



The Use of Tenses and Idioms for Translating Thai Literary Work into German Language

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to cast light on the use of grammar and idioms in the fairy tales *Kraithong and Phadäng-Nangai* which were translated from Thai into German. It was found that the following grammatical topics were used and analysed in this study: 1) The use of the present indicative mixed with the past simple; 2) The use of the subjunctive II in German; and 3) The use of the past perfect tense in German. This leads to the discussion that the use of these grammatical topics can 1) show the intention and language style of the translator depending on which meaning he or she wishes to convey in that particular context; 2) indicate the action has not happened at the moment of reading. It can describe and arouse the emotion of the readers to simultaneously imagine the picture in mind at the time of reading; 3) distinguish the event describing that one event goes even further back in the past than the other event as a meaningful and purposive linguistic device to transfer the religious belief of one culture to the other appropriately in relation to Buddhist belief.

In relation to idioms, German idioms used in the fairy tales were analysed in comparison with English. These idioms in German (L3) are compared with English ones (L2) to enhance the language competence of learners in terms of foreign language learning and teaching. Lastly, it is recommended that English as L2 can affect L3 learning. Learners may transfer the previously gained knowledge and relate their learning styles, experience, obstacles or problems to their L3 learning to acquire the third language effectively and efficiently.

Keywords: Idioms, L2, L3, Translation, Tenses



1. INTRODUCTION

When working in a multilingual society and multicultural workplace, it is possible that English is not one of the languages you deal with when translating. We may have to work in more than one language. For instance, we use the information in one language and write the story in another or we may also write a story first in one language and then rewrite in another language. This indicates that we encounter the task of translation. The language which we are translating from is *the source language*, in German *Ausgangstext*, and the language we are translating into is *the target language*, in German *Zielstext*, (Koller, 2011, p. 9). When translating, tenses and idioms are major problems of translators in terms of appropriate language patterns to convey the exact or acceptable meaning of the target language. In this regard, it will be useful in this study for the context of non-native speakers if the use of German tenses and idioms (L3) can be compared with the aspects of English language (L2) to indicate some specific linguistic functions. Thus, it is worth examining this linguistic aspects in the translation work to investigate the roles of tenses and idioms for translation based on English perspectives for learners in Thailand.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Roles of Linguistics for Translation in the German Context

Albrecht (2013) discusses the role of linguistics for translation in his German textbook as follows:

Die Beschreibung von Übersetzungsvorgängen und die Analyse von Überetzungen ist demnach nicht Gegenstand einer neu zu etablierenden Disziplin, sondern allein mit den Erkenntniszielen und Methoden der Sprachwissenschaft und aller ihrer Teilgebiete zu leisten (In English: The translation process and the analysis of translation concern the linguistic methods and all the areas of linguistic studies).

(Albrecht, 2013, p. XIII)

From the citation, it is obvious that describing the translation process and analyzing the translation are related with linguistics and all linguistic areas. In other words, linguistic aspects are required when translating. This is because translation process is the language process.

2.2 Present Indicative and the Past Indicative in relation to English and German

According to König & Gast (2012), English and German are both members of the Western branch of the Germanic language family and thus closely related genetically. It is therefore to be expected that there are still features manifesting this relatedness, even though English has considerably moved away from these common roots during the last thousand years. Both languages manifest the distinction between weak (regular) and strong (irregular) verbs (e.g. Engl. wash, washed, washed vs. sing, sang, sung), and both exhibit a gradual reduction of the latter group in favour of the former. Both languages distinguish declarative sentences from interrogative sentences through word order (Engl. *I can hear you - Can you hear me?*) and both languages draw a two-term tense distinction (present vs. past) in terms of inflection (Engl. *he snores - he snored*: Germ. *er schnarcht - er*



schnarchte), to give only three examples of such genetically determined similarities. Parallels such as these will not play a major role (König & Gast, 2012, p, 4).

2.3 Past Perfect Tense and the Subjunctive II in German

According to Reimann (2012), the past perfect tense or *Plusquamperfekt* in German is not used very frequently. It describes an event A which goes even further back in the past than event B (Reimann, 2012, p. 29). Reimann (2012) also states that the subjunctive II is the Konjunktiv II in German and it is often used for unreal conditions, possibility, and polite request or question (Reimann, 2012, p. 66). In addition, according to König & Gast (2012), it is an interesting question to what extent English can be said to have a grammatical category of “subjunctive mood”. The fact that there still is one genuine subjunctive form (*were*) might suffice for justifying the assumption of that category for English. Moreover, the use of base forms with a subjunctive implication could be regarded as being indicative of the subjunctive being a grammatical category in its own right, since infinitive base forms can be distinguished from subjunctive base forms on distributional grounds. But then, the very fact that no morphological distinction is made between infinitives and (alleged) subjunctives can be interpreted as being another instance of the tendency for English to abandon the morphological marking of grammatical categories, and to develop into an isolating language. Viewed from this perspective, mood distinctions are on the verge of disappearing in English, since only subjunctive *were* could be regarded as a modal form in its own right (König & Gast, 2012, p, 72).

All these previous studies mentioned in this part are related to what is examined in this study in terms of the conceptual framework.

2.4 Idioms in the German Context

According to Talašová (2010), the roles of idioms for translation are as follows:

Das Problem beim Übersetzen der Phraseologismen beruht auf Kultur- und Sprachunterschieden. Jede Kultur hat sich anders entwickelt, ist durch verschiedene Phasen durchgegangen, und das alles spiegelt sich in ihrer Phraseologie wider. Das erklärt auch das Phänomen, dass verwandte Kulturen viele gemeinsame Phraseme haben. Die Phraseologismen bezeichnen die Komplexität und Undurchsichtigkeit und sie werden als spezifische sprachliche Einheiten gekennzeichnet. Diese Eigenarten haben bewirkt, dass in der Vergangenheit einerseits die Unmöglichkeit der Übersetzung betont wurde und andererseits wurde pointiert, dass für die Übersetzung der Phraseologismen äquivalent in der Zielsprache nur die Phraseologismen sind. (Talašová, 2010, p. 17)

This citation implies that in terms of translating idioms, it may be difficult for Thai learners to find appropriate and equivalent German idioms for their translation this is because expressions or expressing feelings in each culture are specific and culturally-bound. Sometimes, it is not an easy task to convey the meaning in another context as the translator needs to find other cultural references.



2.5 Differences between Second and Third Foreign Language Learning

Hufeisen (2010) discusses the role of leaning foreign languages in the German context as the following:

[...] Erfahrungen mit dem Lernen der ersten Fremdsprache können auf das Lernen der zweiten übertragen werden (wenn sie sich z. B. als gut funktionierend und erfolgreich erwiesen haben) oder völlig vermieden werden (wenn sie beispielsweise als ungeeignet empfunden wurden); Vergleiche zwischen den Lernprozessen und/oder den Sprachen können helfen. Der gezielte Einsatz bestimmter Lernstrategien bei typischen Fremdsprachenaufgaben [...] (Hufeisen, 2010, p. 203).

Based on the study of Hufeisen (2010) in Germany, learning L2 requires the experiences from previous languages they learned. Learners may transfer their previous knowledge to the learning process of the new language being learned. They will know on their own what appropriate learning strategies they can apply.

2.6 Studies on L2 and L3 in Thailand

Saengaramrueng (2008) gives her point of view in terms of learning German in Thailand based on L1, L2, and L3 as follows:

แนวทางของการเรียนการสอนภาษาที่สาม (L1= ภาษาแม่ ,L2= ภาษาต่างประเทศที่ 1 ,L3=ภาษาต่างประเทศที่ 2) โดยทั่วไปแล้ว ต้องคำนึงสิ่งต่อไปนี้ 1) คำนี้ความรู้ด้านเนื้อหาสาระ (declaratives Wissen) ได้แก่ ด้านศัพท์ โครงสร้าง ไวยากรณ์ การถ่ายโอน (Transfer) และการแทรกแซงทางภาษา (Interferenz) ในด้านสัทศาสตร์และการสะกดคำ 2) คำนี้ถึงกระบวนการ (prozedurales Wissen) ได้แก่ ประสบการณ์ในเรื่อง วิธีการสอน และประสบการณ์ด้านวิธีการเรียน เทคนิคการเรียนและกลวิธีการสอน ประโยชน์ในการใช้การสอนตามแนวคิดนี้ คือ เป็นการให้หลักการประหยัดในกระบวนการเรียนรู้ โดยให้ผู้สอนกระตุ้นความรู้ภูมิหลังที่ผ่านการเรียนภาษาที่ 1 และที่ 2 ให้เป็นประโยชน์ในด้านต่อไปนี้ 1. ความรู้ด้านศัพท์ 2. ความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์ 3. ความรู้ด้านการออกเสียงและสะกดคำ 4. การกระตุ้นผู้เรียนทำได้หลายวิธี เช่น ให้ผู้เรียนรู้ว่าตนเป็นผู้เรียนปะเภทใด กระตุ้นให้ผู้เรียนนำความรู้ทั้งหมดที่มีอยู่ก่อน แล้วมาใช้ให้เกิดประโยชน์ในการเรียน (Saengaramrueng, 2008) (In English: English as L2 can affect L3 learning. Learners may transfer the previously gained knowledge and relate their learning styles, experience, obstacles or problems to their L3 learning to acquire the third language effectively and efficiently. This leads to the further discussion that, how can learners, as non-native speakers, correctly use idioms when translating? Apart from this, they may find Thai (L1) into German (L3) translation difficult if an idioms they are encountering while translating is specific to that culture. In this regard, relating the knowledge of learners to their previously gained knowledge may enable them to learn successfully.)



From this citation, prior to German, it is obvious that Thai learners learn English as a first foreign language (L2). It is suggested in this study that comparing their knowledge with what they have learned previously, namely the knowledge of English, can enhance the competence of learners to their fullest potential when learning German. As mentioned earlier that, it may be difficult for Thai learners to find German idioms for their translation this is because expressions or expressing feelings in each culture are specific and culturally-bound. Sometimes, it is not an easy task to convey the meaning in another context because the translator needs to find other cultural references. In this regard, comparing the L3 knowledge (German) with the L2 knowledge (English) can be an efficient learning strategy as these two languages have some language features in common which will cause learners to find some similarities as well equivalences for their translation.

3. PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The main purposes of the study are to examine the roles of tenses and idioms for literary translation and to provide practical recommendations to language teachers concerning effective language pedagogy.

4. METHODOLOGY

Based on the conceptual framework of the study, the following tenses in German: 1) *The Present Indicative*; 2) *The Subjunctive II in German*; and 3) *The Past Perfect tense in German* were specifically and purposively selected for discussion in this paper.

Instruments of the study are the Thai fairy tales *Kraithong and Phadäng-Nangai* which were translated from Thai into German by Watcharakaweesilp (2014) and Watcharakaweesilp (2017).

For the data collection and data analysis, sentences, in which the use of above-mentioned tenses and German idioms is found, were collected and analysed qualitatively in relation the roles of linguistic aspects and based on the comparative study between English and German.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Tenses

5.1.1 *The Use of the Present Indicative*

As know that the Past Tense is widely used in fairy tales. However, the use of the *present indicative* can be used to indicate the action has not happened at the moment of reading. It is used to describe and arouse the emotion of the readers to simultaneously imagine the picture in mind at the time of reading. The readers can depicture as well as anticipate the following possible actions what will happen next while reading. Using the present indicative in the fairy tales can cause the imaginative feeling of the readers. This is because the present simple can indicate the action happening at that moment.

1) Als Krai Thong von dem Angebot des Reichen *erfahren hatte*, **wandte** (past tense) er *sich* an den Phra Kru, ob und auf welche Weise er Chalawan **tötet** (present tense).



(English: After Krai Thong had been informed of this offer, he consulted his master for his advice how to kill Chalawan.)

2) Krai Thong *sah* (past tense) nur Wimala und *drohte* (past tense) ihr mit dem Hok Sattaloha, damit sie ihm das Versteck Chalawans *verrät* (*present tense*).

(English: Krai Thong only saw Wimala and forced her to reveal the place where Chalawan is hiding.)

5.1.2 The Use of the Subjunctive II in German (If-Clause)

The use of the subjunctive II in German is also important when translating to imply and to describe the emotional or exciting scenes in the story while reading. Using this grammatical topic also indicates the hopeless situation that it is hardly possible to achieve something in the story. Additionally, the use of these grammatical topics also shows the intention and language style of the translator depending on which meaning he or she wishes to convey in that particular context.

In English, we use only the word *could* for both past tense and unreal conditional. But in German, two words are used, namely *könnte* for the unreal conditional, and *konnte* for the past simple. From this example, the translator used the word *könnte* (could in English for unreal conditional) to convey the meaning that it was impossible for the hunters to kill the king of crocodiles. In contrast, the word *konnte* which is an equivalent word for the word *could* in English was employed to signalize the real event in the past that it has already happened. To sum up, the use of the subjunctive II in German is important when translating to imply and to describe the emotional and exciting scenes in the story to a certain extent while reading. Using this grammatical topic also indicates the hopeless situation that it is hardly possible to achieve something in the story.

1) So gab er allen Krokodiljägern bekannt, dass derjenige, der Chalawan jagen und ihn fangen *könnte*, von ihm eine hohe Belohnung bekommen würde. Zu allem Übel *konnte* niemand Chalawan besiegen; stattdessen fraß er die Krokodiljäger auf.

(English: It was announced that those who could catch the king of crocodiles would be rewarded. But no one could catch it and was eaten by the crocodile.)

5.1.3 The Use of Past Perfect Tense in German

The use of the past perfect tense in German is crucial to distinguish the event describing that one event goes even further back in the past than the other event. Or in relation to Buddhist belief, to exactly indicate the time specified, the use of the past perfect tense in German is crucial to distinguish the two events in the different time according to the grammatical rules. The past perfect tense as a meaningful and purposive linguistic device is a grammatical topic to transfer the religious belief of one culture to the other appropriately.



In relation to Buddhist belief, people believe in a human past life to compare with life at the present time. To exactly indicate the time specified, the use of the past perfect tense in German is crucial to distinguish the two events in the different time according to the grammatical rules. In this regard, the past perfect tense as a meaningful and purposive linguistic device is a grammatical topic which should be employed to transfer the religious belief of one culture to the other appropriately.

1) Da Thau Phang Kii von Nang Ai im vorherigen Leben *verflucht worden war*, kam plötzlich aufgrund seines negativen Karmas ein giftiger Pfeil angefliegen und traf es.

(English: As Thau Phang Kii had been cursed by Nang Ai in his past life, the poisonous arrow approached him owing to his Karma.

2) Vessavana wies sie auf das Karma des vorherigen Lebens hin, welches beim Krieg eine erhebliche Rolle *gespielt hatte*.

(English: Vessavana explained and related this action to the Karma in their past life which had a great impact on this war.)

5.2 Idioms

Apart from tenses, idioms are vital for foreign language teaching and translating. In relation to idioms, translation is the transfer of meaning from one language to another. It is not the transfer of words from language to language. You must also transfer the meaning conveyed in the text. Not only do languages consist of different words but they also have different languages, grammar, and even word orders. If we have a good command of both languages in terms of grammatical construction, translation should not be difficult, we will be able to judge whether the sentence sounds correct in our translation.

5.2.1 The use of idioms

The results found in this study indicate that idioms are used in three sentences. According to Zentner (2011), explanations in English are provided to enable readers to better understand the meanings of the idioms.

1) Thai Sentence: พระชาลวันเห็นนางตะเกาทองก็รัก

Translated Sentence in German: Als Chalawan Taphauthong sah, *verlor er sein Herz an sie*.

(English: to fall in love with someone)

2) Thai Sentence: ชาลวันได้พูดเกี่ยวกับพาราสิณางต่าง ๆ จนในที่สุดนางก็ยอมเป็นภรรยาของชาลวัน

Translated Sentence in German: Er *verdrehte ihr so sehr den Kopf*, bis sie damit einverstanden war, seine dritte Frau zu werden. (English: to turn someone's head)



3) Thai Sentence: พวกเหล่ากระเซ้งต่างพากันหนีไปหมด

Translated Sentence in German: Aus großer Angst *machten sich* die anderen Krokodile *aus dem Staube*.

(English: to clear off)

Regarding explanations in English of Zentner (2011), it will be useful for learners if activities in class concerning German idioms are designed based on the comparison between English and German.

5.2.2 Designing translation activities in German class based on the language perspectives of English

In this part, the writer mainly focuses on teaching German idioms in the context of non-native speakers. As we know that English can be understood as the global language widely used around the globe. In Thailand and in other countries in South East Asia, English is taught as a Foreign Language (L2). Thus, it can be useful teaching method if we teach and translate idioms for Thai into German translation based on English language perspectives.

As mentioned earlier, prior to German, Thai learners learn English as a first foreign language (L2). This notion leads to the next part of this paper in which it is discussed that comparing the L3 knowledge (German) with the L2 knowledge (English) can be an efficient learning strategy as these two languages have some language features in common which will cause learners to find some similarities as well equivalences for their translation.

In this part, the following teaching aspects are considered: 1) What do German teachers have to take into account when teaching German idioms based on English?; and 2) what kind of effective teaching materials and tasks can be employed based on the efficient language teaching performance?)

Based on these questions, the following activities are suggested when translating idioms for *Thai into German* translation based on English language perspectives:

1) Suggestion for idiom 1 German: Als Chalawan Ta Phau Thong sah, *verlor er sein Herz an sie*.

(Translation into English: As Chalawan saw Ta Phau Thong, he fell in love with her.)

(Explanation of the idiom in English: *to fall in love with someone or to lose one's heart to someone*)

The word *Herz* in German means *heart* in English. To analyse the semantic function of the word *Herz* in German, the following diagram is illustrated: Herz → heart (in English) → heart → love



This is the reason why this German idiom means *to fall in love with someone* in English. When learners have to translate this idiom from Thai into German. They may rely on their English knowledge and use the key word in this sentence to find a German idiom for their translation.

If they need to use an idiom which means *to fall in love with someone*, they may look up an equivalent phrase for this idiom in an English-German dictionary. Then, they will find a German idiom *sich in jemanden verlieben* based on their English knowledge.

In addition, as the word heart and love are semantically related to each other, learners may further think that they should use a German idiom based on the key word **heart** to indicate the semantic relation between the *heart and love*. They may then find the phrase *to lose one's heart to someone* which is an of equivalent idiom in this context leading them to find an appropriate idiom in German, *Herz an jemanden verlieren*.

To sum up, this example shows that how we as language educators can relate the previously gained knowledge of learners to what they are learning.

2) Suggestion for idiom 2

German: Er **verdrehte ihr** so sehr **den Kopf**, bis sie damit einverstanden war, seine dritte Frau zu werden.

(Translation into English: He turned her head until she accepted to be his third wife.)

(Explanation of the idiom in English: *to turn someone's head*)

According to Zentner (2011), *jemandem den Kopf verdrehen* means in English *to turn somebody's head*. (Zentner, 2011, p. 203)

From this example, another possibility for learners to find an appropriate and equivalent idiom for translation is using a specific German-English/English-German dictionary for idioms. The idiom *jemandem den Kopf verdrehen* in German may be difficult for learners to think of when translating at the very first step. But if they know a common idiom *to turn one's head* in English, they can further look up a German idiom with the same meaning and finally find it in their bilingual dictionary.

3) Suggestion for idiom 3

German: Aus großer Angst **machten sich** die anderen Krokodile **aus dem Staube**.

(Translation into English: From sheer fear, the other crocodiles left the place quickly.)

(Equivalent idiom in English: to clear off)



Conversely, learners may not know the idiom *to clear off* in English. But they can use a specific key word in German to find an appropriate idiom for their translation. They may finally find the idiom *sich aus dem Staube machen* in the German dictionary. However, they might not be certain whether the German idiom they use is correct. In this regard, they may use a bilingual dictionary by comparing this German idiom with its equivalence in English. In other words, the knowledge of their English can help them double-check or increase the level of their certainty.

According to Zentner (2011), *sich aus dem Staub machen* in German means *to clear off* in English

Example: Statt Rede und Antwort zu stehen, machte er sich aus dem Staub.

= Instead of explaining his actions he cleared off. (Zentner, 2011, p. 203)

In this step, learners know that the idiom in German means *to clear off* in English. They are expected to look up the meaning of this English idioms again. According to Macmillan English Dictionary (2002), *to clear off* means *to leave a place quickly* (Macmillan English Dictionary, 2002, p. 250). If this meaning shares the same meaning with the German one and matches with its Thai meaning, they can use it. This is because using idioms for translation shows the language style of learners by not translating word by word. Instead, they use an emotional idioms for their translation work correctly and purposively.

6. PRACTICAL RECCOMENDATIONS

6.1 Pedagogical Recommendations for Grammar

Specific language exercises in terms of the use of the present indicative, the subjunctive II in German, and the past perfect tense for fairy tales should be created for learners in class to familiarize them and to enable them to properly and correctly use these grammatical topics when translating. Apart from this, we cannot translate words in isolation. Words get their meanings from how they are used in each situation or a contextual translation. A bilingual dictionary should be used where one is available. When looking up translations for individual words, dictionaries are useful. Nevertheless, suggestions of native speakers play a vital role for translation in terms of contextual or cultural translating since expressions or expressing feelings in each culture are specific and culturally-bound.

6.2 Recommendations for Further Studies in terms of Grammar

Most studies concerning foreign language teaching and translation in Thailand mainly focus on L1 transfer (The process by which the learner's L1 influences the acquisition and use of an L2). As mentioned previously, we may have to work in a multilingual society and multicultural workplace, it is possible that English will not be one of the languages you work in when translating. We may have to work in more than one language. Besides, English can be understood as the global language widely used around the globe. In Thailand, English is taught as a second and foreign language (L2). Hence, comparative studies between German and English is also necessary and unavoidable when teaching foreign languages to enable the learners to relate their previous knowledge (L2) to what



they are learning (L3). In other words, it will be useful if the studies on the transfer from L2 to L3 can be conducted to analysed and compare the similarities and differences from what the previous results suggested. Moreover, there are several teaching and learning aspects in relation to the principles of language education and translation that the researcher has not examined and discussed in this study. It might lead to valuable results and fruitful discussion if other possible aspects can be further studied.

6.3 Recommendations for Idioms

In the previous part, the roles and the importance of the comparison between L2 and L3 for translating Thai into German are discussed. In this part, to enhance the competence of learners at the very first step in class, the following task for designing and creating activities to support the learning concept of comparison between L2 and L3 is recommended for its pedagogical implications: *English: to fall in love with someone =*

(German: ...?)

Sentence: I fall in love with him. =

(German: ...?)

German: jemandem den Kopf verdrehen = (English: ...?)

Sentence: Er verdrehte ihr den Kopf. =

(English: ...?)

It is recommended that translators need to know the exact meaning of the idiom when translating. They may refer to bilingual dictionary to examine the meaning of the idioms before using them in the target language. An equivalent idiom is sometimes required when translators cannot find a specific idiom which has the exact meaning in that particular context. If translators cannot find an appropriate or equivalent idioms for their translation, paraphrasing is a possible way to solve this problem but they have to consider whether the idiom used in the original text is devalued in terms of its linguistic features.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, the results revealed that firstly, the use of the *present indicative* indicates the action has not happened at the moment of reading. It is used to describe and arouse the emotion of the readers to simultaneously imagine the picture in mind at the time of reading. The readers can depicture as well as anticipate the following possible actions what will happen next while reading. Using the present indicative in the fairy tales can cause the imaginative feeling of the readers. This is because the present simple can indicate the action happening at that moment. In relation to translating literary work, especially fairy tales, past tense is the classic way to tell a story. Many fairy tales are all written and told in the past tense. This means that the time of telling the story is separated from the events of the story. However, the use of the present indicative is also



found in fairy tales by some writers and sometimes are used together with the past tense according to the intention and the language style of the translator.

Secondly, the use of the past perfect tense in German is crucial to distinguish the event describing that one event goes even further back in the past than the other event. Or in relation to Buddhist belief, to exactly indicate the time specified, the use of the past perfect tense in German is crucial to distinguish the two events in the different time according to the grammatical rules. The past perfect tense as a meaningful and purposive linguistic device is a grammatical topic to transfer the religious belief of one culture to the other appropriately.

Thirdly, the use of the subjunctive II in German is also important when translating to imply and to describe the emotional or exciting scenes in the story while reading. Using this grammatical topic also indicates the hopeless situation that it is hardly possible to achieve something in the story. Additionally, the use of these grammatical topics also shows the intention and language style of the translator depending on which meaning he or she wishes to convey in that particular context.

As mentioned earlier that English as L2 can affect L3 learning. Learners may transfer the previously gained knowledge and relate their learning styles, experience, obstacles or problems to their L3 learning to acquire the third language effectively and efficiently. In Thailand, Thai learners learn English as a first foreign language (L2) prior to other languages. So, it is suggested in this study that comparing their knowledge with what they have learned previously, namely the knowledge of English, can enhance the competence of learners to their fullest potential when learning German. This paper merely presents some possible ways to apply the knowledge of L2 in the process of L3 learnings. As discussed in this paper that it may be difficult for Thai learners to find German idioms for their translation this is because expressions or expressing feelings in each culture are specific and culturally-bound. Sometimes, it is not an easy task to convey the meaning in another context because the translator needs to find other cultural references. In this regard, comparing the L3 knowledge (German) with the L2 knowledge (English) can be an efficient learning strategy as these two languages have some

language features in common which will cause learners to find some similarities as well equivalences for their translation.

In conclusion, translation is the transfer of meaning from one language to another. It is not the transfer of words from language to language. You must also transfer the meaning conveyed in the text. Not only do languages consist of different words but they also have different languages, grammar, and even word orders. If we have a good command of both languages in terms of grammatical construction, translation should not be difficult, we will be able to judge whether the sentence sounds correct in our translation.



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