

# Studies on Foreignization and Domestication in Training Foreign-Affair Oriented Talents<sup>1</sup>

Ping QU

School of Foreign Languages, Henan Institute of Engineering,  
Zhengzhou, China 451191  
pingyuanmei686@163.com

**Key words:** foreignization; domestication; translation; training

**Abstract.** Foreignization and domestication can be traced back earliest to a German scholar, Friedrich Schleiermacher. In 1813, his one thesis talking about translation strategy mentioned that there were just two translating methods: one is that translator draw readers close to writers without disturbing writers; the other is that translator draw writers close to readers without disturbing readers. However, Schleiermacher didn't name these two translating methods. In 1995, American translation theorist Venuti gave the name foreignization to the first method and domestication the latter.

## Introduction

Foreignization and domestication can be traced back earliest to a German scholar, Friedrich Schleiermacher. In 1813, his one thesis talking about translation strategy mentioned that there were just two translating methods: one is that translator draw readers close to writers without disturbing writers; the other is that translator draw writers close to readers without disturbing readers. However, Schleiermacher didn't name these two translating methods. In 1995, American translation theorist Venuti gave the name foreignization to the first method and domestication the latter.

## Foreignization and Its Characteristics

Lawrence Venuti is the first person who defines the translation strategy as “foreignization” and “domestication”. Foreignization is source language culture-oriented. This type of translating method aims at maintaining the peculiarity of the source, and retaining the source trace in the translated version. As Venuti defines, foreignization “deliberately breaks targets conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original” (Venuti, 1995: 19-20). As a translation strategy, foreignization is not developed long in China, but it has already been accepted by translators. Venuti highly appreciated and advocated the foreignization strategy for the reason that it highlights the strangeness or difference of the foreign text. Hence, as one of the most practical translation strategy, foreignization extends the communication between target languages and source languages.

## Domestication and its Characteristics

Domestication is target language culture-oriented. In contrast to foreignization, domestication requires translators to be loyal to the target language by using expressions that target language readers are familiar with in order to make easier understandings. The most famous supporter of domestication must be Eugene Albert Nida, who advocated that “A translation of dynamic equivalence aims to complete naturalness of expression and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture: it does not insist that he understand the cultural patterns of the source-language context on order to comprehend the message.” (Nida A.E., 1964) In this sense, dynamic equivalent is a principle of translation, which asks a translator to try his best to convey the original meaning to the effect that the wording of translated text will give the same

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is the result of a researching program assigned by Science and Technology Department of Henan in 2016: A Study on Requirements and Cultivation of Foreign Affair Oriented Talents in Zhengzhou Airport Industrial Area . No:162400410233

effect on the target language readers just like what the original work did to the source text audience.

In Lawrence Venuti's view, domestication is the very translation strategy that reduces the readers' strange sense by applying the transparent and fluent style. Translators should not neglect the factor that target language readers may not comprehend the foreign culture very well so it is reasonable to adopt an approximate translation way which can explain the source culture with dynamic equivalence.

### **Advantages and Shortcomings of Foreignization and Domestication**

The controversy over the advantages and shortcomings of foreignization and domestication has long existed, but what must be noticed is that foreignization and domestication emphasize on the aspects of language, culture and aesthetic. Foreignization helps keeping the exotic source culture and introducing new ideas into the target language, but relatively, causes obscurity or stiffness in the target language text. Domestication helps building a better understanding and expanding cultural communication, however, it can possibly cause invisibility as well as source culture misinterpreting. What has now been realized is that foreignization and domestication are inseparable, no single strategy can hold the task of translating the source text into target language perfectly and appropriately. Tendency is that foreignization and domestication are used complementarily more frequently.

### **Foreignization and Domestication in Film Subtitle Translation**

Subtitle translation has its own distinctive characteristics and constrains. During the translation process, a translator must use proper strategies to deal with challenges, of which foreignization and domestication are two main methods.

For one thing, in order to maintain the original color of the movie, cultural features and language style, the translator should foreignize the source text on the basis of a correct understanding, by which means the target language readers can learn the foreign culture behind the film. For other hand, domesticate those obscure words and expressions so as to reach a better understanding of the source culture because of various appreciation abilities. In such way the distance with audiences can be narrowed. Hence, when translating subtitles, translators must do the job from the perspectives of development, only by using foreignization and domestication properly can result in a satisfactory translated version.

Why the translator wants to translate a specific text calls translator's intention. ranslator's intention is the internal cause of certain translation practices, and it works together with ther external causes. These external causes are: text type, translation purposes and target reader. Peter Newmarks holds that the text can be divided into three types: expressive, information and vocative. Hence, when we translate different text, we should use different translating strategies. Expressive texts deliver aesthetic values through the specific language or styles carefully picked by the writer as well as their wonderful contents or plots. Information texts pay more attention on giving readers more information to make people understand the text. And vocative texts conclude bulletin, instruction and advertisement which is aimed at persuading readers to do something.

### **Conclusion**

Film subtitling can be classified as information text. In order to make the film's communication more effective, translators should not provide a plenty of veiled words for film fans, but should give more lucid words and sentences. Therefore, text types' differences influence translator's intention, and different translation strategies tend to be adopted. Translation is a bridge of communication between cultures. Different translation purposes will bring about various translation works and have different effects on the target language. Sometimes, the translator's purpose differs from that of the original writer. In other cases, the same book translated by two translators presents different results.

Foreignization and Domestication will be adopted by translators for different translation purposes.

Translation purpose of film's subtitle translation is to let film fans understand the plots. Maybe sometimes there should be some obscure sentences, it is to let film fans know more about the foreign culture and trend. Target readers are the audience groups that the translator expects to read or to perceive. Sometimes the target readers are scholars who have high tastes for literary works, or they may be children who can just understand easy language. It is the commercial and entertainment feature of the film that determines the audience groups in different levels. As for *The Avengers*, audience should be the youngers, who always follow the tide. So the film translators could use some up-to-date words or internet language to make the subtitle translation amusing.

### **Acknowledgements**

This paper is the result of a researching program assigned by Science and Technology Department of Henan in 2016: A Study on Requirements and Cultivation of Foreign Affair Oriented Talents in Zhengzhou Airport Industrial Area . No:162400410233

### **References**

- [1] Charles R. *The Theory and Practice of Translation*[M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2004.
- [2] Lawrence Venuti. *The Translator's Invisibility*[M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2004.
- [3] Li Yu. *A Study of Film Subtitle Translation from the Perspective of Domestication and Foreignization*[D]. Liaoning University, 2012
- [4] Li Yunxing. *Strategies of Subtitles' Translation*[J]. Chinese Translators Journal, 2001.
- [5] Nida, E.A. *Translating Meaning*[M]. California: English Language Institute, 1982.