Foreignization and Domestication in literary Translation

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Abstract:

This research is located with area of translation studies. It deals with literary translation and the best techniques to translate culture bound terms and expressions. It discusses two vital techniques of literary translation: foreignization and domestication. It also reveals the cultural challenges and difficulties that the translator faces when attempting to achieve balance between these two techniques. Furthermore, it provides some examples of the two techniques to prove that they are applicable to different genres. This study aims to answer the following questions:

1- What is the best way to translate literary works?
2- What is the difference between foreignization and domestication and which of them is suitable for what?

ملخص :

تعني هذه الورقة البحثية بدراسات الترجمة حيث تتناول الترجمة الأدبية وأفضل الاستراتيجيات لترجمة المصطلحات الثقافية المتضمنة في تلك الأعمال الأدبية، ويختص البحث تقنيتين حيويتين لترجمة الأعمال الأدبية وهما التغريب والتوطين. كما يسلط الضوء على عناصر ثقافية محددة ودور استراتيجيات الترجمة في ترجمة تلك العناصر الثقافية، ويكشف الستار عن التحديات والصعوبات الثقافية التي يواجهها المترجم عند محاولته تحقيق التوازن بين هاتين التقنيتين، علاوة على ذلك فإنه يعرض بعض الأمثلة على التقنيتين لإثبات أنها قابلتان للتطبيق على أنواع مختلفة من الأجناس الأدبية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية:

١– ما هي أفضل الاستراتيجيات لترجمة الأعمال الأدبية؟

٢– ما الفرق بين التغريب والتدجين وأيهما أكثر ملائمة لترجمة المصطلحات الثقافية؟

1. Introduction:

Among the different types of translation, literary translation is a challenging task because the major tenet of literary translation is its literary communicative function. When we read any genre of literature translated from or into a foreign language, we appreciate the text itself with its meaning along with the feelings it conveys and arouses. For this reason, literary translation must take into consideration specific features of the taste which make this type of translation different from other texts of an informative type.

Moreover, literary translation is of paramount importance because it helps to shape our understanding of the world in lots of different ways. Reading literary translation provides us with deep insights into life in other cultures and allows the sharing of knowledge as well as life experience from corner to corner. An intrinsic challenge of literary translation is to be faithful to the source work along with the need to come up with something unique and distinguished that will arouse the same feelings and recall response as the original (source text). Therefore, translators and researchers in the field of translation attempt to create techniques that can be used in handling problems involved in translating literary works.

In her book, *Translation and Translation Studies*: *Introduction to Translation*, Amparo Hurtado Albir, one of the leading specialists in translation, defines five translation techniques in order to deal with literary translation. Albir's techniques are: adaptation, linguistic amplification,compensation, elision and borrowing. Albir describes adaptation as a "technique

whereby one cultural element is replaced by another which is typical of the receiving culture. This technique is very useful when translating advertisements, slogans, etc., Adaptation employs a number of different linguistic processes. In these cases, the most important thing is the actual meaning of the message rather than the words making it up" (qtd. in Mathieu). As for adaptation, the word is replaced by a different one which has a similar cultural equivalent and this has something to do with another technique under question i.e., domestication.

In this respect, Lawrence Venuti, an American translation historian, mentioned in his book, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* two techniques that are essential to any translator of literary texts: foreignization and domestication. In translation field, there is a hot argument over the proper translation strategies chosen for the transmission of cultural contents. Foreignization as well as domestication is the focus of the argument since their appearance. Foreignization is the strategy of recalling information from the source text and involves purposely breaking the conventions of the target language to keep its sense. Domestication is the strategy of making the translated text conform to the culture of the language being translated to, which may contain the loss of information from the source text. Chongxin Xu (1991) states that:

> Foreignization is the inevitable tendency in literature translation at the present time, since being faithful to the original works, keeping local conditions and customs of foreign countries, satisfying readers' expecting view is a must in the process of global

cultural communication and mergence. In the 21st century, foreignization will be the keynote in literature translation. Of course, as translators stick to holding foreignization as the main translative method, the supplementary role of domestication cannot be neglected. Domestication, as another important strategy for translation, can make the original more intimate to readers and make up the inconvenience caused by too many difficult unfamiliar cultural factors in the original. (p. 29)

Venuti expounds that he derives these two techniques from the German philosopher and biblical scholar Friedrich Schleiermacher. According to Schleiermacher, the translator has two options, either to leave the author in peace, as much as possible, and move the reader towards him (foreignizing his translation) or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him (domesticating his translation). Venuti rephrases these sentences and states that the act of "leaving the author in peace" may be equated to foreignizing the text "as much as possible" and the act of "leaving the reader in peace" may be equated to domesticating it.

2. Domestication

Linguistically Domestication comes from the verb "to domesticate" which means to make a wild animal used to living with or working for humans. In the field of translation, Wenfen Yang (2010) defines domestication as the strategy that "designates the type of translation in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text

for target language readers" (p.79). As a traditional strategy, Domestication strategy is not recent but rather ancient, at least as old as the age of the ancient Roman, as it was used as a tool of military occupation according to the German philosopher Nietzsche. He mentioned that the Latin poets as Horace and Propertius who translated the Greek texts into Romanian -the language of that era- did not have enough time to work on translating all of these things as names and other culture-bound items. As a solution, they removed the original cultural markers and added translated texts that have Roman cultural connotations. They also replaced the names of the Greek poets with the names that match their culture producing texts as if they were originally written in Latin. Both Horace and Cicero are considered the first who wrote notes about translation at that period and claimed that conveying the meaning and producing a beautiful and creative text in the target language were the correct approach in translation other than adherence to the literal or word-for-word translation.

Domestication played a central role for the Arabs as well, particularly during the Abbasid period (750-1250 AD) under the rule of Al-Mansur, Harun Al-Rashid and Al-Ma'mun, as they encouraged translating sciences. During that period, some translators such as John Ibn Al-Baterrk and Ibn Na`imah Al-Homsi used literal translation in their works by translating every Greek word with its Arabic equivalent and when this method didn't work, they used the borrowing mechanism, but soon it proved that this method was also ineffective. So they switched to translating the meaning against the meaning and producing texts that were distinguished with fluency and naturalness. This

approach was adopted by two translators Hanin Ibn Ishaq and Al-Jawhary. Also Martin Luther, the German pioneer of reformation in medieval Europe and the founder of religious Protestantism, pursued the Domestication strategy in his translation of the Bible from the Hebrew and Greek into the German dialect. He declared that he did not agree with the Catholic Church and its teachings about calling for the protection of their approved versions of the bible that were translated literally. He used to say that you had to ask the mother at home, the children in the street, the ordinary man in the market and look at their mouths, and translate that way; then they will understand and see that you're speaking to them in German. Thus, Luther favored the domesticated strategy.

The evaluation of free translation and its advocacy continued during the next two centuries by many translators and poets like the English translators Cowley and Dryden. Cowley criticized poetry which was transmitted literally to French and Italian prose. He encouraged translators to compensate for the lost beauty during the transfer process by producing another beautiful text using their own writing abilities and creativity away from literal translation. Dryden, too, supported free translation (domestication) suggesting that there are three kinds of translation: literal translation which means word for word or sentence for sentence translation, adapted translation that means the translator puts the writer style in mind but does not adhere to his words and his interest is to be focused on delivering the meaning, simulation which intends to give the translator the freedom to dispose of the source text and to adapt it as he wishes. Dryden called for the necessity to rely on the second type of

classifications that he set and considered it the most effective method of translation.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the German theologian and translator Friedrich Schleiermacher emerged with new ideas in translation that reflect the movement towards Romanticism. Schleiermacher claims that translation is not based on absolute truth, but on understanding the inner feeling. He says that the translator has two choices, either to bring the reader to author or to bring the author to the reader. Schleiermacher preferred the first option (which will be later called foreignization by Venuti) as it delivers the text faithfully to the recipient. Schleiermacher's attitude has affected those who came after him, in this case, Katarina Rice, the author of *types of texts* and Lawrence Venuti the originator of the terminology of domestication and foreignization.

Lawrence Venuti is one of those scholars most interested in the concept of domestication in translation. In his book *Translator's invisibility a history of translation*, he seeks to study the nature of translation through the modern Anglo-American culture which aims to normalize everything in the world according to its political and cultural agenda and seeks to marginalize the other and consider him a source of nuisance. This Anglo-American culture also pursues, by various means, including translation, to obliterate the identity of any foreign culture. He disagrees with the Anglo-American translational orientation that considers the translator a machine which works according to the orders of the master represented by the owners of publishing, editors and auditors. So, the translator finds

himself under pressure and is forced to respond to these orders even if it costs him to sacrifice his style in translation. Venuti gives the ethical aspect in translation great importance through his concern for the translator and the controlling factors in the translation industry. Although he prefers foreignization over domestication, he makes it clear that the translator should have the opportunity to use his style in translation and try to bring the meaning closer to the recipient as long as the meaning of the text can be delivered correctly.

In the context of dealing with domestication, one cannot turn a blind eye to the term that was the focus of translation studies in the 1950s and 1960s as it continues to be a topic of many researches i.e., equivalence. Theorists in that period overlooked the traditional conflict, which prevailed for several centuries between literal and free translation, and became concerned with analyzing translation in a more systematic and organized way. Eugene Nida is one of the theorists most interested in the principle of "equivalence". He tries to develop his theory of translation which is based on the experiences and observations that he learned from his translation of the Bible. He attempts to transfer translation to a scientific stage through accreditation drawing on the results of the latest research in linguistics. His effort was culminated in his publication of the book entitled *Towards a Science of Translation* in 1964. Nida depends in developing his systematized theory on some theoretical concepts and terminology derived from semantics and pragmatics, and on Noam Chomsky's work on sentence structure, which formed the theory of Generative-Transformational Grammar.

Nida gives two definitions as an exchange for literal and free translation: Formal Equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Formal Equivalence focuses on the source text itself in form and content. Accordingly, what is considered important is that the text in the target language should conform as closely as possible to the language of the source text. By the term language, Nida means the lexical and syntactical constructs existing in the source text. Formal correspondence intends to achieve equivalence between original text and translation text and to some extent reflect the linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, syntax and structure of the original language which has a great impact on emphasizing the accuracy and correctness.

On the other hand, Dynamic Equivalence is based on the bond between the recipient and the text. The relationship of the target recipient to the text should be very similar to the one in between the original recipient and the original text. Thus, the translator aims to respond to the linguistic requirements and the cultural aspirations of the reader and to search for a clear flawless phrase and spontaneity in order to achieve naturalness. Nida adopted this principle in his translation of the Bible and considered that equivalence of the meaning more important than the equivalence of the style in order to achieve the equivalent effect. He claims that there are four important elements that must be achieved in free translation (dynamic equivalence) in order to make the text acceptable to the recipient. They are "making sense", "conveying the spirit and manner of the original", "producing a similar response" and" having a natural and easy form of expression" (56).

Scholars have categorized four essential mechanisms that can classify under the domestication technique. The first one is transposition which is ″a change of one part of speech for another without changing the sense″ (Munday, 2001, p. 57). Transposition is moving from one grammatical category to another without changing the meaning of the text. Transposition is "probably the most common structural change undertaken by translators" (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 94). There are two forms of transposition: obligatory transposition and optional transposition. For example, when the translator chooses to render the adjective ′hurtful′ in ′ he can be hurtful′ into the verb (يضر)

instead of the adjective (ضار), he adopts optional transposition. As for obligatory transposition, the translator translates the prepositional phrase ′completely′ in 'completely free' to (تماماً), which is the only alternative for translating the adverb ′ completely '. Transposition has many types when it comes to the part of speech. The following are some examples:

– Adverb-verb: I only blamed myself / I did nothing but blaming myself.

– Adverb-noun: I called you early this week / I called you at the beginning of the week.

– Adverb-adjective: He plays roughly / He plays a rough game.

– Adjective-noun: He found it difficult to forgive his friend / He had difficulties forgiving his friend.

– Possessive article-definite article: Your car is too small / The car you have is too small.

– Verb or past participle-noun: I intended to call you later/ My intention was to call you later.

– Adverb-noun: I saw you early this morning / I saw you at the beginning of the day.

The second domestication technique is omission which means skipping words, phrases, clauses, sentences and even complete segments from the source text whether intentionally or unintentionally. It is only possible when the aim is to avoid duplication, repetition, or less valuable material, or when it has a negative impact on the recipient's viewpoints. Baker (1992) mentions that omission is to be adopted ″only as a last resort, when the advantages of producing a smooth, readable translation clearly outweigh the value of rendering a particular meaning accurately in a given context″ (p. 42).

The third domestication technique is addition which is defined as a translation strategy ″in which something is added to the TT which is not present in the ST″ (Dickins, J., Hervey, S.G.J., and Higgins, 2002, p. 24). Addition is used to help the recipient understand some information that he might not catch due to some cultural or linguistic differences between the source and the target language. Information added to the TT is of three kinds as stated by Newmark (1988): ″cultural (accounting for difference between SL and TL culture), technical (relating to the topic) or linguistic (explaining wayward use of words) ″ (p. 91). In most cases, translators try to explain lexical ambiguities and questions around particular concepts and lexical objects by adding terms, phrases, or sentences. Though, in some cases

translators tend to randomly crush their translations with unnecessary material that adds nothing but false themes to the target text.

The last domestication technique is adaptation which can be described as a cultural feature that replaces the original text or some words with one that is more appropriate for the target language culture. Adaptation has been described as the ″′freest′ form of translation″ (Newmark, 1988, p. 46). As a result, the text becomes more recognizable and informative. It is a kind of oblique translation ″which can be used whenever the context referred to in the original text does not exist in the culture of the target text, thereby necessitating some form of re-creation″ (Bastin, 1998, p. 6). Some scholars regard adaptation as a violation of faithfulness because of the re-creation done to satisfy the needs of the recipients. Thus, adaptation is extremely domesticated to the extent that it is conceived as a ″betrayal of the original author″ (Bastin, 1998, p. 6). Example of adaption is (Pincho) which is a Spanish dish could be translated as (kebab) in English. Another example of adaption "is the translation of ′breast milk′ as (حليب الأُم) or (الرضاعة الطبيعية) that is adapted for ideological purposes. To be rendered as (حليب الثدي) may have sexual connotations that would not be accepted by some Arab receptors who would consider it offensive". (Abu-Melhim & Obeidat, 2017, p. 63)

Example of domestication in Yahiya Haqqi's *The lamp of Umm Hashim:*

The Arabic ST:

... وهكذا عاشت الأسرة في ركاب "الست" وفي حماها: أعياد "الست" أعيادنا، ...

The English TT:

(thus the family came to live within the precincts of Umm Hashim- Sayyida Zaynab- and under her protection: her holidays became our holidays)

Analysis:

The above-mentioned word (الست) is an example of the use of the technique of domestication. The equivalent of the word (الست) in English is the woman but its original meaning refers to Al-Sayyida Zaynab who is the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The word (الست) in Arabic culture is used to indicate high respect and reverence. The translator chooses to domesticate it and that helps to make the target text reader understand the meaning. So, he uses the domestication technique and translated it into "Umm Hashim—Sayyida Zaynab— "

As domestication has followers and supporters, there is another category of theorists and translators who form a parallel current that strongly reject the domestication orientation in translation. They called for preserving the source text and its linguistic and cultural characteristics and transmitting them as they are to the target reader. They tend to make the reader closer to the source language and its cultural features. This approach is known as foreignization.

3. Foreignization

The term foreignization is derived from the adjective foreign which refers to something strange and different. As a trend in translation, foreignization is known as the translational vision which is based on the works of German philosophers such as Von Schleigl, Friedrich Schleiermacher and Walter Benjamin. Such a vision suggests that good translation always preserves important traces of the original foreign text, although it is historically associated with literal or word for word translation. Today defenders of this approach are Antoine Berman and Lawrence Venuti.

Many translation theorists relate this translation strategy to what was known in ancient times as literal translation in which the Church has taken it as a translation strategy to protect the original texts from distortion. The Church used to impose severe penalties on anyone coming with a translation that is contrary to the original. Schleiermacher believes that foreignization mandates that the translator should leave the writer as peaceful as possible and bring the reader closer to the writer. In adopting this approach, Schleiermacher aims to make the recipient read a foreign text and accept its strange culture and stylistic elements that he or she is not familiar with.

Antoine Berman is one of the advocates of the foreignization approach in translation. He supports foreignization and opposes domestication or what he calls "naturalization" in translation. He considers domestication a kind of cultural colonialism and imperialism adopted by the Anglo-American culture which cares more about the goal and delivery of meaning

than the source text and its characteristics. Berman believes that the moral goal of translation is to deliver the foreign text as a foreigner without making any change to it. He mentions some deforming tendencies caused by domestication that support his tendency that foreignization should be more applicable in translation and that it is the best technique to be applied.

Berman mentions that one of the deforming tendencies of domestication is expansion which means that the translation is longer than the original because of the explanation and the clarification added while translating a certain text. Another negativity of domestication is specific impoverishment that refers to the substitution of words and phrases of the original text that had powerful meaning with phrases from the target language which are not comparable to the original ones. That inclination tends to make the original text lose its phonological and semantic richness. One more negative aspect of domestication is the approach adopted by some translators that aims to improve the style and refine the phrase or give attention to the beauty of the text leading sometimes to a change in meaning. Additionally, domestication might destroy the rhythm in the event that poetry is being translated. The last defect that might be associated with domestication is the destruction of fixed and idiomatic expressions. Berman considers substituting a folk proverb or local expression with its counter in the target language as ethnic favoritism. For example, the proverb "A stitch in time, saves nine" can be translated to its equivalence in Arabic which is (درهم وقاية خير من قنطار علاج). But according to Berman it is better to be committed to literal translation and translate it as (غرزة في وقتها توفرة)

(تسعة من أمثالها) in order to the give the recipient the chance to be familiar with the foreign culture and looking into it.

There are three mechanisms that can be classified under the term foreignization. The first one is literal translation which is a way of rendering a text from one language to another while closely trying to imitate the source language structure. In other words, literal translation is a translation of a text done by translating each word separately, without looking at how words are used together in a phrase or sentence. Schleiermacher regards literal translation as significant to maintain the the spirit of language in translation and raise the idea of foreignization as the main method in transferring specific features of the original″ (cited in Kemppanen, 2012, p. 59). Newmark agrees with this approach toward literal translation believing that a translator should leave it "only when its use makes the translation referentially [sic] and pragmatically inaccurate, when it is unnatural, when it will not work" (Newmark, 1988, p. 31). Literal translation proves to be the strategy heavily used. It is the most used mechanism of translation under the umbrella of foreignization.

The second mechanism is called transliteration. Transliteration is a source-oriented strategy that focuses on the ″the process of representing words from one language using the approximate phonetic or spelling equivalents of another language″ (cited in Tiedemann & Nabende, 2009, p. 34). In other words, transliteration is the method of mapping from one system of writing to another based on phonetic similarities. By this mechanism, when you type any letters from any language

(A, B, C, D), they are translated to letters of equivalent spelling in the target language. For example, the word (طعمية) can be translated into "ta'miyah" by using its phonetic sounds.

The third mechanism is borrowing. Borrowing is a common method of translation. It essentially ensures that the translator chooses to use the same word in the target text as it is in the source text. Borrowing is using loan words ″to take a word or expression straight from another language″ (Molina & Albir, 2002, p. 510). According to Myers-Scotton (2006) there are two types of borrowing: cultural and core borrowings. Cultural ones are ″words that fill gaps in the recipient language′s store of words because they stand for objects or concepts new to the language′s culture″ (p.212).

On the other hand, core borrowings are "words that duplicate elements that the recipient language already has in its word store" (p. 215). Many English words have been borrowed into other languages, such as (software) in the field of technology and (funk) in the field of culture. Also, many words in English are borrowed from other languages. For example, abbatoire, café and passé are borrowed from French whereas hamburger and kindergarten are borrowed from German. In Arabic, words like (صويا), (جرام), (فيتامينـات), and (بروتين) are borrowed from the English ones "soy", " gram", " vitamins" and " protein". Borrowing is often used out of necessity when a particular term does not work in the target language. Every day, we use a large number of borrowed words in our spoken language without even realizing that they come from another language.

Example of foreignization in Yahiya Haqqi's *The Lamp of Umm Hashim:*

The Arabic ST:

... إذا قدم القاهرة وهو صبي مع رجال الأسرة ونسائها للتبرك بزيارة أهل البيت...

The English TT:

(Coming to Cairo as a young boy with men and women of the family to obtain blessing from visiting the family of the Prophet)

Analysis:

The word (أهل البيت) has spiritual meaning for ST readers who most of them are Arabs and belong to Islam. It has a religious and holy influence on the hearts of the Muslim readers. It refers to the family of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Getting the blessings of the members of the family of Prophet Muhammad is a spiritual experience that attracts many people in Cairo as well as in other places to visit their shrines. The translator is aware of the Islamic culture and the Egyptian beliefs. So, he tries to bring the meaning closer and make it clear to the TT readers by using the domestication technique and translates it into "the family of the Prophet". Another available option is to use transliteration mechanism which is classified under the foreignization technique, i.e. translating it (Ahl-el Bayt). This Arabic term is acceptable since the term we are debating has now become so popular that can be asserted as a proper noun.

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