

Journal of Universal Language 12-1  
March 2011, 157-195

# Universalizing the Particular in Korean-to-English Translations: The Case of a Korean Short Story, 'Memilkkot p'il muryöp'

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## Abstract

While research on Korean-to-English literary translation has progressed beyond a mere bibliographic perspective, there has been little focus on the translator's strategy or on the assessment of the translation. The present study has identified the strategy employed by the translators of a Korean short story, 'Memilkkot p'il muryöp', in terms of the norms they utilize. With its components of both universality and Korea's unique folk culture, the story has appealing elements that will attract Western readers. This research focuses on enhancing the reading experience for English speakers of the story, identify the norms applied by the translators, and provide a research methodology for the field of Korean-to-English literary translation analysis. The analysis focuses on how the style of the original text is transferred to the three target texts (TTs). Initially, the source text

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Received Jan. 2011; Reviewed Jan. 2010; Revised version received Feb. 2011.

(ST) is closely examined to investigate the cultural status of the original and the acceptability of the translation in the target culture. Then the ST and the TTs are compared and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. In the quantitative analysis, the three TTs focus on communicating with TT readers. Their strategies are TT-oriented and focused on communicating with TT readers. The results of qualitative analysis define the quality of the TTs, which varies according to the norms adopted by each translator.

Keywords: literary translation, norms, translation strategy, culture-bound, TT-oriented

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this research is to analyze three English translations of “Memilkkot p’il muryöp” (“When the Buckwheat Blooms”), a modern short story, and examine the translation strategies employed and resulting quality in three target texts (TTs).<sup>1</sup>

‘Memilkkot p’il muryöp’ by Yi Hyo-sök, widely known to Koreans for its lyrical qualities, was first published in the journal, Chokwang, in 1936. The story revolves around a man moving from Pongpyöng, Kangwöndo to a Taehwa marketplace on a summer day from an omniscient perspective. In an omniscient perspective, the author narrates not only the behaviors or conversations of a character but also his or her inner state of mind. The two themes evident in this story embellished with poetic emotions are the nature of humanity and the beauty of nature. The author stated that he tried to deal with the mysterious aspect of sexual desire through this work (Yi 1938). Kim(1939:199) states that Memilkkot p’il muryöp’ stands at the pinnacle of literary art in Korea.

The core two issues are the aim of the translation and the readability of the TT readers. The TT readers determine the purpose

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<sup>1</sup> Target Text: The translation, i.e. the result of the translation process.

of a translation because the main aim of Korean-to-English literary translation is to attract Western readers. Due to the lack of familiarity of Korean literature among Western readers, the translator must retain a consideration of the target readers throughout the translation process. A TT that ignores any translating limitations in syntax and content, and fails to communicate with TT readers cannot be regarded as successful.

This research is focused on the technique for producing a good quality of Korean-English literary translation under the theory that a Korean-English literary translation should be focused on communication with the TT readers rather than faithfulness to the ST<sup>2</sup>, while retaining the Korean unique linguistic and cultural expressions. An analysis of three TTs will be used to test this hypothesis.

In the first place, the ST will be closely examined to investigate the cultural status of the original and the acceptability of the translation in the target culture. Then the ST and the TTs will be compared and analyzed. The analysis is quantitative and qualitative. The qualitative analysis examines whether the TTs place greater emphasis on communication with the TT or faithfulness to the ST. The qualitative one is used to examine how the TTs reproduce the intrinsic lyrical qualities of the ST.

In the findings of the quantitative analysis, the three TTs focus on communicating with the TT readers. Their strategies are TT-oriented and focused on communicating with TT readers. The results of the qualitative analysis are presented in section 7. Based on the findings, I will discuss the implications and present a methodology for future research in the field.

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<sup>2</sup> Source Text: The text to be translated.

## 2. The Internalization of Korean Literature through Translation

The work ‘Memilkkot p’il muryöþ’ describes the unique source culture and the folksy traditions in the common theme of humanity. The work was therefore selected as the ST as these merits will be attractive for Western readers and the work thus deserves translation. Universality and indigenous themes are topics of globalization, and they are mainly considered when Korean literature is introduced to foreigners.

The issues of universalism and uniqueness have been raised by Ansö, Kim Ök. He described the issues as 'national literature' and 'international literature'. He translated Korean literature into Esperanto and, in the process, he explained the unique beauty and human universalism relating to globalization as follows: “When a piece of literature becomes a masterpiece internationally, it will become a masterwork domestically, but not vice versa. National literature is dense of local color while international literature puts the basic factor on the common understanding of human beings.” (Kim 1987: 610) Ansö thought that Korean translators should introduce the works of human universality to foreign readers, and selected STs by firstly considering human universality. He excluded local color from major considerations. Kim Ök reinterpreted an ST in ways that Western readers can understand easily and translated considering the TT readers’ readability. In other words, he generalized unique Korean vocabularies or idioms for foreign readers. This translating method was based on his own principle. He saw Korean literature as ‘international literature’. He emphasized translation on universal concepts rather than pursuing the local color (Park 2009a: 97).

Which such a humanist perspective, Kim Ök tried to select STs with a common denominator for all human beings. By placing high priority on universal factors, the translator experiences some

problems such as incomplete transference of the differentiated viewpoints or characteristics of an ST to the TT. Especially, when an ST involves the themes of Korean social issues and complex and localized emotions, these kinds of problem can occur more frequently. However, his translation strategy might be appropriate for the demand side. Consideration for the demand of TT is an approach to the socio-cultural frame.

The relative dearth of foreign publishing and distribution indicates the difficulties in establishing Korean literature in the global market. In this situation, it is encouraging that some Korean writers' works have recently been published in Western publishing companies, coming in direct contact to Western readers:

Translation of Korean literature into English means that Korean literature runs into the fierce competition of the English-speaking publishing market. In the macro-level sense, it is a kind of adventure plunging into cultural circle or language power that the imperialism of America and England has established from the modern period to today. (Pong & Kwön 2004: 26)

English-speaking readers who belong to majority culture might have little interest in minority culture. Therefore when Korean literature enters the western culture without substantial preparation, it will fail to attract the western readers' attention. Korean literature must enter the Western cultural circle and create demand on its own in order to gain international recognition. This will induce a need for follow-up translations. The important factor is to develop the brand power of Korea because an interest in Korea and Korean is connected with an interest in Korean literature. The globalization of Korean literature can be achieved by selecting an ST that arouses Western readers' sympathy and producing high quality translation. To achieve this, the existing TTs should be analyzed.

### 3. Looking at the Acceptability of the TT in the Target Culture.

The ST was directly translated from Korean. The plot of the ST can be summarized as follows. A left-handed and pockmarked Hō Saeng-wōn is an itinerant market trader. He gambles and loses his whole fortune, but he does not sell his ass, his alter ego, and goes around the market place. He goes to Ch'ungju woman's tavern with his colleague, Cho Sōn-dal, on the day of Pongp'yōng fair. When he sees Tong-i, a young trader, harass a Ch'ungju woman, he is upset and slaps him on the cheek and throws him out. After the fair, the three traders walk together along the mountain pass in the white moonlit night with buckwheat flowers. Hō Saeng-wōn talks about his one-night stand in his youth. He made love with a girl at the water-mill house in the moonlit night of white buckwheat flowers. Tong-i talks about his mother who has been a single mom. Tong-i does not know who his father is and had a hard time due to his stepfather's violence. Finally he left his home. Old Hō Saeng-wōn misses a step crossing a stream and is drenched with water. Tong-i carries Hō Saeng-wōn on his back. While they cross the stream, Tong-i says that his mom's hometown is Pongp'yōng and Hō Saeng-wōn realizes that Tong-i is left-handed like him. Circumstantial evidence suggests that Tong-i is his son, whom he had with a girl a long time ago. They decide to go to Chech'ōn where Tong-i's mom lives.

Yi Hyō-sōk, the author of the ST, created the original literary world with his sophisticated language style, sufficient vocabulary, and poetic atmosphere in the 1930s. He is regarded as a representative writer of his times. His works faithfully reflect the overall trend of the literary circle in those days, which moved from progressive literature toward post-ideological pure literature.

Yi Hyō-sōk wrote actively since 1930 when he graduated from college. In the beginning, his works showed the color of tendency

literature. He described the life of a poverty-stricken, young intellectual under the Japanese colonial rule. However, his works tended to change with a greater focus on describing sex and nature after 1931 when he published his first collection of works, *Noryōng Kūnhae*. Then, the features of his works representing sex and nature maintained his artistic identity. He had an excellent literary skill to achieve a perfect balance between sex and nature. ‘*Memilkkot p’il muryōp*’ is the typical work that clearly reveals his artistic identity. This short story is a metaphor between nature and human relationships in the background of the Pongpyōng market day.

Yi Hyō-sōk was very interested in the manner in which literature is expressed, i.e. the style of a work. He pointed out that fiction writers generally lacked ‘the skill of expression.’

However tasteful the food may be, you will lose your taste if the dish is ugly. However excellent the material for writing fiction may be, the value and beauty of the work might be offset when the writer lacks the skill of expressions. The work might drop in value when the skill of a writer is unreliable and incomplete. (Yi 1931: 212)

Critics have criticized him for his change and called him ‘*escapist*.’ However, nature might be a support and a young writer under the Japanese colonial rule might depend on and select Mother Earth for strengthening his literary world and purifying his emotion. The nature of ‘*Memilkkot p’il muryōp*’ is a firm ground to support the painful life of the protagonist. Nature and humankind are one and the same body in the work. The important event of this work, the star-crossed love with the girl, is something that can’t be explained objectively. The author attributes the root cause of the connection between Hō Saeng-wōn and the girl to ‘the moonlit night of buckwheat flowers’. The moonlight and buckwheat flowers express the beauty and perfection of nature. The one-night love with

the girl twenty years ago also occurred in the background of moonlight and buckwheat flowers. When Hō Saeng-wōn's old ass reveals sexual urges to Kim Chōm-ji's jenny donkey, it hints at the owner's sexual desire. He also has a son, Tong-i, with the one-night love as his ass has a young donkey with Kangnūng woman's mare. Hō and the ass have similar appearance and circumstance. Hō Saeng-wōn and the ass have a close, 20-year relationship, and the ass is described as old and weak image as his owner's. Both are inseparably related to each other and live in harmony. They symbolize the 'agreement of nature and human beings' as the author suggests. In fact, the background of the work is the author's hometown through which he pursued the lyrical source:

He realized that nature was a space beyond the tragic factor of civilization, and had a healthy life which the Japanese colonial rule took away. In this situation, Yi Hyō-sōk also accepted nature as a space for spiritual comfort. Yi Hyō-sōk went toward spiritual aristocraticism at the moment he regarded nature as the world of spiritual comfort. (Ch'oe 2008: 73)

Nature incorporates with the main subject he pursued and his work makes a deep impression on the readers. Some scholars have examined the sexual deviation of Yi Hyō-sōk from the perspective of post-colonialism. The key issue of post-colonial argument is how the main agents faithful to their historical experience are established in the mixed social system. "...the sexual deviation of female characters aims at post-modernism itself, and can be interpreted as a resistant attitude against the misconception about twisted sex in early-modern times" (Im 2008: 135).



## **4. The Issue of the Analysis**

### **4.1. The Style in Literary Translation**

Transference of style is one of the most important things to consider in literary translation. As Newmark (1981: 39) pointed out, if equivalence effect is secured, the literal translation is the best and most valid translation method. However, if the result of this method is not communicative to the readers, the literary value pursued by the ST might diminish. The present analysis examines how the style of the ST is transferred into the TT. The readers respond to the artistic quality and are impressed by the work. Special attention with regard to translating literary works will be paid to whether or not the translators adequately represent the styles of the ST. Style is the original method to present the identity of the author. When a literary translation cannot convey the style of the ST, the characteristics and artistry of the ST will not be retained in the TT. After all, the quality of literary translation depends on how the style of the ST is revived in the TT.

Shiyab and Lynch (2006: 265) insist that there are two perspectives with regard to translating literary style: linguistic and literary. In the former, the translator has to view the text specifically and delicately. Here the translator should examine the coherency among the sentences, the flow among the paragraphs, and the word order adopted in the text. The translator should study the structure of the text. In the latter perspective, Shiyab and Lynch (2006: 265) suggest that the translator should look at the whole picture in which the text was written. The translator should try to transfer the artistic representations and images of the ST as closely as possible and to reproduce the same feelings, thoughts and style of the ST. The micro-level linguistic perspective and the macro-level literary perspective should not be assessed separately because a shift of the micro-level affects the shift of the macro level. As Shiyab and

Lynch suggest, the best way to revive the artistic quality of linguistic and literary aspects is to remain as faithful as possible to the ST.

However, in the case of literary translation, priority is often given to the readability of the TT readers so that the domestication strategy strays from a faithful rendition of the ST. Therefore, the style of the ST may undergo some changes. The domesticating tendency of Korean-to-English literary translation seems to be inevitable to translators. This tendency is caused by the linguistic and cultural differences between English and Korean. The background of the Korean short stories adopts the culture and the language native to Korea as the material. Especially, the early-modern Korean short stories include many unique Korean expressions as we can see in ‘Memilkkot p’il muryōp’. In such a case, the translator might make some changes to the style of the ST in the translation process. He or she might consider the readability of the TT readers and adopt the domestication strategy. In this situation, we cannot state that the translator destroys the style of the ST (Park 2009b: 80).

In Korea, the main medium to publish literary works is literary journals, where short stories are usually published by making the best use of the limited space. Therefore, writing short stories is the main trend in the Korea’s literary circles. Actually, many active fiction writers have made their debut by writing short stories. In general, short stories are characterized by simple plot, elaborate construction and compact style. Short stories generally describe a selected part or a slice of human lives and real life while novels reveal various sides of human lives comprehensively. Therefore, short stories must present the coherent impression in a whole and have features of compressed and laconic language. The characters of short stories must be portrayed vividly and in detail. The theme, the characters, and the events, which are the main factors of style, consist of conceptual coherence. So, when the style of Korean short

stories should be transferred appropriately, the Korean short stories can communicate well with Western readers. To achieve this goal, Korean literary translators must consider achieving a balance between fidelity to the ST and the readability of the TT readers.

When the translators secure communication with TT readers, they should try to reproduce linguistic and cultural beauty, and local color of an ST which improves the grace and refinement of the TT. As translators represent the style of the ST through their own translation strategy, the TT readers can read the TT with the unique and characteristic features of the translators.

## **4.2. Theoretical Background of the Analysis**

When the literature of a minority language is translated into a majority language, the TT readers might understand the source culture less than vice versa. In this case, the translator will focus on the message delivery rather than on grasping the style. In this situation, a translator's invention is inevitable for delivering the message of the ST. However, the invention must be minimized. It can be classified into three categories: simplification, explicitation, and normalization. In simplification, the contents of an ST tend to be simplified compared to those of the TT. Explicitation means that the meaning that is concealed in the context of an ST is revealed in the TT. In normalization, a translator reproduces the unique texts according to the norms of the target language and culture.

In the detailed analysis, culture-bound vocabulary, unique Korean language expressions, and slang are examined. Translation methods presented by Newmark are adopted as a micro tool for classifying the contents of the TT.

This study uses the relevant items of Newmark to consider the features of Korean-to-English literary translation. Newmark (1988: 82-92) details the translation method as follows:

**Transference** is the process of transferring an SL word to a TL<sup>3</sup> text as a translation procedure. It relates to the conversion of different alphabets.

**Cultural Equivalent** is an approximate translation where an SL culture-bound word is translated by a TL culture-bound word.

**Functional Equivalent** is a common procedure, applied to culture-bound words, that requires the use of a culture-free word, sometimes with a new specific term. This procedure, which is a cultural componential analysis, is the most accurate way of translating, i.e. deculturalizing a culture-bound word.

**Descriptive Equivalent** in translation, description sometimes has to be weighed against function. *Samurai* is described as 'the Japanese aristocracy from the eleventh to the nineteenth century'; its function was 'to provide officers and administrators'. Description and function are essential elements in explanation and therefore in translation.

**Synonymy**: 'Synonym' is used in the sense of a near TL equivalent to an SL word in a context, where a precise equivalent may or may not exist. This procedure is used for an SL where there is no clear one-to-one equivalent, and the word is not important in the text, in particular for adjectives or adverbs of quality.

**Through-Translation** is the literal translation of common collocations, names of organizations, the components of compounds and perhaps phrases are defined as 'Through-Translation'.

**Shifts or Transpositions** is a translation procedure involving a

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<sup>3</sup> Target Language: Language into which a text is to be translated.

change in the grammar from SL to TL such as the change from singular to plural or in the position of the adjective.

**Modulation** is used to define 'a variation through a change of viewpoint, of perspective and very often of category of thought'. Free modulation is used by translators 'when the TL rejects literal translation'.

**Compensation** occurs when loss of meaning, sound-effect, metaphor or pragmatic effect in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part, or in a contiguous sentence.

**Couplets:** Couplets, triplets, and quadruplets combining two, three or four of the above-mentioned procedures, respectively, for dealing with a single problem. They are particularly common for culture-bound words, if transference is combined with a functional or cultural equivalent.

## 5. Comparison of the ST and the TT for Shifts

### 5.1. Culture-bound Words

Differences of culture are considered to be proportional to those of language. Translation and culture are closely related. An aim of literary translation is to pursue communication between the source culture and the target culture. Therefore, literary translators cannot escape from culture-bound words. Literary works describe people's lives, so they have many culture-bound expressions. In this study, culture-bound vocabularies are specifically classified into people, places, things, measurement, and customs. Their translations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Translations of Culture-bound Vocabularies

people	ST	TT 1	T. method
		TT 2	
		TT 3	
	tūt'imjŏn	dry-goods peddler	Cultural Equivalent
		drapery peddler	Cultural Equivalent
		cloth merchant	Cultural Equivalent
	Hŏ Saeng-wŏn	Hŏ Saeng-wŏn	Transference
		Huh Saengwon* (with a note)	Descriptive Equivalent
		Ho Seng-won	Transference
	Cho Sŏn-dal	Cho Sŏn-dal	Transference
		Cho Seondal* (with a note)	Descriptive Equivalent
		Cho Sun-dal	Transference
	ŏmul changsu	fishmongers	Cultural Equivalent(pl.)
		fishmonger	Cultural Equivalent(sing.)
		fishmonger	Cultural Equivalent(sing.)
	ttaemjangi	Tinkers	Cultural Equivalent(pl.)
		tinker	Cultural Equivalent(sing.)
		tea-man	Trans. Error
	yŏt changsu	Taffymen	Cultural Equivalent
		toffee man	Cultural Equivalent
		toffee- man	Cultural Equivalent
	saenggang changsu	ginger vendors	Cultural Equivalent(pl.)
		ginger merchant	Cultural Equivalent
		ginger-man	Cultural Equivalent

	ðlgũmbaengi sangp'an	pock-marked mug	Cultural Equivalent(slang)
		pock-marked face	Cultural Equivalent
		pock-marked face	Cultural Equivalent
	Ch'ungjutjip	Ch'ungju woman	Transference
		Chungju woman	Transference
		Chungju woman	Transference
	nanjilkkun	Quite the ladies' man	Cultural Equivalent
			Omission
			Omission
	mangnani	hopless drunk - a complete good-for- nothing	Descriptive Equivalent
		regular villain	Cultural Equivalent
		regular scoundrel	Cultural Equivalent
place	Pongp'yŏng chang	Pongp'yŏng	Transference
		Bongpyong market	Descriptive Equivalent
		Bonpyong	Transference
	Taehwa chang	Taehwa	Transference
		The market at Daehwa	Descriptive Equivalent
		Daihwa	Transference
	kaekjutjip t'obang	this tiny little room with a dirt floor	Descriptive Equivalent
		the bare earthen room of the inn	Descriptive Equivalent
		the room in the inn	Descriptive Equivalent
	mulbangatkan	Watermill shed	Cultural Equivalent
		water mill	Cultural Equivalent
		water-mill	Cultural Equivalent

	chõnpang	a little shop	Descriptive Equivalent
		a small shop	Descriptive Equivalent
		a little shop	Descriptive Equivalent
things	koritchak	wicker hamper	Cultural Equivalent
		wicker chest	Cultural Equivalent
		wicker baskets	Cultural Equivalent(pl.)
	mõngsõk	straw mat	Cultural Equivalent
		straw matt	Cultural Equivalent
		matting floor	Descriptive Equivalent
	mongdangbi		(omission)
		broom	Cultural Equivalent
		worn out broom	Descriptive Equivalent
	nõldari	the plank bridge	Descriptive Equivalent
		foot-bridge	Cultural Equivalent
		plank-bridge	Descriptive Equivalent
	Koõi	loose summer trousers	Functional Equivalent
		thin shorts	Descriptive Equivalent
		Trousers	Cultural Equivalent
measurement	sõkyubyõng	a bottle of kerosene	Descriptive Equivalent
		a couple of bottles of paraffin	Descriptive Equivalent
		a bottle of paraffin	Descriptive Equivalent



	kogitmari	some fish	Descriptive Equivalent
		a few fish	Descriptive Equivalent
		a bit of fish	Descriptive Equivalent
	yukch'ilsip ni	fifteen to twenty miles	Cultural Equivalent
		twenty-five, thirty kilometres	Descriptive Equivalent
		fifteen or twenty miles	Cultural Equivalent
	mumyöng p'il	the bolts of cotton cloth	Descriptive Equivalent
		the rolls of cotton	Descriptive Equivalent
		the rolls of cotton	Descriptive Equivalent
	chudan pari	the bundles of silk fabrics	Descriptive Equivalent
		the rolls of silk	Descriptive Equivalent
		bundles of satin or silk	Descriptive Equivalent
	p'alsip ni	twenty miles	Cultural Equivalent
		thirty-kilometre trek	Descriptive Equivalent
		twenty miles	Cultural Equivalent
custom	chanch'i	family gathering	Descriptive Equivalent
		Feast	Cultural Equivalent
		Party	Cultural Equivalent
	paekjung	the All Souls' Festival	Cultural Equivalent
		the Lunar Mid-July Buddhist Festival	Functional Equivalent
		a Paik-jung festival	Transference

Translations of culture-bound vocabularies mainly consist of cultural equivalence and descriptive equivalence in the three TTs, indicating that the translators emphasize the readability of the TT readers.

The frequency of the five transferences of TT1 and of the six of TT3 is regrettable since it prevents TT readers from understanding the context sufficiently. The translators could add some contents or notes for the TT readers' convenience. Some culture-bound vocabularies are omitted, as shown in table 1. The following sentence has omitted culture-bound vocabulary:

(1) *Mongdangbi* chöröm tchalke sülliun kkori nün p'ari rül tchoch'uryōgo kikköt hwijōđ poaya pōlssō tari kkajinün tach'i anatta.

TT1: He would try as best he could to swish the flies away with his stumpy tail, now too short to reach even his legs.

TT2: Its tail, cut short into the shape of a broom, swished about in vain as it tried to chase away the flies gathering around its rear.

TT3: Its short tail, like a worn out broom, no longer reached its legs to chase away the flies.

'Mongdangbi', the omitted word, means 'the broom with a worn out end and only the handle is left'. It can be described as 'a stubby broom'. The translators of TT1 might omit the word since a stubby broom would not be commonly used in daily life in Western culture. TT3 explains 'Mongdangbi' in a descriptive way, which seems to be successful for ensuring readability for TT readers.

TT1 and TT3 have similar strategies in the translation of culture-bound vocabularies. They show similar frequencies of cultural equivalence and transference. On the other hand, TT2 consists of cultural equivalence and descriptive equivalence, which means that

the translation strategy is focused on domestication in the definition of TT. TT2 does not have transference.

## 5.2. Uniquely Korean Expressions

Uniquely Korean expressions can be classified into culture-bound expressions at the macro level since language is included in culture. However in this study, culture-bound expressions limit the vocabularies of people, places, things, measurement, and customs. Therefore, unique Korean Expressions are just texts that inflect purely linguistic features of Korean.

The translators of Korean short stories try hard to represent brief and compressed subjects since the writers of Korean short stories often use condensed expressions for showing off the style of their works.

Table 2. Translations of Uniquely Korean Expressions

ST	TT 1	T. method
	TT 2	
	TT 3	
taeösöl sutki to öpsössüna	he hesitate to look a woman in the eye.	Descriptive Equivalent
	He didn't have the courage...	Descriptive Equivalent
	he had no courage...	Descriptive Equivalent
tam do saenggindedaga	already emboldened	Shifts
	got his nerve	Descriptive Equivalent
	grew more confident	Shifts
p'alja e issötna puji	Was it fate that brought us together? You bet it was	Couplets (Compensation and shifts)
	It must have been in our stars that we met like that.	Cultural Equivalent
	It must have been some kind of destiny!	Descriptive Equivalent

twitkongnon	the gossip	Cultural Equivalent
	gossip	Cultural Equivalent
	gossip	Cultural Equivalent
kungsitgōriḡo		Omission
	were wondering around	Descriptive Equivalent
	still hung around	Descriptive Equivalent
nongt'ang ch'inūn kōt	flirting with	Descriptive Equivalent
	...womanize, and doing it with some skill	Descriptive Equivalent
	flirting so naturally with	Descriptive Equivalent
Kkolsanapta	What a disgraceful spectacle!	Shifts
	...really told him off with comments about how absurd he looked...	Modulation
	It was disgusting...	Modulation
t'amt'amhage	...is a full-time job	Shifts
	...called for a solid and frugal life,	Shifts
	...has to put his work first	Shifts
sōrūm sōrūmhan sai	a nodding acquaintance	Descriptive Equivalent
	...when they hardly knew each other	Shifts
	...he hardly knew the boy,	Shifts
kūnyang tuji anūlkōl	They are going to catch hell from me. (Spoken)	Modulation
	...anyone...won't get away with it	Modulation
	They'll get it from me	Modulation
hotangsūrōpke	had squandered	Shifts
	...spent his money like water	Shifts
	...had spent	Shifts
aekkūlnūn chōngbun	his extreme fondness	Descriptive Equivalent
	...he was so fond of	Shifts
	...he was so fond of	Shifts
toroamit'abul	...no choice but to return to	Shifts
	...no alternative but to go back to	Shifts
	...he was back where he had begun,	Shifts

ip e p'ulch'il	hand-to-mouth	Descriptive Equivalent
	to avoid being starved to death,	Descriptive Equivalent
	to keep alive	Descriptive Equivalent
sich'imi rül ttego	innocently	Descriptive Equivalent
	...pretend not to notice his friend's boredom	Shifts
	Ho would take no notice.	Shifts
hümuthan	gentle	Descriptive Equivalent
	drenched in...	Descriptive Equivalent
	soft	Descriptive Equivalent
musöpko do kimakhin pam	scares ...how incredible	Couplets (Compensation +Shifts)
	...an extraordinary night...fabulous.	Descriptive Equivalent
	...a strange and fantastic night.	Descriptive Equivalent
chacha tül	The rumors were flying.	Shifts
	...buzzed with gossip	Shifts
	...was full of gossip	Shifts
kkwöng kwö mökün chari	no more sign	Descriptive Equivalent
	...disappeared like a bubble on the water	Couplets (Descriptive E. +Shifts)
	...just disappeared without a trace	Couplets (Descriptive E.+Shifts)
hangyong		(omission)
		(omission)
	usually	Descriptive Equivalent
sölkke saengak malge	Don't hold it against me.	Descriptive Equivalent
	I hope you won't hold that against me.	Descriptive Equivalent
	Don't feel bad about it.	Descriptive Equivalent
chanakkaena	night and day	Descriptive Equivalent
	all I ever think about	Couplets (DescriptiveE. +Shifts)
	more ...than anyone else	Descriptive Equivalent

tal do ch'aji anūn	prematurely	Couplets (DescriptiveE. +Shifts)
	premature	Descriptive Equivalence
	prematurely	Couplets (DescriptiveE. +Shifts)
ch'öldülösöbut'ö	old enough to know what's what	Descriptive Equivalent
	...ever since I can remember	Modulation
	right from when I was small	Modulation
sim i mudōnhadago	...you were quite a boy for your age	Couplets (DescriptiveE. +Shifts)
	...you must have some reason for your behaviour at such a young age	Couplets (DescriptiveE. +Shifts)
	...were pretty mature	Couplets (DescriptiveE. +Shifts)
kit'ükhan	swell (spoken)	Descriptive Equivalent
	a very kind	Descriptive Equivalent
	a great	Descriptive Equivalent
haekkapke	easily	Descriptive Equivalent
	without much difficulty	Descriptive Equivalent
	all the more lightly	Descriptive Equivalent
haekkapko		(omission)
	light	Descriptive Equivalent
	light	Descriptive Equivalent

The major translation methods of uniquely Korean expressions are descriptive equivalence, shifts, and omissions, which explain the situation in detail, describe the syntactic changes inevitably occurring in the process of explaining a meaning, and possibly occur when the translators cannot find appropriate target language expressions, respectively. In the following, the clauses and sentences include the omissions of translation.

(2) ...Ölgümbaengi sangp'an ül chyödülgo *taeösöl sutki to öpsössüna*

TT1: ...he hesitated to look a woman in the eye.

TT2: He didn't have the courage to lift up his pock-marked face,

TT3: With his pock-marked face, he had no courage for making advances,

'Sutki', which is omitted in the ST, means 'manly openness', or 'boldness'. The translation of TT1 adopts free translation and emphasizes the transference of the message rather than meaning. It seems that the word is omitted in the process.

TT2 and TT3 translate 'Sutki' as 'He didn't have the courage' and '...he had no courage', respectively. These strategies which explain the ST in a concrete way seem to be a desirable policy to transfer the meaning.

(3) Maül saramdül ün köüi tolagan twiyo, p'alliji mothan namukkun p'ae ka kilgöri e *kungsitgöri*godül issüna sökyubyöng ina patko kogitmari na samyön chokhal i ch'ukdül ül parago önje kkaji tünji pöt'igo issül pöp ün öpta.

TT1: Most of villagers had gone home, and you couldn't stay open forever just to do business with the farmhands who would have been happy to swap a bundle of firewood for a bottle of kerosene or some fish.

TT2: Already, half the villagers who had come to the market had gone back home. The woodchoppers, with only sluggish business, were wandering around the market place. But they couldn't be expected to stand about for ever, watching people who were satisfied to but just a couple of bottles of paraffin and a few fish.

TT3: The village people were already gone, and though

a few unsuccessful wood-sellers still hung around, there was no point in waiting for them - they were not likely to want more than a bottle of paraffin or a bit of fish.

‘Kungsitgōrigo’ means ‘tossing and turning sleepless in bed’, but in this context, it means ‘hesitating to go home’, and the word is omitted in TT 1. However, TT2 and TT3 transfer the contextual meaning and translate it, respectively, as ‘were wandering around’ and ‘still hung around’.

(4) Kōlūmdo *haekkapko* pangul sori ka pam pōlpan e hanch’ūng ch’ōngch’ōnghage ulryōtta.

TT1: As Hō ambled along, the tinkle of the donkeys' bells, more lucid now, carried over the dusky expanse.

TT2: His steps were light, and the tinkling of the bells spread still clearer into the field.

TT3: Their steps were light, and the donkey bells rang out more clearly across the empty spaces of the night.

‘Haekkapko’ is a dialect of ‘lightly’, but it is omitted in TT1. TT2 and TT3 translate it as ‘light’. It is embarrassing for translators to translate dialects. A commonly used method is to provide a sense-for-sense translation as in TT2 and TT3.

### 5.3. Translation of Slang

Eleven of the 15 subjects of slang expressions are translated into standard language. All five slang expressions in TT1 are translated into slang. This phenomenon reveals that the translators attempt to reproduce the style of the ST faithfully in the TT.



Table 3. Translations of Slang

ST	TT 1	T. Strategy
	TT 2	
	TT 3	
yak pp'arüge (slang) ttōnanūn p'ae to issōtta.	Some groups had gotten a jump on the rest and left town.	Translated into slang
	...the shrewd ones were already leaving	Trans. into standard lang.
	...some already leaving	Trans. into standard lang.
sangp'an (slang)	Mug	Translated into slang
	face	Trans. into standard lang.
	Face	Trans. into standard lang.
ttagwirūl hana kalgyō chujji ank'onūn	lashed...across the cheek	Trans. into standard lang.
	...hit him in the face	Trans. into standard lang.
	...stuck him on the cheek	Trans. into standard lang.
chulhaengnang	had slunk off to a distance	Translated into slang
	started drifting away	Trans. into standard lang.
	had already gone	Trans. into standard lang.
kōkkurōjil ttae kkaji	till the day I croak	Translated into slang
	till the day I drop dead	Trans. into standard lang.
	until the day I fall down dead	Trans. into standard lang.

## 6. Results and Discussion of the Quantitative Analysis

The analysis results are presented in Table 4:

Table 4. Data Analysis Results

		Cultural E.	Descriptive E.	Couplets	Shifts	Transference	Functional E.	Omissions	Modulation	Trans. Error	Total
Culture-bound vocabularies	TT1	13	9	0	0	5	1	1	0	0	29
	TT2	13	13	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	29
	TT3	12	9	0	0	6	0	1	0	1	29
Unique Korean Expressions	TT1	1	13	4	6	0	0	3	1	0	28
	TT2	3	12	2	7	0	0	1	3	0	28
	TT3	1	13	3	8	0	0	0	3	0	28
Total		43	69	9	21	12	2	7	7	1	171

The general feature of the analysis is the overwhelming influence of descriptive equivalence, which occupies 40.4 percent of 171 subjects, compared to 25.1 percent for cultural equivalence, indicating the translators' focus on message delivery rather than on the capture of linguistic and cultural style. Shift occurs inevitably due to the linguistic differences between SL and TL, and occupies 12.3 percent.

In the translation of culture-bound vocabularies, cultural equivalence and descriptive equivalence are overwhelming, indicating the translators' emphasis on the readability of the TT readers

As for the translation of unique Korean expressions, descriptive equivalence comprises 45.2 percent, similar to the translation of culture-bound vocabularies. In brief, the three TTs adopt the translation strategy of communicative translation by focusing on the readability of the TT readers. TT1 has more omissions than the other two TTs, which means the translators adopt the domestication

strategy.

The quantitative analysis items can be divided into three categories – simplification, explicitation and normalization – in order to present a macro-level standpoint and generalize the analysis results. ‘Omission’ is categorized into ‘simplification’. ‘Descriptive equivalence’, ‘couplet’, ‘functional equivalence’ and ‘modulation’ are classified into ‘explicitation’. Cultural equivalence and shift are categorized into ‘normalization’. These categories are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Analysis Results of the Three Categories

		Simplification	Explicitation	Normalization	Total
Culture-bound vocabularies	TT1	1	10	13	24
	TT2	1	14	13	28
	TT3	1	9	12	22
Unique Korean Expression	TT1	3	18	7	28
	TT2	1	17	10	28
	TT3	0	19	9	28
Sub-total	TT1	4	28	20	52
	TT2	2	31	23	56
	TT3	1	28	21	50
Total		7/158	87/158	64/158	158

Table 6. Percentage of the Analysis of the Three Categories

		Simplification	Explicitation	Normalization	Total
Sub-total	TT1	2.5%	17.7%	12.7%	32.9%
	TT2	1.3%	19.6%	14.6%	35.5%
	TT3	0.6%	17.7%	13.3%	31.6%
Total		4.4%	55.0%	40.6%	100%

The quantitative analysis reveals the delicate differences, although the three TTs adopt strategies of communicative translation

at the macro level. TT1 uses more simplification methods than the other two TTs. TT2 applies the methods of explicitation and normalization. TT3 uses fewer methods of simplification and normalization, indicating its greater focus on faithfulness than the other two TTs.

Among 171 subjects, 158 (92.4%) show that the translators intervene for message delivery in the ways of simplification, explicitation and normalization. The most frequent method is explicitation at 55 percent. The intervening standard of the three TTs is similar, ranging from 31.6 percent to 35.5 percent. This phenomenon reveals that the three TTs are focused on the readability of the TT readers.

Therefore the hypothesis, ‘A Korean-English literary translation should be focused on communication with the TT readers rather than faithfulness to the ST, while retaining the Korean unique linguistic and cultural expression’ has been accepted by the result of the quantitative analysis. Then, the validity of the issue, ‘Korean-English literary translation should also try to reproduce the Korean unique linguistic and cultural expression’, would be tested through qualitative analysis.

## **7. Qualitative Analysis and Alternative Translations**

Qualitative analysis is performed to assess the quality of the TTs. Twelve subjects with linguistic and cultural features are selected as data and analyzed qualitatively. The desirable translations will be referred to, or, when the three translations are not considered appropriate, model translations will be presented. The analysis is defined as follows.

(5) Yǒrūm chang iran aesidangch'ō e küllōsō

TT1: Every peddler who made the rounds of the countryside markets knew that business was never any good in the summer.

TT2: Summer markets were doomed to listlessness right from the start,

TT3: It had been hopeless from the start, this summer market.

The translation of TT1 adds the subject omitted in the ST to help the readers understand the contents clearly and selects the human subject to create a more vivid sentence. The lexical meaning of 'aesidangch'ō e' is 'at the very first time'. TT3 tries to reproduce the structure and meaning of the ST as closely as possible. The recommended translation, which achieves both faithfulness and readability, is 'The business in summer usually has been hopeless right from the start'.

(6) Saengwon, sichim ūl ttedu ta ane. ---Ch'ungjujip malya.

TT1: "Now don't play innocent, Saengwon – I know all about you and the Ch'ungju woman."

TT2: "Saengwon, don't try to hide it from me. I know what you're thinking. You know what I mean, I mean you and the woman at the Chungju inn."

TT3: "Seng-won, I know all about it – that Chungju' woman – it's no use pretending."

The contextual meaning of the ST is 'Saengwon, I know you have been attached to Ch'ungju woman even though you have been as grave as an owl', which is an appropriate translation for explaining to the readers.

(7) Hwajungjipyöng iji. Yönsö p'ae dǖl ǖl chöksuro haguya taegöri ga twaeya maliji.

TT1: "Fat chance I have with her. I'm no match for those kids."

TT2 "No, I haven't got a chance. How do you expect me to beat all that competition for the younger men? No a chance at all."

TT3: "That's only a dream – too much competition from the youngsters."

The lexical meaning of 'Hwajungjipyöng' is 'a Korean cake in a picture'. The three translations try to produce a sense-for-sense translation. The appropriate translation for reproducing the style of the ST is 'She is like a pie in the sky. I cannot beat the youngsters to gain her heart.'

(8) Mör̄i e p'i to anmarün nyösök i natput'ȫ sul ch'ömökko kyejip kwa nongt'ang iya.

TT1: "Still wet behind the ears, and here you are swilling booze and flirting with women in broad daylight,"

TT2: ...and why was he, a greenhorn, still wet behind the ears, drinking himself stupid from the early afternoon...

TT3: - a boy hardly dry behind the ears, drinking in the day-time, and carrying on with a woman-

TT1 carries the style most faithful to the ST. The ST is described in indirect speech while TT1 used a quotation mark and carries it in a direct discourse.

(9) Jangsaran t'amt'amhage haeya toejji

TT1: "...Being a vendor is a full-time job."

TT2: ...being a peddler called for a solid and frugal life,

instead of living the way he did.

TT3: A marketer has to put his work first, and not go chasing after women.

The lexical definition of ‘t’amt’amhage’ is ‘vigilantly, eagerly’, or to achieve something ‘ambitiously’. In this context, a desirable translation is ‘A merchant should concentrate his mind on business instead of chasing after women’.

(10) Amnom ũl pogo chŏ honja palkwang iji.

TT1: “... He got an eyeful of Kim Ch’ŏmji’s mare and went crazy!”

TT2: “... The stupid animal’s gone all crazy because of the mare!”

TT3: “...It saw a female and went mad all by itself.”

The three translations do not give the reason why the mare went crazy. With consideration for readability, a proper translation is ‘He saw Kim Ch’ŏmji’s mare and was overcome with sexual desire’.

(11) Ai nŭn aengdolajin t’u ro sori rŭl ch’imyŏ kkalkkal utŏtta.

TT1: ...shouted the boy, pointing to the underside of Hŏ’s donkey and breaking into laughter.

TT2: The little squirt shouted cheekily, and cackled with laughter.

TT3: The boy’s cheeky voice ended in a burst of laughter.

The boy shouted sulkily and broke into laughter.

‘Aengdolajin’ means ‘angry and sulky’. TT1, ‘pointing to the underside of Hŏ’s donkey’, adds the action of the speaker which is not included in the ST. However, this seems unnecessary since the

readers can fully understand the situation without the translation. A desirable translation is ‘The boy shouted sulkily and broke into laughter’.

- (12) Pamjung ũl chinan muryöp inji chukün tŭsi koyohan sok esö chimsüng kat’ün tal ũi sumsori ka son e chap’il tŭsi tŭllimyö, k’ongp’ogi wa oksusu ipsae ka hanch’üng tal e p’urüge chöjötta.

TT1: It was probably after midnight by now, and it was so deathly still the moon seemed to come alive right there in front of you, its breath almost palpable. Awash in moonlight, the bean plants and the drooping corn stalks were a shade greener.

TT2: ...the hour, now past midnight, had made everything silent and still. In the emptiness, the moon was breathing like some living beast, and the sound of its breathing travelled through the air, and it seemed as if the sound itself could be caught by stretching out one hand and grasping it. The bean plants and the maize were being drenched in the moon beams.

TT3: It must have been after midnight, and in the death-like stillness the moon seemed to be close and breathing, like a living creature, deepening the green of the leaves on the beans and maize.

The ST incorporates the beauty of nature into the literature. The three translations have their own features that reflect the beauty. TT1 adopts several metaphors (the bean plants and the drooping corn stalks were a shade greener) and tries to reproduce the literary value. TT2 has longer sentences than the other two translations and tries to include every meaning of the ST. Especially, the translation ‘In the emptiness, the moon was breathing like some living beast, and the sound of its breathing travelled through the air’ is a graceful



poetic expression that maintains the simile of the ST (chimsŭng kat'ŭn tal ŭi sumsori). TT3 is the most faithful translation to the ST in its content and form. From the viewpoint of faithfulness, TT3 is the most desirable.

(13) Changsŏn kkok irŏn nal pam iŏtne.

TT1: “t was market day in Pongp'yŏng, and the moon was out, just like tonight.”

TT2: “t was a night just like this one, before a market.”

TT3: “It was the night after a market, just like tonight.”

The ST does not include the name ‘Pongp'yŏng’ and does not refer to the moon. However, TT1 adds them. This strategy is appropriate for the readability of the target readers.

(14) Hŏna ch'ŏnyŏ ŭi kkol ŭn kkwŏng kwŏ mŏkŭn chariya.

TT1: But there was no more sign of her than a chicken after dinner.

TT2: She'd disappeared like a bubble on the water.

TT3: “...but she just disappeared without a trace.”

TT1 tries to reflect the style of the ST. The translation, ‘a chicken after dinner’, shows a strong connection with ‘kkwŏng’ which means ‘pheasant’.

(15) Ch'onggak natseron simi mudŏn hadago saenggak haettŏni tŭkko poni ttakhan sinserogun.

TT1: I always thought you were quite a boy for your age, but to hear all this, it sounds like you've really had a hard time.

TT2: I thought earlier tonight that you must have had some reason for your behaviour at such a young age,

and now I've heard your story, I can't help feeling for you.

TT3: "For a lad of your age, I always thought you were pretty mature. I didn't realize that you'd had that kind of life."

'Natseron' means 'for one's age'. The appropriate translation of the ST is 'I thought you were considerate and discreet for your age, and I never realized that you've had such a miserable life'.

(16) Chinjongil silsu man hani wyenilio, saengwon?

TT1: "Saenwŏn, this just isn't your day."

TT2: "You've been blundering into this and that all day."

TT3: "What's the matter, Seng-won? You're making mistakes all day!"

The three translations faithfully reflect the contents of the ST. TT1 is a typical idiomatic translation while TT2 and TT3 consider readability.

## 8. Discussion of the Qualitative Analysis

To examine whether or not the three TTs support the hypothesis, quantitative analysis is used to ensure that the three TTs focus on communication with readers rather than faithfulness to the ST. The methods of cultural equivalence and descriptive equivalence hold a dominant position in the translations of both culture-bound vocabularies and unique Korean expressions. Therefore, how much do the TTs try to reproduce the Korean unique linguistic and cultural expressions? The three TTs exhibit delicate differences in reflecting faithfulness, which decides the quality of each TT.

TT1 reproduces the style of the ST through idiom and slang translations, while retaining its focus on communication with readers. Looking the translations from a viewpoint of faithfulness to ST, TT3 holds a dominant position among the three TTs.

TT2 does not show any particular features in translation. TT2 leaves something to be desired in faithfulness where the style of the ST is reproduced. TT2 only focuses on communication and adopts the strategy of domestication. However, a literary translator must reproduce the style of an ST in his or her own way. A focus solely on getting the message across is not desirable.

TT1 has frequently been mentioned as a desirable translation. The representative translation in TT1, which is successful in maintaining communication and faithfulness, is that 'It must have been after midnight, and in the death-like stillness the moon seemed to be close and breathing, like a living creature, deepening the green of the leaves on the beans and maize'.

Although the qualitative analysis revealed TT1 to be the most desirable translation, TT1 does suffer some problems. There is no perfect translation. Now, I will examine the good and weak points of TT1 in detail since it has factors that illustrate the strategies of a desirable translation and offers some implications for future translation. The strong points are as follows.

In the first place, when the translators of TT1 adopt the TT-oriented translation strategy, they try to use various expressions. For example, the translations of 'kaktagwi' vary according to the context, including 'the local boys as pesky as gnats', 'those little bastards', 'young troublemakers', and 'market pests'. This illustrates the considerable efforts made by the translators to communicate with the TT readers. Another superior feature compared with the other two TTs is the transference of 'measurements' for the TT readers' convenience. Lastly, the transference of the slang terms of the ST into slang terms in the TT is appropriate in reproducing the style of the ST and improving the readability for the TT readers.

Some translations fail to communicate with the TT readers. The atmosphere and the taste of cultural expressions or those of unique texts cannot be properly translated. For example, the method of ‘transference’ that is used in translations of ‘Hǒ Saeng-wǒn’, ‘Cho Sǒn-dal’ and ‘Ch’ungju chip’ cannot present the original meaning clearly and in detail. ‘Saengwǒn’ was a person who passed the lower civil examination in Chosǒn Dynasty period. ‘Sǒndal’ was a person who passed the civil examination in Koryǒ and Chosǒn Dynasty period but did not take up a government post. Later, these titles were attached to old scholars’ surname like ‘Mr’ or ‘Esq’ as a title of honor. ‘Ch’ungju chip’ means a woman whose hometown is Ch’ungju. However, the meaning is not included in the translation. This phenomenon can be also found in the translations of ‘Pongp’yǒng chang’ and ‘Taehwa chang’. ‘Chang’ in this context means a Korean fair to be held every fifth day. They are translated into ‘Pongp’yǒng’, and ‘Taehwa’, which do not contain the meaning of fair. These culture-bound vocabularies can be translated with notes or explanations in the body. Then, some translations of unique Korean expressions omitted words such as ‘Hangyong’ and ‘Mongdangbi’. The translation of these words is not difficult, so their omission is regrettable. However, the TT1 readers may be able to read it comfortably because the translators attempt to describe the culture-bound vocabularies and the unique Korean expressions in detail. This is the main virtue of TT1. Specifically, the translators daringly add some translations absent from the ST in order to give syntactic shifts or changes of viewpoint. The translators feel free to put a focus on communicative contexts to increase the readers’ understanding of the ST and reproduce the style of the ST in their own way. It seems that they achieve the purpose of the translation, i.e., reproducing the style of the ST sincerely while achieving a communicative success with the readers. As a result, TT1 is reader-friendly and comfortable to read.

## 9. Conclusion

Although the history of Korean-to-English literary translation dates back more than a century, Korean literature has still not attracted a wide range of readers, particularly among general readers, as opposed to academic readers with majors in Korean studies or literature. In fact, a considerable amount of publication has been done within Korea. Therefore, Korean-to-English literary translators should set up a translation strategy considering this segmented market. The intervention of translators is inevitable in this situation. The translators can use various methods such as translators' notes and functional descriptions to represent them. However, invention should be limited only to the conveyance of meaning.

A translator should consider the readers before anything else in the translation from a minority language into a majority language such as Korean-English literary translation, in order to smooth the flow of communication between the two cultures. However, a literary translator might intend to reproduce the writer's unique style, and emotional expressions of the source language to TT readers, i.e., to reflect the beauty of the ST.

An ideal translation of Korean-to-English literary texts to maintain the style of an ST while communicating with TT readers is joint translation by Korean and English-native speakers, as seen in the analysis. Joint translation is advantageous in that translators can make TT more understandable by discussing the linguistic and cultural elements of the ST and the transference of TT.

The norms resulting from this study analysis have presented specific cases in Korean-English literary translation. Adopting these norms might not be compulsory for Korean literary translators, and they can adopt their own strategy to find the best compromise between faithfulness to an ST and readability to TT readers. However, the norms offer worthwhile implications to Korean-English literary translators who consider readability.

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