

A STUDY OF STATE COUNSELLOR'S TRANSLATED SPEECH THROUGH VAN DIJK'S IDEOLOGICAL SQUARE

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Abstract

Public speeches are ideologically loaded type of political discourse. The purpose of the paper was to identify the use of manipulation techniques in critical discourse analysis of political speech translation based on Daghigh's (2018) model of political manipulation in translation. When public speeches are translated, they can be manipulated to serve the sociopolitical needs of the target society. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered her public speech on March 25, 2020 when Myanmar identified the first case of Covid-19 disease. Her speech and its translated text by Aung Khin were used for data analysis in this paper. van Dijk's (1998) ideological square as well as Daghigh's model was used as research method in carrying out this analysis. It was found that the translator used promoting manipulation techniques more frequently than demoting manipulation techniques to keep his translation in line with the values set by the government. It is hoped that this study would help translation teachers and professional translators with better understanding of manipulation in political speech translation. It is also hoped that further studies on different genres of political texts could be undertaken in future.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, ideological square, manipulation techniques, political discourse

Introduction

Language is a multi-layered mode of communication. Therefore, different sides of a language must be investigated when analyzing a text. According to Daghigh, Sanatifar and Awang (2018) quoting Kwong Leung (2006) and Letcu-Fairclough (2008), translators tend to neglect the traditional notion of equivalence as they work under certain socio-political conditions to produce a translated text which is in line with the set values. In the context of political discourse translation translators employ manipulation, which is regarded as political or ideological because political translation implies the manipulation of a source text (henceforth ST) to a certain extent to bring its target text (henceforth TT) in line with a politically correct model or notion. This ensures the sociopolitical acceptance of a target society. According to Munday (2009), language is an instrument of manipulation to convey ideologies through lexical, discoursal and syntactic arrangements of words.

State Counsellor of Myanmar Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered her speech to the nation on March 25, 2020 on the updated situation of the Corona virus infection in the country. The transcript of her speech and its translation by Aung Khin, the senior translator of the newspaper 'The Global New Light of Myanmar', were used as data for this study. The purpose of the paper was to identify the use of manipulation techniques in the translation of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's public speech based on Daghigh's (2018) model of political manipulation in translation. His theory was based on the ideological square model of van Dijk's (1998) critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA).

Manipulation in translation is a translation act because of the nature of non-equivalence between different language pairs. However, it can become more than a translation act when a translator tries to influence the outcome of a translation. For example, nowadays in certain news coverage of Covid-19 disease in the USA, the negatively-loaded word 'CCP virus' [meaning 'Chinese Communist Party Virus'] is being used instead of the Corona virus. According to

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Fairclough and Wodak (1997), CDA is mediation of power relations. Therefore, it necessitates a socio-cognitive approach. The significance of the study is that the study can shed light on what was happening inside a translator's mind as he or she was trying to manipulate a political text in his or her translation.

It is assumed that translating a political speech of a political leader involves making manipulation techniques to achieve a maximum effect to keep the translation in line with the set values of the people in power. Based on this assumption, an attempt was made on whether the translator Aung Khin used manipulation techniques in his translation of State Counsellor's public speech on the fight against the Corona virus.

Research questions

1. What manipulation techniques are frequently used?
2. Which factors cause the translator Aung Khin to use these manipulation techniques?

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to identify the use of manipulation techniques in the translator Aung Khin's translation of State Counsellor's political speech based on Daghigh's (2018) model of political manipulation in translation.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify the instances where manipulation techniques are used by the translator Aung Khin in his translation of State Counsellor's public speech on the fight against the Corona Virus
2. To explain the factors which lead the translator Aung Khin to use these manipulation techniques

Literature Review

Many critical discourse studies have been conducted to analyze political discourse including speeches and manifestoes of political leaders and parties as well as political decision makers. According to van Dijk (1998), CDA studies the language of powerful elites as well as the people who are responsible for making political decisions and social reforms.

In their research paper "Persuasion and Political Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Imran Khan's Election Speech (2013)" the researchers Khalil, Chattha and Qazalbash (2017) critically analyzed the election speech of Imran Khan, a chairman of a major political party in Pakistan. They tried to uncover the ideologies behind the election speech. Using Fairclough's (1995) framework they studied how specific words and phrases carry power to achieve political objectives. By means of Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional approach of description, interpretation and explanation, the researchers employed CDA tools such as word choice, repetition, referential strategies, persuasive strategies, positive self-representation and negative other-representation. They found that political discourse could be invented to project specific ideologies. They also found that politicians employed certain linguistic strategies to persuade people to follow their hidden agenda.

In another paper "Modelling van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square in Translation Studies: Investigating Manipulation in Political Discourse Translation" Daghigh et al. (2018) studied 31 English opinion articles along with their Persian translations to identify how manipulation was used in political discourse translation. They used van Dijk's ideological square in identifying

political manipulation in their data. They proposed their model of preserving, blocking, demoting or promoting strategies in Persian translation of English opinion articles based on van Dijk's model of ideological square. They found that Persian translators manipulated the undesired negative/ positive representation of English texts by means of blocking or demoting strategies very frequently. The researchers also found that Persian translators attempted to preserve or promote the desired positive/ negative representation of English texts on most occasions.

Materials and Method

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's public speech on Covid-19 disease which she delivered to the nation and its written translation by the translator Aung Khin were used as material for data analysis in this paper.

State Counsellor's speech and its translated text were analyzed based on van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square, which is composed of 'our own group versus other group' or 'us versus them'. We tend to represent our own group positively and negatively represent other group. Under other-negative representation authors or translators or trans-editors (translation editors) emphasize bad things of other group by preserving or promoting the negative representation of ST in TT. They also de-emphasize good things of other group by blocking or demoting the positive representation of ST in TT. Under self-positive representation authors or translators emphasize good things of their own group by promoting or preserving the positive representation of ST in TT. They also de-emphasize bad things of their own group by blocking or demoting the negative representation of ST in TT.

Other-negative representation	Self-positive representation
Emphasize their bad things by preserving & promoting the negative representation of ST in TT	Emphasize our good things by preserving & promoting the positive representation of ST in TT
De-emphasize their good things by blocking & demoting the positive representation of ST in TT	De-emphasize our bad things by blocking & demoting the negative representation of ST in TT

Van Dijk's Ideological Square (1998)

The procedure of the analysis used in the study was as follows: align the ST and its corresponding TT segments to identify the instances where manipulation techniques are used based on Daghigh (2018); then evaluate whether the manipulation techniques are promoting strategies or demoting strategies; and finally explain the causes in light of van Dijk's ideological square model used in CDA.

Daghigh's (2018) theoretical framework which was based on van Dijk's Ideological Square was as follows:

Demoting undesired representation of ST in TT	
Manipulation techniques	Explanation
Partial omission	To partially remove an undesired representation of ST in TT so that the degree of representation is minimized
Nominalization	To lower the loading of an undesired representation of ST in TT by nominalizing, by which the details of subject and object are removed
Implication	To lower an undesired negative/positive representation of ST in TT by implying the meaning
Change of modality	To lower an undesired representation of ST in TT by replacing the probability/obligation of an event/action by using a modal, which expresses a lower possibility/probability
Particularization	To particularize an undesired negative representation of ST in TT as opposed to the generality of a ST representation so as to lower the load of negativity
Passivization	To omit the subject of an undesired negative representation of ST in TT as opposed to an active structure so as to remove the responsibility of the actor(s)

Promoting desired representation of ST in TT	
Manipulation techniques	Explanation
Addition	To add an item which intensifies a desired positive representation of ST in TT
Explication	To make a desired positive/negative representation of TT more explicit as opposed to that of ST
Generalization	To generalize desired positive/negative representation of ST in TT as opposed to the specificity of the ST representation
Change of modality	To intensify a desired positive/negative representation of ST in TT by replacing the probability/obligation of something by using a modal which expresses a higher possibility
Activization	To add subject to a desired positive/negative representation of ST in TT to intensify the representation
Lexicalization	To intensify a desired negative representation of ST by either replacing it with a more negatively-loaded item or adding an extra negatively-loaded item

Data Analysis

As for the promotion of desired ST representation in TT, all the promoting instances can be summarized in the following table.

Tally Table of Promoting Instances	
Manipulation Technique	Number of Instances
Addition	6
Explicitation	4
Generalization	-
Change of Modality	-
Activization	21
Lexicalization	1

There were 6 instances of addition found in the data analysis of State Counsellor's translated public speech. The words and phrases were added to promote the desired positive representation of ST in TT so that self-positive representation of the government could be maintained in the TT. Consider the following examples.

Example 1,

ST [u]l lrsu] lyzm;emlcit? acmifqllcit? armyetEltEG lltit? pwh COVID-19 a&m*goib& vUpm wppwpm&f&uusefma&Xme olw, lzletell aelpOlyrerysuruluf taMumifMum;&rsn lzplygw, /]

TT [They should report **their health conditions** to the health centers by telephone whether they have COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, cough and fatigue.]

Example 2,

ST [vltlyxbn; wllO, lla&m*guir, h tvm;tvmuyrsm;ygw, /]

TT [If you go into the crowd to buy **these commodities**, there is more likelihood that you will catch the disease.]

Example 3,

ST [rlyelyh; zltwlylnobawon t"uyg/ llynbaw&lpwvwnlrl tiftm;uomt"dulzplygw, /]

TT [People are the key to prevent the spread of **this virus**; the ability of the people to remain calm plays a pivotal role.]

In Example 1, the words [health conditions] were not present in the ST. The addition of these words promoted the self-positive representation of the government. The government was trying to make sure that its health centres were available for the citizens to report their health conditions. As a result, its political image could be improved. In Example 2, the words [these commodities] were added. This addition improved the government's image. The government was reminding the people not to buy these household items in panic. This panic buying could result in the transmission of the disease between the people. In Example 3, the addition of the word [virus] promoted the self-positive representation of the government because the government let the people know that it was depending on the people's cooperation in trying to prevent the spread of the disease.

As regards the explicitation instances, there were altogether 4 instances. Consider the following.

Example 1,

ST ['Mh&m*g ul;pubE;Dlaw&&amumit owit;xulvmvmell pl&thyelewevyl allumu& olaw& &ur, f qlvvm celr&Elygw, /]

TT [We could estimate that there would be people with anxieties and fear as soon as news came out that two persons infected with **COVID-19** have been found.]

Example 2,

ST [uleftae& Efi&awmftp&u& ul;pm;lymy& lymbaw&lyemum;csi&wmuawmh allumu&v& wevylcif r&uygel? acgitat;at;xm;ly&ow&up&ne& usefma&O&mu&Xme& tlc& tpl&Xmersm;& xwlyexm;wh COVID-19 e& yw&ou&wh&emum;csuf aw&u&u&em&uz&ly& lzplygw, /]

TT [I would like to make a plea to the public on behalf of our government, 'don't get into a panic' about it, and follow the directives and announcements of **the Ministry of Health and Sports** and other government agencies regarding COVID-19 calmly and without any nervousness.]

Example 3,

ST [, clt&se& x&f&E&f&it&v&ly& vly&u& h&ew& u&er&w&E&f&ib&E&f&ibm;rm;ly&n&w&f&u& t&pl&u&f tly&u&f ly&ev&n&f O&f&a&mu&h&ewm u&u&u&cl&v&su&ly&gw, /]

TT [**Myanmar** is welcoming back the influx of **Myanmar nationals** who were working in Thailand.]

In Example 1, the name of the virus [Covid-19] was substituted in place of the ST word ['Mh&m*g]. This made the TT representation of the ST phrase more explicit. As a result, the desired other-negative representation of the ST increased. In Example 2, the more explicit phrase was [Ministry of Health and Sports]. This substitution of a more specific word for a less specific word [usefma&O&mu&Xme&] made the TT phrase more explicit. This, in turn, increased the self-positive representation of the ST in the TT because this ministry was leading the way in the fight against the disease. In Example 3, the phrases [Myanmar] and [Myanmar nationals] were substituted for the ST phrase [ulef&w&E&f&ib&E&f&ibm;rm;ly&n&w&f&u&]. This substitution made the TT phrase more explicit because the name [Myanmar] was more specific than the generic term [country]. As a result, the self-positive representation of the government increased because the government was welcoming back its own citizens from Thailand.

There were no instances of generalization. Moreover, there were no instances of modality change to promote desired representation of ST in TT so that the probability of something happening became strong. To promote desired ST representation in TT, there were many instances of activation found in the data. There were altogether 21 instances of subject addition in the TT. Consider the following examples.

As regards partial omission, there were 7 instances of partial omission found in the data analysis of State Counsellor's translated public speech. Consider the following.

Example 1,

ST [COVID-19 a&m*g[mxeifcsyVW&allumi f urqilusefma&tZMUBU allymxm;lyDlzpygw, /]

TT [The World Health Organization has announced that **COVID-19** can be controlled.]

Example 2,

ST['bowifay;yWsom usefma&Xmetaeel vltiyucsubsi fterll aq;ulorl ay;Elirfllzpygw, /]

TT [Only then, could the respective health center provide **free medical treatment**.]

Example 3,

ST [aps;0, lwitcgrbm;plvU? tptztVUroth;bl wpDwnf;wpa, mulwnf;wmOef, lyD rbm;pk twuf trawu, vltiywlyrmPulybth;a&muf 0, f, Muapvlygw, /]

TT [It is also advised that only one person should go for buying, instead of going in groups and that only the quantity that is really needed should be bought.]

In Example 1, the word [disease] was partially omitted in the phrase [Covid-19 disease]. This omission removed an undesired representation of the ST in the TT. In Example 2, the word [prompt] or [immediate] was omitted in the phrase [subsi fterll aq;ulorl]. This minimized an undesired self-representation of the ST in the TT. Similarly in Example 3, the omission of the word [family] minimized an undesired self-representation of the ST in the TT.

As regards nominalization instances, there were no such instances found in the data. As for implicitation instances, there was only 1 instance found in the data. For example,

ST ['Mbumv [mvaw&allumi h llynbawfitaell t xwlvvvelrlzpluygell/] TT [Please do not get panicked by such news.]

In the above sentence the substitution of [news] in place of [rumour] made the TT phrase less explicit because [news] was less specific than [rumour]. This substitution lowered the undesired negative representation of the ST in the TT. Moreover, there was 1 instance of modality change under the demotion of desired ST in TT. For example,

ST [ul irsuu lyzm;emlci f? acsmifqllci f? armyet;El f;EG lci f? pwl COVID-19 a&m*golb&vuPm wpplwpm&f&Uusefma&Xme olw, vltiel aelpOlyr frysufuuf tallumi fMum; &rflzpygw, /]

TT [They **should** report their health conditions to the health centers by telephone whether they have COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, cough and fatigue.]

In this example, the probability of people reporting their health conditions to health centres decreased by using a modal, which expresses a lower probability. As for particularization and passivization instances, there were no such instances found in the data.

Findings and Discussion

It was found that the translator Aung Khin tried to promote desired representation of the ST in the TT as suggested by Daghigh et al. (2018) by using promoting manipulation techniques such as addition, explicitation, activization and lexicalization. Activization strategy was used dominantly because there were 21 such instances. Subjects were added on most occasions to intensify self-positive representation of the ST in the TT. Addition and explicitation techniques were also used to enhance self-positive representation of the ST in the TT. There were 6 instances of addition and 4 instances of explicitation in the data. The least used promoting manipulation technique was lexicalization because there was only 1 instance of it in the data.

As for demoting manipulation techniques, the translator attempted to use the techniques of partial omission, implicitation and change of modality. There were 7 instances of partial omission. However, these instances of omission were less frequent than those of addition. As for implicitation instances, there was only 1 such instance as opposed to 4 instances of explicitation. Moreover, there was 1 instance of modality change belonging to demoting category. As for its promoting category, there was no such occurrence. It was found that the translator used promoting manipulation techniques more frequently than demoting manipulation techniques to keep his translation in line with the values set by the government.

Conclusion

The aim of the study was to identify the use of manipulation techniques in critical discourse analysis of political speech translation based on Daghigh's (2018) model of political manipulation in translation. In light of van Dijk's (1998) ideological square, Daghigh et al. (2018) proposed manipulation techniques in translation. By means of these manipulation techniques, an attempt was made to study State Counsellor's public speech on the fight against the Corona virus and its translated version translated by the senior translator of the newspaper 'The Global New Light of Myanmar' Aung Khin.

The current study investigated manipulation in political speech translation from critical discourse analysis. Through descriptive-explanatory approach taken in this study, it was found that the ST speech was spoken by Myanmar political leader. The translator of her speech was also an official translator from Myanmar. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no hostile representation of the ST as stated in 'us versus them' representation of van Dijk (1998) that could have a great impact on its TT production. However, it was found that the translator Aung Kin used promoting manipulation techniques on most occasions in order to make sure that his translation was in line with the values set by the government. It is hoped that this study would help translation teachers and professional translators with better understanding of manipulation techniques in political speech translation. It is also hoped that further studies on different genres of political texts and different manipulation techniques could be undertaken in future.

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Appendix A

Elif bawm\ twi\ yic\ k'w\ a':atm\ gelpun\ nebe/ twi 59\ trswi 177/25rw\ 2020/

, ck Covid-19 a&m*gell ywbuwlh aemuqltalc taeult rsm; o&Ei Etl tp&i ckwilyvlu
ygw, / raelu Covid-19 a&m*gutpuclx m;& ol EspDaw&Blygw, / csiflyne, irn tar&luf
lynaxmi prs tr&om;wpDell &efulefrn , hurye&a muvmwh tr&om;wpDl Nzplygw, / EspDpvW
aq;ulbrch laely? , clxpilr&r, fi talctaerfr&btvho&ygw, / 'M&m*gutpucl EspD
aw&B&alumi f owif xlvwmwmlpl&rlyewelvyf alumu&BawG &Nur, lqvlmcclrf& El lygw, /
uler taeeEl fi lawmftpl&ulu flpm;lynybawulyelum;csi wmuawmh alumuvel welmylcif
r&Nuygel acgifatat;xm;lybowuldpnellusefrma&;Oemuxmeel tlcm;tpflXmersm;&ll xlvlyexm;
wh Covid-19 elywbulwinhelum;csuawlukvluemuzbyl Nzplygw, /

Covid-19 a&m*g_l mx&efcsyV&allumi& ur&use&rma&;tz&u&u alym&xm;ly&lp&pygw, / a&m*g&obaw&x&rs u&f m&f&te&p&a&m&u&v&h& m&c&l&E&ef;[m 4.4 lp&pygw, / 'g&allumi&ubov&w&h a&m*g&q&l wmv&n&f&xi&f&n;ygw, / u&f m&f&ol&rm;[ma&m*g&t&c&ol&rm; u&l b&h&t&m;en&f&ol&rm;e&l u&lor&b&h l&ci&f aem&uf&sol&rm;lp&pygw, / 'g&allumi&a&m*g&lp&E&l b&lc r&m;ol&rm;t&ae&l t&x&l*&w&p&u&f a&el&uz&w&u&w&ef c&si&f&ygw, / y&ly&t&a&;m&u&w&it&csu&f&aw&mh apm&p&h&a&q;u&lor&b&h E&l b&a&;lp&pygw, / a&m*g&v&u&P&m ay:v&mly&v& x&i&p&m&lp&v&m&w&m&el c&u&f&ci&f&a&el&ra&u&n&ra&u& t&e&l&q&u&se&rma&;X&me&ol o&f&n;ap&cs&i&f&ygw, / “ap&m&ap&m&al&y&m? ap&m&ap&mo&l t&m;v&h&t&u&s&f&f& q&u&w&it&w&il&f&y&l u&se&rma&;X&me&u&l ap&m&ap&m&al&y&mo&i&f&v&m al&y&my&/ , c&k&t&c&e&r&f&sq&f&i&a&m*g&f&f&allumi& o&f&f&o&E&f&ol&el x&aw&ol&ol&rm;t&m;v&h t&ap&m&q&l u&se&rma&; X&me&u&tt&ol&ay&yg/ 'g[m&u&l m&h&la&;u&l f&y&w&ef&usi&f&v&h&la&; E&p&f&y&p&v&h&t&w&il lp&pygw, / w&w&ers l&y&n&ol&t&cs&u& t&p&l&r&f&v&ely& w&w&ers&x&u&b&h&a&el&uw, m&h&ol&ygw, / 'm&v&ly&ci&f[m&b, b&ol&u&rs t&u&s&f r&ly&E&l f&y&gb&t/ wu, f&y a&m*g&y&f&f&ely&q&f&i&f b, l&of&n;of&n; u&l f&el&t&w&y&go&n;r&f&y/u&l f&y&f&n&f&n u&se&rma&; X&me&u&b&f&n;ly& t&p&p&f&yg/v&h&t&y&w&u&lor&b&h f&y/ u&l f&ol&r&p&w&al&umi&h t&rm;u&ly&f&E&ul&p&u&f&v&m r&f&ol&lp&f&q&ap&el/

[illegible]

r&wmuU today:alymvlygw, / aps:0, lwitcgrbm;pkvU/ tptkzlvuroh;blwpDwnf wpa, muf
wnf, wmoef, lyD rom;pkwuf tr&wu, f vlttywlyrmPulybth;a&muf 0, f, Muapvlygw, /

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wmuawmh qE? a'go? b, marm[wlylpzygw, / , clurefwtm;vU tncm;EfiHsm;entfwi
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qEuw&tyUv rvlyoiUrvlyxUwlmawG vpkva0;lpaplcif? &U&awG aq;0g;awG plaqmit
lcif? usefma&n&um;csuawG rvUemlcif;qUwmuU&siyg/ a'gouw&tyUvrvlvmpdwel r&f
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tallumuUw&m;v&lyD&umpaqmitlcif;a&m*gvuPmzUuG fxm;lcifsm;uU&siyg/
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qEr&m;ac:&mrUlygel? nhn&win&vel uU csi&f&ae&ayr, ES/Hom;eUyrl&U p&ac:rawU
twlytaygit&iqU Mur, / a'goweUyU&mra&tygel/ tcsi&fcsi&Mum;arw&yth;lyD p&ac:rawUtm;vU
twUwlausmfv&M;ur, / b, mzc&m ruygel? EfiH tiftm;? NynbUttiftm;awG pbnf;lyD p&ac:rl
awUtm;rm;rwf&iqU Mur, /

arm[qE&smrepygel/ Covid-19 el ywbuUv tpl&XmetoboU xwlyecsuawbU
avlvmyg/ aumvm[vaw&em;OilyD vrf&sn;ay:ra&muUygapel/ tm;vUtwl owD&? ynmU
tm;xm;lyD Covid-19 p&ac:rlUbuU twitEfi, Muygr, / aumif&efwhtpl& tly&cyln&ep&U talccl
vlttycsuawbZpwl wmoef, wmoefcl&U yG hvi&f&riomruU talccllyDulefwt tpl&taeel Nynborm;
obib&klwU upawUtt&seUwpaUy;nd xwlyecb;rsilzpygw, / Nynbaw&mt"uyg/
ausZtwilygw, /

Appendix B

Translated Text of State Counsellor's Speech

Citizens of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

I am presenting a report regarding the latest update about the Covid-19 disease for the information of the public. Yesterday, we found two persons who tested positive for Covid-19. One of them was a man from Chin State who had returned from the United States, and another man was from Yangon who had returned from the UK. Both of them are being given medical treatment and we understand that they are “not in critical condition.”

We could estimate that there would be people with anxieties and fear as soon as news came out that two persons infected with COVID-19 have been found. I would like to make a plea to the public on behalf of our government, ‘don’t get into a panic’ about it, and follow the directives and announcements of the Ministry of Health and Sports and other government agencies regarding COVID-19 calmly and without any nervousness.

The World Health Organization has announced that COVID-19 can be controlled. Out of those infected by this disease the death rate is 4.4 per cent. Therefore, it is clear that it is a curable disease. Those who died from this disease were patients with chronic diseases, poor immune system or late treatment. So we wish to suggest that those persons who are vulnerable to this disease need to take this matter seriously. What is most important is to get medical treatment early. As soon as a person gets symptoms, he should go to the nearest healthcare centre immediately, without procrastination.

Just as in the saying “report early, know early, benefits everyone”, please inform the health centers what you need to tell them. At this time, all those who had contact with the two infected persons should report to the health center at the earliest. This is both for individual safety as well as the safety of the respective community. I heard that some residents in Tiddim Township are fleeing in panic out of grave concern. This type of behavior does not benefit anyone. In reality, if someone is infected with the virus, it will be carried in the body wherever this person goes. Please go to the health center in your village and get tested. Please get the necessary treatment. Myanmar is welcoming back the influx of Myanmar nationals who were working in Thailand. They are advised to stay at home or a designated place in a responsible manner for home or facility quarantine for 14 days to prevent the spread of the disease. Those who have arrived back home should cooperate with a full sense of responsibility. Those who have arrived back in Myanmar should not go into hiding because of fear and concern. This is important. They should report their health conditions to the health centers by telephone whether they have COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, cough and fatigue. Only then, could the respective health center provide free medical treatment. Those in 14-days home quarantine must follow the directives of the health departments without fail. By doing so, cases of infection could be detected immediately and early treatment could be given to them. It could also effectively prevent their family members and communities from becoming infected. By providing early treatment we can effectively reduce the death rate.

As soon as the news came out that two person infected with COVID-19 have been found, some people began buying foods, medicines and household items in panic. There is no likelihood that we will run out of stock. If you go into the crowd to buy these commodities, there is more likelihood that you will catch the disease. People are the key to prevent the spread of this virus; the ability of the people to remain calm plays a pivotal role.

I wish to inform that the government has to plan to shut down necessary public services, markets or commodity centers. It is also advised that only one person should go for buying, instead of going in groups and that only the quantity that is really needed should be bought.

Fake news are [sic] floating around that enterprises, factories, workshops will be closed; and that entry and exit points to townships and villages will be closed. Please do not get panicked by such news. I hope you know the “Four wrongful paths”. A wrongful path is a path which is wrong. What pushes onto the wrongful path are: Intention, Hatred, Fear and Ignorance. It is important we should not be pushed onto the wrongful path with regard to the COVID-19 disease that other countries are facing. Pushed on by Intention: do not participate in unlawful gatherings; hoarding of commodities and medicines and neglecting of healthcare instructions. Pushed on by Hatred: do not spread false information and rumors which affects the peace and stability of communities. Fear: Fear must not turn into panic buying and covering up symptoms of infection. Ignorance: could result in negligence of official announcements and advice to prevent wrong doings. I wish to request all of you not to follow the above mentioned “Four Wrongful Paths”.

Don't fall into the trap of intention. We can face against all the challenges with our hearts in close proximity despite social distancing. Don't bear hatred. Let us overcome all challenges with loving-kindness for each other. Don't get filled with fear. Let us meet our challenges by uniting the strength of the people and the strength of the nation.

Don't be submerged in ignorance. Instead, people should study the official announcements; do not get onto false path by listening to rumors. We can overcome the Covid-19 problems with mindfulness, relentless effort and wisdom. Based on responsibility, accountability and transparency which are the basic fundamental needs of good governance, our government will release up-to-date information in real time all information that the people need to know. People are the key. Thank you. (Translated by Aung Khin)