



# Detours and Destination: Liham ni Pinay Mula sa Hongkong in Translation

Rowell de Guia

University of the Philippines

College of Arts and Letters Professor

Department of English and Comparative Literature

corresponding author: rgdeguia@bpsu.edu.ph

## Abstract

By comparing the source text (ST) and the translated text (TT), this paper revealed the strategies used and the predispositions in translating the Filipino poem “Liham ni Pinay mula sa Hongkong” in English. The focus was particularly set on the nuances of the poem where discourse creation, borrowing, literal translation, variation, and amplification were observed. These translation strategies caused the TT to diverge from the literary style of the ST but preserved the fundamental content of the text. The findings suggest that in producing the TT, priority was given to the meaning rather than the structure for its message to reach its target audience. Thus, although “Liham ni Pinay mula sa Hongkong” encountered some linguistic detours, its message successfully arrived at its destination.

*Keywords: translation techniques, translation, poem*

## 1. Introduction

This paper is an attempt to identify the techniques (Molina & Albir, 2016)<sup>i</sup> used in translating the Filipino poem Liham ni Pinay mula sa Hongkong into English. Kolahi (2012)<sup>ii</sup> argues that translating poems involves a choice between content and form and, more often than not, one is prioritized over the other. Thus, this paper also examines the tensions and predispositions in carrying out the translation.

The ways in which the source text (ST) and the translated text (TT) are read in this paper are drawn from Garcia's<sup>iii</sup> (2005) essay, "How to Teach a Poem", which elaborately suggests putting emphasis on sound, image, and story. Sounds are built upon the formal qualities of a poem; images emerge from its striking features; and the story is revealed in the construal of the poem's meaning.

Firstly, the textual level analysis will be shown to identify the linguistic nuances of the ST. Secondly, the images and the storyline of the ST will be discussed to highlight its contextual meaning. Finally, the ST and the TT will be compared to answer the questions (1) What translation techniques are used? and (2) What element of the ST is prioritized in producing the TT?

### **A peek at the letter**

Liham ni Pinay mula sa Hongkong is one of the poems in the anthology of Ruth Elynia S. Mabanglo, *Mga Liham ni Pinay* (1987), that puts together pigments of the character "Pinay" and the aspirations that flew them to the different parts of the world, the role they took as overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their plight being a Filipino and being a woman. Mabanglo put Pinay's narratives into a poetic form using the letter metaphor in their collection of poems that also included *Liham ni Pinay mula sa Kuwait*, *Liham ni Pinay mula sa Japan*, *Liham ni Pinay mula sa Singapore*, *Liham ni Pinay mula sa Australia*, and *Liham ni Pinay mula sa Brunei*. The title of these poems aptly resounds Pinay's experiences in diasporic spaces, a narrative that influenced the penning of the literary style and theme that enveloped their period.

### **The author**

Ruth Elynia S. Mabanglo is an academic, a Filipino language advocate, a journalist, and a literary writer. Mabanglo was a professor at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and the coordinator for the Department of Hawaiian and Indo-Pacific languages and literatures as well as the Filipino and Philippine Literature Program. In their home country, they spent their career in journalism with two leading tabloids, *Taliba* and *Abante*. They are best known for their literary works that include the 1987 Palanca Award winning collection *Mga Liham ni Pinay at Iba Pang Tula* (*The Letters of Pinay*). They were invited into the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature Hall of Fame in 1995 making them the first woman to receive such a merit from the most prestigious award-giving body for literature in the country.

## **The translation**

The English translation of Mabanglo's poems in *Mga Liham ni Pinay* appeared in the 1998 collection *Invitation of the Imperialist/Anyaya ng Imperyalista*. The primary translator, Roderick Niro Labrador, calls the translation project a product of collaborative efforts with the author<sup>iv</sup>. Labrador, a Filipino American and non-native Tagalog speaker, had studied Filipino language under the tutelage of Mabanglo. In the introduction to the same collection, the translator boldly aired out frustrations for one's lapses in capturing the author's literary style, feminist themes, and voice. Nevertheless, Labrador carried out the translation work after more than a year of exchange of ideas with Mabanglo about word choices, meanings, and context.

## **Forging the letters from the 70s to present**

Abad (2005) described the poetic terrain of the Philippines from the 1970s to the present as the forging of the work called poem at the point of mastery of the language and the poetic form. They argued that forging can be construed both as a creation of reality from language and a liberation into the reality separates from language. The work called poetry in the last 30 years had been, on the one hand, more conversational and can be likened to the English spoken by educated Filipinos, and, on the other, grounded on the social reality of the time.

Alongside these observations, the national literature in Filipino had also been pushed forward to better express the aspirations and struggles of the nation. Women poets have also found their voice in their works where they write of their realities. Filipino poets, indeed, up play both their formalistic adeptness and their nationalistic ideals in their masterpieces.

### **I. Unpacking *Liham ni Pinay mula sa Hong Kong***

Reading a poem aloud and listening to its sound is fundamental to accessing the formal qualities of a poem. The arrangement of words, the number of lines in every stanza, and the harmony of syllables create patterns that lead the readers to the poem's rhyme scheme.

*Liham ni Pinay mula sa Hong Kong* has eight (8) stanzas with two (2) lines each. In Table 1, each line is numbered according to the stanza where it belongs and its order of occurrence in its respective stanza. Table 1 summarizes the poem's sound patterns.

## 1. Sound patterns

Table 1. Syllabic and rhyme patterns of the ST

Liham ni Pinay mula sa Hongkong		Syllable s	Assonanc e	Consonanc e
1.1	Sa lunting pangarap nagmula ang lahat,	12	a	a
1.2	Binaligtad ang bulsa't nilikom ang danas.	13	a	b
2.1	Sa nagtangkang gusali't karatula'y sumilong,	15	b	c
2.2	Itlog ng tagak ang ibig matunton.	11	b	d
3.1	Amo kong Intsik kunwa'y mabait,	10	c	a
3.2	Ginagahasa ako kung gabing tahimik --	13	c	e
4.1	Pagkat ang ipinangako'y ceramics at jade,	13	d	f
4.2	Inialay ko ang takot sa altar ng AIDS.	13	d	g
5.1	Nalaman ko ngayong hindi siya tapat,	11	a	a
5.2	Kahit dibdib nami'y madalas maglapat.	12	a	a
6.1	Makapal pa sa buhok ang duming nakalugay,	14	a	h
6.2	Ang garing na isip ay hindi tiwasay.	12	a	h
7.1	Kulang pa sa sukat ng balakang	10	a	c
7.2	Ang isinusulit kong pagdaramdam – ako'y pakinggan:	15	A	d
8.1	Nagmamadali kasi ako sa pagyaman,	13	a	d
8.2	Buntis ako ngayon, walang matuluyan.	12	a	d

Assonance is formed from the couplets that can be found in the first four stanzas and a monorhyme pattern can be found in the remaining eight lines. Consonance, although less prominent, occurs in 5.1 and 5.2, 6.1 and 6.2, and 8.1 and 8.2. The poem is characterized by the irregular number of syllables ranging from 10 found in 3.1 and 7.1 to 15 found in 2.1 and 7.2.

The poem's syllabic features and sound patterns reflect Abad's<sup>v</sup> (2005) observation that the 70s to the present is a post-structuralist and liberative space for Philippine poetry as it exhibits the absence of any formal constraint. It is the point when facility of language and mastery of poetic form are attained enabling new ways of forging the work called poem and freeing the poet from rhetoric and its figures.

On the contrary, some traces of the obsession with figurative language, such as idioms and allusion, are still evident in the poem. Line 1.1, “Sa lunting pangarap nagmula ang lahat” resembles the English idiom “greener pastures”. The other English idiom-based phrase is in 6.2, “Ang garing na isip ay hindi tiwasay”. The Filipino phrase “toreng garing” is a translation of the English idiom “ivory tower” that refers to the state of having refined academic intelligence but living a life remote from everyday affairs.

Line 2.2, “Itlog ng tagak ang ibig matunton”, can be a reference to the goose that laid the golden eggs (in Aesop’s Fables 620-560 BC, #87 in the Perry Index). The other possible allusion in the poem is found in 7.1, “Kulang pa sa sukat ng balakang”, and 7.2, “Ang isinusulit kong pagdaramdam --...”. These phrases have semblance to the bible verse Nahum 2:10: “Siya’y tuyo, at walang laman, at wasak; at ang puso ay natutunaw, at ang mga tuhod ay nagkakaumpugan, at ang pagdaramdam ay nasa lahat ng mga balakang...” Apparently, the phrase “ang pagdaramdam ay nasa lahat ng mga balakang” has several translations in various versions of the Bible. For example, King James 2000 Bible says “much pain is on all sides”, the New International Version puts it as “bodies tremble”, the English Standard Version says “anguish is in all loins”, the New King James Version uses the phrase “much pain is in every side”, and the Contemporary English Version says “tremble with fear”.

Idioms and allusions characterize Philippine literature in general. However, Abad notes the presence of conversational and more relaxed language and rhythm among the works of the new generation of poets. In *Liham ni Pinay mula sa Hongkong*, contractions like “bulsá’t” in 1.2, “gusalí’t” 2.1, “kunwa’y” in 3.1, “ipinangako’y” in 4.1, “nami’y” in 5.2, and “ako’y” in 7.2 manifest Abad’s observation. These dialectical markers can be deliberately put for colloquial effect and to paint a sense of realism on the images and the story of the poem.

## 2. Images and Story

This section concerns the possible construal of the images and symbols present in the ST. “Possible” construal because, as Garcia (2005) says, “there are as many ways to read a poem as there are poems to be read” (p.27). However, this reading is validated by referring to actual passages in the poem to make it “textually defensible”. Line 1.1 and 1.2 introduce the persona who is motivated by the aspiration to have a better life as suggested by “lunting pangarap”.

1.1 Sa lunting pangarap nagmula ang lahat,

1.2 Binaligtad ang bulsa’t nilikom ang danas.

The persona's life situation presented in 1.2, "Binaligtad ang bulsa't nilikom ang danas", forms part of the starting point of the story. The persona exhausted all resources and capitalized on experiences to achieve the ultimate dream – the greener pastures. In general, OFWs risk their lives abroad to provide a better life for their families. The English idiom "greener pastures" has been part of the Filipinos' conceptual system being a common reason for many professionals in the Philippines who are scantily compensated or underemployed (if not unemployed) to work abroad. The cultural meaning of such an expression needs to be foregrounded in order to set the background in the telling of Pinay's story.

2.1Sa nagtangkang gusali't karatula'y sumilong,

2.2Itlog ng tagak ang ibig matunton.

Line 2.1, "Sa nagtangkang gusali't karatula'y sumilong", illustrates the setting. It outlines the overwhelming setting by saying that towering structures and billboards constitute its cityscape, an image that is very typical of the busy Hongkong. As the persona arrives at the destination, line 2.2, "Itlog ng tagak ang ibig matunton", re-emphasizes the goal effectively expressed through an allusion to the search for the goose that laid the golden eggs. Although instead of the goose, the legendary bird in Chinese mythology called "tagak" or cranevi (Rugs, 2019) landed cohesively on the said line to surface the Hong Kong vibe.

Using the images projected on the first and second stanzas, the introduction of the narrative is coherently and concisely established. Line 3.1 gives hint to the conflict by introducing another character ascribed with power as suggested by the word "Amo" or employer/master who pretends to be kindhearted. Line 3.2 reveals the plight of the persona in the hands of the employer. In this stanza, three features require further attention.

3.1 Amo kong Intsik kunwa'y mabait,

3.2 Ginagahasa ako kung gabing tahimik --

First, it is in 3.1 where a pronoun first appears, the variation of the possessive pronoun "ko" or my. Line 3.2 has the objective case of the first-person pronoun in Filipino, "ako" the equivalent of me. The use of these personal pronouns can be construed as a way of finally revealing the "self" in the telling of a bitter truth about the persona's life. The preceding stanzas with the absence of pronouns can be interpreted as a hesitation in narrating one's experiences. However, the third stanza heightens the idea that this poem is the persona's own story, hence the use of possessive personal pronoun.

Second, the verb “[g]inagahasa” takes the form of progressive or habitual action. It evokes the uncomfortable situation Filipinos in diaspora are experiencing. Particularly, the stanza unapologetically reveals the sexual abuse and exploitations women in such a socioeconomic space helplessly face.

Third, the em-dashes calls attention to the reason for the persona to fall victim to this torment. By using em-dashes, 4.1 and 4.2 are underscored.

4.1 Pagkat ang ipinangako’y ceramics at jade,

4.2 Inialay ko ang takot sa altar ng AIDS.

The persona is forced not to resist because of the promise of material wealth symbolized by “ceramics at jade”, two ornamental and precious products of China. So, instead of attempting to escape from the situation, the persona surrenders all fears and just hopes not to acquire AIDS. The term AIDS here may not only mean compromising one’s health but also a direct reference to the threat of AIDS at the particular point when the poem was written. In 1984, the first case of HIV infection was recorded in the Philippines<sup>vii</sup> and the same year in Hongkong<sup>viii</sup>. As the poem connects to the social reality of its time, it exemplifies Abad’s (2005) observation that Filipino poets since the 70s have overtly exhibited social awareness in their writings.

The next stanzas lead to the climax and the eventual denouement of the story. After the long-suffering, a realization occurs.

5.1 Nalaman ko ngayong hindi siya tapat, 5.2 Kahit  
dibdib nami'y madalas maglapat.

An epiphany is marked by the word "[n]alaman" in the fifth stanza. After braving the financial and emotional hardships, line 5.1 suggests that the persona comes to a point of realization that everything is futile. Arguably, the lexical choices in 5.1, "...hindi siya tapat," and 5.2, "Kahit dibdib nami'y madalas maglapat" can be associated with a failed romantic love affair. This stanza prompts readers to question whether the persona is credulously hoping for a faithful partner and a genuine relationship despite the abuse.

Eventually, things begin to fall apart. With unclear vision because of the dirt hanging loose as expressed in 6.1, the persona loses sanity as suggested in 6.2.

6.1 Makapal pa sa buhok ang duming nakalugay,  
6.2 Ang garing na isip ay hindi tiwasay.

Stanza 7 indicates the persona suffers physically and emotionally working in Hongkong and confesses that the consequence is not worth all the pain.

7.1 Kulang pa sa sukat ng balakang  
7.2 Ang isinusulit kong pagdaramdam – ako'y pakinggan:

Moreover, emotional, mental, and physical pain is figuratively expressed in the lexical items "dibdib" in 5.2, "isip" in 6.2, and "balakang" in 7.1 respectively. Finally, in line 7.2, the persona demands to be heard.

The penultimate line shifts the tone through the use of what appears to be a verbal irony.

8.1 Nagmamadali kasi ako sa pagyaman,  
8.2 Buntis ako ngayon, walang matuluyan.

Line 8.1 is a form of irony because it can be the opposite of what the persona wants to say but, when calling for help, that is the kind of response some people give. So, because of helplessness, the persona willingly accepts the blame. "Buntis ako ngayon, walang matuluyan" cries the last line. "Buntis" and "walang matuluyan" symbolize the most vulnerable point in the persona's life. "[W]alang matuluyan" can be the result of being disowned by one's family or after

being separated from one's husband because of pregnancy. Finally, another irony can be drawn here as the one whom this society calls a "homemaker" is homeless.

Overall, *Liham ni Pinay mula sa Hong Kong* is delivered to a society motivated by the promise of greener pastures in foreign lands at the expense of being mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters to their families. Women's diaspora and servitude are the particular social realities that constitute the narratives of OFWs in Hong Kong. The poem is packed with layers of tragic experiences women are caught up with living as expatriates, working as domestic helpers, and enduring physical sufferings, life dangers, and sexual abuses. Hence, the title of the poem is unmistakably true. The poem is a message from Pinay in Hongkong the world needs to read.

## II. **Pinay's Letter from Hong Kong takes some detours**

Translation of literature includes folds of rendering such as of meaning, textual features, and culture. Aside from the ability to deliver information to a wider group of readers, the translation can depict the aesthetic values of the text and must transmit its cultural essence. However, because of the complexity of carrying out literary translation, some TT cannot always capture the entirety of the ST. Translation of literature, therefore, necessarily involves a predisposition toward meaning, textual features or cultural essence.

So far, the analysis of the ST reveals the idiomatic expression and allusions possibly derive from English, such as *lunting pangarap* to express the persona's aspiration for "greener pastures", *garing na isip* to liken one's intellect to an "ivory tower", *itlog ng tagak* to allude to the "the goose that laid the golden eggs", and *kulang pa sa sukat ng balakang ang isinulit kong pagdaramdam* with established equivalent "pain in every side" or "bodies tremble". The ST also has a relaxed and conversational tone as suggested by the use of contraction. Thus, comparing the ST with the TT can probe whether these expressions form part of the translation of the Filipino poem into English and whether the textual features of the TT resound the same images and storyline from the ST.

*Liham ni Pinay mula sa Hong Kong* is translated in English as *Pinay's Letter from Hongkong*. The TT depicts the number of stanza and lines and the free syllabic count of the ST. Coupled rhymes are also created in some stanzas (i.e., 1, 2, 4, 6). In this section, the ST and the TT will be analyzed to facilitate the identification of the translation techniques used and of the elements that have been prioritized in the translation. A line-by-line comparison between the ST and the TT is possible because each stanza in the ST has a corresponding one in the TT.

Table 2. Comparison of the ST and the TT

Liham ni Pinay mula sa Hongkong	Pinay's Letter from Hongkong
1.1Sa lunting pangarap nagmula ang lahat, 1.2Binaligtad ang bulsa't nilikom ang	1.AFrom a luxuriant fantasy it all commenced, 1.BI emptied my pockets and gathered my experience.
2.2 Sa nagtangkang gusali't karatula'y sumilong, 2.2 Itlog ng tagak ang ibig matunton.	2.AIn the rising buildings and billboards I took shelter, 2.BA tagak's egg I hoped to discover.
3.1Amo kong Intsik kunwa'y mabait, 3.2Ginagahasa ako kung gabing tahimik --	3.AMy <i>Intsik</i> employer feigns kindness, 3.BWhen the night is silent he rapes
4.1Pagkat ang ipinangako'y ceramics at jade, 4.2Inialay ko ang takot sa altar ng AIDS.	4.ABecause he promised ceramics and jade, 4.BI offered my fear to the altar of AIDS.
5.1Nalaman ko ngayong hindi siya tapat, 5.2Kahit dibdib nami'y madalas	5.ANow I discover his duplicity, 5.BEven if our breasts repeatedly entangle.
6.1Makapal pa sa buhok ang duming nakalugay, 6.2Ang garing na isip ay hindi tiwasay.	6.A The loose filth is even thicker in my hair, 6.B My ivory mind despairs.
7.1Kulang pa sa sukat ng balakang 7.2Ang isinusulit kong pagdaramdam – ako'y pakinggan: 7.B For the emotional pain I bear – listen to me:	7.A Even the hip's measure is deficient
8.1Nagmamadali kasi ako sa pagyaman, 8.2Buntis ako ngayon, walang matuluyan.	8.ABecause I rush to become wealthy, 8.BI am pregnant now, without a place to occupy.

### 1. Discursive creation vs semantic misfit

The first stanza of the ST implies that Pinay's motivation to find a job away from one's family is to alleviate their impoverished state. Such is a reality for the Filipinos in the margins. Being the person who has nothing but a dream, to begin with, and compelled to provide for a destitute family is not at all parallel with having the desire for luxury. On the contrary, line 1.A suggests that the illusion of a lavish life pushed the persona to find employment in Hongkong. The TT, at this point, deviates from the message the first stanza aims to deliver. In effect, it fails to capture the image of a persona who has to bring food to the table no matter what it takes, instead it creates an image of a person who gambles one's life for a "luxuriant fantasy" in 1.A.

Line 2.2 presents Pinay's purpose for going abroad, specifically to Hongkong. She is definite about what she is looking for although finding it can be an arduous task. She is not in Hongkong to explore and "discover", contrary to what is mentioned in 2.B. She is there to search for and find a means for a better life. Translating the phrase "ibig matunton" in 2.2, then, requires a word that carries the semantic property "purposive" rather than "aimless". Therefore, the word "discover" in 2.B, which means to find something unexpectedly, lacks the sense that the line in the ST implies.

These evidences demonstrate semantic misfit between the ST and the TT as a result of discursive creation or establishing a temporary equivalence that is totally unpredictable. Indeed, without considering the context of the ST, such a technique can turn into a translation error.

## **2. Borrowing vs established equivalent**

Some occurrences of borrowing are also evident in the TT. The words “tagak” in 2.2 and “Intsik” in 3.1 are used in 1.B and 2.B as they are. Although the syntactic arrangement of the lines is affected by the interlinguistic structural difference, the word class of the borrowed terms remains the same. Apparently, there is no lexical gap between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) as both “tagak” and “Intsik” have direct translations in English such as “heron” or “egret” and “Chinese” respectively. It means that heron/egret and Chinese can arbitrarily take the position of “tagak” and “Intsik” in the TT unless it is for stylistic or rhetorical reasons.

The conscious choice to use borrowing even when the words in the ST have established equivalent in the TL is explained by Grassilli (2015)<sup>ix</sup> as a way of preserving the local color of the word. For example, Intsik will lose its semiotic and cultural sense that indexes the unique experience of the Filipinos with the Chinese living in the Philippines and their influence on the Filipino culture. Archival, documentary, and anecdotal records from the 1860s to the 1930s tell the tales involving Intsik construed as “The Others” because of their “strange ways” according to Cabreza (2014)<sup>x</sup>. Contemporary narratives as well include Filipinos as indentured servants being differently treated by their Chinese masters who are figures of power and deception. Therefore, borrowing Intsik from the ST can be justified. Lines 3.A and 3.B echo the persona’s defenselessness in the hands of the Intsik employer who not only feigns kindness but also is a rapist.

## **3. Literal Translation**

The similarities between the SL and the TL allow the succeeding stanzas to be translated literally and be read through the same interpretative lens used in analyzing the ST. The succeeding stanzas narrate that because of the promise of a better life (4.A), Pinay defies the threats of AIDS (4.B). However, after discovering the duplicity of the Intsik employer (5.A) despite their intimacy with one another (5.B), Pinay is in despair (6.1 and 6.2) and regretful because suffering the pain (7.B) is not worth it (7.A). In the end, the persona calls for help. Pinay is left with nothing but a baby in the belly (8.B) because of the dream to become wealthy (8.A). In other words, the literal translation facilitated the

rendering of the basic storyline of the poem. The story itself is the recapitulation of the meaning embedded in the text.

It is also interesting to note how the literal translation of 7.1 and 7.2 into 7.A “Even the hip’s measure is deficient” and 7.B “For the emotional pain I bear – listen to me:” works without directly using the English phrase “pain is on all sides” or “much pain in every side”. The word-for-word translation of the idiom can result in a nonsensical phrase but, because of the context surrounding the stanza, it is able to preserve the meaning of the ST.

#### **4. Linguistic variation and amplification**

Although literal translation is dominantly used in producing the TT, a closer look at some linguistic elements reveals the shift in the textual tone. The ST shows occurrences of contractions such as “balsa’t” in 1.2, “gusali’t” in 2.1, “kunwa’y” in 3.1, “ipinangako’y” in 4.1, “nami’y” in 5.2, and “ako’y” in 7.2, which can be construed as foregrounding realism. Because these elements are not evident in the TT, the colloquial effect of the ST is changed.

Sensitivity to the pragmatic and sociocultural meaning of linguistic or paralinguistic elements is required in translation. This is particularly important for texts that serve as cultural artifacts. However, what is carried over in the translation will greatly depend on what the translator intends to put forward. For example, using variation as a translation technique involves a conscious attempt to change the dialectal indicators to adapt the text to its target audience.

Although the colloquial marker in the ST is lost in the process of translation, a linguistic element is gained. In lines 1.B and 2.A, the pronoun “I” occurs although it has no corresponding overt equivalent in the ST. The insertion of linguistic elements called amplification happens when producing the TT is influenced by the translator’s “interpretation” of the ST. Indeed, the first and second stanzas of the TT show the assumption that the poem’s narrative is told from the first-person point of view. Nevertheless, linguistic variation and amplification do not totally affect the storyline of the poem.

## **2. Conclusion: Detours and Destination**

The textual and contextual analysis of the ST enabled the exploration of the sound patterns, the images, and the story that constitute the poem. Attention was particularly given to

the striking qualities of the ST such as the use of idiomatic expressions, allusions, and colloquial markers and the images and storyline that emerged from the textual evidence. The text-to-context reading of the poem revealed that the language used was subtle yet sharp in resounding the diasporic narrative of OFWs specifically the exploitations of women workers in Hongkong.

To a great extent, the analysis of the ST set the expectations on the literary style and content the TT should reflect. The comparison of the linguistic and non-linguistic elements between the ST and the TT revealed some deviations from the expected rendering of the structural and lexical features of the poem in the TL. Idioms were unidiomatically expressed as a result of discursive creation. A word was borrowed instead of using its established equivalent in the TL. Linguistic variation lost the conversational effect of the ST. Nonetheless, the fundamental storyline of the poem was preserved. In effect, the content the poem carries were successfully rendered through the effective use of translation techniques that captured the non-complexity of the language used in the poem.

The comparison of the ST and the TT showed that content is prioritized in translating the text. Although lexical and semantic diversions were noticeable, they were negligible when the focus is given on the meaning. Likewise, despite the fact that the frustrations of the translator to demonstrate equal literary agility as that of the author were felt in lines and stanzas of the TT, the desire to retell the narrative about what it means to be a woman, a Filipino, and an overseas worker and to deliver the message coming from diasporic space to a wider audience was achieved. Thus, after some linguistic detours, *Liham ni Pinay mula sa Hongkong* successfully arrived at its destination.

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