Foreignization and Domestication in Practice:
A Case Study of English-Chinese/Chinese-English Translation

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Abstract. In translation, domestication and foreignization have been one of the hottest issues, which approves that translators are trying to seek the most proper translation strategy. Both of them have very strong points. This article mainly explores the meanings and usage of foreignization and domestication. The translators should accomplish the translation by grasping the Chinese and English culture, with the proper approaches.

1. Introduction

People will understand each other through the translated texts, which includes other country's culture, custom, language, habits and so many aspects of people’s life. In order to make them know each other properly, translators are always seeking the most appropriate approach to transform the author’s intention or lead readers to get closer to the author. So, in the procession of seeking, domestication and foreignization turn up. They have different strong points towards translation and we can get the most acceptable translation only by taking good use of the two approaches. Misunderstanding is not expected. In the following pages, the author would like to discuss the source and meanings of foreignization and domestication, for the sake of showing the points to make readers properly choose the better translation strategy.

2. Foreignization

To let readers know an exotic atmosphere and its culture, which is also the aim through reading the translated texts, foreignization combines the culture in target language with the language expression in order to strengthen language vitality. Through this kind of translating, readers can taste the real texture of the original texts.

There are some following examples to illustrate the real feeling of foreignization, to grasp the expected meaning.

Example:
子曰: “学而时习之，不亦悦乎？有朋自远方来，不亦乐乎？人不知而不愠，不亦君子乎？”
The Master said, "Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?"
"Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters?"
"Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no discomposure though men may take no note of him?"[1]

子曰: “君子食无求饱，居无求安，敏于事而慎于言，就有道而正焉，可谓好学也已。”
The Master said, "He who aims to be a man of complete virtue in his food does not seek to gratify his appetite, nor in his dwelling place does he seek the appliances of ease; he is earnest in what he is doing, and careful in his speech; he frequents the company of men of principle that he may be rectified: such a person may be said indeed to love to learn."[1]

宠辱若惊，贵大患若身。
何谓宠辱若惊？宠为下，得之若惊，失之若惊，是谓宠辱若惊。
何谓贵大患若身？吾所以有大患者，为吾有身；及吾无身，吾有何患？
故贵以身为天下，若可寄天下；爱以身为天下，若可托天下。

‘Favour and disgrace goad as it were to madness; high rank hurts keenly as our bodies hurt.’ What does it mean to say that favour and disgrace goad as it were to madness? It means that when a ruler's subjects get it they turn distraught, when they lose it they turn distraught. That is what is meant by saying favour and disgrace goad as it were to madness. What does it mean to say that high rank hurts keenly as our bodies hurt? The only reason that we suffer hurt is that we have bodies; if we had no bodies, how could we suffer? Therefore we may accept the saying: 'He who in dealing with the empire regards his high rank as though it were his body is the best person to be entrusted with rule; he who in dealing with the empire loves his subjects as one should love one's body is the best person to whom one can commit the empire.’

The translators who adhere to foreignization hold that there are gigantic differences between different countries and nations, which provides them with the essential basis. This kind of translation fully use the experience of other cultures for reference and absorb them, to make its own language and expression more and more abundant and radiate flourishing vigour. Translation should play an important role in cultural communication, and foreignization strategy is beneficial to cultural exchange. Translators should keep in mind that the readers' imagination of target language and their ability to understand an exotic atmosphere. And we should define that there may be foreignization part, but it cannot be unconventional or unorthodox, otherwise, readers will be hard to accept.

Example:
Two is company, three is misery.
① 两个和尚抬水吃，三个和尚没水吃。
② 两人是伴，三人是患。

① is used by domestication, and ② is used by foreignization. ① is vivid, easy and smooth; but the word "和尚" seems to be over-domestication, totally changes the original culture connotation. ② is also clear and more smooth, at the same time, it keeps the original lingering charm, easy to be accepted by readers.

Foreignization has its own strong points and weak points, but in this short essay it cannot be presented fully. The author holds that in the future discussions or essays, domestication, even domestication and foreignization will be talked more and strived to talked all-sidedly.

3. Domestication

Domestication is a translation theory that is based on the target language. Domestication theory always dominates the culture of foreign countries. Eugene A. Nida is the representative, who poses "dynamic equivalence". To these translators who support domestication, when translating texts, they should remove two obstacles: language and culture. The responsibility of translation is to iron out the above obstacles in order to make target readers accept the translated works. Differences of language and culture require translators attach great importance to culture awareness because the words that cannot be translated to represent the original meanings are bearing the rich cultural connotation. And then we will look at some examples to demonstrate the strong points in domestication, and how they make translated works to be effectively accepted by readers.

Here are some examples:

秦氏道：‘婶婶，你是个脂粉队里的英雄，连那些束带顶冠的男子也不能过你，你如何连两句俗语也不晓得？常言‘月满则亏，水满则溢’，又道是‘登高必跌重’。如今我们家赫赫扬扬，已将百载，一日倘或乐极生悲，若应了那句‘树倒猢狲散’的俗语，岂不虚称了一世的诗书旧族了！’

‘Tell me, Auntie,’ said Qin-shi, 'how is it that you who are such a paragon among women that even strong men find more than their match in you can yet be ignorant of the simple truths expressed in homely proverbs?
Take this one:
The full moon smaller grows,
Full water overflows.
Or this:
The higher the climb, the harder the fall.

Our house has now enjoyed nearly a century of dazzling success. Suppose one day "joy at its height engenders sorrow". And suppose that, in the word of another proverb, "when the tree falls, the monkeys scatter". Will not our reputation as one of the great, cultured households of the age then turn into a hollow mockery? [4]

There was no anger in her for Kino. He had said, "I am a man," and that meant certain things to Juana. It meant that he was half insane and half god. It meant that Kino would drive his strength against a mountain and plunge his strength against the sea. Juana, in her woman's soul, knew that the mountain would stand while the man broke himself; that the sea would surge while the man drowned in it. And yet it was this thing that made him a man, half insane and half god, and Juana had need of a man; she could not live without a man.

她并不恨基诺。他说过“我是男子汉大丈夫”，胡安娜觉得这句话意味深长。这句话意味着他虽失去理智，却英武威严，意味着他敢于力拔山高，敢于填平大海。而胡安娜，在她女人的心灵中深深懂得，人只会在巍然屹立的高山面前粉身碎骨，在波涛汹涌的大海下面惨遭灭顶。然而，正是这种雄心壮志才使得他成为一个男子汉，成为一个失去理智却又英武威严的人。胡安娜需要的正是这样的男子汉，没有这样的男子汉她是活不下去的。 [5]

4. Conclusion

In literary translation, how to choose domestication or foreignization in a proper way is not to be lumped together, it must be made a concrete analysis of concrete conditions. Translators, as the media to propagate culture, when adopting to domestication or foreignization, must reduce the distance between two different cultures, respect various nationalities' cultural distinguishing feature, and treat every kind of culture with an equal and open attitude, for the sake of bringing the translation strategy into full play, eliminating the obstacle. In the aspect of upholding the diversity of culture and promoting cultural communication, translators must make translation an effective media of propagating cultures.

References