

FOREIGNIZATION OR DOMESTICATION: WHICH SERVES THE READER BETTER?

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Annotation: *The foreignization versus domestication discussion, two opposite methods to translation, has continued to provoke scholarly discourse in translation studies. While domestication seeks to accommodate the receiving culture's expectations by adjusting the source material, foreignization defies accommodation, maintaining the original work's linguistic and cultural difference. This article investigates both methods by discussing their related theories and practical examples, determining which of them yields a greater benefit to the reader. It argues that no approach is better than any other, but, instead, depends on a work's nature, a translation's goal, or a work's skopos, or even a reader's expectation. Inevitably, therefore, a translator becomes a cultural mediator, trying to balance accessibility and original work fidelity.*

Keywords: *Foreignization, domestication, reader reception, cultural translation, linguistic equivalence, dynamic equivalence, cultural adaptation, hybrid translation, translator agency.*

INTRODUCTION

Translation exists beyond formal linguistic neutrality, involving both cultural and ideological levels. As per Lawrence Venuti (1995), every translation project involves a choice: to make a foreign element familiar or to make a familiar element foreign. The employed strategies imply different ideological positions and considerably influence how a reader approaches a text.

This research explores:

Which strategy better responds to the recipient's needs: foreignization or domestication?

This study focuses on media effects concerning how literary, audiovisual, and religious representations influence understanding, aesthetic appreciation, and cultural acceptance.

Methodology

It utilizes a comparative-descriptive approach, analyzing representative examples derived from translations from literary texts (e.g., prose, poetry), media materials (e.g., subtitles), and religious literature. The descriptive models applicable to this analysis are Vermeer's Skopos theory, Venuti's concept of cultural visibility, and Nida's dynamic equivalence principle. The research focuses as much on linguistic transmission as it does on how strategies applied by translation affect reading.

Results and Discussion

Domestication: Accessibility Coming with Attendant Trade-offs

It refers to adapting original material to meet target culture and target language conventions. It focuses on smooth flow within a story and expeditious comprehension.

Many English versions of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince* correctly translate his French phrase *dessiner un mouton* ("draw me a sheep"), but a number of adaptations fail to maintain his characteristically innocent tone.

Analysis: The act of domestication specifically serves casual readers and mass-market translations. It reduces cognitive load, encourages narrative coherence, and increases commercial potential. It can, however, generate cultural homogenization, which can cause a loss of unique stylistic or cultural characteristics.

Another example:

In the Uzbek translation of a British novel, "afternoon tea" may be rendered as "choy ichish vaqti" to create relatability. While understandable, this erases the cultural ritual of English teatime, stripping it of class and historical connotations.

Foreignization: Cultural Integrity and Reader Enrichment

Foreignization keeps intact structures, references, or vocabulary from the original language, challenging the reader to encounter the new.

Jay Rubin's translations from Haruki Murakami's prose often retain Japanese honorifics, like *-san*, and other Japanese phrases, like *tatami*, *bento*, and *onsen*, rather than replacing them with their standard English equivalents.

Analysis: Foreignization respects cultural authenticity and encourages intercultural literacy. It positions the translator as an educator and cultural bridge. However, it may alienate some readers who lack contextual knowledge or patience.

Religious texts, including the Qur'an, are often subjected to a foreignization process, which retains Arabic terminology, including phrases such as *taqwa*, *jannah*, and *shirk*, with explanatory footnotes. This process ensures that subtle theological nuances and cultural nuances are retained.

Reader's Purpose and Background Matter

Optimization depends on the nature of the target audience.

Optimal Reader - Category - Made possible by justification

Casual or young readers - Domestication - Enhances clarity and comfort

Academics or researchers - Foreignization - Offers deeper cultural insight

Religious audiences - A balanced methodology - Maintains the sacredness but allows understanding

Literary enthusiasts - Foreignization Preserves authorial style and voice

Example: In *One Thousand and One Nights*, various English translations show these choices. Sir Richard Burton's 19th-century version is heavily foreignized with archaisms and Arabic terms, catering to Orientalist interests. In contrast, modern simplified versions domesticate language and omit complex references for young readers.

The Ethical Issues and Translator's Autonomy

Venuti critiques domestication as promoting ethnocentrism, where everything is filtered through the target culture's norms, thereby marginalizing the foreign. Foreignization, he argues, is an ethical resistance, a political stance that values difference.

Translation texts that foreground feminine voices, especially those written by Barbara Godard, utilize foreignization strategies to maintain their gender-infused storylines and power relationships, which are generally eroded by more domesticating versions.

Analysis: Here, the translator is not just serving readers, but also defending marginalized identities and resisting cultural homogenization. Foreignization serves readers ethically, even if it challenges them cognitively.

Hybridity and Creative Compromise

Most skillful translators utilize an integrative approach that combines both methods.

Both domestications, or changing the contextual structure and syntax to favor English-speaking listeners, and foreignization, or maintaining Indian lexical items like puja, sari, and biryani, are employed within Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*. This two-part manner educates and entertains.

CONCLUSION

Foreignization values cultural authenticity and aims to enlighten readers, even though it could be intellectually demanding or innovative. In effect, even the translator's task becomes contextual and dynamic, being influenced by audience demand, textual purposes, and moral considerations. In some situations, a combined approach could be useful, maintaining original identity but making it easier to understand. Ultimately, the question "Which serves the reader better?" defies a categorical response. A more relevant question here is: How can a translator serve both text and reader ideally, simultaneously? The translations considered to be the most competent are those where accessibility and authenticity are judged to be in a balanced relationship, allowing the reader to understand the message but, at the same time, understand where it comes from.

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