoem. The four forms are a mimetic form, an analogical form, an organic form and an extraneous form. The differences between these four forms will be explained when the results are presented.

The formal matrix informs us that the ST and the TT should be examined both phonically and graphically. Holmes's approaches are chosen because they are the most helpful and the most relevant categorisation of poetry translation into different verse forms from Thai into English.

The TT will be categorised according to the four approaches to help identify the translation pattern(s).

3. Results

Scanning the ST phonically, it is evident that *klon paet* is the main metre used in *Nirat Phra Bat*. The word *paet* means eight, which is the desirable number of syllables in each hemistich. *Klon paet* can be translated as 'eight-syllabled poem'. The *klon* forms are identified by the number of syllables in each hemistich, not the number of syllables in each line. There are four *wak* (วรรค; hemistich) forming one *bot* or *kha-na* (บท; คณะ; stanza) (Nim, 2000, p. 359). Thai poets are considered skilled only when all their lines conform exactly to the prescribed metrical pattern. It is, therefore, not difficult to decide what the metre of the Thai poem is because of minimal variability and irregularity.

Syllable count and external rhymes, rhymes between hemistichs, provide the basis for a reader's recognition of a particular metre. External rhyme is a prominent feature of style because it forms a significant relationship with other features of style, such as internal rhyme and alliteration. External rhyme in *klon paet* is a metrical medium of some rigidity and inflexibility through which Thai poetry works.

At graphic level, it should be pointed out that traditionally *klon paet* is presented in a columnar format. The standardised format of *klon paet* is as follows: two hemistichs are always presented in one line and are always separated at the distance in which the following line has to follow. The result is that two separate columns are read from left to right. However, in Sawanee's bilingual edition, one hemistich is laid out and the line breaks, similar to the format of blank verse in English.

The ST shape is not a source of textual effects. It does not make use of the visual effects on the graphic level. It does not use different typefaces or different font sizes. To the Thai readers, the *klon paet* poems that are not in the standard columnar format may be considered oddities. On the other hand, the format of the TT is familiar to the English readership, in that the line break occurs after each hemistich, like blank verse form. Hervey and Higgins (2002, p. 77) point out that readers take little notice of the shapes of what they read, paying attention primarily to the message of the utterance, for this reason, the shapes are usually irrelevant to the message. I argue that the shape of the ST, which is laid out on the opposite page of the TT, influences the way the TT reader would perceive Thai poetic forms. The shape may not be directly relevant to the message but purely on the visual level, the layout of the ST, which looks similar to the layout of English poetry can convince the TT reader to a certain extent that equivalence has been achieved. If the ST (in the translation) would have been laid out in a columnar format, as *klon paet* poems traditionally and usually are, the TT reader would see the difference in the layout between Thai poetry and English poetry and they would instantly detect a shift in poetic form.

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After the translation is analysed, it can be concluded that the TT is not in a mimetic form, an analogical form, or an extraneous form. If the translator uses the ST form *klon paet* and its governing metre to translate the poem, the TT will then be cast into a mimetic form. If the translator looks to the function of the original poem's form within its poetic tradition, then seeks a form that fills a parallel function within the poetic tradition of the target language (Holmes, 1988, p. 28), s/he translates the poem in an analogical form. Holmes points out that some translators believe that the verse appropriate to the epic in English is blank verse (ibid.). To follow this approach, if the *nirat* genre is equated with a form of English narrative poetry, for instance an epic, then the *nirat* poem should be translated into English blank verse. Sawanee did not employ an existing form in English in translating *Nirat Phra Bat*. Neither did she translate "the poem into a form that is not implicit in either the form or the content of the original" (ibid., p. 26), which Holmes calls an 'extraneous form' or a 'deviant form' since it does not derive from the original poem at all (ibid., p 27). However, in some cases, the extraneous form is an "older collateral of the organic form" in which the translator minimally conforms to the formal requirements of his or her poetic culture but still has the freedom to transfer the meaning of the poem (ibid., p. 28). Even though this form gives the translator more creative freedom to transfer the meaning of the poem than the other three, it is, however, not discussed by Holmes at length.

The form that Sawanee chose is an organic form. The translator who chooses this form starts from the semantic material by allowing it to take its own unique poetic shape as the translation develops (ibid., p. 27). It is a new intrinsic form that is allowed to develop from the inward workings of the text itself (ibid., p. 28). Mimetic and analogical forms are form-derivative forms while organic form is a content-derivative form (ibid., p. 27). The distinguishing feature of this form is that the translator does not try to fit the content into existing forms. In this case, the translator looked beyond *klon paet* and blank verse to render the poem and the end result is a new form that Sawanee created.

The TT is mostly made up of couplet-rhymed quatrains. The rhyme-scheme is aabb. A stanza from the translation is as follows:

I want to jump off the elephant <u>instantly</u>,

But afraid they would call me a <u>sissy</u>.

I was lightheaded with blurry <u>eyes</u>,

Putting a hook on my lap, I rode <u>by</u>. (Sawanee, 2015, p. 81)

Fussell (1979, p. 110) affirms that the essential element of coherence in a stanza is end-rhyme, in spite of the fact that lines can be organised into stanzas without it. End-rhyme has developed into a convention because the part that is the most emphatic is the end of the poetic line (ibid., p. 6). Even if the end of the line offers the reader no rhyme, the end of the line constitutes an accumulation of forces (ibid., p. 167).

The end rhymes used in the TT are not always full rhymes, which occur when two or more words or phrases share the same last stressed vowel and all following sounds (Lennard, 2005, p. 191). The end-rhyme 'instantly/sissy' is a half rhyme, where either the stressed vowel or following sounds differ (ibid.).

After analysing the TT phonically and graphically, it can be said that the translator attempted to recreate a poem using line-breaks and recurrent sounds that are somewhat familiar to the TT readership. Alongside the TT's layout, the ST is laid out according to the poetic convention in English. Oddities of the ST on the visual level can be eradicated to a certain extent in the translation while oddities of the TT, such as the use of many transliterated forms of place and plant names, stand out to remind the reader of the cultural and linguistic gaps between the source and target languages.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The TT reveals a systematic translation pattern. Sawanee, the translator, attempts to use one rhyme scheme (couplet-rhymed quatrains, aabb) in her rendering of the whole *nirat* poem. When this pattern becomes an option that a translator in a given socio-historical context selects on a regular basis, a translation norm is formulated. Only after all translations of *nirat* poems into English are investigated, the claim that a translation norm is formulated can be made.

It should be noted that shifts (linguistic changes that occur in translation), mostly on a microstructural level, are discernible in Sawanee's translation. The shifts detected on a microstructural level can be found in words, clauses and sentences and the shifts on a macrostructural level can be detected in the changes in characters, events, time and other meaningful components. The microstructural shifts deriving from decision-making processes of the translator will be classified as generalisation.

The words used in the TTs are generalised by replacing a hyponym with a hypernym as can be seen in the following hemistichs:

Some folded and packed their stuff.

Other argued and vied for sappacaps. (Sawanee, 2015, p. 75).

The ST is 'bang muan suea mat krasop hop sabiang' (บ้างม้วนเสื่อมัดกระสอบหอบเสบียง). The ST specifies each item: *suea* means 'mat', *krasop* means 'sack', and *sabiang* mean 'provisions', that the royal pages who accompany the prince to Phraphutthabat Temple have to pack up. The hypernym 'stuff' is used to also create a rhyme with the transliterated word 'sappacaps'. This Thai word is integrated into the target language phonologically and morphologically through the conversion of the source language alphabets into the target language alphabets. When the transliterated form for this word is used without being italicised, it then has to be complemented by paratextual elements for the foreign-derived word to make some sense, to invoke a mental picture in the mind of the TT readership if no illustration is provided. When the name of a foreign item is transliterated, the

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use of paratext seems indispensable. The translator explains that 'sappacap' is 'a seat or platform for one or more persons, commonly with a railing, placed on the back of an elephant.' (ibid., p. 75). To retain foreignness in the TT, paratext in the form of footnoting has to be employed.

Another example is the translation of the following hemistichs:

The Mondop columns decorated with bright-color glasses,

Crowned with moldings in the shape of lotuses, (ibid., p. 113)

The ST is 'krajang sam plai sao pen bua ngai' (กระจังแซมปลายเสาเป็นบัวหงาย). The word 'bua' means 'lotus' and the word 'ngai' means 'face up'. The translator decided to not translate the word 'ngai', assuming that the TT readership would be able to use his/her imagination to conjure an image of upward lotuses, rather than downward lotuses. By not specifying the position of lotuses, this translated choice is also generalised. Due to cultural gaps between Thai and English, the TT reader may not be able to construct the same mental picture of *bua ngai* as Thai readers.

It seems that at times Sawanee uses transliterated forms for words that are not culturally specific items (CSI) as can be seen in the following hemistichs:

The kings brought their sanoms here for bird watching.

Now it's been deserted, trees are overgrowing. (ibid., p. 43)

There seems to be no need to transliterate the word 'sanom' (สนม) since the transliterated word does not yield any poetic effects, unlike 'sappacap' in the abovementioned example, which is a CSI (words or phrases specific to one culture) and is needed by the translator to create a rhyme.

It should be noted that 'pun' in Thai cannot be compensated for in the TT. When the poet associates a place name with his love-longing, the transliterated form in the TT cannot create the same association, especially when the translator decides not use to sound repetition in the TT. To illustrate the point, the whole stanza will be quoted as follows:

At the fringe of Bang Rakam, I was wretched.

Over a long area, this sad village stretched.

How could people live in this sad place?

Do they use to being sad, nights and days? (ibid., p. 63).

The first two hemistichs are translated from 'rakam kai ma tueng thai rakam ban' (ระกำกายมาถึงท้าย ระกำบ้าน) and 'rakam yan ni ko yao na ok oei' (ระกำย่านนี่ก็ยาวนะอกเอ๋ย). The word 'rakam' is used three times in these two hemistichs to describe the emotional state of the poet when he arrives at the village called 'Rakam'. The translator annotates that 'rakam' means 'sad, sorrow, misery, painful, heartbroken' (ibid.). Sound repetition is a foregrounding poetic device for *nirat* poems. When proper names are used and the names have both denotative and connotative meanings that the

poet can bring into his composition, it seems impossible for the translator to textually compensate for the lost poetic effects in English.

While there are shifts at microstructural level, Sawanee's work is monumental in itself. The translation direction is from dominated to dominant language. In the process of producing the verse translation of *Nirat Phra Bat*, the ST moves from a 'non-globalised' language used in a limited area, namely Thai, to a 'globalised' language used across the globe, English. The source poet and poem are then brought into the English-language public whose knowledge of Thai language and culture may be limited. The ST, with specific poetry-translating challenges, has been brought into the English readership and it can be concluded that the translator renders the verse translation that does not change the characters, events, time and other meaningful components. At times, momentary foreignness is created through many transliterated forms. By retaining linguistic peculiarities in the translation, foreginising translation strategy predominates in this translation and this strategy also allows the translator to be a visible actor as Sawanee's voice is directly present in the footnotes.

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The Effect of Neuro Linguistic Programming in Lowering Affective Filter in English Classroom: A Case Study from Calicut University, Kerala, India

Abdul Rasheed P

Assistant Professor & Research Scholar
EMEA College of Arts and Science, University of Calicut, Kerala, India
E-mail: Prof.Abdulrasheed@outlook.com

Abstract

It is often heard from the teachers in the second language classroom about a 'mental block' formed among the adult learners that stop them acquiring the second language faster than expected and make them slow and delayed in the attainment of desired output. It can easily be related to the Affective Filter hypothesis of Stephen Krashen (Krashen 1987: 31). According to the Affective Filter hypothesis, a number of 'affective variables' such as motivation, self-confidence and anxiety play a facilitative role in second language acquisition. Krashen says that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to 'raise' the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. Lin (2008:3) in her empirical study into the significance of affective factors agrees with Krashen by claiming that teachers of university level students should use films, songs and games in the classroom situation in order to attract students to study English more willingly.

Anxieties which have impact on language acquisition and learning are foreign language (classroom) anxiety, social anxiety, test anxiety and speech anxiety. It is said that foreign language anxiety is more common among adults (Aydin 2013: 63). Horwitz et al (1986: 128) defines foreign language anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process.

A qualitative research has been carried out among the 40 Under Graduate English students of EMEA College of Arts and Science of Calicut University, Kerala, India from December 2015 up to July 2016. A questionnaire of 25 questions has been prepared to know if students have any mental block in the form of anxiety, confidence and self-esteem etc with a 5 minute presentation on any topic they like. After identifying various anxieties through the questionnaire and presentation among the students that inhibit them from acquiring English language faster, the students were grouped into two groups. The first one comprised of 20 students is made as a control group and the other group of same number was given techniques of

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NLP to deal with anxiety and also given 5 lessons in English. The post lesson questionnaire focused upon the some tests and a presentation. It was astounding to note that the second group 98 percentage could perform better than before. At the same time, control group could improve only 2 percentages than the previous one. The paper elaborates the effect of NLP on the performance of second language learners at college level and it gives at length about the techniques of NLP used to make big result among the second language learners of English at EMEA College of Calicut University.

Keywords:, Affective Filter, Anxiety, English Language Teaching, ESL/EFL Classroom, Neuro Linguistic Programming.

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Survey Question Read Write (SQWR) Technique: Effect on Reading Comprehension of the Students in MHS-Kapisahan Extension

Zosimo B. Gomez[1], Joey N. Abrematea[2], Marlon D. Linsagan[3], Chris T. Sagarino[4]

[1]E-mail: zosimogomez@edu.com.ph, [2]E-mail: j14abrematea@yahoo.com, [3]E-mail: marlon.linsagan@gmail.com
[4]E-mail: chrissagarino2016@gmail.com

Abstract

The students of MHS – Kapisahan Extension lack reading comprehension skills which resulted to their low scores in various tests given to them in different learning areas. Reading with comprehension is one of the primary goals in education. Comprehending what one reads is essential for a student to grasp the lessons taught in school. Students must be able to understand the context of the words in individual sentences and also understand multiple concepts when reading longer passages. Thus, this study aims to improve the reading comprehension skills of the students in MHS – Kapisahan High School Annex using the SQRW strategy.

SQRW (Survey Question Read Write) is defined as a strategy for reading and taking notes from textbooks. Each letter in SQRW stands for a step in the strategy. To conduct this approach, the study is divided into three parts: the pre-test, cycle, and result. The pre-test is conducted to assess the learnings of the students. The cycle consists of four parts which are the reflection, plan, action and observation, and evaluation. Analyzation and interpretation will follow after acquiring the results.

The result of the research shows that there was a significant increase of the number of students who got the correct answer from pre-test to post-test using the SQRW strategy in all sub-reading skills. Most of the respondents who answered correctly from pre-test to post-test are the female respondents. In terms of genre, most of the students have increased their scores in nonfiction category.

Based on the result of this study, the SQRW strategy had a positive effect of the students in improving their reading comprehension skills.

Keywords: Cycle, Evaluation, Meaningful Understanding, Observation, Planning, Pre-test, Post-test, Question, Read, Reading Comprehension, Reflection, Survey, Write, Technique,

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1. Introduction

MHS-Kapisahan Extension in Iligan City Philippines was opened on June 1, 2015. Most of the students in this school have stopped schooling before the school was opened due to various circumstances and some of them were already married. Based on the test result from 1st quarter and 2nd quarter, only 20% of the class passed the quarter exams in all subjects. When the researchers reviewed the data, they found out that most of the students are having difficulties in reading comprehension. Because of this result, the researchers are concerned about the written and oral performance of the students. The researchers then conducted a study and planned for strategies to improve the reading comprehension of the students.

Background of the Study

SQRW is a strategy for reading and taking notes from the textbooks or any reading materials. The first letter of the strategy is (S) stands for survey. In this step, one needs to know the main topic of the story. Finding the title, introduction, heading, and summary or conclusion are included in this step. The second letter, (Q) stands for question, where the students will formulate the queries that help them to understand the content of the given passage. (R) Reading follows the second step for the learners to find the answer to their questions about the selection. The students will read carefully and comprehend the written texts. (W) Writing is the last pace of the strategy where they are going to write their answers on a piece of paper. (Mangrum 2010)

1.2 Objective

This objective of this study is to improve the student's reading comprehension through surveying, questioning, reading and writing (SQRW) strategy.

1.3 Review of Related Literature

Reading Comprehension

According to (Wilhelm 2012), **Comprehension requires the reader to be an active constructor of meaning.** Reading demonstrated that readers do not simply "perceive" the meaning that is IN a text. In fact, expert readers co-construct meaning WITH a text. Moreover, reading is a "transaction" in which the reader brings purposes and life experiences to bear to converse with the text. This meeting of the reader and the text results in the meaning that is comprehension. Comprehension always attends to what is coded or written in the text, but it also depends upon the reader's background experiences, purposes, feelings, and needs of the moment. That is why we can read the same book or story twice and it will have very different meanings for us. We, as readers, are an equal and active partner with the text in the meaning-making process of comprehension.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

This general objective of this study is to improve the student's reading comprehension through surveying, questioning, reading and writing (SQRW).

Also, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between pre-test and post-test of the students using the SQRW strategy in finding the:

    1.a main idea of the reading text

    1.b specific information of the reading text

    1.c word meaning of the reading text

    1.d textual reference of the reading text

2. Is there a significant difference between pre-test and post-test of the students in terms of gender?

3. Is there a significant difference between pre-test and post-test of the students in terms of genre?

    3.a Fiction

    3.b Nonfiction

    3.c Drama

    3.d Poetry

    3.e Folklore

4. Is there a significant difference between the student's mean percentage score of the pre-test and post-test?

5. Does the strategy SQRW promote meaningful understanding to the students?

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1.5 Hypothesis

The SQRW strategy could improve the reading comprehension skills of the students in MHS – Kapisahan High School Annex, especially in finding the main idea, specific information, word meaning and textual reference of the given passage.

1.6 Research Design

The researchers used an experimental design with quantitative method in processing the data.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

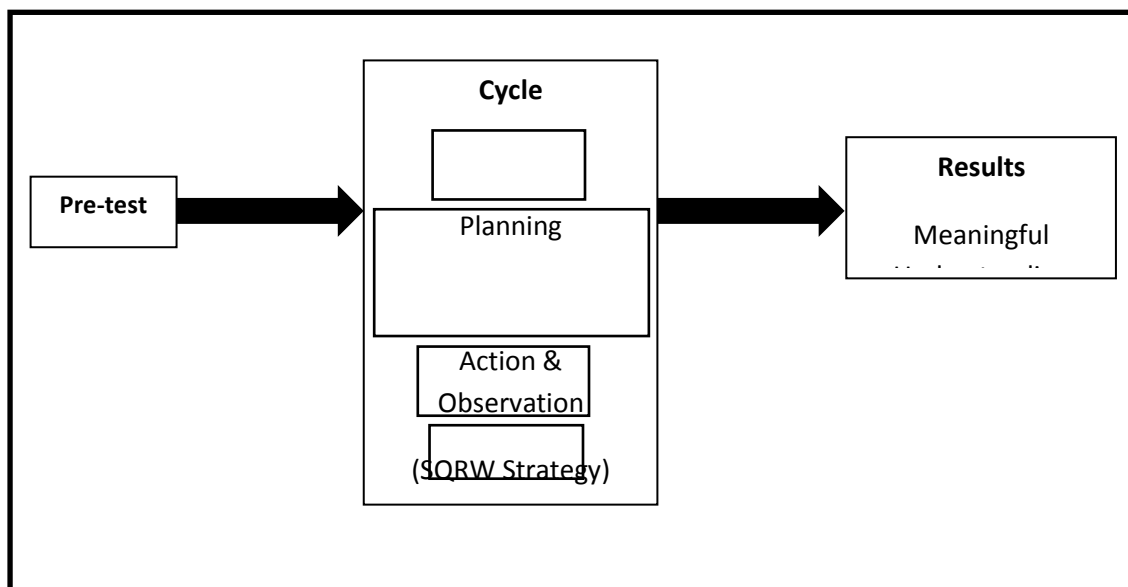The researchers illustrated the three stages of the study: Pre-test, Cycle, and Results.

Figure 1: Stages of the study

2. Method

2.1 Respondents

The grade 7 and grade 8 students of MHS – Kapisahan High School Annex were the respondents of this action research. A total of forty-four (44) students participated in the said study.

2.2 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the effectivity of SQRW strategy in improving the student's reading comprehension specifically the four sub-reading skills. These are the main idea, specific information, word meaning and textual reference. The genres of the reading text that will be used in the study are fiction, nonfiction, drama, poetry and folklore. The strategy was integrated in three (3) subjects namely English, Filipino and Science. The study was conducted last November 9 until December 11, 2015

2.3 Research Instruments and Strategy

This study will make use of the following instruments:

1. *Reading Material* - These materials were used in assessing the reading comprehension of the students.

2. *Test* - The pre-test and post-test in collecting data of the study. The pre-test was conducted to assess the skills of the students and to identify their problem in answering the exams given. The post-test was done at the end of each cycle to find the students' improvement in answering the exams given to them. The exams were multiple-choice made by the teachers and validated by Ms. Libly T, Generaole, Ms. Mich Logronio and Mr. J-roel B. Semilla to assess students' understanding of the reading text.

3. *Teacher's Observation Notebook* - Contains observation of the researchers while conducting the study.

4. *Follow-up questionnaire* – contains open-ended questions specifically designed for the students to reflect and organize their ideas. This served as a tool for the researchers to fully understand the problems of the students in understanding the text given to them.

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5. *Interview*   - The purpose was to gather the respondents' opinion on the researchers' study.

6. *SQRW Strategy*   - is the strategy used in the study.

6.1 (Survey) the students will check out what they are about to read. The titles, subtitles, captions, maps, bold-print words, etc.

6.2 (Question) turn titles and subtitles into questions. Write each question down on an individual post-it note and place in book.

6.3 (Read) read one section at a time.

6.4(Write) during and after completing a section, answer the question on your post-it note.

2.4 Materials and techniques of the study

The study is divided into three parts. Part one is the pre-test, part two is the cycle and part three is the result where the researchers use the SQRW strategy.

2.3.1 Pre-test

It is a preliminary test administered to determine the student's baseline knowledge or preparedness for educational experiences. Before the test was administered, the researchers prepared a teacher-made questionnaire and brought it to the expert for validation. The following procedures are elaborated bellow.

Figure 2: Construction of Questionnaire
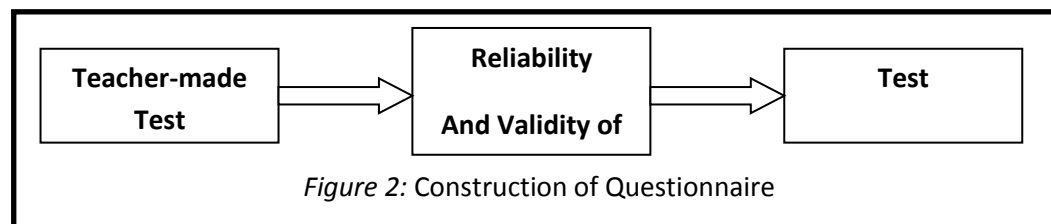
2.3.2 Cycle

The action is going to be conducted in a cyclic process which consists of three meetings. The cycle starts with reflection. Based on the result of the reflection, the researchers will make a plan. The researchers' plan will be put into action that involves observation. Evaluation will follow. If the problem persists, the cycle will be conducted again until reading comprehension improves.

Figure 3: The cycle of the study
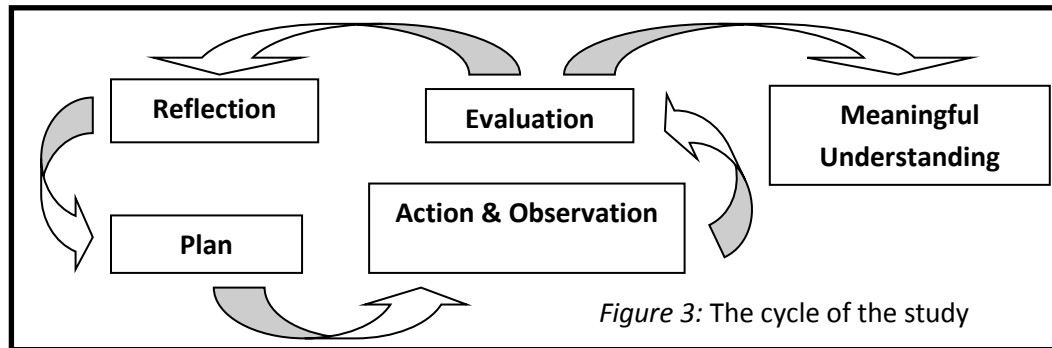
The procedures applied in this study are stated below:

1. **Planning**

Based on the pre-test result, the researchers discussed the main problem or concern in the classroom. After the discussion, the researchers prepared reading materials, questionnaire and worksheet. Camera and observation notebook was employed by the researchers for the documentation purposes.

2. **Action**

These were the steps followed in gathering of data:

2.1 Pre-activity

Before introducing the strategy, the researchers provided learning materials to the students. The learning materials are the following:

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2.1.a Newspaper

Every week, the researchers bring latest newspaper to allow students to access latest news and events. With the help of this material, the student's reading interest will increase.

Figure 4: Students read newspapers

2.1.b Puzzle and Game Board

The researchers introduced word factory games to the students. During vacant time, the students play these games with their classmates and have fun. At first, the students have difficulties to learn how to play the game and they can't build or create a word. But, later they already know the patter in playing the game. With this kind of games, it helped the students improve their vocabulary skills.

2.1.c Books

The researchers solicited books to help the students have an additional textual references. MSU-IIT National Coop Academy with the help of their Student Body Council (SBC), answered our call by delivering books, other reading materials, and some school supplies to the students in kapisahan on November 9, 2015. Thus, not only the high school students befitted from the said solicitation but the elementary pupil as well.

Figure 5: Students playing puzzle and board game

Figure 6: Students reading books

2.2 During the activity

The researchers used the SQRW strategy. They elaborated the steps by discussing the surveying, questioning, reading and writing.

Figure 7: Exchanging ideas with the SQRW strategy

The Thereording group presented is cussed be ished in the SQRW stractegy, engage in short brainstorming method and exchanged ideas with the SQRW strategy. Each group selected a leader who reported their group discussion output. After the reporting, the researchers allowed other groups to raise questions to the group who reported and later gave feedback.

Figure 8: Students activity

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After the activity, the researchers interviewed random students to give feedback on what they have learned in the activity.

Figure 9: Researcher-Student Interview

2.3 Post-test -Activity

In this step, the researchers administered the post test. The students carefully read the story or passage and answer the questions. The respondents were given thirty (30) minutes to answer two (2) genres in every subject. The assign teacher will manage the test base on what subject he thought in that level.

Figure 10: Students taking the post test

3. **Observation**

The researchers used their observation notebook to record necessary details and observations they have gathered while conducting the research. The researchers took pictures to the entire procedure of the study which was part of their documentation.

4. **Evaluation**

The researchers evaluated the results of the post-test and determine the strengths and weaknesses of the SQRW strategy. The results of pre-test and post-test were analysed in order for the researchers to know the effectiveness of the strategy used. Based on the results, the researchers then can determine if there is an improvement in the student's ability in reading comprehending certain textual readings.

5. Reflection

The researchers finalized the study which involving planning, action and the observation. And based on the positive result in the post-test conducted, the researchers come out with a meaningful understanding by the students.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data were analysed based on the result of the pre-test and the post-test conducted. Below are the statistical tools used in the study:

1. Percentage score - is the percent of test items answered correctly. These scores can be useful when describing a student's performance on a teacher-made test or on a criterion-referenced test.

2. Bar Graph - This was used to emphasize the graphical extent of the variables considered.

3. Results

This section should be organized in order to answer each of your research questions.

A. *Four (4) Sub-Reading Skills*

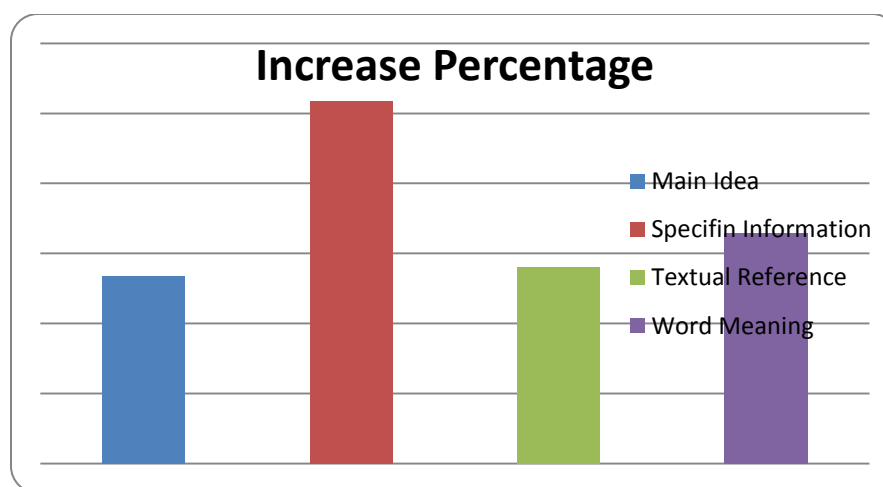The researchers identify the scores and percentage of the respondents in terms of sub-reading skills.

Figure 4: Graph of average increase percentage score in all sub-reading skills.

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Over all, Figure 14 shows the summary of the difference for every sub-reading skill. The specific information category has the highest increase of the respondents who answered correctly from pre-test to post-test with an average of 25.91%, followed by the word meaning category with an average of 16.42%. The textual reference category has an average of 14.04% and lastly, the main idea category got the lowest increase of number of respondents got the correct answer with an average of 13.41%.

B. Pre-test and Post Test Result by Gender

The researchers identify the scores and percentage of the respondents in terms of gender. The purpose of this,
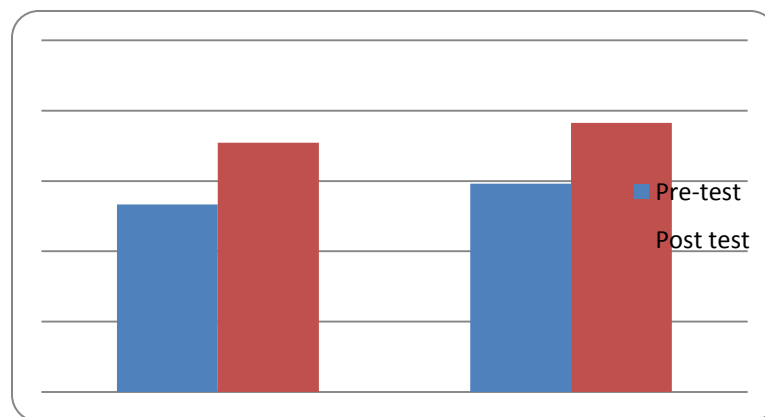

Figure 4: Graph of the average percentage scores between male and female.

Figure 15 shows that most of the respondents got the correct answer from pre-test to post-test were female students. Because the number of students who answered the question correctly from pre-test to post-test, male got an average of 17.55% and female got an average of 17.65% (See table 5). The figure indicates that there is a significant difference of the pre-test and post-test in terms of gender.

C. Pre-test and Post Test Result by Genre

William Allan emphasized that one of the most striking aspects of classical literature is its highly developed sense of genre. Genre is one of the major ways people

connect to something new. By comparing their experience to things they have seen in the past, audiences can quickly form a basis for any deviations from generic form.

In line with this, this study also helps the researchers know what kind of genre the respondents would prefer to read.
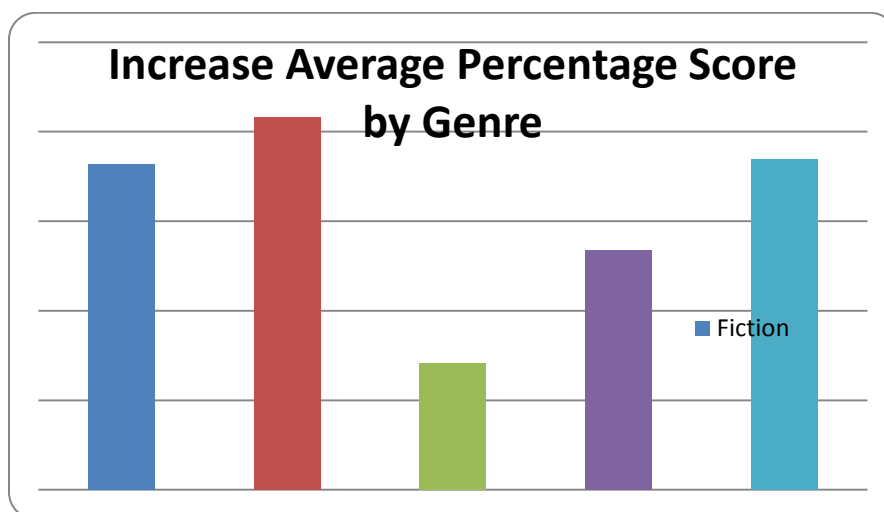

Figure 4: Graph of the increase average percentage scores between the genre.

Figure 16 shows that an average of 20.83% of the students, got the correct answer in nonfiction from pre-test to post-test which has the highest percentage increase, followed by an average of 18.48% increase in folklore. The students also increase their scores in fiction and poetry with an average percentage of 18.18% and 13.41% respectively. Meanwhile, drama got the lowest average percentage score increase of 7.05%. Also, the figure shows that there is a significant difference of the number of students got the correct answer in every genre.

D. Overall Pre-test and Post Test Result

In general, based on the gathered data and information by the researchers, the result of pre-test and post-test is show in table 6 below.

Table 6: Overall pre-test and post test result

	Pre-test	**Post test**	**Increased Percentage**
Average # of students	24.40	32.07	7.67
Average percentage	55.45%	72.89%	17.44%

Table 6 shows that an average of 24.40 or 55.45% of the respondents who got the correct answers in the pre-test and an average of 32.07 or 72.89% in the post test. It indicates that an average of 7.67 or17.44% of the students increased their scores in the post test.

The result thereby indicates a significant increase in the number of students who answered the question correctly by using the SQRW strategy in reading comprehension.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

4.1 Summary

The purpose of this study was to improve the student's reading comprehension through surveying, questioning, reading and writing (SQRW) strategy. To accomplish that purpose it became necessary to reach some prerequisite goals. This study then focused on the effectivity of SQRW strategy in improving the student's reading comprehension specifically the four sub-reading skills, namely the main idea, specific information, word meaning and textual reference. In addition, the genres of the reading text used in the study were fiction, nonfiction, drama, poetry and folklore. Furthermore, the strategy was integrated in three (3) subjects namely English, Filipino and Science. Moreover, there were forty-four (44) respondents of this study from grade 7 and grade 8 students of MHS – Kapisahan High School Annex.

The study was divided into three parts the pre-test, cycle and result. The data was analysed based on the result of the pre-test and the post-test conducted. The researchers used percentage score and bar graph. Lastly, the researchers used an experimental design with quantitative method in processing the data.

4.2 Conclusion

This study has described the effect of SQRW strategy in improving the student's reading comprehension. The researchers conclude that:

1. There is a significant increase of the number of students who got the correct answer from pre-test to post-test using the SQRW strategy in all sub-reading skill. The specific information category got the highest increase of the respondents who answered correctly from pre-test to post-test followed by the word meaning category then the textual reference category and lastly the main idea.
2. Most of the respondents who answered correctly from pre-test to post-test were the female respondents.
3. The respondents who answer the question correctly from pre-test to post-test were increased. In terms of genre, most of the respondents had increased scores in nonfiction category. While the drama category had the lowest improved scores.

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The Changing Face of Social Issues in Japanese Children's Literature

Misato Nakagami

PhD Candidate,
Nagoya Gakuin University Graduate School of Foreign Studies, Japan
E-mail: jewel_of_strawberry@yahoo.co.jp

Abstract

This paper examines the problem of traditionally taboo subjects in Japanese children's literature, including divorce, sexuality, and the rights of mothers to individual needs and desires. It presents some recent children's literature which breaks those taboos. The paper points out that the subjectivity of the Asian child is quite different from that of the Western child and analyzes this difference in terms of the worlds depicted in children's literature. It also looks at Thai children's literature and notes some similarities with Japanese children's literature.

The foremost children's literature journal in Japan, *Nihon Jidou Bungaku*, devoted two issues in the space of thirteen years to the problem of taboos in Japanese children's literature. Divorce, sex, runaway kids, and suicide: all of these issues were taboo. Compared to children's literature in the West, Japanese children's literature was stuck in a fantasy land of ideal families and ideal kids. The aim of this paper is to analyze the cultural factors behind those taboos and to look at some works which have emerged from cracks as the taboos age and threaten to disappear.

In nearly all children's literature in Japan up until now, we get stories about a happy family where we can find the typical image of mother. The mother is good at cooking, takes care of children well, knows how to answer children's questions, and is the center of an enormous kindness. There is a phrase for such a mother in Japan; *ryousaikenbo*. It means a person who is a good wife for her husband and clever and hardworking for her children.

Six years before the first discussion of taboo issues in Japan, Judy Bloom had already published *It's Not the End of the World* (1972), perhaps the most famous American children's book dealing with divorce. In 1982 the British writer Sue Townsend published her explosively popular *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13 3/4*. This book shows a comical portrait of a teenager who is more responsible than his parents. His mother is dating one of the neighbors and plans to elope with him as soon as possible. It is high British comedy, and we are meant to take it as such, but no Japanese YA literature writer could present such a picture, however comically intended. The image of the mother is sacred and cannot be shown to have flaws.

Writers on the construction of Japanese motherhood have pointed to the creation of the *Ie* system in Meiji Era Japan (1868-1912) (Sato, 1991). Faced with a variety of family arrangements, the Meiji government sought to ensure uniformity by creating a head-of-household system that made the husband the governmental representative and resulted in the subjugation of female household members.

Kano (1991) underscores a more surprising reality in pointing out that the relation between the British royal family and the British subject cannot be compared to the Emperor and his subjects. The reason is that the first is a kind of contract based on rights, while the second is a "blood relation that cannot be severed" (65). The emperor himself is like a nurturing mother, radiating an equal love to all subjects regardless of position. The emperor himself performs the role of nurturing mother to be emulated, adding a sacred and unassailable dimension to motherhood in the nation. Few writers who depict the family would dare to present a realistic picture of changing motherhood. The silence which pervades the imperial existence also covers the very institution of motherhood.

And it is not only the sacred institution of motherhood which has kept the taboos in children's literature in place; there is also the issue of the subjectivity of the child. Perhaps it is not too much to say that the subjectivity of the Asian child is quite different from that of his/her Western counterpart. While the Western child is placed on the same footing as adults (Sriwarakan, 2008), the Japanese child has been seen in quite a different "*waku*" (category or role) from adults, which is characterized as being "*sunao*" (innocent; naive) and dependent upon adults for emotional security. Suzuki (2000) claims,

> Japanese mothers do not regard independence of infants as an important aspect of their early developmental tasks. Doi (1962) delineated this structure using a Japanese word "amae", often translated as dependence or indulgence. In the Japanese context, "amae

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[dependence]" is not an undesirable trait of children; rather children should have the right to be dependent on their close adults. (179)

The Japanese image of the child is very close to the Thai image described by Sriwarakan, who claims that, in contrast to the image of the child in German children's literature, Thai children are seen as possessing qualities of "innocence and immaturity" (7). Such a belief, she continues, "leads to a belief in providing children with appropriate things and at the same time, it also prevents children from learning about inappropriate things, which are claimed to be the adults' matters" (5). Like Japanese children's literature, Thai children's literature has been characterized by taboos.

In contrast to Thai children's literature, Sriwarakan continues, German children's literature portrays kids as friends and confidants of adults, expected to understand the world of adults and make their own decisions. Sriwarakan focuses on the differences between Thai children's literature and German children's literature published in 1980s and 1990s. She analyzes two German children's stories: *I Have My Own Dad Too* by Christine Nöstlinger (1994) and *Two Dads Better Than None* by Nortrud Boge-Erli (1993) and two Thai children's stories: *My Neighours, My Best Friends* by Manop Kaewsanit (2004 Print) and *Breaths in Childhood* by Yun Kamolsereerat.

According to Sriwarakan, children in German children's literature "are now supposed to learn about problems or conflicts such as divorce, alcoholism, drugs, poverty and racism. When the [traditional] adult attitude towards children changed, the authoritarian nature of the relationship between children and adults changed too. That is, children came to be viewed as people who have the same rights as adults and they now respect children" (2). Children are the partners of adults, so a mother asks an idea to her child when she has problems with her boyfriend, or a child can choose his or her lifestyle, choosing to live with mother or father.

Although the bulk of Japanese children's literature has much in common with Thai children's literature as Sriwarakan describes it, some recent works published in Japan show kids caught up in their parents' problems. I would like to discuss two books which can be good examples; *Puranetariumu*, (Planetarium), by Arie Nashiya (2009), and *Hinagiku-to-Pepahminto*, (Daisy and Peppermint), by Hiiragi Nonaka (2008). In both stories, the main character is a girl, a junior high school student, whose parents got divorced. Each girl lives with her father, not her mother; however, the girl can go to see her mother whenever she wants.

In *Puranetariumu*, the main character, Minori, first lives with her mother when her parents get divorced; her mother often talks about her new boyfriend to Minori. When her mother starts to live with her new partner, Minori feels uncomfortable with the arrangement; that is why she decides to live with her father. The mother, lost in love, thinks of getting married with her new boyfriend; on the other hand, Minori takes an objective view of her mother's situation.

Minori and her father communicate about various things in their new life together. Shockingly enough for Japanese children's literature, her father anticipates his daughter's having a boyfriend and provides her not only with sex education, but also with a contraceptive device.

While scenes depicting mothers giving their daughters advice on love are common enough, in this story it is the father who talks about love to his daughter. Minori asks her father if he still loves her mother and asks about how they met. Minori's father answers the questions honestly and gives his own ideas about love. This father often assumes roles traditionally associated with the mother.

In *Hinagiku-to-Pepahminto,* there are three new family types and one "ideal" type of family. First is the family of the main character, Yuka. Her parents get divorced and Yuka chooses to live with her father because Yuka thinks that her mother is strong enough to live alone, much more so than her father. However, she realizes she was wrong; she comes to see that her mother easily succumbs to loneliness.

One day Yuka and her mother go driving. Yuka talks about the age of puberty with her mother. Her mother tells Yuka that she herself feels trapped in puberty; she cannot graduate from it. The conversation between Yuka and her mother sounds more like one between friends than one between a mother and her child.

Yuka has a closest friend, Mai, whose family is very close to the typical image of Japanese family. Mai has both parents and two brothers. Her mother is a *sengyou-shufu*, a full-time homemaker, and there are many of the mother's hand-made goods everywhere in the house. Yuka feels envy towards Mai's family because it is such a warm, happy one. This story shows both the reality of the changing family and the lasting charm of the traditional one.

Other types of families in the story include the families of the two boys who go to the same school as Yuka. A boy's parents also got divorced and he lives with his mother. The single mother and her child are not common figures in the Japanese children's literature. The members of this particular family have an ideal relationship between mother and son. The mother watches and understands the son, and also the son loves and tries to protect the mother.

The other boy lives not with his parents, but with his great-grandmother. His mother is an actress and still young, around thirty years old; she does not want people to know she has a child. She never does anything together with her child; for instance, cooking, going out together, or even talking with the son. However, the son does not resent this. He is one of his mother's biggest fans, and wants her to become an even brighter star. He has a generous love for his mother just as the other boy described above has.

The three children in *Hinagiku-to-Pepahminto* display a different sense and behavior from classic types of children in Japanese children's literature. The story is notable for its bold suggestion that happiness can be had outside of the stereotypically ideal family structure. The family situation is viewed and evaluated not only from the adult point of view, but also from that of the child, who has the freedom and the will to make the family situation positive. The family is seen not as a given thing, but something to be constructed together.

Shumatsu wa Kazoku (The Weekend Family) (Katsura, 2014) also presents a new type of family. Daisuke and Mizuho have married for an unconventional reason: they are sick of having to listen to people's advice about finding a marriage partner. Mizuho is asexual and has no desire for a man, but the unusual couple knows that they can protect each other with the home they can erect around themselves.

Hinata is a ten-year-old girl living at the children's home visited by Daisuke and Mizuho. They decide to become foster parents for Hinata on weekends. One reason they are interested in her has to do with her surprisingly good acting ability, which they notice when she plays the role of Helen Keller in the play at the children's home. Daisuke is a member of an acting troupe and he gets roles for Hinata to play.

Her acting is not restricted to appearing in plays; she also hires herself out to play the role of a family member for someone who needs a child present, like a woman who wants to embarrass her ex-boyfriend in front of his parents. She is skillful at performing in these real-life situations. The book seems to emphasize that family roles are negotiable things, and that a real sense of family can only be found in developing a team that can cooperate, just as Daisuke, Mizuho, and Hinata do.

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When Hinata is presented with the possibility of living with her real mother, she refuses because she treasures the team she is a part of. She hardly knows her mother, who gave birth when she was only fourteen. Because of the steadiness of Daisuke and Mizuho in raising her, she has finally allowed herself to trust people. Ironically enough, the three members of this family are all acting out traditional family roles while constructing something real with unconventional forms.

The three stories I have presented show the image of the Japanese family moving away from traditional patterns and including the child in the decision-making process. These children are closer to actual children than the ideal ones traditionally presented. As Sriwarakan warns, discussing the ideal images of children populates Thai children's literature.

> This ideal image has been institutionalized and cannot be easily changed. At the same time, a new ideal image has not yet been created to replace the old one. In other words, these ideal children don't really exist since they don't have their own idea or don't think for themselves. Their existence is just the result of the imaginative creation of adults . . . (8)

The stories I have discussed show the cracks beginning to appear in the taboo-dominated world of Japanese children's literature. And my interest in Sriwarakan's research makes me wonder if some cracks are appearing in Thai children's literature as well. The much-acclaimed book by Jane Vejjajiva, *The Happiness of Kati*, (2006) seems to me to be a candidate for a new type of Thai children's literature, one in which the child can exercise agency.

Like some of the protagonists in my stories summarized above, Kati lives with her grandparents and the whereabouts of her mother are a mystery that punctuates every chapter in the novel. Kati is obviously very happy living in the gracious home which her grandparents make for her, but the question of why her mother chooses not to live with her eats away at Kati's heart.

The book is traditional in that the people around Kati make every effort to make sure no upsetting news reaches Kati's ears. Her grandparents want to protect her happiness, and they put off until the last possible time the news that Kati's mother has a debilitating illness that has forced her to live apart from her daughter. Kati learns this fact as well as some details about the man who is her father, a man separated from her mother, living somewhere outside of Thailand.

The book builds to the moment when Kati must decide whether to contact this absent father or not. Her uncles and aunts, as well as her grandparents, are quite concerned, but they leave it to Kati to make the decision. The book's ending reveals the fact that Kati never contacted her father, but only mailed a postcard to her friend. The reader understands that the happiness advertised in the title of the book is the happiness of living with her warm extended family. She has no need for anything else.

The focus on Kati's making the decision, as well as the complicated situation of her parents' union and separation, marks this gracious book as a new type of Thai children's literature in which the boundaries of things that concern children and the boundaries of adult concerns are not totally separated. Like the Japanese books I discussed above, *The Happiness of Kati* may mark the beginning of a more realistic portrayal of the child's world, one in which the child herself possesses agency.

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