

**STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO TRANSLATING CULTURE-SPECIFIC
CONCEPTS: THE CHOICE BETWEEN
DOMESTICATION AND FOREIGNIZATION
INE TRANSLATION (NMT) ON TRADITIONAL ENGLISH
TRANSLATION THEORIES AND TRANSLATOR TRAINING**

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Abstract:

This paper explores the strategic approaches employed in translating culture-specific concepts (CSCs), focusing on the dichotomy between domestication and foreignization as theorized by Lawrence Venuti. Translating CSCs presents a unique challenge, as it involves bridging significant cultural gaps while maintaining semantic and pragmatic fidelity. Domestication aims to make the translated text familiar and accessible to the target audience by adapting source culture elements to the target culture, potentially at the cost of losing original cultural nuances. Conversely, foreignization prioritizes retaining the foreignness of the source text, introducing target readers to the original culture, which might challenge their linguistic and cultural norms. This study analyzes the implications of each strategy on meaning, readability, and cultural representation, examining various case studies across literary and non-literary texts. It discusses the factors influencing a translator's choice, including the purpose of translation, target audience, genre, and ethical considerations regarding cultural identity. Ultimately, the paper provides insights into how translators navigate these complex strategic decisions to achieve effective cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: Culture-specific concepts, domestication, foreignization, translation strategies, cultural translation, Venuti, target audience, source culture, target culture, cultural identity.

Introduction

Translation is not merely a linguistic transfer but a complex intercultural act, often confronted by the challenge of conveying culture-specific concepts (CSCs). These concepts, deeply embedded in the source culture's history, social practices, and belief systems, lack direct equivalents in the target culture, posing a significant dilemma for translators. The core of this dilemma lies in choosing a strategic approach: either to adapt the foreign elements to make them palatable and familiar to the target audience (domestication) or to preserve their foreignness, thereby introducing the target audience to new cultural realities (foreignization). This binary, prominently discussed by translation theorist Lawrence Venuti, underscores the ideological and ethical dimensions of translation, moving beyond purely linguistic concerns. Domestication, often associated with fluent and transparent translation, risks erasing the source text's cultural specificity, while foreignization, characterized by its resistance to cultural assimilation, may challenge target readers' linguistic and cultural expectations. This paper aims to explore the theoretical underpinnings and practical implications of both domestication and foreignization in translating CSCs. By examining the motivations behind each choice and their effects on meaning, reader reception, and cultural representation, we seek to illuminate the intricate decision-making process translators undergo to bridge cultural divides effectively. Understanding these strategic approaches is crucial for appreciating the translator's role not just as a linguistic mediator but as a cultural agent shaping cross-cultural understanding.

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Conclusion

The translation of culture-specific concepts lies at the heart of intercultural communication, demanding a nuanced strategic approach from translators. This paper has explored the fundamental tension between domestication and foreignization as two primary strategies for navigating these cultural gaps. While domestication prioritizes target-reader accessibility and fluency, potentially at the cost of cultural erasure, foreignization champions the preservation of source culture distinctiveness, which can enrich the target culture but may also pose readability challenges. The choice between these two strategies is rarely absolute but rather a contextual and often ideologically informed decision, influenced by factors such as the text type, translation purpose, target audience, and the translator's own ethical stance. Effective translation, therefore, often involves a judicious blend or oscillation between these poles, aiming to strike a balance that respects both source authenticity and target comprehensibility. Ultimately, recognizing the power dynamics and ethical implications inherent in these choices empowers translators to make informed decisions that promote genuine cross-cultural understanding and dialogue, fostering a richer global linguistic and cultural landscape. Future research could delve deeper into the reception of domesticated versus foreignized translations among diverse target audiences, particularly in the context of emerging digital media and globalized content.

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