

ABSTRACT

The analysis of Thai - English translation of legal language

The study involves an analysis of legal translations from Thai to English. The subject is drawn from the narcotic laws of Thailand. The analysis is divided into two parts: the results from an analysis of language structure and the findings from questionnaires on the topic "Current Trends and Future Directions of Law Translation in Thailand".

In the first part, the patterns of legal translation both from Thai to English and from English to Thai are examined and categorized by their linguistic aspects. The descriptive method is also applied to explain the differences in language structure in English - Thai legal translation. The research findings support earlier reports by Graivixien (1984) and Bhatia (1993) that legal sentences both in English and Thai have similar characteristics and these are composed of the following examples: many complex prepositional phrases, binominal and multinominal expressions, noun phrases, connectors, adverbs, modals and conditional sentences. Although the structures are similar, the analysis indicates some differences in legal translating from Thai to English and from English to Thai. These differences are observed and illustrated in this study and are described in tables.

Regarding the last part, the main findings from the questionnaires comprising three sections are as follows: 1) Personal Data: although all of respondents have the bachelors degrees in both law and various fields, half of them have no experiences in law. 2) Data on Law Translation Jobs: most of the opportunities to translate law are in documents and from participating in international seminars. The types of translation work are reports, articles, news, communication, conferences, seminar documents and contracts / agreements. The respondents' attitude is that it is necessary to translate technical terms of law from English to Thai and 90% of the respondents believe that technical terms are the part which should be translated. In addition, they think the standard of translation needs to be fixed and they view that the Office of the Juridical Council and the Ministry of Justice are most suitable for fixing the standard of translation. 3) Data on problems concerning law translation: the problem encountered most by translators is lack of confidence in translating; the least is lack of knowledge of special lexicons / technical terms. The method most selected to solve word problems is submitting the problematic words to the Royal Institute for consideration and the method least selected is choosing words already translated by others.