

Exploring Translation Ethics in Fan Translation and Digital Media Environments within a Thai Context

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Abstract

This article describes global ethical translation issues, with a focus on fan translation, a specific type of translation practice, in a Thai context. Translation involves the process of transferring meaning from one language to another. As a social practice, translation is currently being facilitated by technological resources on the Internet. Previous studies of translation ethics have largely focused on codes of conduct within the profession; however, the impact of digital environments has been overlooked. Although the Internet has enabled people to become globally connected despite physical boundaries, users are still influenced by their cultural beliefs. Paying particular attention to the impacts of digital environments and cultures, this article uses ethical pluralism in digital media ethics, an approach suggested by Ess (2006, 2014), to analyse ethical considerations within Thai fan translation practices. The ways in which the industry and fan translators have taken part in audiovisual and novel translations in Thailand show that an ethical pluralistic view may be the most effective way to maintain authorial rights and intellectual property protection as well as the sharing and compassion for communities that are part of the Thai culture.

Keywords: translation ethics, fan translation, digital environments, cultural contexts, ethical pluralism

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จริยธรรมการแปล: เสี่ยงสะท้อนการแปลในโลกดิจิทัลโดยกลุ่มแฟนในประเทศไทย

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้ศึกษาประเด็นจริยธรรมการแปลในบริบทโลกปัจจุบัน โดยมุ่งเน้นไปที่การแปลของกลุ่มแฟนในสังคมไทย การแปลเป็นกระบวนการถ่ายทอดความหมายจากภาษาหนึ่งไปสู่อีกภาษาหนึ่ง และยังจัดเป็นกิจกรรมทางสังคมที่อาศัยทรัพยากรทางเทคโนโลยีบนอินเทอร์เน็ตมากขึ้นเรื่อย ๆ งานศึกษาเรื่องจริยธรรมการแปลที่ผ่านมาส่วนใหญ่มุ่งเน้นเรื่องแนวทางปฏิบัติในฐานะการแปลเป็นอาชีพ แต่อาจไม่ได้คำนึงถึงผลกระทบของเทคโนโลยีและสังคมดิจิทัลมากนัก ในขณะเดียวกันแม้ว่าอินเทอร์เน็ตจะช่วยให้คนสามารถติดต่อสื่อสารแบบไร้พรมแดน แต่อิทธิพลจากความเชื่อทางวัฒนธรรมยังคงส่งผลต่อผู้ใช้อินเทอร์เน็ต บทความนี้เล็งเห็นความสำคัญของผลกระทบทางเทคโนโลยีและวัฒนธรรม จึงวิเคราะห์ประเด็นด้านจริยธรรมการแปลโดยกลุ่มแฟนในบริบทสังคมไทยโดยใช้แนวคิดพหุนิยมทางจริยธรรม (ethical pluralism) ซึ่งนำเสนอโดย Ess (2006, 2014) กล่าวโดยสรุป กิจกรรมการแปลนิยายและการแปลสื่อโซเชียลที่ดำเนินการโดยผู้ประกอบการและนักแปลที่เป็นกลุ่มแฟนในประเทศไทยปัจจุบันแสดงให้เห็นว่ามุมมองพหุนิยมทางจริยธรรมอาจเป็นแนวทางที่สามารถสนับสนุนการรักษาสิทธิความเป็นเจ้าของของผู้ผลิตและทรัพย์สินทางปัญญา รวมถึงความเชื่อเรื่องการแบ่งปันและความเอื้อเฟื้อเผื่อแผ่ในชุมชนที่เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของวัฒนธรรมไทยได้

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Introduction

In the digital era, available online platforms have enabled people to stay connected, effectively passing on information and knowledge irrespective of their physical locations. One can simply access a news website with one click and receive updates from the other side of the world. It is possible to get updated on the latest technology and view public comments or leave remarks on social networking sites like Twitter. Thanks to online technologies, audiences can also freely choose the time and place of their media consumption. This results in a democratisation of media viewership (Hartley, 2004), in which people can globally consume media and access knowledge and information. In online media consumption, language is sometimes an obstacle to global communication. Translation is a key mediating tool, acting as a bridge to build a connection between the source and target languages (Bassnett, 2014). It is also a “form of intercultural communication” (Chueng, 2014, p. 56) among people from different sociocultural contexts, with interactions between cultures reflected by linguistic choices, ideas and concepts, and backgrounds. Not only do human translators play an important role in bridging the gap between cultures, but digital technologies such as Google Translate or other machine translation programs can currently assist people wishing to understand messages from different cultures. Within a free and easily accessible online space, internet users may serve as both audience members who view or read translations and content creators who actively take part in generating subject matter. The ability of engaged users to independently interact with the media demonstrates the bottom-up relationship in media consumption in the digital era made possible through translations.

Still, the lack of physical boundaries in an online environment does not mean that users can freely access, share or reproduce media content. Owners of content are legally protected by such factors as copyright laws. These prevent media users from sharing, changing or reproducing authorised content without the express permission of the copyright owner. This implies that translated content, as a form of reproduction, is subject to laws, just like original content. However, some users have taken advantage of technological advances to perform actions that could be considered copyright violations. Taking legal actions against violators may be difficult due to the anonymity of users in online space. The ways in which digital environments allow Internet users to independently interact with media content have highlighted the influential role of technology in shaping people’s perspectives and behaviours in media consumption. Such technological impacts can affect the values held by people in a

society, a factor that is closely related to ethics (Hongladarom & Ess, 2007). Therefore, beyond the enforcement of laws in relation to media consumption, promoting moral conduct and raising public awareness could possibly offer a viable solution to address the issue of unethical behaviour. This gives rise to the main objective of this article: a deliberation about ethics in a digital media environment with a particular focus on translation.

Ethics are related to “our ability to make decisions on the basis of what we believe to be morally right or wrong in a specific context” (Baker, 2018, p. 308). Whether an action is considered ethical or unethical can be decided based on the extent to which such actions affect others. Ethics can be appraised based on the values of universalism (ethical judgements are applicable to every individual) and/or relativism (ethical judgements can be different based on particular local conditions) (Hongladarom, 2016). To reflect the complexities of globalisation that enables people to communicate with one another through the Internet, establishing a universal view of ethics might permit us to reach a common agreement. Nevertheless, the influence of culture on people’s individuality should not be underestimated.

In addition to the two points of view described above, ethics can be evaluated using a deontological approach, focusing on human duties or responsibilities, and/or a teleological approach, highlighting the best results of an action (Baker, 2018). However, this article does not try to convince readers to choose any specific ethical value. This is in accordance with what Baker (2018) pointed out, that different approaches to ethical decision-making by translators can be taken, although they sometimes lead to identical decisions. Instead, the present article intends to support a pragmatic view of ethics, in which common traits are sought and there is a clear acknowledgement of the differences in cultural beliefs (Hongladarom, 2016).

In translation studies, ethics involve understanding of “what is good and bad, right and wrong” in translation practices (Koskinen & Pokorn, 2021, p. 3). Discussions of ethics issues have mostly been concerned with their close link to professional codes or ethical behaviours of translators in their conduct of practice (see the Ethical Discussions in Translation Studies section below). Nevertheless, the ethics of translation is still likely to have limitations in its diverse discussions in terms of principles and viewpoints (Koskinen & Pokorn, 2021). Thus, following a pragmatic view of ethics, this article aims to fill the gap by raising the question: *Which ethical approach should be used when deliberating the ethics of translation*

in digital media environments, particularly in a Thai context? The primary proposal involves ethical pluralism, a part of digital media ethics proposed by Ess (2006, 2014) because of its applicability to the impact of technologies and cultural differences.

To shed light on the ways in which ethical issues have been applied to current Thai translation practices, this article will first discuss the literature of ethics in translation studies, both in professional and non-professional contexts. Next, it considers ethical issues in relation to media consumption and translation in a Thai context. After that, the article explains the concept of ethical pluralism within digital media in order to consider ethics in translation within a Thai context. The conclusion addresses the implications of ethics in translation.

Ethical discussions in translation studies

Within the changing environment resulting from technological advances, the general issue of ethics has been raised in such academic contexts as medical research and science and technology studies (Pym, 2001). In the 1990s, translation scholars, particularly key translation researchers such as Venuti, were concerned with the linguistic choices of translators (Venuti, 1998), discussing ethics by focusing on the translated text itself. Ethical questions would be raised about such topics as which options translators choose and the extent to which translators are faithful to the source text (ibid). Although his ethical discussions of the source and target texts take into account language and cultural differences, Venuti's concept has been criticised due to its sole focus on literary texts and overly prescriptivist emphasis (Inghilleri, 2020). Nevertheless, one of Venuti's important conclusions is that ethics in translation is closely related to language and culture, but can actually go beyond the issues of linguistic equivalence or fidelity. This is aligned with Pym's call for ethics to be deliberated from a contextual view, considering translation to be a type of intercultural communication. Therefore, ethical reviews should examine other translation considerations, including specific cultural locations and the roles of agents in translation, including their engagement in the practice (Pym, 2001). Although Pym did not explain in detail how such attributes affect ethics in translation within different cultures, his way of viewing ethics, especially the focus on intercultural aspects of translation, is applicable to ethical considerations of translation activities in the globalised era.

In practice, ethical decisions in production and distribution are made by agents, including translators. Many studies have explored the ethics of translation from the standpoint

of professional translators. Koskinen (2000) stated that signs of translator professionalism include their self-awareness and critical skills in making translation decisions in diverse circumstances. Baker (2018) echoed Koskinen's view when she recommended that translators be able to make critical ethical decisions when involved in translation practices. The main difference between these two translation scholars is that while Koskinen criticized the lack of fixed rules or guidelines for translators to solve moral problems in translation (Koskinen, 2000), Baker thought that codes of conduct are sufficient since they can serve as references for translators making ethical decisions (Baker, 2018). In this way, codes can be presented as norms of translation. Chesterman (2009) suggested a deontic view of ethical considerations as this focuses on what actions should be taken. He linked the ethical judgement of translators to the values that they believe in. Such values, including clarity, truth, trust and understanding, are expressed by how the norms of translation are specified (ibid). His study illustrates how the ethics of translators are demonstrated when they follow the norms in translation.

However, translation production does not involve only the translators themselves. It relies on many agents who are part of a translation production network (Abdallah, 2012). This suggests that ethical considerations in this area should include all relevant translation agents. Also, the ethical decisions of translators do not always arise from the norms in translation. This is demonstrated by McDonough Dolmaya's study (2011). After comparing ethical codes from profession-oriented networks in fifteen countries with a translator forum, McDonough Dolmaya (2011) found that translators follow codes of ethics based on which production network they are in, and many codes focus on service providing rather than on the translation itself. The author also suggests that ethical guidelines have overlooked the impact of the current technological environment in which computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools provide significant assistance to translators in practice.

Thanks to the technological resources available, including both tools and platforms, current translations are not necessarily limited to professional contexts. Some translators have not had translation training or pursued translation as a profession. They translate texts for humanitarian projects as a result of their engaged media consumption of digital platforms, and act as mediators of religious and cultural-conflict issues, giving rise to non-professional translations (Pérez-González & Susam-Saraeva, 2012). Within the non-professional translation communities, translators are likely to create their own ethical approaches. Drugan (2011) revealed that these codes of ethics consider shared goals and community member

interactions as well as encouraging ethical behaviour among non-professional members. These standards are different from professional translation where confidentiality, loyalty and duties are prioritised (ibid). Such a call for more ethical consideration in translation in both professional and non-professional contexts is also highlighted in this article.

Technological tools such as machine translation programs (e.g. Google Translate) have also played a crucial role in translation practices as they enable individuals to easily access data from various cultural contexts. Their significance can raise ethical questions as to how they benefit translation. Kenny (2011) detailed some of the ethical issues relevant to machine translation, such as the extent to which technological resources should be shared, the confidentiality of data and the accuracy of translation. Such ethical considerations are kept in mind by agents, not only translators but also post-editors, trainees and teachers, who negotiate their roles to achieve the best translation outcomes (ibid).

The aforementioned studies highlight the ethical issues of translation from many perspectives. They address the influence of culture on ethics in translation (Pym, 2001; Venuti, 1998) and focus on the duties and responsibilities of translators as an integral part of professionalism (Baker, 2018; Chesterman, 2012; Koskinen, 2000; McDonough Dolmaya, 2011). They also suggest that ethical values can be considered in non-professional translation contexts (Drugan, 2011), and show the importance of considering ethics when evaluating the impact of technology in translation (Kenny, 2011).

Although issues of cultural influences have been raised in the literature, there is still a lack of detailed explanations about how they impact translation ethics. Moreover, despite a variety of research projects considering these topics, there has not been sufficient discussion of the ethical issues raised by how technology affects translation as a social practice. This article, therefore, aims to shed light on ethics in translation, going beyond the duty and responsibility of translators. It examines the impact of digital environments and cultural contexts, particularly in Thailand, on translation practices, especially those carried out by fan translators.

Ethical issues related to Thai translation practices in the digital era

In Thailand, ethical standards have been introduced in both professional and academic contexts. In professional settings, codes of ethics have been implemented as

guidelines for conduct across diverse fields, such as medical science³ and journalism⁴. In the academic sector, the office of Human Research Standard⁵ under the National Research Council of Thailand has been established to ensure that human subject research is conducted ethically and reaches an international standard. Moreover, researchers in the fields of medical sciences, as well as humanities and social sciences (including translation studies), are now required to detail and justify their research procedures to gain ethical approval whenever conducting research with human subjects.

In the translation field in particular, the Thai translation profession may arise after the Second World War when readers turned to translated novels as their popular choices of reading, and western novels were translated into several modes, including open plagiarism, adaption, and proper translation (Chittiphalangsri, 2019). Such translation modes imply that the use of authorised works was not strictly monitored in the past. This perhaps can partly explain why there seem to be no general codes of conduct specially designed for professional Thai translators and interpreters, and only a few specific organizations, e.g. the Thai-Dutch Translator and Interpreter Association (*Vereniging Tolken en Vertalers Thai-Nederlands*⁶), have developed their own ethical guidelines. Still, translation has gained recognition professionally and academically. Evidence can be found in the establishment of The Translators and Interpreters Association of Thailand aimed at raising standards and promoting research in translation (Translators and Interpreters Association of Thailand, n.d.). Moreover, in the National Language Policy (2021-2022), the idea of standardizing the translation and interpretation profession is emphasised (Rohitasthira, 2021). Such a situation reveals that despite the recognition of translation practices in Thailand at present, ethical awareness may still not receive adequate emphasis in professional contexts.

When considered as a social practice, translation involves the reproduction of information from one language into another. Thanks to the availability of technological resources such as CAT tools and machine translation, different types of translations - including

³ Medical Council Regulations on Medical Ethics Preservation, B.E.2549 (Source: https://tmc.or.th/En/assets/files/file_BE2549.pdf)

⁴ Code of Ethics for members of the Press Council of Thailand (Source: <http://www.presscouncil.or.th/code-of-ethics-for-members-of-the-press-council-of-thailand>)

⁵ <http://ohrs.nrct.go.th/>

⁶ http://vtvtn.nl/?page_id=41

fan translations, Wikipedia translations and TED⁷ translations - have been extensively performed in online environments. When reproducing authorised content, copyright issues need to be taken into consideration. It is, therefore, necessary for translators to gain permission from copyright owners before producing a translation. However, free spaces on the Internet may lead to the unauthorised use of content in such activities as fan translation. To manage these issues arising with online open spaces, many initiatives, including Creative Commons⁸ and Free and Open Source Software⁹ (FOSS), have been set up to allow Internet users, with a certain level of freedom, to share or reproduce texts or software with the permission of copyright owners. These initiatives have also been instituted and encouraged in the Thai context.

The current status links ethical issues in translation with information ethics, raising ethical questions in both online and mass media environments (Capurro, 2005). Soraj Hongladarom is a key Thai academic figure who has analysed this field of ethics. He has stated that ethics should consider the interconnected environments in the digital world and the cultural contexts, including those within Thailand. He proposed that ethical values be viewed in a pragmatic way and used the issue of privacy as an example (Hongladarom, 2016). The right to privacy can be integrated into Thai culture if supported by local standards and beliefs. For example, some Thais might believe privacy is part of being a global citizen while some, viewing the issue from a Buddhist perspective, believe in the autonomy of a person (ibid). Buddhism is important here as its religious beliefs have been intertwined with Thai culture for centuries and its significant influence can be illustrated by the ways of living, customs, and traditions (Kuppako, 2016). Because of the Buddhist influence, compassion, generosity and hospitality have been valued in Thai society (Bhattarakosol, 2007; Kuppako, 2016; Payutto, 2012). Interactions among individuals have also been highly valued in Asian societies, including in Thailand. Hongladarom (2020) stated that these values can influence ethical considerations, starting from the bottom-up relationships in which individuals can shape and lead ethical discussions in society.

Nevertheless, not many translation studies considering a Thai context have focused on ethical issues. One exception was produced by Petchwathana (2016), who explained that

⁷ <https://www.ted.com/>

⁸ <https://creativecommons.org/>

⁹ https://freeopensourcesoftware.org/index.php/Main_Page

Thai translation practices in the 21st century are generally used as a key tool to enable people to be interconnected, especially in an ASEAN context. She pointed out that translation ethics are related to moral questions of what translators should and should not do, emphasizing the duties and responsibilities of translators and the accuracy and confidentiality of translations (ibid). Another study focuses on Thai fansubbing, subtitling created by fans (Wongseree, 2018). The study tapped into ethical values among fan translators. It found that the ethics of fansubbing arose from the translators' shared values and engagement in online fan communities, leading them to maintain a non-professional practice by fans for fans (ibid). These two translation studies conducted in a Thai context show the differences between ethical values in professional and non-professional translations, similar to the literature review of translation studies ethics described in a previous section. That is, while professional translation focuses on the duties and responsibilities of translators, non-professional translation practices highlight shared community values. Despite these two studies, there should be more ethical discussions in Thai translation practices, considering the current significance of the ethical issues in Thai settings.

The discussions of ethics in this section demonstrates that ethical awareness in Thailand has been increasing, but this issue has not been sufficiently discussed in translation studies in a Thai context. Moreover, cultural influences on ethics can affect translators' values when completing their work. This leads to the main objective of this article, to propose an ethical approach that considers both interconnected digital environments and cultural contexts to explain ethics in Thai translation practices.

Ethical Considerations: Application of ethical pluralism in Thai fan translation practices

To fulfil its objective, this article has extended the scope of ethics in translation beyond professional codes of conduct and applied an approach from digital media ethics. Digital media include information or content shown on digital platforms such as websites and social media. Its fluid and interactive nature leads this type of media to a global stage where individuals from any location in the world can freely gain access to information and become interconnected. Such pervasiveness of media consumption, which highlights that the distribution of information via digital networks comes with increased responsibility (Ess, 2014), can cause digital media ethics to become more important. Like Hongladarom (2016), Ess (2006) believed that one particular ethical framework called universalism and relativism might not be the best choice for ethical consideration in a globalised world. He thought that shared

norms or values should be sought, with an acceptance of individual diversity from different cultures. He proposed a pluralistic point of view as this acknowledges that more than one ethical judgement can emerge from a diversity of interpretations or applications of shared values, beliefs and practices (Ess, 2006, 2014). Therefore, individuals may share certain ethical beliefs or values but these opinions are based on different supporting reasons according to their cultural background. Also, ethical pluralism does not judge the correctness of individual ethical viewpoints; however, not all ethical judgements are considered acceptable. Such an approach is similar to the practical view of ethics suggested by Hongladarom (2016).

An example raised by Ess (2014) concerns copyright issues. These are closely related to translation since the practice involves the reproduction of authorised works. While the US and European countries emphasize intellectual property rights and authorial rights, respectively, philosophies in Asian countries like Confucianism in China or Buddhism in Thailand stress community benefits. This might affect how individuals treat copyright violations as people from the US and Europe may take serious measures whereas believers in Confucianism and Buddhism might have more relaxed attitudes. Due to these differences, an ethical pluralistic view might suggest a middle path such as ‘copyleft’, an alternative solution that allows users certain freedoms to share and adjust copyrighted works as long as the authors permit them to (Ess, 2014, p. 94).

Currently in Thailand, the Internet has allowed users to take advantage of available technological tools and platforms to share and reproduce texts regardless of whether copyright owners have given permission. This situation affected practices in fan translations, including fansubbing whose popularity was demonstrated by the large number of available fan subtitles and fansubbing groups in existence until around 2017 (Wongseree, 2018). Such significance of fan translation practices may result from the relaxed ethical and legal attitudes of Thai people, as encouraged by the translators’ perception of translation in the past (Chittiphalangsri, 2019). Its emergence was so obvious that it was noticed by copyright holders, resulting in some fan subtitles facing notice-and-takedown measures from media companies. These claims of copyright infringement caused many fan translators to give up their practice. One example was the closing down of Kodhit, a former Thai fansubbing group of Korean TV series in 2016. This stirred quite an uproar among Thai audiences on social media at the time (Chucherd, 2016). Fansubbing can be considered an example of the permeable boundary between ethics and legality. From the viewpoint of universalism, common in the US and

Europe, translation practices cannot ignore the legal implications involved in using unauthorised audiovisual materials or demonstrating ignorance of intellectual property and authorial rights. On the other hand, a relativistic viewpoint that found in Thai cultural beliefs values the concept of sharing and compassion for the benefit of the community (Bhattarakosol, 2007; Kuppako, 2016; Payutto, 2012). It may therefore support fansubbing because the fan translators' main goal to benefit the foreign programmes and other fans, not pursue monetary gain, and their actions are consistent with local ethical values. This practice is intended to help promote programmes at an international level and allow fan audiences to watch their favourite foreign programmes in Thai (Wongseree, 2018). These two different attitudes towards ethical questions raised by fansubbing issues show how negotiations to reach a compromise between different ethical viewpoints may be a better option in a globalised world where different cultural attitudes result in clashing opinions about the media consumption of translated foreign programmes.

Such a middle path through an ethical pluralistic view has actually been employed in current Thai media consumption. Some video streaming providers located in Thailand who offer licensed Asian TV programmes online, such as Viu¹⁰ and WeTV,¹¹ have used some fansubbing methods to promote their business. As fansubbing practices in Thailand have emerged in response to programme unavailability and/or their preference for subtitling over dubbing (Wongseree, 2018), these streaming providers have successfully met these demands and offered free access to general audiences. Meanwhile, licensed companies have instituted a paid membership scheme to increase revenues, attracting audiences who want faster access and better video quality. These factors are also part of fans' viewing expectations when watching fan subtitles (Wongseree, 2018). The availability of these media streaming platforms may be part of the reason why Thai fansubbing practices have been gradually diminishing, as shown by the many inactive fansubbing groups on social networking sites. This example demonstrates how the licensed companies have achieved a compromise in dealing with their audiences, including fans. Permitting audiences to freely access a certain number of translated copyright audiovisual materials is consistent with the Thai beliefs in sharing and compassion.

¹⁰ <https://www.viu.com/ott/th/>

¹¹ <https://wetv.vip/th>

In return, by offering a paid package with extra benefits for engaged audiences, they have increased profits by retaining the licenses and authorial rights.

Another recent example of the use of ethical pluralism can be found in novel translations in Thailand. These are evidence of the close relationship between fan translations and publishing companies. The translation of Asian novels, especially from China, has been growing in popularity.¹² This is also evident in the number of books released by publishing companies such as Amarinbooks¹³ (via Arun and Rose Publishing), SMM Publishing¹⁴ (via Siam Inter Book), and Jamsai Publishing.¹⁵ For example, in 2020 Amarinbooks published about 40 translated Asian novels, mostly Chinese.¹⁶ Some of this popularity might be due to non-professional translators who use online reading platforms, such as Dek-D,¹⁷ Tunwalai¹⁸ and readAwrite,¹⁹ to distribute Thai translations of online Chinese novels. For this reason, Dek-D has planned to open a new section focusing on Chinese literature (Thairath, 2020). This might be a result of growing interest in the novels from a fan base that has been reading fan translations online.

Fan translators can continue practicing on available online platforms while showing ethical responsibility by posting a clear statement that their translations will be taken down when the novels are licensed in Thailand.²⁰ This scenario would, in turn, benefit the media publishing companies which are the copyright holders in Thailand. They would be able to determine the number of interested readers and estimate a novel's market value before purchasing a license or releasing a book. After acquiring a license, the publishing houses can adapt how they release translations by non-professional translators on online platforms in order to promote their licensed translations. For example, they may use online reading

¹² <https://www2.thaipr.net/general/804234>

¹³ <https://amarinbooks.com/>

¹⁴ <https://smmpublishing.com/>

¹⁵ <https://www.jamsai.com/>

¹⁶ 23 novels for Arun Publishing (Source: <https://amarinbooks.com/novelarun2020/>) and 20 novels from Rose Publishing (Source: <https://amarinbooks.com/bestrosenovel2020/>)

¹⁷ <https://www.dek-d.com/home/writer/>

¹⁸ <https://www.tunwalai.com/>

¹⁹ <https://www.readawrite.com/>

²⁰ <https://writer.dek-d.com/subhapich/writer/view.php?id=1701275>

platforms to distribute the first few chapters of translated novels as a preview to build readers' interest before the books are officially released.

Ethical pluralism is evident in the interconnection of fan translations and publishing companies in the novel translation business. The licensed translation is still well-protected by copyright law. The respect for authorial rights and the protection of intellectual property rights valued in the West have been maintained. Meanwhile, the Thai cultural value of community sharing has been acknowledged. This is proven by the implicit permission given to non-professional translators without legal rights to novels to distribute their work, serving their own engagement with the books and assisting other interested readers.

Audiovisual and novel translations, both closely related to fan translations, are evidence of how strongly Thai people rely on the Internet at present. This is illustrated by the way fan translators and copyright holders have been using fluid and interactive digital platforms to distribute their translations and attract Thai readers or audiences. In the meantime, the compromise that it achieves in how media business is conducted in Thailand is in accordance with Hongladarom's suggestion (2014), where compassion is shown by the industry and the community helps to establish a fair business environment in return. The current circumstances imply that an ethical pluralistic view is applicable to translation in the digital era. While the authorial and intellectual property rights are acknowledged, such a global view of ethics demonstrates that it does not overlook the ethical values of specific cultural contexts such as Thailand.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that ethics in translation does not have to be considered only from a professional context that focuses on the duties and responsibilities of translators, but can be studied in a wider context as a social practice. Ethical convergence is encouraged with the consideration of various ethical beliefs, traditions and discourses in the environment where technology is advancing at present (Guangqin, 2021). The Internet can connect individuals through language transfers. The availability of technological resources and online platforms have enabled many Internet users to become translators, expanding translation practices into a non-professional realm. The impact of digital environments, therefore, was included in the types of ethics considered by this article. Meanwhile, cultural influences cannot be overlooked as they can affect the ethical decisions and behaviours of translation

agents, including translators and publishing or media companies. As part of digital media ethics, ethical pluralism is proposed as a compromise between the ethical standpoints of individuals from different cultures, demonstrating an acceptance of diverse interpretations of shared values in digital environments. As shown in this article, ethical pluralism is implied in the ways in which translation agents, both authorised companies and fans, have cooperated in Thai translation practices of audiovisual texts and novels. Such an ethical point of view has proven to be applicable to actual Thai settings.

Not only does this article propose an alternative ethical consideration in translation practices, but it shows that ethics is closely related to our everyday lives. Therefore, ethical awareness should be raised among translation agents and audiences of translated texts. Moreover, ethical discussions of translation practices should be included in translation courses in Thai universities. This will emphasise that translation is not only about a meaning transfer between languages but is a way to show ethical responsibility and awareness as a citizen in a global context.

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