

Original Paper

The Preservation of Culture-Specific Items in Translation from Vietnamese to English (Note 1)

Hoang Thi Hue^{1*} & Nguyen Hoang Nguyen¹

¹ Hue University of Education, Hue University, Hue city, Viet Nam

* Hoang Thi Hue, E-mail: hoanghuedhsp@gmail.com; hoangthihue@hueuni.edu.vn

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Abstract

The article uses statistical, comparative, quantitative and qualitative methods, to determine the frequency of using certain translation strategies for translating CSIs (in the Dumb luck novel). The data generated by this method is a statistic showing the frequency of each translation strategy applied. From studying the application of CSI translation strategies, the article have been explored to find out the handling of cultural issues in translation, whether the translators are able to convey culture-specific items from the original to the translation English, and methods to optimize CSI translation. This study will provide results that help translators understand better how to use CSI translation strategies and evaluate the effectiveness of their work in the best way, how to preserve Vietnamese cultural values when translate Vietnamese to English.

Keywords

culture-specific items, Dump luck, translation, cultural issues, CSI translation strategies, proper noun

1. Introduction

Culture is the sum total of what a society has built up from its very past to the present time and does not consist of necessarily concrete elements. Culture by its very nature both involves and is influenced by historical experiences, religious rituals, agricultural practices, traditions, habits, values, ideas, systems, technologies, literary and artistic works, etc. In essence, the culture of a society has its roots in the values and traditions of that society.

Translating from one language into another has never been an easy job even for the most experience translators. We often see translation as the basic form to hold the contact and transformation of different languages, but in fact it carries the view of contact, collision and interchange between different cultures.

The target of the translation is not only to translate the words but also the culture, therefore the translation of culture-specific items maybe unsatisfactory or even incorrect. Therefore, if the translator fails to convey the cultural value of Vietnamese society over a period of time, the values of the work will be lost. Understanding the advantages, disadvantages as well as cultural impacts on translation, the translators can decide how much important certain cultural aspects are to the text to translate them into target language by using appropriate strategies.

Exploring the translation of culture-specific items in *Dump luck* (Peter Zinoman and Nguyen Nguyet Cam), will give us a better understanding of the value of translating cultural issues, and the influence of culture on translating literary works.

2. Research Methodology

This study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method is used to determine the frequency with which a given translation strategy was used for the translation of CSIs in the novel. The data generated by this method are statistics that reveal how frequently each of the translation strategies was applied, which strategy was used most often and which strategy was used least often. Overall, this method uncovers the pattern of the translation of CSIs.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 An Overview

This chapter focuses on Vu Trong Phung's masterpiece *So do* which constitutes the corpus of the present study. It will carry out an in-depth analysis of the transfer of CSIs in *So do* into English in order to discuss the joint contribution of the translation of CSIs to the development of a foreignized or domesticated text. The chapter finally will present a detailed discussion of the results derived from the analysis of the translation of CSIs.

So do is Vu Trong Phung's successful novel in terms of content and art form. He generalized the picture of contemporary urban society, the miserable urban area in the urbanization of a colony, in a country full of idyllic ideals, customs and hybrid. Vu Trong Phung criticized strongly the inhuman, deceitful and corrupt nature of the upper society before the August Revolution. By building caricature portraits: sex and lust, organizing the plot based on comical scenes, reverse situations, each chapter is a comedy. Comedy in every detail: writing, tone, analogy, pun...

Vu Trong Phung lived in the period of society changing from feudal colonial life to Europeanization and urbanization, it was the time when the society was full of ludicrous things. To paint such a colorful picture, the author puts in his novel a great deal of culture-specific content. A big proportion of the CSIs found in the novel are used to name the characters. Others are used to describe their customs through idioms, how they work or which way they behave. Many CSIs are names of the characters, organizations, or places. In total, 128 CSIs have been found throughout the book.

To deal with such a large number of CSIs, all six strategies proposed in Davies' taxonomy were employed by the translators, though the frequencies with which they were resorted to are markedly different from one another. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the six strategies among the 80 CSIs. It is evident that the most prominent strategy is preservation, which was used to translate 61, accounting for up to 49%, of all the 128 CSIs analyzed. The second most common strategy is addition, used on 53 CSIs, equivalent to 41%. Meanwhile, the least frequently used strategy is transformation with no CSI found. The prevalence of preservation and addition, together with the rarity of transformation, indicates the translators' emphasis on conveying truthfully and adequately the cultural content of the source text for English readers.

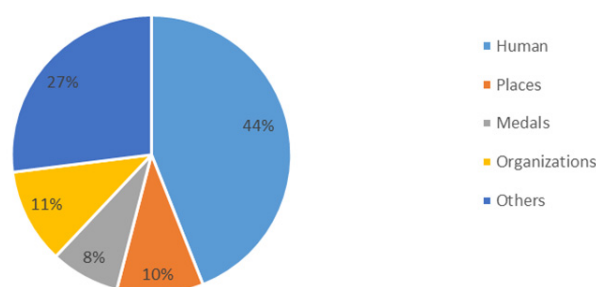
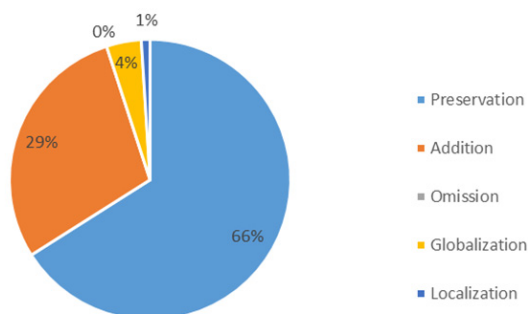
Meanwhile, the other three strategies, namely globalization, localization and omission, were used quite sporadically, to translate only 8, 4 and 2 CSIs, equivalent to 6%, 3% and 1% respectively. That localization and omission were used not often reaffirms the translators' determination to retain the distinctive cultural colors of the source text. The number of CSIs translated by globalization is not small. However, this figure proves disproportionate in comparison with the number of CSIs translated by preservation. It seems that between anchoring the foreign cultural references into the target language's culture and keeping their exoticness, the translators tended to favor the latter. In other words, rather than trying to make the translated text sound as if it originated from the English culture, the translators decided to make readers aware that the novel they are reading is set in a culture different from theirs. It is noticeable that the prevalence or scantiness of a strategy when it is considered in the whole of 128 CSIs does not correspond to the prevalence or scantiness of that strategy if it is considered in one of the two subgroups of CSIs. In fact, how the six strategies are distributed among the 80 proper noun CSIs is different from how they are distributed among 48 common expression CSIs. In the following part, a detailed examination of the translation of these two subgroups of CSIs will be given.

3.2 The Translation of Proper Noun Culture-Specific Items

The first category of CSIs to be examined is proper nouns. Of the 128 CSIs that are found throughout the novel, 80, or more than three-fourths, are proper names. Many of them are names of people and places. Some are names of medals, organizations and others. These 80 proper noun CSIs will be classified into 5 categories.

Table 1. Type of Proper Noun CSIs

Proper noun	Frequency
Human	35
Places	8
Medals	6
Organizations	9
Others	22

Types of proper noun CSIs**Figure 1. Show the Frequency of Proper Noun CSIs in So Do****Strategies to translate proper noun CSIs****Figure 2. Shows the Frequency with Which Each of Davies' Six Strategies Was Used to Deal with These 80 CSIs**

The prevailing method is preservation, which was used to translate 53, or 66%, of all the CSIs in this category. The second most common strategy is addition, employed for the translation of 23, equivalent to more than 29%, of the 80 CSIs. Meanwhile, only 3 and 1 CSIs, each accounting to almost 5% of the number of CSIs in this subgroup, were translated by globalization and localization respectively. No CSIs was omitted and only none was translated by transformation.

These 80 proper noun CSIs will now be discussed in more detail. They will be grouped into their respective strategy. Due to the limited space of this thesis, only examples that are representative will be mentioned here. For the full list of all proper name CSIs, together with their translation strategy, please refer to Appendix 1.

3.3 Preservation

Preservation refers to the retention of a CSI in the TT. There are two types of preservation as formal and semantic preservation. The first means preserving the form of a CSI in the target text. Accordingly, a ST item is either transliterated or kept unchanged in the TT. The latter means preserving the literal meaning of a CSI in the TT. Accordingly, a ST item is literally translated into the TT without any explanation (Davies, 2003). Both formal and semantic preservation will be analyzed under the heading of preservation.

Preservation is found to be the most common method used to translate proper name CSIs in the novel *So do*, with 53 items subjected to this strategy. A systematic application of preservation means that the translator will be able to preserve the exoticness of the source text. Encountering names that are distinctively foreign, readers will be reminded that the story happens in a country and a culture that are different from theirs. This strategy was particularly often employed in the translation of names of characters or places that do not bear any significant historical or cultural associations. Below are some examples.

Table 2. Examples of Preservation Applied in Translating CSIs

	Vietnamese	English
1	Số đào hoa của Xuân tóc đỏ	Red-Haired Xuân's Luck in Love
2	Lòng thương người của Bà Phó Đoan	The Compassion of Mrs. Deputy Customs Officer
3	Cặp vợ chồng Văn Minh khẽ cúi đầu đáp, nhưng bà Phó Đoan ngẩng một cái.	Mr. and Mrs. Civilization nodded their heads in acknowledgment, but Mrs. Deputy Customs Officer turned away in disgust.
4	Chung quanh cổ, một cái vòng vàng đeo nặng trĩu, một chiếc khánh vàng với một cái gôi quạ. Thấy tiếng chị ba nói như van lơn: -Cậu Phước mặc quần vào, đi.	Around his neck was a thick gold choker on which hung a small pendant and a huge gold medallion. The plaintive wail of Miss Three echoed from the other room: "Master Blessing! Master Blessing! Please put on your pants!"

5	Ông Victor Ban kinh hãi cúi đầu rất thấp, bắt tay Xuân Tóc Đỏ xong thì đứng ngây mặt ra như người bằng gỗ.	Victor Ban bowed his head low and shook hands with Xuan, who stood frozen in place like a wooden statue.
6	Cụ Hồng chưa kịp đáp đã giữ lấy ngực để ho sù sụ lên một hồi dài ghê gớm như sặc thuốc lào.	Before he could reply, Grandpa Hồng was seized by a fit of violent coughing.
7	Giữa lúc ấy, cô Tuyết bước vào. Cô này là con gái út cụ Hồng, mới 18 tuổi đúng, rất có nhan sắc, lại cũng lãng mạn theo cái lối tân tiến rôm...	As the debate heated up, Miss Snow-Grandpa Hồng's eighteen-year-old baby daughter-entered the room. She was beautiful and possessed a frivolous romantic quality that was fashionable for the time.

The translators keep as much as they can of the original reference. The obvious example here is the treatment of Victor Ban, ông Joseph Thiết. They do not have any special historical or cultural associations with them, although the way they sound to Vietnamese speaking readers must be different from the way they sound to readers who do not speak Vietnamese.

In the English translation of *So do*, to make the readers recognize the proper names, the translator borrow which has the same meaning in the T.T. Proper names such as Xuân Tóc Đỏ, bà Phó Đoan, bà Văn Minh, ông Văn Minh, cậu Phước are treated. In this way, readers can read as well as simplify the names. In his taxonomy, Davies (2003) distinguished between two types of preservation: formal preservation and semantic preservation. All the examples shown above are cases of formal preservation where the CSIs were kept exactly like they are in the source text.

The general rule seems to be that if a name or part of a name has meaning, it will be semantically preserved, whereas if it does not have any meaning, it will be formally preserved. Semantic preservation did not happen in the translation of proper name CSIs. The translators fail in transferring all the meanings of the names like the humorous textual effects carried by certain proper names, acronyms or puns. Below are some examples:

Table 3. Some Wordplays of Proper Name CSIs

1	Xuân Tóc Đỏ	Red-Haired Xuan
2	Bà Phó Đoan	Mrs. Deputy Customs Officer
3	Cậu Phước	Master Blessing
4	Ông TYPN (Tôi Yêu Phụ Nữ)	Mr. ILL (I Love Ladies)

Red-Haired Xuan is the central character with typical traits of the so-called “Europeanization”. Vu Trong Phung’s language is very consistent in re-enacting this central character but at the same time the writer always uses contradictions to show the multifaceted character. Even the name “Red Haired Xuan” has opposite meanings. Red haired is a typical sign to identify this character, the result of the miserable years of miserable life: “Damn, I’ve never bought a hat before, but my hair is red”. But with the modern couple in Bong Lai Hotel rejoiced: “Damn, your hair is very beautiful, very fashionable”. “Xuân has red hair because it is sunburn. Red refers to his nature: hooliganism, homeless, uneducated. Red also refers to luck “đỏ”, xuân’s luck. Due to the hooliganism in accordance with the social nature, he quickly infiltrate the upper society to become a phony learner, a phony doctor. Red-Haired Xuan yet to convey the meaning of this hidden meaning.

Bà Phó Đoan, Đoan is the husband’s name, it means decent and respectable. On the other hand, Bà Phó Đoan is completely opposite. A fat and erotic woman, who always want to be raped. Fashion designer However, the cultural content in the source text has not been fully conveyed, the reader may not understand all the artistic intentions of writer Vu Trong Phung. In translated texts, this translation strategy can generally be used quite commonly. With Vu Trong Phung’s in *So Do*, the cultural meaning of the author’s name has not been shown. For example, in Mrs. Pho Doan, in addition to the meaning of the husband’s name, it also means expressing the respect and respect of a woman. But the name is like that, and her true nature is a lecherous woman, unconcerned, ignoring. Vu Trong Phung named it to emphasize her lecherous nature, and at the same time highlighted the laughable and despicable character of Mrs. Doan Doan. Mr. TYPN used to fabricate very bold women’s clothes with names that Dậy thì, Ngừng tay, Ôm ỡ,... but scold his wife for wearing modern clothes. So do repeating cultural movements, political trends, literary trends, artistic movement ... In *So do*, Vu Trong Phung mimics how many “turns” of a chaotic society: europeanization, popularization, romance, urbanization, abstraction, politicization ...

Opposing details exist in the same character, each name contains epigrammatic and humorous elements. Vu Trong Phung wanted to point out the truth of ridiculous lies of the men who are known as the noble, civilized and modern civilians, which are actually scum, teratogens of the colonial society in the country before the August revolution.

The translators attempt to preserve the form of original items but they also prevent readers from having a chance to discover the implication meaning or hidden message which are underlying those proper names. It could be said that as globalization takes place at an increasing speed and American people experience more exposure to Asia cultures in general and Vietnamese culture in particular, people feel more comfortable reading texts with names that are not English and therefore the need for translators to adapt the names has become less relevant. The naming is not simply a symbol of the character, but rather a way of expressing a vision, an attitude of the narrator to the character. The *So Do* is a laugh that mimics the “Europeanized” society of Vietnamese urban under the rule of French colonial rule.

Table 4. Some Proper Nouns of Places

1	Đường Cổ Ngư	Old Fish Road
2	Hồ Tây	West Lake
3	Hồ Trúc Bạch	White Bamboo Lake
4	Đền Bia	Bia Pagoda

The preservation of the meaning of a cultural element may lead to loss of its other aspects such as connotations whereas the preservation of the form may lead to loss of its recognizable meaning (Davies, 2003, p. 75). Except from the last example, all the phrases have been literally translated into English. *Cổ Ngư*, *Hồ Tây*, *Hồ Trúc Bạch* are place names and they do not have any implication in Vietnamese context and these names does not interfere with reading experience. As a result, the translators should use repetition to preserve all these names in the target text.

3.4 Addition

The translators use the above-mentioned procedures, but considers it necessary to offer some explanation of the meaning or implications of the CSIs. At the same time, it does not legitimate or convenient to mix this explanation with the text. The decision, then, is to distinguish the gloss by marking it as such (footnote, endnote, glossary, commentary/translation in brackets, in italics, etc.)

Of the 80 proper noun CSIs found in the novel *So do*, 23 items were translated by addition. This strategy was usually employed when simple preservation of the CSIs would cause obscurity in meaning. By providing readers with more background information, addition helps to ensure that readers are well informed enough to have a comfortable reading experience.

Information can be added inside the text or outside the text as a footnote. There are examples of both types in the 23 instances of addition to proper name CSIs found in the novel. Below are some examples.

Table 5. Examples of Addition Applied in Translating CSIs

	Vietnamese	English
1	Xuân Tóc Đò không ngờ rằng khi xưa, lúc nó ngồi đọc quảng cáo cho một hiệu thuốc vào phóng thanh, và ngồi trên mũi ô tô với bộ quần áo Charlot và cái mặt nạ thổi loa khắp phố phường [...].	How could Xuân have guessed the benefit he was to derive from an old part-time job for which he was paid to sit on the hood of a car, made up as <i>Charlot</i> , [9] and bark out advertisements over a loudspeaker [...]
2	Một khi Hoạn Thư đã nổi giận.	The Anger of <i>Hoạn Thư</i> [1]

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 3 | Ông Văn Minh ngửa đầu tựa thành ghế lấy điều thuốc Ăng-lê thứ mười tám ra để lên miệng, oai vệ quệt diêm. | Mr. Civilization leaned back in his chair and looked up at the ceiling. He put the eighteenth <i>Ăng-lê</i> [2] cigarette of the day into his mouth and struck a match. |
| 4 | Cụ cũng tiu ngui ở chỗ con cụ không kiếm nổi mảnh văn bằng nào, nhưng khi nghe con cụ cãi rằng: “Học thức không ở văn bằng. Những người như Phạm Quỳnh hay Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh, mà khảo đến bằng, thì thành ra vô học hay sao?” thì cụ lại được yên tâm. | While disappointed that his son had returned home without a diploma, he was reassured by the argument that “education does not come from a diploma. If it did, then even <i>Phạm Quỳnh</i> and <i>Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh</i> are uneducated”. [6] |
| 5 | Xưa kia, cụ là một ông phán. Sau khi hưu trí, nghiệm rằng cụ đã giúp nước phò vua trong 30 năm tròn, Nhà nước bèn ân thưởng cho cụ cái Hồng lô tự thiếu khanh. | Following retirement, the state acknowledged his thirty years of service to the king and the country by awarding him the <i>Hồng lô tự thiếu khanh medal</i> . [3] |
| 6 | Ngàn ấy điều kiện đã khiến cụ Hồng trung thành với ông con trai đã Pháp du của cụ cũng như trung thành với nước Đại Pháp. Cụ đã xưng toa moa với con, hết sức hoan nghênh đủ mọi việc và đủ mọi cử chỉ Tây Tàu của con cụ. | Just as he was faithful to Great France, Grandpa Hồng was fiercely loyal to his son, a fidelity he demonstrated by adopting all of his son’s many foreign affectations, such as using the pronouns <i>toa</i> and <i>moa</i> . [7] |

Footnotes were resorted to only when the references require lengthy explanations that cannot be incorporated into the text. For example, to enlighten readers about *Hoạn Thư*, the translators added the following footnote: “Character from Nguyễn Du’s celebrated verse narrative *Kim Vân Kiều*, renowned for her jealousy”. Likewise, with *Phạm Quỳnh và Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh*, the translators supplemented: “Phạm Quỳnh (1898-1945) and Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh (1882-1936) were prominent francophone intellectuals and journalists during the interwar era”. With 23 footnotes made for the total of 80 proper noun CSIs, the translators seem to have been careful in opting for this method, which is understandable as too many footnotes may disturb readers’ experience or, more dangerously, disengage them from the narrative.

Table 6. Examples of Transliteration Applied in Translating CSIs

1	Một người đi qua, ông gọi lại chán nản mà rằng: -Này, thầy min đơ thầy có buồn không!	“Hey, Officer Min đơ !” [1] he called out glumly. “Is this pathetic or what?”
2	Ông Văn Minh ngửa đầu tựa thành ghế lấy điếu thuốc Ăng-lê thứ mười tám ra để lên miệng, oai vệ quẹt diêm.	Mr. Civilization leaned back in his chair and looked up at the ceiling. He put the eighteenth Ăng-lê [2] cigarette of the day into his mouth and struck a match.
3	Bà Văn Minh ẹo là hai bàn tay ngọc khẽ vỗ vào nhau -Được lắm! Dernières créations!	Mrs. Civilization clapped her elegant hands together. “Very good! Derniere creation! ” [2]
4	-Thưa ngài, tôi rất được hân hạnh nếu ngài cho tôi hầu ngài vài séc .	“I would be honored if you would play a séc [2] with me,” he said.

In descriptive equivalent, the meaning of the culture bound term is explained in several words. The proper names in the ST have been transliterated by the formal preservation strategy. For example, the ST item *Dernières créations* and proper name *Min đơ* have been transliterated in the TT. The concept of *Dernières créations* literally means “most recent creation”, the translators make it more visible to the target readers as they retain the phrase in the ST and provide explanation with footnotes and in italics. The other instances are transliterated in the same way. The translators exactly bring the ST item into the TT along with footnotes. Most of the times, these footnotes are very brief because adding a lengthy note may cause divergence from the original and lead to discrepancy in length between the source text and the translation.

It is noticeable that intratextual additions, meaning additions made inside the text, and footnotes are not incompatible with each other. There are many instances where the translators used both in translating one CSI. For example, with *Hồng lô tự thiếu khanh*, the translators added both an intratextual addition, *medal*, and a footnote.

3.5 Omission

Omission is the deletion of a CSI in the TT so that the target readers will be totally unaware of its existence. A CSI may be omitted for several reasons such as the lack of an equivalent term in the target language and the inability to interpret the meaning of the original item. Although the omission of an ST item may result in the complete loss of the original reference, it may ensure a smooth reading process for the target audience.

Of the six strategies proposed by Davies, omission could be said to be the most radical one. While the other five strategies allow readers of the translated text to access, to varying degrees, to the cultural implications inherent in the original CSIs, omission totally stripes the readers of this opportunity by

actually removing the CSIs from the translation.

No omission is found in the translation of a total of 80 proper noun CSIs. Aware of the loss that this strategy may very likely cause, the translators must have tried their best to avoid it by opting for other strategies instead.

3.6 Globalization

Globalization is the replacement of a CSI with a more neutral or generic term in order to reach and attract a wider readership. When a CSI is globalized into a more general term or a superordinate, it may lead to some loss of the cultural associations or characteristic attributions of the original item. There are totally 3 cases of globalization in the translation of proper name CSIs in *So do*. They are presented in the table below.

Table 7. Examples of Globalization Applied in Translating CSIs

	Vietnamese	English
1	-Bần tăng xin phép... Thưa ngài, bần tăng đã cam chịu khổ hạnh, vất vả đến nỗi bần tăng lại còn làm chủ nhiệm một tờ báo nữa, tờ báo Gỗ mỗ ... A Di Đà Phật!	“With your permission ... Sir, I am a poor monk who lives but an ascetic and onerous existence. In addition, I am the publisher of a newspaper called the Wooden Fish Drum . Amitabha!”
2	Chắc rồi đức Kim Thượng sẽ được thỏa ý, nếu ngài đánh đổ mấy cây quân vọt quán quân của Trung Kỳ, Nam Kỳ, rồi đại biểu cho Đông Dương để đi Xiêm .	Our Majesty will be so pleased if you defeat the champions of Annam and Cochinchina and go on to represent Indochina in Siam .
3	Hồ Trúc Bạch cứ là một thứ hàn thử biểu, thời khắc biểu về những bi kịch mới cũ xung đột, cá nhân, gia đình, hy sinh, giác ngộ, áp chế, giải phóng mãi mãi, mãi mãi, nếu không có một nhà thương yêu nòi giống xây ngay trên bờ hồ ấy một khách sạn mà Tây phương có lẽ cũng thèm muốn, là khách sạn Bông Lai .	The White Bamboo Lake might have remained forever and ever little more than a contemporary barometer of tragic conflict between the Old and the New, the Individual and the Family, Self-Sacrifice and Political Awakening, and Oppression and Liberation, had not a great patriot decided to construct on its banks an irresistible (even to the French) lakeside inn known as the Fairyland Hotel .

With the application of globalization, a CSI is substituted by a more neutral, widely accessible term, thanks to which its essential meaning is kept and readers of the translation will not feel that something has been lost when they encounter the term.

Mỗ, literary meaning *wooden fish drum* is a wooden percussion instrument. The *wooden fish drum* is used by monks and lay people in the Buddhist tradition. Also, “Gõ mõ” is the job of the one who has to drum and announce according to the orders of dignitaries in ancient Vietnamese villages. His job is to go around the village knocking on villagers to gather at the courtyard to hear the news that happened in the village. In fact, “Thằng mõ” is often a very poor person and is overlooked by the villagers. *Gõ mõ* is considered the most primitive media in Vietnamese traditional society, this “communication system” existed until the middle of the twentieth century and contributed a certain value in bringing information to the villagers. Vu Trong Phung used “Gõ mõ” with a sarcastic meaning, exposing the evil nature of the newspaper to create laugh. The ST item *tờ báo Gõ mõ* has been translated as a more general term *the Wooden Fish Drum*. This globalization of the translator have failed in delivering the hidden message which are underlying the proper name.

The phrase *Bồng Lai* literally meaning “Paradise view” has been translated as a more general term *Fairyland* into English. Although this translation neutralizes the religious content of this CSI, it still gives its essential meaning. Thus, the translation here does not disturb the smooth flow of reading as a result of the globalization strategy.

3.7 Localization

Localization has been rarely applied in the translation of proper name CSIs in *So do*, with only 1 CSI localized.

Table 8. Examples of Localization Applied in Translating CSIs

Vietnamese	English	Back translation
Thật vậy, chính sự nghiệp của ông, cũng là kỳ lạ, từ khi ông làm Vua Thuốc Lậu và chủ tiệm Bồng Lai	Just like Xuan, Victor Ban had also recently reinvented himself-from the King of Venereal Disease Treatment to the owner of the Fairyland Hotel	Vua điều trị bệnh hoa liễu

The ST item *Thuốc Lậu* has been rendered as *Venereal Disease* in the TT. The translators have also inserted *Treatment* into the TT in order to clarify what this proper noun refers to. However, *thuốc lậu*, a Vietnamese noun usually used to denote the counterfeit of herbs. It is not the name of Gonorrhoea medicine. The translators who may have been motivated by the desire to familiarize the target readers with the source culture. Due to misunderstanding, they have delivered the wrong translation.

4. Conclusions

The present study aims to carries out a comparative analysis of Vu Trong Phung's *So do* (1936) and its English translation entitled *Dump Luck* (2002) done by by Nguyen Nguyet Cam and Peter Zinoman in terms of the translation of CSIs. There are a considerable number of Vietnamese CSIs scattered on the pages of the novel which may be challenging for readers from outside the Vietnamese culture.

In the light of the theoretical framework discussed in the first, the study examines closely the translation of CSI in the *So Do* into the English to determine which strategies proposed by Davies (2003) have been used in the transfer of CSIs in *So do* into English. When a CSI in the *So Do* refers to the names of people, places, organizations, etc., the translators have opted to either preserve them in English with the minimum of adaptation or to supplement them with explanatory information in the English to facilitate readers' familiarity with such references. Therefore, the cultural peculiarities of *So do* is retained and reflected in the English translation *Dumb Luck*, for the majority of the CSIs in the *So Do* are kept almost unchanged and imported into the English and the flavor of the original culture is imparted to the receiving culture.

As the translators have opted to stay closer to the *So Do*, the target readers, in one way or another, learn about the source culture. Accordingly, readers of the English who continually encounter alien references and items belonging to the Vietnamese culture journey through a Vietnamese epic and human encyclopedia of nearly 200 pages. The article uses statistical, comparative, quantitative and qualitative methods, to determine the frequency of using certain translation strategies for translating CSIs in the *Dumb luck* novel. The data generated by this method is a statistic showing the frequency of each translation strategy applied.

From studying the application of CSI translation strategies, the article have been explored to find out the handling of cultural issues in translation, whether the translators are able to convey culture-specific items from the original to the translation English, and methods to optimize CSI translation. This study will provide results that help translators understand better how to use CSI translation strategies and evaluate the effectiveness of their work in the best way.

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Notes

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