

CASES IN ENGLISH AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES, AND TRANSLATION

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0. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims at advocating some grammatical principles of translation from Southeast Asian languages (Cantonese, Khmer, Lao, Thai, and Vietnamese) into English and vice versa. These principles are based upon a case grammar model where both case relations and case forms are taken into account (Starosta 1973a and 1973b), and upon the system of translating set forth by Nida and Taber in these terms:

"Basically there are two systems for translating...

The second system of translation consists of a more elaborate procedure comprising three stages: (1) analysis, in which the surface structure (i.e., the message as given in language A) is analyzed in terms of (a) the grammatical relationships and (b) the meanings of the words and combinations of words, (2) transfer, in which the analyzed material is transferred in the mind of the translator from language A to language B, and (3) restructuring, in which the transferred material is restructured in order to make the final message fully acceptable in the receptor language. This approach may be diagrammed as in Figure 6.

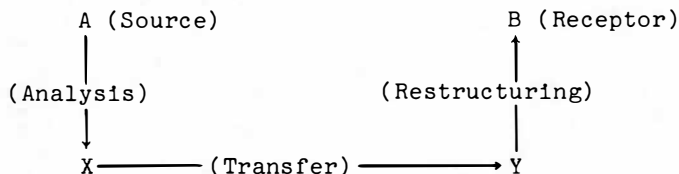


Figure 6.

(Nida and Taber 1969:33).

1. CASE RELATIONS IN ENGLISH AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES

The analysis of English and Southeast Asian languages presented here assumes to be correct Fillmore's claim that there is a finite and universal set of relationships holding between a predicate and its hosted nominals such that every nominal constituent of a proposition is related in a specific way to the predicative verb;

"...for the predicates provided in natural languages, the roles that their arguments play are taken from an inventory of role types fixed by grammatical theory" (Fillmore 1971:376).

Case relationships, hereafter referred to as case relations, may be realised overtly in a variety of ways. These ways include (1) affixation of the noun or pronoun, (2) presence of prepositions or postpositions, (3) word ordering, or (4) marking on verbs (Fillmore 1968:32). Thus, a single case relation can quite normally be realised in different ways, or case forms. Likewise, a single case form can host more than one case relation.

The following twelve universal case relations can¹ be posited. And as they are universals, they should be adequate and sufficient for an analysis of English and the Southeast Asian languages studied:

The AGENTIVE (AGT) case:

The AGT actant is the "instigator of the action identified by the verb" (Fillmore 1968:24). It is assumed here that the agent is not necessarily equated with "intent", for recent research on Tagalog (Ramos 1973) has indicated that certain generalities cannot be formulated unless we allow for non-intentional agents as well as intentional non-agents.

The OBJECTIVE (OBJ) case:

The OBJ actant is the "semantically most neutral case, the case anything representable by a noun whose role in the action or state identified by the verb is identified by the semantic interpretation of the verb itself" (Fillmore 1968:25). In general, it will be the element which is acted upon, or whose state or existence is predicated. This

relation subsumes several that have been treated as distinct in other case grammars including Experience, and Result/Factitive. These two types are treated as the interpretations given to the neutral Objective case when it appears with psychological and creative verbs respectively.

The DATIVE (DAT) case:

The case of the "animated being affected by the state of, or experiencing the action of the verb" (Fillmore 1968:24).

The BENEFACTIVE (BEN) case:

The BEN actant receives the benefit of the action identified by the verb.

The COMITATIVE (COM) case:

The COM actant accompanies another actant in the verbal activity or state described.

The INSTRUMENT (INS) case:

The INS actant is "the case of the inanimate force or object causally involved in the action or state identified by the verb" (Fillmore 1968:24).

The LOCATIVE (LOC) case:

The LOC actant indicates "the location or spatial orientation of the state or action identified by the verb" (Fillmore 1968:25).

The DIRECTION (DIR) case:

The DIR actant indicates the orientation of the state or action identified by the verb.

The SOURCE (SRC) case:

The SRC actant indicates the location or time from which action has begun.

The GOAL (GOL) case:

The GOL actant indicates the space or time toward which the action or state identified by the verb has occurred.

The EXTENT (EXT) case:

The EXT actant indicates the space or time through which the action or state identified by the verb has occurred.

The TIME (TIM) case:

The TIM actant identifies the time-setting of the state or action identified by the verb.

Out of the twelve cases, only the AGENTIVE and OBJECTIVE are nuclear in the clause, the DATIVE, BENEFACTIVE, and INSTRUMENTAL cases are semi-nuclear in that they can be hosted only by certain verb classes, and the

rest of the cases, namely, COMITATIVE, LOCATIVE, DIRECTIONAL, SOURCE, GOAL, EXTENT, and TIME are satellites in that they occur with most verbs except those otherwise marked.

The twelve universal case relations are pigeon-holed in language-specific case forms that differ from one language to another. The covert case relations and overt case forms could be set up in bidimensional charts yielding pigeon-holes for possible correspondences of possible, i.e. case relations and case forms of a language.

2. CASE RELATIONS AND CASE FORMS IN ENGLISH

In English, the twelve universal case relations are pigeon-holed in twelve overt case forms of which some are marked by their positions *vis-à-vis* the predicative verb, and some are marked by prepositions. The twelve case forms are:

- NM the Nominative position immediately precedes the verb, and there are no prepositions.
- O the Objective position immediately follows the verb, and there are no prepositions.
- A the Agentive position follows the verb, and its objects if any, and it is marked by the preposition *by*.
- B the Benefactive position follows the verb, and its objects if any, and it is marked by the preposition *for*.
- C the Comitative position follows the verb, and its objects if any, and it is marked by the preposition *with*.
- I the Instrumental position follows the verb, and its objects if any, and it is marked by the preposition *of*.
- L the Locative position follows the verb, and its objects if any, and it is marked by the preposition *at*.
- Di the Directional position follows the verb, and its objects if any, and it is marked by the preposition *to*.
- Sr the Source position follows the verbs, and its objects if any, and it is marked by the preposition *from*.
- G1 the Goal position follows the verb and its objects if any, and it is marked by the preposition *until*.
- Ex the Extent position follows the verb and its objects if any, and it is marked by the preposition *in*.
- T the Time position is variant. It can be at the beginning or at the end of the clause, and it is not marked by a preposition.

Naturally, besides the listed prepositions, there are also other prepositions that usually mark one, or at most two, peripheral case relations like LOCATIVE or TIME. Examples of these prepositions are *after, before, against, on, above, under, beneath, while, during, towards*, etc. Being specific case form markers, they do not interest us in this paper. Similarly, the choice of the prepositions *by, for, with, of, to, from, until*, and *in* as case form markers to be discussed could be contested, at least for some of the cases. But that, also, is a question beyond the scope of this paper.

The bidimensional chart of case relations and case forms in English yields 144 possible pigeon-holes of correspondence between case relations and case forms, and the language makes use of thirty two of them as in Chart I below. (If one tries out all the verbs in English, one will most likely find some more correspondences of case relations and case forms. But that, too, will not challenge the validity of the system of translation proposed here.)

Chart 1

CASE RELATIONS AND CASE FORMS IN ENGLISH

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		NM	O	A	B	C	I	L	Di	Sr	Gl	Ex	T
1	AGT	1		11									
2	OBJ	2	7		15		20	22					
3	DAT	3	8	12					26				
4	BEN	4	9		16								
5	COM					18							
6	INS	5	10	13		19	21						
7	LOC	6		14				23				30	
8	DIR								27				
9	SRC									28			
10	GOL							24			29		
11	EXT				17							31	
12	TIM							25					32

The examples of the correspondences between the case relations and case forms in English are as follows.

1. [+NM, +AGT] is hosted by transitive agentive verbs:²

He bought a book.

[+NM] [+O]

[+AGT] [+OBJ]

2. [+NM, +OBJ] is hosted by stative, intransitive, and passive transitive verbs:

He went away.

[+NM]

[+OBJ]

3. [+NM, +DAT] is hosted by transitive dative, and passive transitive dative verbs:

He knew her.

[+NM] [+O]

[+DAT] [+OBJ]

4. [+NM, +BEN] is hosted by passive transitive benefactive verbs:

He was given a book.

[+NM] [+O]

[+BEN] [+OBJ]

5. [+NM, +INS] is hosted by transitive instrumental verbs:

This knife cut the meat well.

[+NM] [+O]

[+INS] [+OBJ]

6. [+NM, +LOC] is hosted by stative verbs:

This room is warm.

[+NM]

[+LOC]

7. [+O, +OBJ] is hosted by transitive verbs:

The President bought the book.

[+NM] [+O]

[+AGT] [+OBJ]

8. [+O, +DAT] is hosted by transitive dative verbs:

John sent Mary a book.

[+NM] [+O] [+O]

[+AGT] [+DAT] [+OBJ]

9. [+O, +BEN] is hosted by transitive benefactive verbs:

John did Mary a favour.

[+NM] [+O] [+O]

[+AGT] [+BEN] [+OBJ]

10. [+O, +INS] is hosted by transitive instrumental verbs (it is noted that the case relation here could be considered as that of OBJECTIVE rather than INSTRUMENTAL):

John used the knife to cut meat.

[+NM] [+O]

[+AGT] [+INS]

11. [+A, +AGT] is hosted by passive transitive agentive verbs:

The book was bought by the President.

[+NM] [+A]

[+OBJ] [+AGT]

12. [+A, +DAT] is hosted by passive transitive dative verbs:

The book was seen by the President.

[+NM] [+A]

[+OBJ] [+DAT]

13. [+A, +INS] is hosted by transitive passive verbs marked with [+INS]:

The glass was broken by the broom.

[+NM] [+A]

[+OBJ] [+INS]

14. [+A, +LOC] is apparently hosted by all verbs:

John was standing by the door.

[+NM] [+A]

[+OBJ] [+LOC]

15. [+B, +OBJ] is hosted by transitive verbs that always have *for* with them:

John was looking for the book.

[+NM] [+B]

[+AGT] [+OBJ]

Another way of analyzing the same construction would be to consider *look for* as a two-word verb, hence, *the book* would be [+O, +OBJ]:

John was looking for the book.

[+NM] [+O]
[+AGT] [+OBJ]

The second solution might be theoretically more sound, because the equivalent passive construction still has the preposition attached to the verb:

The book was being looked for by John. (?)

[+NM] [+A]
[+OBJ] [+AGT]

16. [+B, +BEN] is hosted by all verbs except those otherwise marked:

John bought the book for Mary.

[+NM] [+O] [+B]
[+AGT] [+OBJ] [+BEN]

17. [+B, +EXT] is hosted by all verbs, except those otherwise marked. The EXT can be only in time, not space:

John walked for two hours.

[+NM] [+B]
[+OBJ] [+EXT]
 [+time]

18. [+C, +COM] is hosted by verbs other than statives:

John walked with Mary.

[+NM] [+C]
[+OBJ] [+COM]

19. [+C, +INS] is hosted by verbs other than statives:

John cut the meat with a knife.

[+NM] [+O] [+C]
[+AGT] [+OBJ] [+INS]

20. [+I, +OBJ] is hosted by transitive verbs that always have of with them:

John thought of Mary.

[+NM] [+I]
[+DAT] [+OBJ]

As in No. 15 above, another way of analyzing the same construction would be to consider *think of* as a two-word verb, hence, *Mary* would be [+O, +OBJ]:

John thought of Mary.

[+NM] [+O]
[+DAT] [+OBJ]

21. [+I, +INS] is hosted by passive transitive verbs of the *to be made* type. INS might be a misnomer; it might be more accurate to posit a MATERIAL case relation here:

The airplane was made of wood.

[+NM] [+I]
[+OBJ] [+INS]

22. [+L, +OBJ] is hosted by transitive verbs that always have *at* with them:

John looked at Mary.

[+NM] [+L]
[+DAT] [+OBJ]

As in No. 15 and No. 20 above, another way of analyzing the same construction would be to consider *look at* as a two-word verb, hence, *Mary* would be [+O, +OBJ]:

John looked at Mary.

[+NM] [+O]
[+DAT] [+OBJ]

23. [+L, +LOC] is apparently hosted by all verbs (it is to be noted that one could posit more than one LOCATIVE case relation, Platt (1970) posits three LOCATIVES. Such a solution would be capable of indicating which LOCATIVE could be accepted by all verbs, and which ones would not be):

John stayed at the hotel.

[+NM] [+L]
[+OBJ] [+LOC]

24. [+L, +GOL] is hosted by verbs marked with [+goal]:

John arrived at the hotel.

[+NM] [+L]
[+OBJ] [+GOL]

25. [+L, +TIM] is apparently hosted by all verbs:

John arrived at two o'clock.

[+NM] [+L]
[+OBJ] [+TIM]

26. [+Di, +DAT] is hosted by transitive dative verbs:

John gave the book to Mary.
 [+NM] [+O] [+Di]
 [+AGT] [+OBJ] [+DAT]

27. [+Di, +DIR] is hosted by verbs marked with [+dir]:

John went to the hotel.
 [+NM] [+Di]
 [+OBJ] [+DIR]

28. [+Sr, +SRC] is hosted by verbs marked with [+source]:

John went from school.
 [+NM] [+Sr]
 [+OBJ] [+SRC]

29. [+G1, +GOL] is hosted by verbs marked with [+goal]:

John worked until 5 o'clock.
 [+NM] [+G1]
 [+OBJ] [+GOL]
 [+time]

30. [+Ex, +LOC] is hosted by all verbs except those marked otherwise:

John worked in his room.
 [+NM] [+Ex]
 [+OBJ] [+LOC]

31. [+Ex, +EXT] is hosted by all verbs except those marked otherwise:

John finished his work in two hours.
 [+NM] [+O] [+Ex]
 [+AGT] [+OBJ] [+EXT]

32. [+T, +TIM] is hosted by all verbs:

John went at two o'clock.
 [+NM] [+T]
 [+OBJ] [+TIM]

3. CASE RELATIONS AND CASE FORMS IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES

In the Southeast Asian languages considered (Cantonese, Khmer, Lao, Thai, and Vietnamese), the twelve universal case relations are pigeon-holed in twelve overt case forms of which some are marked by their positions *vis-à-vis* the predicative verb, and some by coverbs (for a summary

of analyses of coverbs in some Asian languages, see Clark 1975). The twelve case forms are:

- NM the Nominative position immediately precedes the verb, and there are no prepositions.
- O the Objective position immediately follows the verb, and there are no prepositions.
- D the Dative case form is marked by a coverb meaning '*to give*' or '*to*'. The position follows the Objective position in Cantonese, Khmer, and Vietnamese, but precedes the latter position in Lao and Thai.
- B the Benefactive case form is marked by a coverb meaning '*to help*' or '*for*'. The position follows the Objective position, if any, in all the languages.
- C the Comitative case form is marked by a preposition meaning '*with*'.
- I the Instrumental case form is marked by a preposition meaning '*by means of*'.
- L the Locative case form is marked by a preposition or coverb meaning '*to be at*'.
- Di the Directional case form is marked by coverbs having such meanings as '*to go up*', '*to go down*', etc.
- Sr the Source case form is marked by a preposition or coverb meaning '*to quit*' or '*from*'.
- G1 the Goal case form is marked by a coverb meaning '*to arrive*'.
- Ex the Extent case form is marked by a coverb meaning '*to gain*' or '*in*'.
- T the Time position is a variable one, but it is usually placed at the beginning or the end of the clause.

The twelve covert case relations and the twelve overt case forms can be charted in a bidimensional chart yielding 144 possible pigeon-holes of correspondence. It can be generalised that all the five Southeast Asian languages make use of twenty five correspondences between case relations and case forms as in Chart 2 below (this is a generalisation because one or two of those correspondences might be considered strained, hence not quite grammatical, by native speakers of a language in the group).

Chart 2

CASE RELATIONS AND CASE FORMS IN S.E.A. LANGUAGES

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		NM	O	D	B	C	I	L	Di	Sr	Gl	Ex	T
1	AGT	1											
2	OBJ	2	6										
3	DAT	3	7	14									
4	BEN		8	15	16								
5	COM					17							
6	INS	4	9				18						
7	LOC	5	10					19					
8	DIR		11						21				
9	SRC							20		22			
10	GOL		12								23		
11	EXT		13									24	
12	TIM												25

The examples of the correspondences between the case relations and case forms are as follows (for the sake of economy, each correspondence will be exemplified in only one language):³

1. [+NM, +AGT] is hosted by transitive agentive verbs:

l^áaw s^ỳy kh^ḥḥoŋ (Lao)
he buys things.
 [+NM] [+O]
 [+AGT] [+OBJ]

2. [+NM, +OBJ] is hosted by stative, and intransitive verbs:

koət t^áəw (Khmer)
he went.
 [+NM]
 [+OBJ]

3. [+NM, +DAT] is hosted by transitive dative, and transitive submissive verbs:

khǎw thùuk tii (Thai)
he undergo beat
He was beaten.
 [+NM] [+submissive] [+O]
 [+DAT] [+OBJ]

Notice, incidentally, that the correspondence [+O, +OBJ] is filled, as is the case here, by a verb standing for clause when the host verb is marked [+submissive]. All the languages considered have only one submissive verb each, meaning 'to experience something bad', except Vietnamese which has two submissive verbs, được 'to experience something good', and bị 'to experience something bad'.

4. [+NM, +INS] is hosted by transitive instrumental verbs:

dao này cắt thịt (Vietnamese)
this knife cut the meat.
 [+NM] [+O]
 [+INS] [+OBJ]

5. [+NM, +LOC] is hosted by stative verbs:

hóoŋ nìi hōoŋ (Lao)
this room (is) hot.
 [+NM]
 [+LOC]

6. [+O, +OBJ] is hosted by transitive verbs:

keúih maaí syù (Cantonese)
he bought books.
 [+NM] [+O]
 [+AGT] [+OBJ]

7. [+O, +DAT] is hosted by transitive dative verbs:

Ông ấy bán tôi sách. (Vietnamese)
He sold me books.
 [+NM] [+O] [+O]
 [+AGT] [+DAT] [+OBJ]

It is noted that in Lao and Thai, the word order is [+O, +OBJ] before [+O, +DAT].

8. [+O, +BEN] is hosted by transitive benefactive verbs:

Ông ấy mua tôi cuốn này. (Vietnamese)
He bought me this volume.
 [+NM] [+O] [+O]
 [+AGT] [+BEN] [+OBJ]
 [+DAT]

It is noted that the example is ambiguous in that *tôi* 'me' can be either BEN or DAT.

9. [+O, +INS] is hosted by transitive instrumental verbs:

keúih yuhng dou (Cantonese)
He used a knife.
 [+NM] [+O]
 [+AGT] [+OBJ]

10. [+O, +LOC] is hosted by intransitive locative verbs:

khǎw yùu haawaay (Thai)
He lives in Hawaii.
 [+NM] [+O]
 [+OBJ] [+LOC]

11. [+O, +DIR] is hosted by intransitive directional verbs:

láaw paj hóonhéem (Lao)
He went to the hotel.
 [+NM] [+O]
 [+OBJ] [+OBJ]

12. [+O, +GOL] is hosted by intransitive [+goal] verbs:

láaw máa hòot mýaη láaw (Lao)
 [+NM] [+O]
 [+OBJ] [+GOL]

13. [+O, +EXT] is hosted by all verbs except those otherwise marked:

láaw paj sǎam dyan (Lao)
He went for three months.
 [+NM] [+O]
 [+OBJ] [+EXT]
 [+time]

14. [+D, +DAT] is hosted by transitive agentive verbs:

Ông ấy bán sách cho tôi. (Vietnamese)
He sold books to me.
 [+NM] [+O] [+D]
 [+AGT] [+OBJ] [+DAT]
 [+BEN]

Notice that the example is ambiguous. It could mean 'He sold books to me' or 'He sold books for me', i.e. cho tôi could be [+D, +DAT] or [+D, +BEN].

15. [+D, +BEN] is hosted by transitive agentive and intransitive actional verbs:

láaw paj háj khôj (Lao)
He went for me.
 [+NM] [+D]
 [+OBJ] [+DAT]

16. [+B, +BEN] is hosted by transitive agentive and intransitive actional verbs:

khǎw tham thúk-yàaŋ phǎa lúuk (Thai)
He does everything for his child.
 [+NM] [+O] [+B]
 [+AGT] [+OBJ] [+BEN]

17. [+C, +COM] is hosted by verbs other than statives:

khǎw paj kàp phǒm (Thai)
He went with me.
 [+NM] [+C]
 [+OBJ] [+COM]

18. [+I, +INS] is hosted by transitive and intransitive actional verbs:

láaw tát paa duàj mǐit (Lao)
He cut the fish with a knife.
 [+NM] [+O] [+I]
 [+AGT] [+OBJ] [+INS]

19. [+L, +LOC] is apparently hosted by all verbs (re. note about the same correspondence in English, No.23, p. 51):

khǎw tham ɲaan yùu haawaay (Thai)
He works in Hawaii.
 [+NM] [+L]
 [+OBJ] [+LOC]

20. [+L, +SRC] is hosted by verbs marked with [+dir] or [+goal]:

Ông ấy ở Pháp đến (Vietnamese)
He from France arrived.
 [+NM] [+L]
 [+OBJ] [+SRC]

Notice that the sentence could be analysed as having two independent clauses and meaning '*He stayed in France, (he) arrived*'.

21. [+Di, +DIR] is hosted by transitive and intransitive verbs marked with [+dir]:

láaw khÿn paj phúu (Lao)
(he ascend go mountain)
He went up the mountain.
 [+NM] [+Di]
 [+OBJ] [+DIR]

22. [+Sr, +SRC] is hosted by transitive and intransitive verbs marked with [+source]:

kaa mɔɔk pii haawaj (Cambodian)
A comes from Hawaii.
 [+NM] [+Sr]
 [+OBJ] [+SRC]

23. [+G1, +GOL] is hosted by transitive verbs marked with [+goal]:

khǎw maa thŋ haawaay cǎak san fransiskô (Thai)
He came to Hawaii from San Francisco
 [+NM] [+Di] [+Sr]
 [+OBJ] [+DIR] [+SRC]

24. [+Ex, +EXT] is hosted by all verbs except those marked otherwise:

láaw jūu nīi dǎj sǔɔŋ dyan (Lao)
He stayed here for two months.
 [+NM] [+O] [+Ex]
 [+OBJ] [+LOC] [+EXT]

25. [+T, +TIM] is hosted by all verbs except those marked otherwise:

láaw si paj taláat mÿy-ÿyn (Lao)
He will go to the market tomorrow.
 [+NM] [+O] [+T]
 [+OBJ] [+LOC] [+TIM]

4. TRANSLATION

The system of translation advocated here is that set forth by Nida and Taber (1969:33) whose terms have been quoted in the introduction of this paper, and are repeated below:

"The second system of translation consists of a more elaborate procedure comprising three stages: (1) analysis, in which the surface structure (i.e. the message as given in language A) is analyzed in terms of (a) the grammatical relationships and (b) the meanings of the words and combinations of words, (2) transfer, in which the analyzed material is transferred in the mind of the translator from language A to language B, and (3) restructuring, in which the transferred material is restructured in order to make the final message fully acceptable in the receptor language." (Nida and Taber 1969:33).

The first stage of the translation process is then "analysis". In terms of the grammatical model proposed herein analysis is decoding (re. Chart 3). A message appears in the source language in the surface structure, i.e. it is the clause level that concerns us here, its noun phrases show overt case forms to their predicative verbs. To decode is then to find out the covert case relations that are pigeon-holed in the overt case forms. The process of decoding is indicated by either arrow downwards in Chart 3, and is exemplified as follows.

The surface structure of the message shows the case forms:

John bought Mary a new dress.
 [+NM] [+O] [+O] (OVERT CASE FORMS)

‡ To decode the message is to find out the covert case relations:

John bought Mary a new dress.
 [+AGT] [+BEN] [+OBJ] (COVERT CASE RELATIONS)

The second half of the analytical process given by Nida and Taber, namely, the analysis of the "meanings of the words and combinations of words", is also very important in translation. However, it is not discussed here because the analysis of the "meanings of the words" is semantics, and the "combination of words" lies in the internal structures of phrases, and hence, both of these aspects lie beyond the realm of this paper which aims specifically at demonstrating the importance of case realisations and case relations in translation.

The second stage of the translation process, namely "transfer, in which the analysed material is transferred in the mind of the translator from language A to language B" (Nida and Taber 1969:33) is, in this proposed model, the conceptualisation of the covert case relations of noun phrases to their hosting predicative verb phrases.

The third stage, namely "restructuring, in which the transferred material is restructured in order to make the final message fully acceptable in the receptor language" (Nida and Taber 1969:33) is, in terms of the proposed grammatical model, encoding (Chart 3, on page 61). To encode a message at the clause level is to pigeon-hole the covert case relations of the noun phrases to their predicative verb phrases in the system of overt case forms of the receptor language. Its process is indicated by either arrow upwards in Chart 3, and is exemplified as follows:

	<i>John</i>	<i>bought</i>	<i>Mary</i>	<i>a book.</i>	(Source)
	[+NM]		[+O]	[+O]	(OVERT CASE FORMS IN SOURCE)
Decoding ↓	[+AGT]		[+BEN]	[+OBJ]	(COVERT CASE RELATIONS)
Encoding ↑	[+NM]		[+D]	[+O]	(OVERT CASE FORMS IN RECEPTOR)
	John	mua	cho Mary	một cuốn sách.	(Receptor, Vietnamese)

The above example of the decoding and encoding process shows that (1) the AGENTIVE and OBJECTIVE case relations appear in the Nominative and Objective case forms respectively in both the source language and the receptor language, and (2) the BENEFACTIVE case relation appears as an Objective case form in English, but as a Dative case form in Vietnamese. The change of case form in the receptor language is necessary in order "to make the final message fully acceptable" (Nida and Taber 1969:33), and is done according to the surface structure requirements of the receptor language. This leads us to the deductions about the priorities in the translating process set forth by Nida and Taber in these terms:

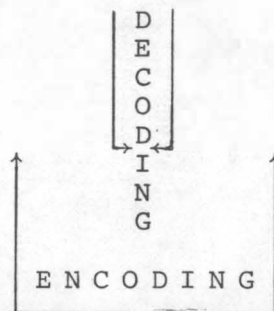
"In conclusion, let us remind ourselves of the priorities in the process of transfer:

1. At all costs, the content of the message must be transferred with as little loss or distortion as possible. It is the referential, conceptual burden of the message that has the highest priority.
2. It is very important to convey as well as possible the connotation, the emotional flavor and impact, of the message. This is harder to describe than the first, and even harder to accomplish, but it is very important.
3. If, in transferring from one language to another the content and connotation of the message, one can also carry over something of the form, one should do so. But under no circumstances should the form be given priority over the other aspects of the message." (Nida and Taber 1969:118-19).

In the process of translating a message from English to the Southeast Asian languages under consideration, or vice versa, one must bear in mind that the pigeon-holed correlations of case forms and case relations that are circled in Chart 3 are particular to either English or the Southeast Asian languages considered. These case relations, once encoded in the receptor language, will have a different case realisation

Chart 3
CASES AND TRANSLATION

	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	T	Ex	Gl	Sr	Di	L	I	C	B	(D)	O	NM		NM	O	(A)	B	C	I	L	Di	Sr	Gl	Ex	T
1												✕	AGT	✕		(✕)									
2											✕	✕	OBJ	✕	✕		(✕)		(✕)	(✕)					
3										(✕)	✕	✕	DAT	✕	✕	(✕)					(✕)				
4									✕	(✕)	✕		BEN	(✕)	✕		✕								
5								✕					COM					✕							
6							✕				✕	✕	INS	✕	✕	(✕)		(✕)	✕						
7						✕				(✕)	✕		LOC	✕		(✕)				✕				(✕)	
8					✕					(✕)			DIR								✕				
9				✕		(✕)							SRC									✕			
10			✕							(✕)			GOL							(✕)			✕		
11		✕								(✕)			EXT											✕	
12	✕												TIM			(✕)	(✕)			(✕)					✕



from the one in the source language.

	Ông ấy	ở Canberra	đến.	(Source, Vietnamese)
	[+NM]	[+L]		(OVERT CASE FORMS IN SOURCE)
Decoding ↓	[+OBJ]	[+SRC]	↘	(COVERT CASE RELATIONS)
Encoding ↓	[+NM]	[+Sr]		(OVERT CASE FORMS IN RECEPTOR)
	He	arrived	from Canberra.	(Receptor)

The example above shows that sometimes not only do overt case forms differ from one language to another in the translation process but they also occupy different positions *vis-à-vis* other case forms in the clauses.

	John	was given	a book	by Mary.	(Source)
	[+NM]	[+O]	[+A]		(OVERT CASE FORMS IN SOURCE)
Decoding ↓	[+DAT]	[+OBJ]	[+AGT]		(COVERT CASE RELATIONS)
Encoding ↓	[+NM]	[+O]			(OVERT CASE FORMS IN RECEPTOR)
	John	được	Mary	cho một cuốn sách.	(Receptor, Vietnamese)

The example above shows that "It is very important to convey as well as possible the connotation, the emotional flavor and impact, of the message" (Nida and Taber 1969:119). Indeed, the fact that John was given a book by Mary is something benefactory to John. That benefactory connotation is translated by the verb *được* literally meaning '*to experience something good and beneficiary*'. The passive form in English, but having an unfortunate connotation will have to be translated differently as follows:

	John	was beaten	by Mary.	(Source)
	[+NM]	[+A]		(OVERT CASE FORMS)
Decoding ↓	[+DAT]	[+AGT]		(COVERT CASE RELATIONS)
Encoding ↓	[+NM]	[+O]		(OVERT CASE FORMS)
	John	bị	Mary đánh.	(Receptor, Vietnamese)

In the above example, the fact that John was beaten by Mary was an unfortunate matter for him, hence the verb *bị* literally meaning '*to experience something bad and unfortunate*' is used.

All the other correlations of case forms and case relations (i.e. those which are not encircled in Chart 3) could be literally carried over from one language to the other, and would be grammatical. However, such a literal translation might run the risk of not being dynamic. There are semantic/sememic factors which lead any case relation to be expressed by alternative case forms. Given any correlation of case form/case relation in Chart 1 and 2, (1) one needs to determine these semantic/sememic factors which call for the overt case form in question

in the source language, and (2) armed with that and the knowledge of the covert case relations plus the knowledge of how these semantic/sememic factors are realised by one of the possible case forms in the receptor language which express the same case relations, one then makes the right choice of the overt case realisations.

Finally, it is the belief of the author that language is closely related to culture, and that a good translation work must necessarily take that language and culture relationship into account.

NOTES

1. The number of case relations could naturally be reduced; for example, Marybeth Clark (1975) grouped the LOCATIVE, DIRECTIONAL, GOAL, and EXTENT case relations into only one case relation, namely LOCATIVE. Such a reduction of case relations could very well be theoretically preferred, but would only make longer the arguments in favour of the proposed translation theory.
2. As this paper does not intend to classify the verbs in the languages, the information on their characteristics, i.e. whether they are transitive or intransitive, is not exhaustive, and is meant only to second the exemplified correspondences between case relations and case forms. For a classification of verbs in this theoretical model, see Liem 1975, and Liem forthcoming. For classification of verbs in English, see Liem 1969:75-108.
3. The transcriptions follow Huang and Kok (1973) for Cantonese, Brown (1967, 1968, and 1969) for Thai, Crisfield (1970) for Lao, Huffman (1970) for Khmer, and the Vietnamese script.

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