

Conceptualising the Issues of Translation Culture in China: The Roles of Domestication, and Foreignization

AN GANG^a, Tengku Sepora Tengku Mahadi^b, ^{a,b}School of Languages, Literacies & Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Minden, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia, Email: angangusm@gmail.com, tsepora@usm.my

Cultural differences, while translating, can be ensured using foreignization and domestication strategies. Transparent and fluent styles are usually adopted in a domestication translation to reduce the strange words for target readers. Foreignization mostly focuses on the target text, which is designed to break target conventions, and at the same time, it retains some of the foreign flavors. This paper aims to explore on relationship and implications of foreignization and domestication in translation. This essay discusses the history of domestication and foreignization and associated issues briefly. It is also argued that the uniqueness of culture would be considerably diminished if the culture of translation is dominated by domestication. On the other hand, mechanical translation will enhance if it is going towards the direction of foreignization. It is further quoted that legitimate obligations are not required for foreignization or domestication while translating as long as the practicality of translation is there.

Key words: *Translation, Culture, Domestication, Foreignization.*

Introduction

Globalization changes every part of our lives. Globalization is making the world shorter than we think, and in a very short time, it helps people get to know each other. In this age of globalization, it's convenient to meet people from various countries around the world. This leads to the use of a common language as a mechanism known as the global language as people from various cultures communicate (Abdullah and Chaudhary 2012). In the sociolinguistic sense, they defined global language to be the use of a language as a universal. Translators need



to keep the culture in mind during translating texts as translation and culture are positively related to each other. Besides, source and target language are dissimilar, two most recommended and well-known methods for that are foreignization and domestication (Chesterman, 2012). Translators should actively take cultural significance into account because it represents culture before the world and is part of the contact and dissemination of the whole source language to the language of target. When translating, translators need to understand more about the cultures of the countries involved, since language is part of culture. The efficiency of the translation must be accomplished with the consideration of cultural materials. The translation is considered as the best process of exchanging knowledge of culture among several countries regardless of having limitations from cultural elements (Baker, 2000). Mutual and better understanding among different cultures can be established through an ideal translation. Translators should know appropriate knowledge such as linguistic knowledge and translating techniques of the involved culture since cultural elements are very necessary for the source language reproduction method (Newmark, 2001).

Domestication and foreignization, known as the American translation theorist Venuti, are two main approaches to translation that offer instruction in both the linguistic and cultural aspects (quoted. in Schaffner 1995:4). Venuti proposes what he calls domestication, which is the ethnocentrism that makes foreign texts conform to the cultural values of the target language (Venuti,1955:20), that is, the translation must be carried out in a transparent, fluent and invisible way to minimize target language foreignness of the translation. Venuti regards domestication as "a pressure of racial deviation from the cultural values of the target language, showing the linguistic and cultural heterogeneity of foreign texts and pushing readers abroad. And foreignization is an significant national conflict regarding basic cultural values that encourages readers from abroad to discriminate between cultures and languages. (Venuti 1995: 20)

The argument about those two strategies continued for an extended period. He stated that, after the appearance of a more efficient and mostly linguistic-oriented method in the 1950s and 1960s, the linguistic level had become the target of translation (Jeremy 2001:9). A different view of social, cultural, and historical has been explored after emerge of the cultural turn in the 1970s. The difference between domestication and foreignization occurs mainly because of various translation methods. Instead of linguistic extension of the old debate about free and literal translation, these translation approaches are seen as political and cultural (Wang Dongfeng 2002:24). Whereas free translation and literal translation also intersect unlike domestication and foreignization. Strangeness may be a symbol of translation domestication or foreignization of language or culture. Literal translation and free translation are two methods for preserving language structures and translating between languages. Domestication and foreignization, on the other hand, involve primarily two distinct cultures: one is to replace the original culture with the target culture, and the other is to protect cultural distinctions from the



original. When cultural context varies in the language aspect, domestication and foreignization becomes evident exclusively. There are also significant variations in the use of language in order to control their social relations among speakers or readers of various languages (Troy, 2008). It can lead to contact problems if people of different cultures speak in a second or primary language (Gerritsen & Verckens, 2006; Islam and Patwary, 2013). Therefore it can be argued that learning language well usually includes language culture awareness (Chlopek, 2008; Patwary & Rashid, 2016). While the value of intercultural communication is understood by most teachers in education, the perception by teachers of cultural knowledge does not offer a consistent and concise basis for the conceptualization of cultural education and cultural learning programmes. This research therefore aims to provide an outline of the history of translation and its relation to domestication and foreignization.

Literature Review

Translation Culture in China

Since the 1980s, domestication and foreignization have been controversial issues in the translation of Chinese literature. Many scholars and experts have their own different views, and this topic has been the focus of debate. In 1987, the popularity of the Chinese domestication area in a text called *Domestication- The Wrong Direction of Translation* was written by Liu Yingkai. The author has summed up the domestication in five separate ways: 1) Manipulating the idioms, which are four-word; 2) Manipulating the classic elegance in words; 3) Manipulating the concept; 4) Manipulating the replacement; 5) Manipulating the images and allusions. According to Liu (1994: 269), domestication-based translation misrepresents by assimilating the national feature, and it may destroy the national cultural tendency. Another supporter of domesticated translation is Xu Yuanchong. He suggested the concept of cultural competition to explain the cultural differences and to use the strength of a translator in full to make it attractively. For instance, Xu uses lots of four-character phrases while translating since one of the strong elements of the Chinese language is four-character phrases. While translating, he preferred using ancient Chinese literary works as well.

China Translation Journal published a total of six papers on the strategies of translation from the cross-cultural exchange perspective in 2002. After analysis, the foreignization began to dominate. According to a representative of foreignization, Sun Zhili, conveying the concept and characteristics of the original language completely and accurately, is the basic term of translating. He assumes that in the 21st century, foreignization will become China's most preferred form of literary translation (Sun Zhili 2002:40-44). There are some claims against Sun's point of view. Cai Ping, for example, advocates domestication as a core literary translation strategy. Cai Ping also described that the aim of translation is to communicate and make the source text understandable for readers. A massively foreignized translation cannot



be appreciated by readers because it might become too unfamiliar for them to understand. In retrospection of the History of translation, Cai concludes that foreignization gives way to domestication with the passage of time (Cai Ping 2002 : 39-41). Xu Jianping presented the negotiating document and listed the text in two forms: English and Chinese. He recommended domestication to support foreignization during the English Chinese translation and to increase the use of domestication in Chinese-English translation so that cross-cultural communication can be maintained. Xu Jianping (2002: 36-38) said that the purpose is that foreign readers are not keen to adopt the foreign cultural element as like as the Chinese do.

The Overview of Domestication, and Foreignization

These two strategies were clarified by the author of the book *The Invisibility of the Translator: a history of translation*, (Venuti, 1995). He researching translating in Anglo-American culture and found that domestication is the best strategy because it allows users to easily and efficiently translate. (Venuti, 1995:6-7). Venuti pointed out that the domestication of the original text makes translator "invisible," implying that "an ethnocentric regression of the foreign text to the cultural values in the target language". He said that the translator highlights the importance of Anglo-American culture of domestication in the translated text. Venuti advised using foreignization to avoid cultural issues like confliction in translation. Nevertheless, it is worth noting here that the German philosopher and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher first introduced domestication and foreignization. Schjoldager said Schleiermacher had established modern translation studies, and his ideas have, in many ways, influenced many scholars (Schjoldager 2008:141). *Verfremdung* and *Entfremdung* are the contrasting methods suggested by Schleiermacher during his famous lecture in 1813. To put this differently, translator tries to move the reader towards the author by making his translation as an import from another culture in source-text oriented method referred by the former whereas the translator tries the opposite by hiding the text's foreign origin in the target-text oriented method which is referred by the latter. Schleiermacher, however, advocates a text-oriented approach in literary translation. In fact, it should also be remembered that Venuti called *Verfremdung's* Schleiermacher a strategy for foreignization and *Entfremdung* as a strategy for domestication. Schleiermacher's description of two forms of cultural translation is outlined in the diagram below: domestication and foreignization.

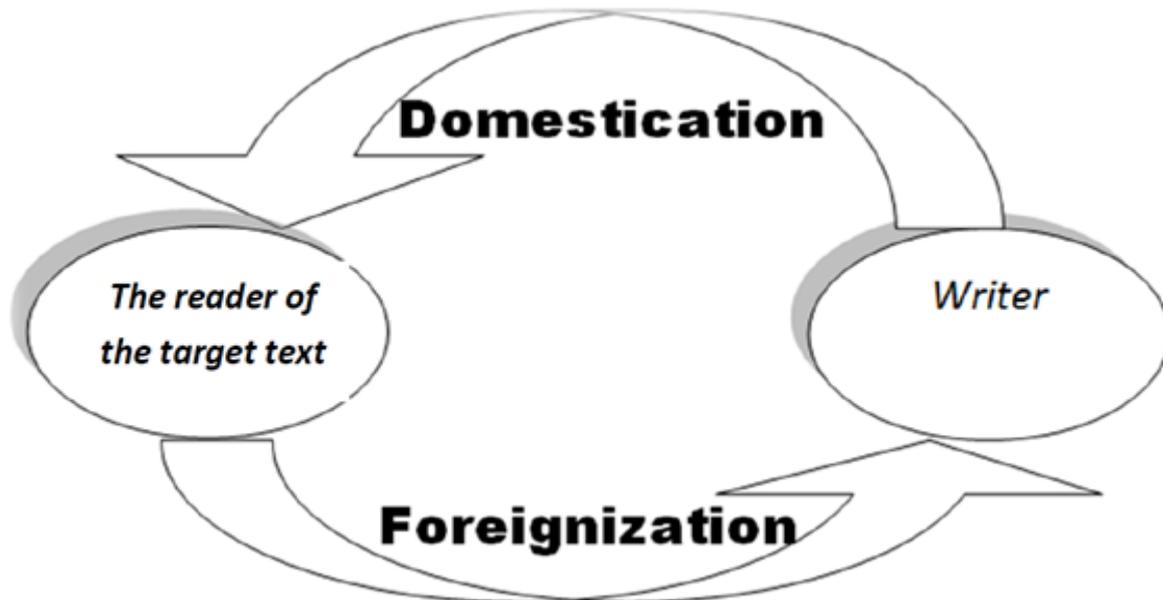


Figure 1. Schleiermacher's Notion of Domestication, and Foreignization Strategies

In proposing the concept of domestication and universal translation, Lawrence Venuti was based on Schleiermacher's theory. He thinks that domestication is targeted at the target culture, so that the text is more suited to the target audience. (Venuti, 1995:20-24). Venuti believed that in the process of domestication, foreign cultures could be transformed into understandable and readable texts. (1995:20) stated that the target text tries to maintain the exotic flavor of the source culture by contrast in foreignization.

Language and Translation Culture

Students in schools are typically in monolingual settings, and the students take language classes in their motherland. Then in the target language nation, they don't have many opportunities to access the culture. Hence their intercultural experience is difficult to extend. The key thing is that their purposes for learning a foreign language are to create international contact between the language's native and non-native speakers. Most learners are learning a new language as an optional language. Chlopek (2008) argued that interaction with insufficient cultural material contributes to incomprehension and also contributes to miscommunication. In many nations' citizens from varied cultures and from abroad can be found prejudice and racism.

Intercultural communication is a positive way to express empathy, awareness, comprehension and respect. The society deals with the language at different stages, with some levels closer to



society and others closer to literature, as Liddicoat et al. (2003) have clarified. Liddicoat, and the rest. (2003) explores the extent of contact between the Community and the language of translation. The degree that is called understanding of the world has the least connexion with language. World Consciousness refers to a contextual understanding of the culture. The category named spoken and written genres then has to do with the views of society. The value of both written and spoken knowledge is the priority at this stage. The suitability or attractiveness of one cultural element in another region can be measured in numerous ways. The normal norms or pragmatic norms deal in a given culture with the notion of politeness, vocabulary and utterance appraisal. Interaction requirements apply to the appropriateness of conversations, i.e., what can be said at a given point in a discussion and what should be said. The final step includes the grasp of linguistic concepts and cultural ideas like text, nonverbal meaning or personal space. Inextricable interactions between language culture and translation (Ho, 2009), which is based on the degree of language and cultural exchange, are inseparably interdependent. Understanding how culture acts are particularly important in the course of language learning.

Origin of Translation Theories

The 20th century definition of translation, proposed by Cicero (106-43 BC), is based on a repetitive, a thoroughly debate are literal translation and free translation in textual translation, There are two variants suggested by St. Jerome In the Bible. An argument about the religious text's translation was one of the main focuses of the translation concept for many years (Jeremy 2001:33). However, the domestication process was used not so early as in Ancient Rome, as stated in the Rutledge Encyclopedia (Baker 1998: 242), when, as stated in Nietzsche, the translation it was a conquest. For example, two Latin poets Horace and Propertius, after that they made the translation of their works into two other languages which are the Greek text and finally in Roman. In German culture, the strategy for foreigners was developed by philosophers and theologians in the classical and romantic era.

Methodology

This study highly depends on the literature reviews to explore the importance of domestication and foreignization in translation culture, more specifically, in China. While searching for existing literature, the researchers started with translation culture, domestication, foreignization, and they narrowed down to its implications, importance, and related issues. Literary information was gathered from several online resource databases, namely Science Direct, google scholar, emerald, the web of science, CNKI, etc. During the study, researchers attempted to analyse the most significant findings in the thesis to put the present analysis to a conclusion and to make positive recommendations for future studies. Previous studies also followed the same guidelines for extensive review paper (Patwary, Omar, & Tahir, 2020;



Patwary & Omar, 2016; Ashraf, Asif, Talib, Ashraf, Nadeem, & Warraich, 2019). In the process of review, the researchers considered the concurrent issues highlighted in the study, methodological standpoint, and findings of the study.

Discussion and Conclusion

Today, because of the effects of globalisation, the world changes rapidly. It appears that globalisation is a continuously changing phase. The globalisation, which makes our lives universal and easily hits people from other countries around the world (McDaniel et al. 2007; Alom, Patwary, Khan 2019). In the context of cultural globalisation, each country has its own distinctive culture and each culture can be absorbed into culture globalisation, in order to develop new characteristics of national culture and to incorporate new features to the cultural identity. The creation of translation helps the whole world to grasp each country's various cultural characteristics. We need to learn how to communicate with people from other countries, as members of the global community. In order to be happy, we need to become conscious of the diverse communities in order to learn to work and live in a inclusive environment within the intercultural atmosphere. Several scholars have attempted to complete various studies aimed at people with diverse attitudes, values, societies, races and social behaviours worldwide, lifestyles, beliefs and religions to respond to the effect of globalization (Knutson et al. 2003; Patwary, Roy, Hoque, & Khandakar, 2019; Patwary, Mohammed, Hazbar, & Kamal, 2018; Komolsevin, Knutson & Datthuyawat, 2010; Gitimu, 2010).

From a contextual view, domestication and foreignization, none of them are perfect but related to each other. They cannot go to extremes. The translation of cultural characteristics will be removed due to the extreme use of domestication. On the other hand, the excessive use of foreignization would not render the translation mechanical the connotative sense expressed in the text, nor be able to persuade the reader as strongly as it should. Both methods are disadvantageous for cultural inter-national contact. The translator's knowledge of the two cultures should be enough. To some degree, a good translation text has to be domesticated as well as foreignization. The question that has been hotly debated for hundreds of years in the Chinese translation circles is whether translation use the source-oriented or target-oriented. Moreover, it is well described that foreignization has more characteristics of being source-oriented, and domestication has based on the target language. Venuti is planned for Western countries as a symbol and form of translation for foreigners and Nida as a popular domestic translation. Foreignization and domestication is the contention of Chinese translator, but for atleast a hundred years they have been at the core of most language conflicts. Lu Xun said the translator could either choose the original text to be translated, or retain the original text's foreign characteristics. Many Chinese language culture researchers encourage domestic translation. When "maintaining smoothness" clashes with "maintaining foreignness," the latter is thrown away.



While domestication and foreignization are in dispute, they are both used in translation alternatively. The source text is more readily translated in language for target readers by applying domestication; however, foreignization should also be employed when facilitating cultural exchange and transmission.

Besides, translation through the domestication method mostly emphasizes on fluency, elegance, and make it easier for readers. Domestication also applied for historical and cultural information on the language targeted for readers—however, domestication results of losing some cultural context from the original source. The Foreignization translation method is more prone to be on the cultural context where the source language and its cultural implications are given the same importance in order to keep the best version of the source.

Limitations and Future Study Recommendation

Although this research has contributed to the body of knowledge by exploring in-depth on domestication and foreignization related issues, however, this study also lies on several limitations. Firstly, this study entirely relied on a literature review rather than focusing on an empirical investigation which lacks a methodological standpoint. Therefore, future studies should include more findings by analysing related factors from the collected data. Secondly, the literature review of this study mostly highlighted and based on Chinese translation culture, which lacks the generalisation of genuine ideas and thoughts.



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