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Taming the Stranger: Domestication vs Foreignization in Literary Translation[1]

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Abstract. The translator's task is to bridge the gap between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT), to mediate between the source culture (SC) and the target culture (TC). Cultural mediation is always more than linguistic mediation: it facilitates understanding between cultures. Cultural mediators need to be extremely aware of their own cultural identity, understanding how their own culture influences perception (ethnocentric attitude). While foreignization introduces the TT audience to the ST culture as much as possible, making the foreign visible, domestication brings two languages and two cultures closer, minimizing the foreignness of the TT, conforming to the TC values, and making the unfamiliar accessible (Venuti 1995, Munday 2016). This paper investigates different ways to find the balance between these two tendencies, offering examples from literary translation.

Keywords: cultural mediation, foreignization, domestication, source culture, target culture

Introduction

A nation's identity is partially defined by what others think of this community, what image is perpetuated about them in public consciousness. To a great extent, this image is facilitated by what is translated from that nation's literature into another and what the quality of these translations is.

As Antoine Berman famously states, a "translation is 'the trial of the foreign'" (Berman 2012: 240). This paper addresses the topic of the "Stranger"/"Foreigner", the key idea of this year's imagological conference, from the perspective of translation studies, specifically the domestication (taming) of a foreign literary source text through translation. In Lefeverian terms, it is claimed that translation is the "act of rewriting" of an original text to conform to certain purposes instituted

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by the receiving system, rewriting it in the language of the target culture (Lefevere 1992). In the first part of the paper, the approaches towards a literary text through domestication or foreignization will be discussed, highlighting the two major kinds of translation strategies which the translator, in actual fact, a mediator between two cultures, might rely on when trying to "tame the stranger". The second part of the paper brings up several examples of literary translation from English into Hungarian where this kind of domestication or foreignization proved to be more or less successful. The text that lies at the focus of our attention is G. B. Shaw's *Pygmalion* and its Hungarian translation by Dezső Mészöly as this translation provides us with all the necessary examples to illustrate those linguistic and cultural issues to be analysed when discussing domestication vs foreignization strategies.

1. Domestication vs foreignization in translation studies

Paul Ricoeur considers translation as an act where "two partners are connected through the act of translating, the foreign – the term that covers the work, the author, his language – and the reader, the recipient of the translated work. And, between the two, the translator who passes on the whole message" (Ricoeur 2006: 4). Ricoeur cites Franz Rosenzweig, who claims that "to translate […] is to serve two masters: the foreigner with his work, the reader with his desire for appropriation, foreign author, reader dwelling in the same language as the translator" (Ricoeur 2006: 4).

Translation is considered by Ricoeur as an ethical model for the hospitality of otherness. In his view, translation is "linguistic hospitality … where the pleasure of dwelling in the other's language is balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word at home, in one's own welcoming house" (Ricoeur 2006: 10). "In other words, for successful translation to the local, we must place ourselves in the foreign other's shoes, acknowledging the other's existence as a thinking, feeling, constructing being and, simultaneously, our inability to understand these constructions" (Maitland 2017: 6).

In this paper, the idea of domestication vs foreignization is addressed in literary translations, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of both strategies. It should be emphasized that – vis-à-vis the translation of texts written for special purposes, where their evaluation can be based on their usefulness – literary translations are much more difficult to assess: the subjective factors greatly influence their reception. This is also emphasized by Koskinen (2012), who claims that:

> regardless of translation strategies […], we experience the translations as either affectively positive (familiar, pleasant, aesthetically pleasing) or

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> negative (strange, confusing, aesthetically unpleasant or uninteresting), depending on what our tendencies are, what kinds of previous experiences we have had, and how our acculturation has predisposed us towards particular aesthetic solutions. (Koskinen 2012: 21)

In their attempt to mediate between different languages, values, or cultures, translators try to naturalize the different cultures to make them conform more to what the reader of the translation is used to (Lefevere 2012: 207). Among other constraints, this naturalization is carried out within the constraints of "natural languages in which a work of literature is written, both the formal side of that language (what is in grammars) and its pragmatic side, the way in which language reflects culture" (Lefevere 2012: 206). Therefore, along with the theory of linguistic relativity (the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis), it can be claimed that the structure of a given language itself determines the way in which the speakers of that language view the world, in other words, different languages reflect different values and cultures.

Domestication is defined in translation studies as a translation strategy in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for the target language reader (Venuti 1995: 15), i.e. it assimilates texts to target linguistic and cultural values. The source of this thought derives from Schleiermacher, who states that the translation "leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Venuti 1995: 19–20). In actual fact, the strategy of domestication "brings the reader to the author"; it is the case "when the text is accommodated to the reader" (Paloposki & Oittinen 2001). By domestication, the source text becomes more accessible for the target-language reader, it reads more fluently; thus the translator remains "invisible" (Venuti 1995) and offers the reader the impression as if it were written in the target language, as if the translated source text were part of the target culture. In Venuti's view, this is rather dangerous as it provides the target-language reader with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural "other" (Venuti 1995: 15). In this sense, domestication has acquired negative connotations as Venuti identifies it with a policy common in dominant cultures which are "aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign". Therefore, in cultures where domestication is predominant and standard (e.g. British and American cultural tradition), the translator's role is to remain invisible and to prepare a target text which is likely to be acceptable in such a culture. This idea is closely linked to the fact that domesticating translation (along with explicitation) characterizes mainly translations from less widely spoken (minor) languages into more widely spoken (major) languages (e.g. from Hungarian into English) (Klaudy 2012: 45).

Among the most frequent domestication strategies, the following can be enlisted:

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– the careful selection of texts which lend themselves to being translated in this manner (see the powerful translation and publishing industry, cf. Munday 2016: 223–224);

– the conscious adoption of a fluent, natural-sounding TL style;

– the adaptation of TT to conform to target discourse types;

– the interpolation of explanatory material;

– the removal of SL realia (e.g. SL archaisms, units of measurement, or Latinisms);

– the general harmonization of TT with TL preconceptions and preferences (cf. Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997: 44).

On the other hand, there is the possibility of employing the strategy of foreignization, where, in Schleiermacher's terms, "the translator leaves the writer in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader toward the writer" (Venuti 2008: 15–16). It is the case "when a reader is taken to the foreign text" (Venuti 1995). Foreignization "means using translation strategies which retain the foreign flavour of the original". I agree with Venuti's view in that foreignization is an acceptable strategy as it allows the reader to experience the "otherness" of a foreign text, where "some foreign significant traces of the original text are retained". In this case, translators act as agents who deliberately become visible and emphasize the text's otherness from the point of view of the target culture. Through a visible translator, the readers realize they are reading a translation of a work from a foreign culture (Venuti 1998, Munday 2016: 226). The cumulative effect of such features would be to provide TL readers with an "alien reading experience" (Venuti 2008: 16). The foreignizing translation of a ST results in a non-fluent style, which deliberately breaks the TL conventions and retains SL realia in the TL text, requiring more effort on the part of the reader in processing the incoming information (Klaudy 2012: 41).

As opposed to domestication, foreignizing (non-domesticating) strategies are also culture-specific, being mainly employed in various non-globalized language cultures, as observed by Tymoczko (2000). She also stresses that "the textual and cultural deformation of translated texts is not the result of particular translation strategies, but rather of cultural dominance itself" (Tymoczko 2000: 35).

All in all, translators act as mediators who, in a visible or invisible guise, can emphasize or stress the text's foreignness or familiarity from the target culture's point of view. As a result, depending on the degree of visibility (as a result of foreignization) or acceptability (as a result of domestication) with which they wish to endow a text, they will employ these two diverging strategies.

Based on my experience as a reader of foreign literatures, I cannot but agree with Mesterházi (2008) in that literary translators do their job well if the target text, the result of their hard work, proves to be light and transparent, if the mediator's transpiration does not transpire in the resulting text(ure). The result will be easily perceivable if the text is linguistically transparent, if translators do

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not draw the reader's attention on themselves with their clumsiness, with several extra footnotes, or with exceeding virtuosity, in other words, if the reader of the target text forgets that they are reading a translation. A literary translation can be considered acceptable if the translated text is as faithful to the original as possible. However, there are situations where the price of faithfulness is unfaithfulness (Mesterházi 2008: 533). In the following, such situations will be analysed.

2. The foreignness of an English text and its (re)solution through domestication or foreignization in its Hungarian translation

As we discuss the "taming of the foreign" through domestication, the question inevitably arises: what makes an English text foreign to a Hungarian reader? If one approaches an English literary text to be translated into Hungarian, the first obstacle that might puzzle a foreign reader is the language itself, its vocabulary and grammar. Among the vocabulary items difficult to tackle with are the culture-specific items (Nord 1997, Aixela 1997), also called realia (Klaudy 2007b, Tellinger 2003, Leppihalme 2011, Ajtony 2015), or ethno-culturemes (Tellinger 2005). In the case when the English source text contains such vocabulary items, the translators usually resort to different types of solutions, sometimes domesticating the "foreign" cultural term, sometimes retaining it in the TT:

2.1. Translation of culture-specific vocabulary

a. food names:

(1) Colonel Pickering prefers double *Gloucester* to *Stilton*. (Shaw 133)[2]
Pickering ezredes jobban szereti az *ementálit*, mint a *trappistát*. (Mészöly 111)

While both Gloucester and Stilton are two well-known British cheese names, they might not be so well-known to the Hungarian audience. Therefore, the translator resorted to their replacement with cheese names that the target audience might be more familiar with (*ementáli* and *trappista*).

b. British cultural notions:

(2) May I ask, sir, do you do this for your living at a *music hall*? (Shaw 25)
Szabad kérdeznem: *varietékben* szokott fellépni ezzel a tudományával? (Mészöly 14)

2 The page numbers refer to Shaw (1984) and to the Hungarian translation by Dezső Mészöly (Mészöly 1971).

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The music hall is a type of typical British theatrical entertainment popular from the early Victorian era up to 1960, where a mixture of popular songs, comedy, and variety entertainment were presented to the public. The Hungarian term *varieté* covers a similar form of entertainment, as it denotes an entertaining show with lots of music, dancing, and elements of cabaret, that form part of city life.

c. geographical names (toponyms):

(3) I've been to *Charing Cross* one way and nearly to *Ludgate Circus* the other (Shaw 15)
El voltam egész fel *Charing Crossig* és le a *Körtérig* (Mészöly 8)

(4) Did you try *Trafalgar Square*? (Shaw 15)
Próbáltad a *Trafalgar téren* is? (Mészöly 8)

(5) I tried as far as *Charing Cross Station*. Did you expect me to walk to *Hammersmith*? (Shaw 15)
Mindenütt próbáltam egész a *pályaudvarig* – azt nem várnád, hogy kisétáljak *Hammersmith*be? (Mészöly 8)

As the above examples show, the highlighted London place names are either retained in the TT (*Charing Cross*, *Hammersmith*) or partially retained – partially translated (*Trafalgar Square* – Trafalgar tér), as this is how it is familiar to the Hungarian audience, or eliminated and replaced through generalization (*Charing Cross Station* – pályaudvar). All three solutions are adopted to be maximally accessible for the receptor.

(6) You were born in *Lisson Grove*. (Shaw 23)
Hiszen *Doverben* született. (Mészöly 13)

Lisson Grove is a district and a street of the City of Westminster, London, which is described as the capital's worst slums at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The translator resorted to the full replacement of this toponym with *Dover*, a name of a city lying on the south-east coast of England, one which is better-known to the Hungarian audience.

(7) Men begin in *Kentish Town* with 80 pounds a year, and end in *Park Lane* with a hundred thousand. (Shaw 27)
Az emberek valahol a *zsibpiac* táján kezdik évi nyolcvan fonttal és a *villanegyed*ben végzik évi százezerrel. (Mészöly 16)

In this context, the toponyms are used in their metaphorical meaning, referring to the financial status of the region. Kentish Town is historically recorded as a very poor area of northwest London, while Park Lane is a major road in the City

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of Westminster, which, after the nineteenth century improvements, attracted the *nouveau riche* to the area, thus becoming one of the most fashionable roads to live on in London. Due to the fact that the English toponyms do not reveal the above mentioned connotations for the Hungarian audience, the translator resorted to the elimination of the names and replaced them with two generalizations referring to the poor slums as "zsibpiac" (rag fair, junk yard) vs the neighbourhood of the rich upstarts as "villanegyed" (villa area).

d. British currency names:

(8) Have you *any pennies*? (Shaw 17)
Van *aprópénzed*, Klára? (Mészöly 9)

(9) No. I've nothing smaller than *sixpence*. (Shaw 17)
Nincs. *Hat penny* a legapróbb. (Mészöly 9)

(10) I can give you change for a *tanner*, kind lady. (Shaw 17)
Tudok visszaadni, van annyi apróm, kedves naccsága. (Mészöly 9)

(11) For *a sovereign*? I've nothing less. (Shaw 19)
Egy aranyból? Nincs kisebb pénzem. (Mészöly 10)

(12) I can change *half-a-crown*. Take this for *tuppence*. (Shaw 19)
Egy félkoronást fölváltok. Ehun-e: ez csak *két penny*. (Mészöly 10)

The British currency names are translated in different ways, again adapted to the assumed general knowledge of the Hungarian public. "Pennies" are naturally rendered as "aprópénz" (coins of small value, change), "sixpence" as "hat penny" (six pence) (although this was one single coin), "tuppence" (two pence) as "két penny" (again referring to one coin), "half-a-crown" as "félkoronás", while the one with the largest value is the "sovereign", a gold coin worth £1, which is simply translated as "egy arany" (one gold coin), avoiding any further explicitation. As it can be seen, in some cases, the translator retains the original name of the English change, i.e. he applies the strategy of foreignization, as these are known to the Hungarian average audience (e.g. "két penny"), but in the case of "sovereign" or "tanner", when the exact meaning of the currency is not so obvious to the target reader, he resorts to the strategy of domestication in order to make the value of the coins more perceptible for the readers.

e. Poems, lyrical texts

Children's nursery rhymes may also be enlisted as ethnocultural items. In *Pygmalion*, this appears in the following rhyme, through which Higgins and Pickering tease Eliza Doolittle because of her name:

(13) *Eliza, Elizabeth, Betsy and Bess,*
They went to the woods to get a birds nes',

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They found a nest with four eggs in it,
They took one apiece, and left three in it. (Shaw 39)

In the Hungarian version of the play, the translator took the freedom to slightly alter and domesticate the lines, as follows:

Liza, Lizi s Lizike	[Liza, Lizzie and young Lizzie
Fészket szednek izibe…	Make a nest therewith…
Nem találnak semmi mást,	They find nothing else
Összevissza négy tojást. (Mészöly 25)	But four eggs.]

It is obvious that the translator retained the four-line format but did not follow the ten-syllable lines: the Hungarian verses contain only seven syllables, shorter lines being more common in Hungarian children's poems. The topic is very similar to the ST rhyme, the only difference is that – due to the shorter line – in the Hungarian version three girls are mentioned, while in the English one there are four.

2.2. Phrases, phrasal verbs, idioms

It soon becomes obvious that even if one transfers the words from the English SL into the Hungarian TL, also considering the grammatical rules of the TL, in most of the cases, the resulting text will still not make sense due to the fact that the ST might contain phrases, proverbs, or idiomatic expressions whose literal translation produces nonsensical or even humorous equivalents. Speaking proof of this failure are the phrases that Google Translate "produces". Therefore, further clarifications must be made. A very common strategy that translators employ is to find the semantically similar phrase or idiom in the TL or to translate by paraphrase (see also Kovács 2016). Through this strategy, the text becomes more acceptable to the TL reader.

(14) I'm *getting chilled to the bone*.[3] (Shaw 13)
Csuromvíz vagyok. (Mészöly D. 13)
[I am soaking wet.]
(15) He won't get no cab not until half-past eleven, missus, when they come back after *dropping their theatre fares*. (Shaw 14)
Nem kap az, kérem, fél tizenkettőig… Majd ha *a színházból hazafuvarozzák a népet*, aztán. (Mészöly 7)

3 The examples in point are italicized by the author.

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[He won't get one until half past eleven… Later, when they drive the people home, then.]

(16) *If Freddy had a bit of gumption*, he would have got one at the theatre door. (Shaw 14)
Kaphatott volna kocsit a színház előtt, *ha nem volna olyan mafla*. (Mészöly 7)
[He could have got a cab in front of the theatre if he were not so sheepish.]

(17) *There's not one to be had for love or money*. (Shaw 14)
Semmi pénzért. Ezeknek rimánkodhat az ember! (Mészöly 8)
[For no money. These may be implored by man.]

(18) I shall simply get soaked for nothing. (Shaw 15)
Bőrig ázom, és semmi értelme! (Mészöly 8)
[I shall get soaked to the skin and there's no use.]

(19) I can give you change for a tanner, *kind lady.* (Shaw 17)
Tudok visszaadni, van annyi apróm, *kedves naccsága*. (Mészöly 9)

(20) *Thank you kindly, lady*. (Shaw 17)
… *csókolom, naccsága*. (Mészöly 9)

(21) *Oh, thank you, lady*. (Shaw 17)
… *csókolom*. (Mészöly 9)

(22) If you're going to be a lady, you'll have to give up feeling neglected if the men you know don't spend half their time snivelling over you and the other half *giving you black eyes*. (Shaw 130)
Ha művelt nő akar lenni, akkor ne nyavalyogjon, hogy elhanyagolják és mellőzik, csak azért, mert a férfiak nem töltik fele életüket azzal, hogy a keblén pityeregnek, fele életüket meg azzal, hogy *kékre verik*. (Mészöly 108)

In the latter examples, the literal translation of the English idiom would sound quite hilarious (i.e. "fekete szemeket ad"), therefore the translator applies a Hungarian idiom with a similar meaning. While the ST idiom refers only to one single body part (the eye) which becomes black after a punch, the TT idiom expands it to the whole body which will turn blue.

2.3. Word order

Last but not least, the problem that should also be solved is the "strangeness" of the English word order for the Hungarian ear. This has been discussed by translation scholars (Klaudy 2006, 2007a, for instance) regarding the "translational behaviour" of certain language pairs, explained by their typological difference. While English forms a friendly pair with e.g. German (both being Indo-European, Germanic languages), having an analytical sentence structure and a rigid

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(dominantly SVO) word order, it forms an "unfriendly language pair" with Hungarian, the latter belonging to the Finno-Ugric family of languages, having synthetic sentence structure, with a flexible, but dominantly SOV word order. Therefore, while in English nominal structures are expanded to the right, and there is subject prominence, in Hungarian nominal structures are expanded to the left, and there is topic prominence. For this reason, English texts lend themselves much more easily to translation if translated into a cognate language (e.g. Romanian, French, or German) but resist to translation in the case of their translation into a non-cognate language pair (e.g. Hungarian).

Placing stress on the desired item in the sentences is carried out through intonation in the English ST: the emphasis is laid on the verbs in both remarks (*came* vs *was going*). The Hungarian translation preserves the same sentence structure, the stresses falling similarly on the verbs (*jövök* vs *készültem*):

(23) PICKERING. I *came* from India to meet you.
HIGGINS. I *was going* to India to meet you.
PICKERING. Indiából *jövök*, hogy önnel találkozzam!
HIGGINS. Indiába *készültem*, hogy önnel találkozzam!

It is noteworthy, however, that while the English sentences have the obligatory subject + verb + adverb word order, the Hungarian word order is much more flexible: as verbs carry the reference to the subject in their ending, there is no need for an explicit subject at the beginning of the sentences; therefore, it is a natural phenomenon of the Hungarian language to start a sentence with an adverb.

2.4. Accent, dialect

Probably the most difficult task of the translator in the case of *Pygmalion* was the rendering of Liza Doolittle and other characters' Cockney accent.

(24) THE SARCASTIC BYSTANDER I can tell where you come from. You come from Anwell. Go back there.
THE NOTE TAKER *H*anwell.[4] (Shaw 26)
II. ÁCSORGÓ Én is megmondom magának, honnan való: a diliházbul. Menjen vissza, oszt kérjen egy csillapító inekciót.
A NOTESZES In*j*ekciót.[5] (Mészöly 25)

The English place name Hanwell is known for its asylum opened in 1831 for mentally ill paupers. The Hungarian translation reveals that the translator

4 The italicized "H" is emphasized by Shaw.
5 The italicized "j" is emphasized by the translator.

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intended to retain the meaning of the original sentence, i.e. that the bystander ironically sends the note-taking Professor Higgins to a lunatic asylum, and Higgins corrects his Cockney accent typically known for dropping the word-initial 'h' sounds. The ingenious solution for rendering this toponym was to generalize it to "diliház" (lunatic asylum), thus deleting the original place name. However, in order to compensate the reader, he employs a similar phonetic trick, the missing and replaced sound in the Hungarian text being "j".

(25) Ow, eez ye-ooa san, is e? Wal, fewd dan y' de-ooty bawmz a mather should, eed now bettern to spawl a pore gel's flahrzn than ran awy atbaht pyin. Will ye-oo py me f'them? (Shaw 16)[6]
Ez a manusz a maga fia? No iszen, szép kis mamuska az ilyen, csak bámulja, hogy a fiatalúr a virágomon tiprakodik, osztán – alásszolgája – olajra lép! Maga fogja megfizetni! (Mészöly 9)

There are further solutions to render a character's Cockney dialect – reference is made to a typical feature of this accent: dropping the word-initial "h" sounds. As the literal translation of this language shift would be uninterpretable by the Hungarian audience, the translator resorts to another solution, indicating that by dropping her aitches, Eliza actually starts "speaking in an ugly way":

(26) Purposely *dropping her aitches* to annoy him. (Shaw 131)
Szándékosan *beszél csúnyán*, hogy bosszantsa Higginst. (Mészöly 110)

Conclusions

The examples taken from G. B. Shaw's *Pygmalion* and their Hungarian translation by Dezső Mészöly have proved that the translator managed to "tame" the foreign text in a visible yet acceptable way. The visibility of the translation (as a result of foreignization strategies) and, at the same time, its acceptability by the target audience (as a result of domestication) are detectable through the simultaneous employment of these two diverging strategies, and they account for the long-lasting success of the translated text on Hungarian stages. The strategy of domestication has been chosen in the cases when the culture-specific element is not emphasized by the author as the term may not be essential in the given situation, and its translation through explicitation might overburden the recipient. On the other hand, through the employment of foreignization strategies (retention of English proper names or currency names), the Hungarian text manages to preserve the

6 Oh, he's your son, is he? Well, if you'd done your duty by him as a mother should, he'd know better than to spoil a poor girl's flowers and then run away without paying.

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foreign atmosphere of London at the beginning of the twentieth century. The combination of the two strategies demonstrate that the Hungarian translator managed to find the golden mean between domestication and foreignization.

The "taming" of the English text proves that this translation can also be considered a model for the hospitality of "strangeness" or "otherness" and that this hospitality can serve as a model for other forms of accommodating the "other" in one's own culture.

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