

IX. Domestication and Foreignization

Domestication and foreignization are strategies in translation, regarding the degree to which translators make a text conform to the target culture. Domestication is the strategy of making text closely conform to the culture of the language being translated to, which may involve the loss of information from the source text. Foreignization is the strategy of retaining information from the source text, and involves deliberately breaking the conventions of the target language to preserve its meaning. These strategies have been debated for hundreds of years (we must at least remember Schleiermacher's naturalizing and alienating strategies), but the first person to formulate them in their modern sense was Lawrence Venuti, who introduced them to the field of translation studies in 1995 with his book *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. Venuti's innovation to the field was his view that the dichotomy between domestication and foreignization was an ideological one; he views foreignization as the ethical choice for translators to make.

In his 1998 book *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*, Venuti states that "Domestication and foreignization deal with 'the question of how much a translation assimilates a foreign text to the translating language and culture, and how much it rather signals the differences of that text'".

According to Lawrence Venuti, every translator should look at the translation process through the prism of culture which refracts the source language cultural norms and it is the translator's task to convey them, preserving their meaning and their foreignness, to the target-language text. Every step in the translation process—from the selection of foreign texts to the implementation of translation strategies to the editing, reviewing, and reading of translations—is mediated by the diverse cultural values that circulate in the target language.

He estimates that the theory and practice of English-language translation had been dominated by submission, by fluent domestication. He strictly criticized the translators who in order to minimize the foreignness of the target text reduce the foreign cultural norms to target-language cultural values. According to Venuti, the domesticating strategy “violently” erases the cultural values and thus creates a text which as if had been written in the target language and which follows the cultural norms of the target reader. He strongly advocates the foreignization strategy, considering it to be “an ethnodeviant pressure on [target-language cultural] values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad.” Thus an adequate translation would be the one that would highlight the foreignness of the source text and instead of allowing the dominant target culture to assimilate the differences of the source culture, it should rather signal these differences.

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestication_and_foreignization

Reading Guidelines:

Translators have to be very careful of the slight differences between words. These slight differences express important nuances of meaning. Moreover your choice of words defines your identity and position on different issues. Look at the differences between the following pairs of words:

الاشتراكية / العدالة الاجتماعية

صراع الطبقات / الفقراء و المحرومين و المضطهدين

صواريخ العباس و الحسين / صواريخ سكود

الخليج الفارسي / الخليج العربي

Q.I Give the exact meaning of the following words first in English and second in Arabic: strategies, conform to, retaining, deliberately, conventions, formulate, innovation, assimilates, prism, refracts, mediated, erases, advocates.

Q.II Derive as many words as you can from the following words: strategies, preserve, formulate, innovation, assimilates, refracts, implementation, estimates, submission, register, dominant.

Q.III Give the opposites of the words below and use them in good English sentences of your own: conform to, loss, retaining, deliberately, assimilates, diverse, minimize, adequate, allowing.

Q.IV Answer the following questions briefly:

1. What are domestication and foreignization? What is domestication? What is foreignization?
2. Who preceded Venuti in introducing the notions? What were his own terms?
3. Where did Venuti introduce the terms? What was his innovation?
4. According to Venuti, how should the translator look at the translation process and what is his/her task?
5. Do you agree with Venuti that translation is dominated by submission? Why did he criticize translators?
6. Which translation strategy does Venuti advocate? Why?

Q.V Before translating paragraph 1 into plain Arabic, discuss different Arabic equivalents for domestication and foreignization.

Research Activity:

1. Acclaimed translator and critic Jabra Ibrahim Jabra once said that the ten ranks of love categorized by Al-Thaalubi should be justly differentiated from the English word "love".
2. What other areas in which English or Arabic has abundant vocabulary and poor vocabulary?
3. Love is always present in our translation projects and endeavours. Can you think of documents that are the result of a neutral or a hatred relationship?

Quote of the Day:

There can never be an absolutely final translation.

Robert M. Grant