

# Perceptions about Foreignization and Domestication: A Case Study of Undergraduate Students at NUML, Islamabad

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## ABSTRACT

The following study aims to find out the attitudes of the undergraduate students of 8th semester, studying at National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, about the two techniques of translation, foreignization and domestication. The concept of foreignization and domestication was put forward by an American translation theorist, Lawrence Venuti, in 1995 in his work *A Translator's Invisibility*. Two translated paragraphs of Ismat Chughtai's short story, *Do Hath*, are given to the students. One is written using domestication, and the other is written leaving imprints of the source culture. The research is exploratory as interviews are conducted to corroborate the study. For analysis of interviews, Kathy Charmaz's model of interview analysis is used. The model was given in 2012 in Charmaz's book about the Grounded Theory. It is found that the students of the English Department of NUML, Islamabad, who have studied Translation Studies as a subject in their previous semester (7th semester), asserts that the technique of foreignization should be prioritized while translating texts from Urdu to English.

## KEYWORDS:

Domestication, Foreignization, Kathy Charmaz, Lawrence Venuti

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## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Language is a carrier of culture. It is a unique way of conveying emotions and these emotions are core of culture-laden elements. Every communicative event in the world within a specific culture is idiosyncratic (Boas, 1942). Communication is quite a complex phenomenon with manifestation of ideas of a specific culture being of utmost significance (Newmark, 1981). Phenomenon of translation holds an important ground across the globe. It is a process about which Calvino says, "Without translation, I would be limited to the borders of my own country. The translator is my most important ally. He introduces me to the world" (Italo Calvino Quotes, n.d.). Translation is a process where expressions and text of one text is taken and conveyed into another culture and context through language. The process is rigorous and time-taking. It needs expert to be carried out (Barnwell, 2022). When a text is translated from one language to another, traces of the Source Text (ST) are inevitable to be in the translated text, i.e. the Target Text (TT). A translator should leave imprints of their own language while translating from one language to another. By leaving imprints means to translate in such a way that the cultural norms and values remain preserved in the translated version (Venuti, 1995). Venuti expounded the concept of foreignization and domestication in his seminal work, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, introducing a different angle to understand the phenomenon of translation (Hassoon, 2021).

Urdu is one of the culturally-rich languages of the world. Plethora of literature has been produced in it. It is not only spoken in Pakistan, where holds the position of National Language, but it is also spoken in India as well. Urdu has numerous writers of literature. Among them, Ismat Chughtai is a crucial figure. Her works have had a lasting impact on the societal issues being faced by the women of South Asia, especially the United India (Patel, 2001). Several studies have been conducted on the translated stories of Manto, a prominent Urdu writer, and other writers as well. However, there are limited studies on the works of Ismat Chughtai. Her short stories have been translated into English; nonetheless, there is a lacuna that needs to be filled regarding the efforts of Ismat Chughtai (Bahri and Menozzi, 2021; Chaudhry, 2024).

## Research Questions

1. How do the undergraduates studying at National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad perceive the differences between domesticated and foreignized translations of "Do Hath" by Ismat Chughtai?



2. What is the opinion of the interviewees regarding the cultural and lingual implications of the techniques of foreignization and domestication?

## Research Objectives

- To find out the perception of the undergraduate students of NUML, Islamabad about the techniques used to translate texts.
- To find out the views of the participants about the cultural and lingual implications resulting from the usage of domestication and foreignization.

## Statement of the Problem

The job of a translator is seminal in translated works. Foregrounding the culture of the source text and conveying the meaning to the audience simultaneously is rigorous and difficult to maintain. The perception of the audience is significantly a factor that affects the authenticity of a translated work (Gelaidan, Al-Swidi, and Al-Hakimi, 2024). A translator needs to be a learned person with expertise in both the source text and the target text. In this way, the message can be fully conveyed. The art of foreignization and domestication is something a translator must be acquainted of. However, owing to cultural constraints, translation can be a challenging task. Urdu literature is rich of texts that challenge the social norms and pivotal authorities. It also includes cultural and context-bound expressions. The solution to this lies in techniques of foreignization and domestication and their precise and accurate use, paying heed to the fact that the culture of translated work is not lost. This research is exploratory in nature, as the researcher attempts to understand the perceptions of students who have studied Translation Studies as a subject at the undergraduate level (Aldossary, 2021).

## Significance of the Study

The work chosen by the researcher is, *Do Hath*, written by Ismat Chughtai in Urdu and translated in English. The researcher mentioned earlier that there is little to no work carried out in the realm of translation from Urdu to English when it comes to Ismat Chughtai's literature. Similarly, the following attempt will unveil the perceptions that may lead to inclusion of literature in the courses encouraging the change students want to harbor, directing attention of the future researchers to work on texts that have been translated from Urdu to English, and a reminder that there is a need of an effort to foreground the identity of Urdu culture through translation.

## Delimitation of the Study

The following study is carried out to evaluate the elements of foreignization in the translated work of Ismat Chughtai. The framework that is used was presented by an American translation theorist Lawrence (Venuti, 1995). The author chooses two aspects, which is foreignization and Domestication, of Venuti's theory of translation. Hence, the study is focused on a single short story of Ismat Chughtai. The students of National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad are chosen for research. However, the participants are delimited to the students of 8th semester.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

(Yang, 2010) propounds that there is vie between those who favour domestication and those who are in favor of foreignization. Eugene Nida is a staunch proponent of the technique of domestication. On the other hand, Lawrence Venuti, a renowned theorist of translation, holds the view that foreignization should be preserved in a text, giving chance to every community to spotlight their culture, committing little to no deviation with respect to cultural norms in a translation. Domestication is a strategy adopted by the translators to minimize the strangeness- when a translator tries to become invisible, which means that the translation is conformed to the source text as far as possible- of a translated work and an effort to achieve fluency. Foreignization; however, is exploited when the translator wants to leave imprints of their presence and preserve the culture of the target text (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997). Keeping in mind the previous debate, Venuti emphasized on "resistant translation" rather than "smooth translation", urging non-native English translators to preserve their cultural identity and avoid the hegemony of native speakers (Venuti, 1997).

While putting to test James Joyce's *Ulysses* under the lens of Venuti's concept of foreignization, (Torresi, 2007) finds out that sustenance of foreignization is one way or another dependent on domestication. Another concept of explanatory paratext for the sake of complementation is expounded by (Torresi, 2007). In this regard, a translator uses a paratext for the sake of clarification and explanation in the text. Translating is a complex process, and it requires a translator to consider two important factors: whether the translator is translating the source text into their mother tongue or second language (Çekçi, 2020). For instance, there is a text in Urdu that is to be translated into English. The origin of the translator is of utmost importance and it can be an affecting factor in the process of translation. (Gregov, 2018) asserts that Venuti's concept of domestication and foreignization is an influential step in the realm of translational studies. Gregov compares and contrasts different techniques from different theorists in the field of translation, inferring

from a rigorous research that every method has its pros and cons and the best method is that has limited restrictions and drawbacks. As per Gregov, Venuti's theory outclasses other theories as it gives flexibility to the translator and the readers/audience. With advancement of technology, the world has become a global village. Cultures across the world amalgamate and it is not possible to delineate them easily. Translation is at dispersal and preserving culture-specific items is important (Viswanath and Kumar, n.d.). Telugu short story "Nenostunanu" is examined by (Viswanath and Kumar, n.d.) and it is found out that domestication and foreignization are indispensable, complementing each other to complete the sense of translation. An example of domestication from the story,

"Samastha jeevanakankshalatho egasipade manassu. (S.T)

The mind is enraged with all desires of life. (T.T)" (Viswanath and Kumar, n.d.)(p. 6).

In the above example, word "egasipade" is domesticated by the translator as the word is given a conforming equivalent in English language. Similarly, example of foreignization is provided as well;

"Athani kallalo aasala deepaalu kanipinchaayi. (S.T)

I found lights of hope in his eyes. (T.T)" (p. 7). In the excerpt mentioned above, expression "aasala deepaalu" is literally translated into English as the translator could not find suitable equivalence in the target text (TT), denoting towards utilization of technique of foreignization by the translator.

(Nasir, Ullah, and Iqbal, 2023) employ a mixed method research to scrutinize the translated works of Urdu. Utilizing the concept of Culture-specific items (CSIs) expounded by Ramiere in 2006. Umar Memon's five translated stories are selected for the research. Lawrence Venuti's idea of foreignization and domestication is used. The research is concluded with an outcome of 59 percent usage of domestication in the selected works and 41 percent of foreignization by the translator. Giving rise to the fact that these both strategies are integral part of process of translation. (Zahoor, Parveen, and Fatima, 2023) observe that Pakistani translators are more inclined towards foreignization than domestication. Manto's two translated seminal works, Toba Tek Singh and Khol Do, are assessed to the conclusion that Toba Tek Singh is full of deliberate dropping of culture-specific items in the translation of the story; however, Khol Do is a blend of domestication and foreignization.

Faltdt (2024) conducts a study on the translated works of the Swedish authors who have employed the technique of foreignization to stay close to their domestic audience and domestication to foreground their culture and let their voice be heard across the globe. Four researchers were selected for the study and the literature that was to be studied was that of Edgar Allen Poe. Using Venuti's concepts, the researcher guided their study. The study is a comparative analysis of Poe's works taken from four different books. The books were compared and contrasted to look for patterns, loanwords, and other morphological distinctions (Balabanian, 2024). The study is concluded by foregrounding the fact that the selected translators have used foreignization, domestication, as well as blend of both of these strategies to bring into prominence that how language can be played with and culture of one language can be transferred to another through the field of translation.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The following research is a qualitative study in nature. It has features of exploratory design as it is based on the interviews, and purposive sampling is used to conduct the research.

### Method of Data Collection

The passage is taken from Ismat Chughtai's work, Do Hath. 10 interviews are taken from students of 8th semester enrolled at the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad. Among the interviewees, there are five males and five females. The translated passage is given to them for reading. Consequently, they are requested to share their thoughts about the techniques of domestication and foreignization.

### Framework for Analysis

The framework used for analysis is derived from theories of two different theorists; Lawrence Venuti and Kathy Charmaz. Lawrence Venuti gave the concept of two techniques employed by the translators, foreignization and domestication (Venuti, 1995). Additionally, (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012) propounds a method of analysis of interviews taken by a researcher. She goes on to say that interviews for data collection is a plausible way to validate your data.

These two concepts are employed and a conceptual framework is made for the analysis.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned above, two paragraphs have been taken from Ismat Chughtai's short story, Do Hath, and these two paragraphs are written in two different styles of translation, i.e. domestication and foreignization. The translated paragraphs are following:

## Domestication

Old mama turned fifty, though she looked seventy. Mother Nature had tested her womb for nearly dozen times. Among them, only Ram Autaar was blessed to survive the tides. It's only been a year since he accepted the fire-deity's blessings of marriage; he was summoned by the military. Upon his departure, the old mama's copious tears to see his beloved bunny bowling down to ask for her blessings bore no fruits. Wearing a field uniform, Ram Autaar gave a glimpse of a sophisticated commander.

The scene proved to be a source of amusement for the workers. Everyone looked up to Ram Autaar honorary occupation. Though Ram Autaar was never allowed to come near to the artiliaries, his association with the soldiers and their laundries had left an impact of military vibes on his personality. He was a laundry man. But, Military uniform must have transformed the old sluggish Ram Autaar to a courageous soldier .So, it was not possible for his courageous heart to hear and bear the harsh words of a white lady.

## Foreignization

Old mama had turned fifty, though she looked seventy. She had produced a dozen children. Among them, only Ram Autaar could survive. It has not been a year since Ram Autaar had been married; he got a pukaar from the military. Matarानी became sentimental over hearing the news of her son's departure, and when her son came, wearing wardi, to get her blessings for the last time, his shan o shaukat impacted her. As if he had become a Karnal.

The servants were laughing after seeing this. Everyone was in expectation to watch the drama that would happen after Ram Autaar's return. Ram Autaar had not gone to work in toapkhana, however, his extensive period of laundering in the army had inculcated a sense of akar in him. Wearing bhoori wardi must have transformed Ram Autaar into courageous man whose jawan khon could not stand the harsh words of a white lady.

The above paragraphs were given to the participants for reading. After the reading, they were asked to answer five questions.

The above table summarizes the responses given by the ten participants to the five questions included in the questionnaire given to them.

## Analysis of Students' Perceptions

When the participants were asked to relay their thought about the first question, six out of ten felt more drawn to the method of foreignization as it included words of the language they were familiar with. Those who opted domestication, they held the view that they all hailed from the English department, (of NUML, Islamabad) and found the technique of domestication easy to understand. A sharp distinction among the opinions of the students was observed.

In responding to the second question, every participant opted the strategy of foreignization, as it was obvious that it included the cultural imprints. It is embedded in one's mind that culture is among the valuable assets that humans have. They held the view that it must be preserved and relayed for the survival of a nation. Furthermore, that the culture preserves a language and language preserves a culture; they both are indispensable to each other.

Answering the third question, five out of the ten participants chose domestication, as it was more fluid and smooth for them. They held the stance that they had been learning English for the past four years so it was easy for them to read the domesticated text undisturbed. The fluency they felt, came from the constant exposure they had, which instilled a sense of familiarity to the TT. Those who privileged foreignization as a tool for translation divulged that leaving imprints of the source text (ST) made it easier for them to read the two passages. Reading the cultural terms and expressions made it feasible for them to read the text in a smooth manner. Moreover, they felt a sense of belonging while reading the foreignized words.

In replying to the fourth question, the four participants prioritized domestication as a balancing factor and easy to understand. In their point of view, English-speaking audience, whether native or non-native, should be more close to English language. Rest of the six participants considered authenticity, i.e. foreignization as a more apt technique as it represents the cultural expressions of the source text balancing the outcome.

In response to the fifth question, those four who favored foreignization for the English-speaking audience were of the view that their culture, the source text (ST)'s, should be foregrounded in the process of translation. They viewed it as a procedure of post-colonial strategy and an indispensable one to keep their identity intact. Those who kept in view domestication as a better choice, when it comes to the English-speaking audience, prioritized adaptation so that the language of power, English, could be made a tool to carry the cultural burdens.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found out that the students of 8th semester held a mixed view of both of the techniques. Those who favored domestication were more inclined towards smoothness and adaptation of the translation. Contrary to this, those who held their culture in high-esteem opted foreignization for both, the natives and non-natives. They viewed their culture

Participant ID	Answer 1	Answer 2	Answer 3	Answer 4	Answer 5
Participant 1	Domestication is prioritized.	Cultural preservation is palpable in foreignization.	Domestication is easier.	Adaptation, i.e., domestication of language is a better approach.	For natives, domestication should be used.
Participant 2	Foreignization is a better approach.	Foreignization has better linguistic essence.	Foreignization is more comfortable.	Authenticity, i.e., foreignization is more suitable.	Domestication is suitable for English-speaking audiences.
Participant 3	Foreignization is better.	Foreignization represents the source text's essence better.	Readable and engaging; foreignization.	Authenticity is apt.	Foreignization disseminates cultural ideology; therefore, it should be used for natives as well.
Participant 4	Foreignization should be used.	Foreignization represents better cultural essence.	Foreignization is more engaging and readable.	Foreignization should be used as it is closer to originality.	Natives should read the culture of the source text (ST) as well; therefore, foreignization should be prioritized.
Participant 5	Domestication should be prioritized.	Foreignization is a better choice for preserving the norms of the source text.	Domestication is more engaging and readable.	Authenticity should be focused.	Foreignization should be inculcated if footnotes are provided by the translator.
Participant 6	Domestication is more drawing.	Foreignization keeps the real essence of the source text better.	Domestication is more readable and engaging.	Adaptation is better for learning.	Domestication is a better way to convey the ideas of the source text to the target audience.
Participant 7	Foreignization is more appropriate as it represents the culture of the source text better.	Foreignization represents the true essence of the source text.	Domestication is more readable and attention-getting.	Authenticity should be prioritized.	Foreignization should be used for the natives as well. Foregrounding the culture of the source text should be the priority.
Participant 8	Foreignization is better for the reader's interest.	Foreignization manifests the cultural essence better.	Foreignization is more engaging and legible.	Adaptation, i.e., domestication, is better when balancing the translation.	Domesticated translation is more understandable for natives.
Participant 9	Domestication is better as it gives more information about the target text.	Foreignized text is better for providing the cultural essence.	Foreignized text is better for engagement and readability.	Authenticity is better for balance.	Natives should also go for foreignization as they will encounter new words from a culture they are interested in learning.
Participant 10	Foreignization is more alluring as it represents the essence of cultural norms.	Foreignization represents a better essence.	Domestication is better in terms of readability and engagement.	Domestication is preferable for balance.	Foreignization should be used to introduce the culture of the source text to the target audience.

**Table 1:** Participant Responses on Translation Approaches

as the epitome of priority. They connected the idea of coloniser and colonized to different forms of translation. Moreover, it can be inferred from this that culture and thought are interconnected and that they influence each other to a great extent.

Overall, it can be said that both of these translation hold a significant place in the realm of translational studies. One prefers smoothness and the other spotlights the cultural aspects. Lawrence Venuti viewed domestication as something that should not be used in place of foreignization. Foreignization is regarded for bringing the cultural essence of the source text (ST), however, fluidity is attached to domestication.

## Recommendations

The researcher encourages the future researchers to work on the perceptions of the students of different areas to propagate awareness about the techniques of translation. Moreover, the future scholars should divert their attention in contributing to the realm of translation, attaching it to the identity of the region where they live.

## CREDIT AUTHOR STATEMENT

**Kashif Ali:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Data curation, Writing- Original draft preparation. **Nida Noor** Visualization, Investigation, Validation. **Muhammad Mobein Zaid** Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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