Analyzing the English Translation of "Kalit" by Sunray Balasbas Through the Lens of Vinay and Darbelnet`s Translation Model

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the translation of the Waray poem *Kalit* by Sunray Balasbas into English. This identified translation problems and applied strategies through Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation model. Employing a qualitative research design, specifically textual analysis, the study focused on both the linguistic and cultural dimensions of translation. The researchers translated the poem, documented problems, and analyzed how direct and oblique translation strategies, such as borrowing, calque, literal translation, modulation, transposition, and equivalence, were applied. Findings revealed key problems including lexical gaps, idiomatic expressions, grammatical differences, and the preservation of emotional tone. The study found that using Vinay and Darbelnet's framework allowed for a nuanced translation that maintained the cultural depth and poetic integrity of the source text.The study concludes that translating regional literature demands not only linguistic accuracy but also a deep understanding of cultural context, emotional tone, and stylistic intent. This reinforces Hatim and Munday's (2004) argument that effective literary translation balances fidelity to the source with readability in the target language. Recommendations include integrating translation theory into classroom instruction, using regional literature in translation exercises, and encouraging flexible strategies for student translators. Future researchers are encouraged to explore comparative translations across languages and examine reader reception to better understand the impact of translated regional texts. The development of a glossary of culturally specific Waray terms is also suggested to support future translation efforts.

Keywords: *Translation, Poetry, Waray Literature, Waray language, Vinay and Darbelnet's Model*

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, translation has played a vital role in fostering communication and understanding among individuals and nations—an importance that has only grown in today's globalized world. As Anderman and Rogers (2003) assert, translation may rightly be regarded as both an art and a science. It is a science in that it handles factual content and objective information, often requiring precision and consistency. At the same time, translation is also an art because it involves the aesthetic and expressive dimensions of language. Similarly, Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) argue that translation can at times be viewed as a creative act, wherein the translator crafts a unique rendition, hence every translator may offer a version that is singular and inimitable.

As Boase-Beier (2017) points out, translated poetry necessitates more effort on the part of the reader to create a context that supports interpretation, and thus the translation process can be said to have "enhanced and intensified many of the poetic elements of the source text." Stylistic study of translated texts might be expected to find that such texts possess. Even within the same cultural background, poetic language is sometimes difficult and nearly never easy, as "English," "French," or "Arabic" cover a wide range of contexts within a single language.

De Asis-Nungay (2004) emphasized that the history of a nation can be learned from its constitutions, its laws, and its political statement. But the history of a nation's spirit is in literature. Waray literature is a wealthy collection of poems and oral and written stories. Siday is particularly an enduring literary form that has survived through the years and has continued to evolve. At present, it is the most popular literary genre among local writers in Samar and Leyte. Writing in Waray is a vital part of the Waray society as it reflects the identity and culture of its people. Hence, it is important to integrate Waray literature in the classrooms. This would allow a deeper understanding of one's culture through contextualized learning strategies including local literature. Waray literature has to be taught not only the reading of it but also side by side with the writing of it because it is an affirmation that Waray language and literature are not inferior to the language and literature of the other parts of the world. Despite this, the siday has generally been relegated to the margins of academic study.

Sugbo (2003) explained that there has been a renewed interest in local literature as new Waray writing is being created, sparked by writers and Waray academics who conduct writers' workshops in which they teach the art of poetry and fiction. Today's Waray poetry is subtle and lightweight, metaphorical and creative, in contrast to previous generations' poetry. He went on to say that the new policy requiring students to research local literatures in school has aided young people in becoming more mindful of their own literatures, as well as the ideals and understanding of their cultures, through reading local literatures.

Alunan (2017) discussed one problem that teachers face when they teach literature in the native language which is the lack or absence of materials. The current system of education has alienated students

from their own cultures because they focused more on learning Anglo- Saxon literatures which are written in English. One of the problems in any college or university of students learning literature is that literary studies is at the bottom of the educational chain, reviled and despised by instructors, students, and administrators who do not understand its importance. Tiempo (1996) says that one misconception in teaching literature is giving a large portion of the sixty minutes of a class meeting to the author's life. Biography is never a substitute for the work itself.

The majority of the literature teachers in the country seem ill-equipped to teach literature courses. Consequently, the students are not challenged to think, to rationalize, to analyze, and to evaluate. Instead of developing their sensibility and making literature alive and enriching, literature teachers stunt the minds of students. Cadden (1965) underscored that this problem in teaching literature, poetry in particular, where teachers teach poets and not the poetry itself, results in students becoming acquainted with poets but not experiencing the beauty that poetry has to offer.

Because of the cultural overlap between the different words in the Waray language and English, as well as their profound impact on Waray culture, and the various interpretations of their meanings, it is difficult to determine the exact lexical item that can be used to label each of those culture-specific items (CSI) in the context of translation. As a result, the process of determining an appropriate equivalent term must take place within the context of cultural translation. The difficulties of translating the various classes of CSIs can be better understood if one considers that even transliterating these lexical items is difficult and usually results in multiple alternatives for the same words. To make matters even more difficult, the East and West have opposing viewpoints on many issues. For example, in terms of translating certain mythological creatures, Easterners' understanding of the startling, troublesome, frightening creature has little to do with the Western media's promising, magical, unthreatening image of the same creature.

When it comes to translation, these issues have given rise to two opposing viewpoints. On the one hand, some argue that no single translation strategy can capture the true essence of certain CSIs. Others, on the other hand, accept the broader concept of untranslatability and seek guidance from existing suggestions for dealing with non-equivalence. To overcome the problems that accompany the process of translating literary texts, particularly the siday, which becomes more complicated when the translator is faced with the problem of translating lexical items in the Waray culture, a good mastery of literary translation methods and strategies is required.

In a multilingual country like the Philippines, where literature is often born in regional languages, the task of translating these works into widely understood languages like English is both a cultural necessity and a linguistic challenge. One such literary piece is *Kalit*, a Waray poem written by local poet Sunray Balasbas. This poem captures the emotional subtleties and lived experiences of Waray speakers— nuances that risk being diluted or lost when rendered into another language.

The central aim of this study was to analyze the English translation of *Kalit* through the lens of Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation model, which offers a structured approach for analyzing the shifts that occur between source and target texts. Their model identifies two general strategies—direct

translation (including borrowing, calque, and literal translation) and oblique translation (including transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation)—which serve as tools for evaluating how meaning is carried over across languages. Given the poem's regional origin and emotional depth, applying such a model is timely and necessary to understand the layers of transformation in the translation process.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the growing body of research on regional Philippine literature and its translation, an area still underrepresented in academic discussions. Second, it highlights the role of translation as a form of cultural preservation and accessibility. According to Newmark (1988), translation is a bridge that allows literature to cross linguistic and cultural borders without losing its essence. By analyzing *Kalit* using an established theoretical framework, this research emphasizes the translator's responsibility in maintaining poetic integrity while adapting to the linguistic norms of the target language.

The scope of this study focused specifically on the textual analysis of the English translation of *Kalit*. It did not intend to evaluate the translator's background or the reception of the translation by audience. Rather, the analysis was delimited to identifying translation problems, translation strategies used, and how these affect the representation of meaning, emotion, and style in the translated text.

With these in mind, the study aimed to (1) translate Sunray Balasbas' Waray poem Kalit into English, 2) identify the translation problems encountered during the translation process, 3) apply translation strategies based on Vinay and Darbelnet's model to address these problems, and 4) provide practical recommendations based on the findings of the study. Ultimately, the study seeks to spark a broader conversation on the importance of theory-informed translation in preserving the cultural and literary richness of regional Philippine works.

METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design, particularly textual analysis. Since the main goal was to analyze the English translation of the Waray poem *Kalit* using Vinay and Darbelnet's model, the descriptive approach allowed for a detailed analysis of the translation process and the challenges encountered along the way. Through this approach, the researchers were able to identify translation problems, apply relevant strategies, and offer insights into practical solutions based on the model.

The focus on analysis also made it possible to explore not just the technical aspects of translation, but also the cultural and linguistic nuances embedded in the original Waray poem. This aligns with the broader aim of understanding how meaning can be carried over from one language to another, especially in the context of local literature.

Data Description

The primary source of data for this study was the Waray poem *Kalit*, written by Sunray Balasbas. This piece, which falls under the literary form known as *siday*, was composed during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019. The poem captures the emotions, experiences, and reflections brought about by the sudden and life-changing impact of the global crisis.

Kalit was selected for its rich imagery and expressive language, which presented both opportunities and challenges in translation. The poem's cultural and emotional weight made it an ideal subject for applying Vinay and Darbelnet's translation model, which emphasizes both linguistic and stylistic elements.

Data Collection and Analysis

Before the analysis began, the researchers sought and were granted permission by the author, Sunray Balasbas, to use *Kalit* as the main source of data for this study. This step ensured that ethical standards were followed, and the author's intellectual property was respected.

Once permission was obtained, the researchers proceeded with the translation of the poem from Waray to English. During this process, any difficulties or problems encountered were carefully documented. These included lexical gaps, idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and structural differences between the source and target languages.

Following the identification of these translation challenges, the researchers applied the strategies outlined in Vinay and Darbelnet's model—specifically, the methods of direct and oblique translation. Each instance of a problem was analyzed in relation to the strategy used to address it. This allowed for a systematic examination of how well the model worked in handling the complexities of translating a regional literary piece.

Finally, based on the findings of the analysis, practical recommendations were formulated to guide students, emerging translators, language and literature teachers, and future researchers working with local literature, particularly those dealing with underrepresented languages like Waray.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the translation of Sunray Balasbas's Kalit from Waray to English, specifically focusing on identifying the translation problems encountered during the process and applying translation strategies based on Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) model. The findings below are categorized accordingly.

Translation of the Poem "Kalit"

Source Text	Translated Text
Kalit	Suddenly
Adi na an kathuraw	The drought has come and clouds drift
Daw mga gapas an mga dampog	like cotton.
Naanod	
	Where are they heading?
Tikain dawla?	And cicadas suddenly whir like Iday's cry
Ngan kalit humuni an Gangis	Where are you going?
Sugad han kan iday pag tangis	Time, so loud,
	so rushed.
Tikain ka dawla?	The skies turned dark.
An panahon, kaapurado,	Then slowly, the heavy rain began to fall,
nagbarikaso.	thudding on the roof, leaking through the ceiling.
	And in pans, rain no one could have forestalled
Nagdalumdon an langet.	
Ngan hinay-hinay nanlagatik ha atop an bahol nga	When the rain stopped, we mopped the floor,
turo han uran. Tagsa tagsa kita	hung the curtains back,
trapo ug panalod	and locked the door.
han mga tabuyas	
nga diri mapugngan.	Time—
	still loud,
Kahuman,	still rushing, now distant.
Paghuraw,	
Panlimpyo,	The church bells rang Oratio Imperata
Pangurtina,	
Ngan an porta igtrangkado	Sign of the cross
An panahon, kaapurado,	Relief came delayed,
nagbarikaso, distansyado.	Ants came before we even tasted cans of sardines.
	The 3-in-1 coffee given by the chairperson has
Tunog han Kampana	now cooled, waiting for the rooster's crow.
Orasyon Imperata	
	In your haste, your longing showed,
Pungudos	etched in your face.
Halaghag an pagbasiyo, Nahiuna an harumigas	Your hair, brushed back, meticulously arranged,
pagsulat han sardinas. Mapinit na an 3 in 1 hatag	dressed in those trousers and your favorite Ambel
ni Kapitan paghinulat tumugaok kamanokan.	shirt, the one with the delicate floral embroidery.
Han im pag-apura, nadalum ha bayhon an	
kamingaw mo.	Everything is ready,
	we're about to leave.
Ginpaura han pamada,	We rushed to the street,
Buhok mo nga buhay,	No one here knows you except by rumors
Sul-ot an karsonsilyo,	and wary stares
Doblehan Ambel nga paborito, padis pulo nga	

burdado hin bukad pustorawo. Ngatanan andam na, Makadto na kita. Nag papalanat mga pitad didto han kalsada nga nagiliw han kaliding. Waray ha imo nakilala nga sangkay asay mga huring ngan siplat an pabalon. Lantaw ko na an Brgy. Rawis Samtang an baybay ha imim naabigis. Maghihimlas panhauli ha akon pag uli, talagudti nga tarahiti han imo baris nga akon ginlili	From a distance, I could see Rawis— its shoreline mirrored in the curve of your lips. We wash ourselves and heal upon returning, holding your tear-stained baris of clothes.

2. Translation Problems Encountered

1.1 Lexical Gaps and Culture-Bound Terms

The poem contains terms and expressions that are unique to the Waray culture. Words like *"Ambel"*, "baris", and *"Orasyon Imperata"* carry specific local or religious meanings that lack direct English equivalents. These terms challenge the translators to either find a close approximation or retain the term while adding context.

These strategies reflect the translator's effort to maintain the cultural embeddedness of the poem, an approach supported by scholars like Nida (1964), who emphasized the importance of dynamic equivalence in religious and poetic texts.

1.2 Idiomatic and Figurative Language

Several lines in the poem feature poetic or idiomatic expressions that resist literal translation. For example, "*Nagpapalanat mga pitad / didto han kalsada nga nagiliw han kaliding*" expresses footsteps falling on a quiet street, a metaphorical image not easily rendered in English. Direct translations here would fail to carry the nuance of silence and emotional weight.

Although some metaphorical richness is lost, the translator retains the emotive force of alienation. This aligns with Vinay and Darbelnet's equivalence technique—different wording that yields similar emotional or poetic effects.

1.3 Grammatical and Structural Differences

Waray syntax allows for flexible word order and often omits subjects or articles, relying heavily on context. English, on the other hand, demands clearer subject-verb-object constructions. For instance, the Waray line "*Nagdalumdom an langit*" required structural expansion in English: "The skies turned dark." Without such adjustments, the translation would be awkward or unclear.

This effort reflects Baker's (2011) notion of grammatical equivalence, where the translator must account for differences in tense, aspect, and word order without losing meaning.

1.4 Emotional Tone and Voice

A crucial issue in translating Kalit was preserving its tone of grief, nostalgia, and subtle hope. Emotional expressions like "*Ginpaura han pamada / Buhok mo nga buhay*" are rich in imagery and feeling. A translation that is too literal risks sounding flat and emotionless, while overinterpreting could distort the original sentiment.

This aligns with House's (2015) view of functional equivalence, where the goal is to recreate the communicative purpose of the source text, not just its words.

3. Translation Strategies Used Based on Vinay and Darbelnet's Model

To solve the above problems, the translators applied several procedures from Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation model. The seven strategies are grouped into *direct* (borrowing, calque, literal) *and oblique (transposition, modulation, equivalence, adaptation) methods*.

2.1 Borrowing

Words like "*Ambel*" and "*baris*" were retained in the translation. This borrowing strategy preserves cultural authenticity and avoids distortion from forced paraphrasing.

Example: "Your favorite Ambel shirt" — instead of describing the brand, the term is kept as is to honor local significance.

According to Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), borrowing is the simplest form of translation and is often used when there is no equivalent term in the target language or when the borrowed word carries specific cultural significance. Retaining local terms like Ambel (a brand) supports foreignization, a strategy that Venuti (1995) argues helps resist cultural homogenization and maintains the source culture's identity.

2.2 Calque

The phrase *"Orasyon Imperata*" was translated to "*Oratio Imperata*", an example of calque, where a literal translation is done word-for-word. Though it may not be widely understood by non-Catholic readers, it maintains religious context and local color.

Calque, as described by Vinay and Darbelnet, is a form of borrowing where the structure of the source expression is translated literally into the target language. This strategy is suitable for institutional or religious terms where literal translation helps maintain cultural specificity. Newmark (1988) also notes

that such translations are effective in conveying terms that are semitransparent and contextually loaded with cultural meaning.

2.3 Literal Translation

Several lines were rendered literally while remaining grammatically and semantically acceptable in English.

Example: "*The skies turned dark.*"

This line is a faithful and structurally natural version of "*Nagdalumdon an langit*".

Literal translation involves a word-for-word rendering that is grammatically and semantically acceptable in the target language. Newmark (1988) points out that literal translation is preferred when the structure and meaning of the original align with the target language. Munday (2016) emphasizes that literal translation works well when it does not distort naturalness in the target language and retains the integrity of the original image.

2.4 Modulation

In some cases, the translator changed the point of view or perspective to better convey meaning in English.

Example: "*Where are you going?*" for "*Tikain ka dawla?*"

While the literal meaning is preserved, the Waray tone of concern and intimacy is softened in English, showing a shift in emotional framing.

Modulation changes the perspective, focus, or cognitive category of the message. Vinay and Darbelnet define this as a strategy necessary when literal translation results in awkward or culturally inappropriate expressions. Hervey and Higgins (1992) support modulation for emotional or connotative adjustments that better resonate with the target audience.

2.5 Equivalence

This strategy was applied to lines involving idiomatic or poetic phrases.

Example: "*No one here knows you except by rumors and wary stares*"

This line creatively translates the metaphorical idea of being a stranger recognized only through hushed talk *("Waray ha imo nakilala nga sangkay, Asay mga huring ngan siplat an pabalon"),* preserving the poetic impact.

Equivalence refers to rendering an expression in the target language that replicates the same situation, effect, or meaning of the source expression, often used for idioms, proverbs, or poetic lines. Vinay and Darbelnet highlight it as ideal for maintaining stylistic and emotional effect.

Baker (1992) also stresses that equivalence involves making pragmatic and cultural adaptations to keep the impact intact.

2.6 Transposition

Changes in grammatical structure were made to suit English syntax.

Example: "The 3-in-1 coffee given by the chairperson has now cooled." (Mapinit na an 3 in 1 hatag ni Kapitan paghinulat tumugaok kamanokan)

This line shifts word classes and restructures the sentence, using transposition to preserve both meaning and rhythm.

Transposition, as defined by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), involves changing the grammatical category of a word or phrase without altering the meaning. It is especially useful when the source and target languages differ significantly in their syntactic or morphological systems. This strategy allows translators to preserve naturalness and readability in the target language.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that the translation of Sunray Balasbas's Kalit from Waray to English involved several challenges, including lexical gaps, idiomatic expressions, grammatical differences, and the preservation of emotional tone. Culture-bound terms like Ambel and baris, as well as figurative language, posed difficulties due to their lack of direct English equivalents. To address these issues, the translator employed a range of strategies from Vinay and Darbelnet's model, such as borrowing, calque, literal translation, modulation, equivalence, and transposition.

These strategies helped maintain the poem's cultural essence, emotional depth, and readability in the target language while ensuring that both linguistic and poetic elements were effectively conveyed.

CONCLUSIONS

The translation of *Kalit* required both linguistic and cultural sensitivity. Problems emerged primarily from lexical gaps, idioms, grammar differences, and emotional tone. The translators employed various strategies from Vinay and Darbelnet's model to address these issues—most notably modulation, equivalence, borrowing, and transposition. These allowed for a translation that balances faithfulness to the source and naturalness in the target language.

As Hatim and Munday (2004) argue, literary translation demands not just linguistic proficiency but also a deep awareness of context and voice. The researchers' choices reflect a commitment to that principle, making *Kalit* accessible without losing its Waray soul.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For Student and Emerging Translators

1.1 Deepen Familiarity with Source Culture.

Translators should immerse themselves not only in the language but in the *cultural context* of the source text. Cultural sensitivity ensures more accurate and respectful translations.

1.2 Use Parallel Texts for Reference.

When translating poetry, consult bilingual or parallel texts in the same genre. This helps in identifying natural equivalents for idiomatic expressions and poetic devices. This practice also builds awareness of how figurative language is handled in both languages.

1.3 Balance Literal and Creative Choices.

Use literal translation where possible, but do not hesitate to shift to modulation or equivalence if the literal version sounds unnatural or distorts the meaning. A flexible mindset is essential in literary translation, especially for emotionally rich texts like *Kalit*.

2. For Language and Literature Teachers

2.1 Integrate Translation Theory into Teaching.

Encourage students to analyze poems using models like Vinay and Darbelnet's to understand the *why* behind translation choices. This improves both their analytical skills and translation quality.

2.2 Include Local Literature in Translation Exercises.

Incorporating regional texts like *Kalit* into classroom activities helps students engage with their linguistic heritage and enhances their practical translation skills. It also raises awareness of regional identity and voice in translation.

2.3 Emphasize Emotional and Tonal Equivalence.

In evaluating student translations, go beyond grammatical accuracy. Include criteria for tone, rhythm, and emotive quality, especially in poetry and narrative works.

3. For Researchers and Future Studies

3.1 Explore Multilingual Comparative Translation.

Future researchers might compare Waray-English translations with Filipino-English translations of the same poem to identify broader patterns in regional language translation.

3.2 Study Reader Reception.

Research could be extended to examine how English-speaking readers interpret translations of Waray poetry.

3.3 Develop a Glossary of Untranslatables.

A community-sourced or academic project could document Waray terms that frequently pose translation challenges. This can become a valuable resource for future

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