

An Investigation of the Domestication and Foreignization Approach in the English Translation of Martin Wickramasinghe's *Madol Duwa* Based on Antoine Berman's Framework

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Abstract

This study investigates the application of the domestication and foreignization strategies applied by Ashley Halpe in the English translation of *Madol Duwa* (1947), originally written in the Sinhala language by Martin Wickramasinghe, based on the theory "The Experience of the Foreign" emphasized by Antoine Berman in 1984, with the support of Lawrence Venuti's domestication and foreignization strategy. This study employs a qualitative textual analysis to examine the rendition of the socio-cultural elements of Sinhalese in the English translation. The Sinhala text '*Madol Duwa* (1947)' by Martin Wickramasinghe and the Target text '*Madol Duwa* (1976)' by Ashley Halpe have been selected as the primary data of this study, while the first chapters of both primary sources have been chosen to evaluate. The study found that while the translator preserved some socio-cultural elements in the translated text, the absence of explanatory notes, footnotes, and a glossary limits deeper understanding for target readers. In conclusion, the translator achieved a partial balance between cultural specificity and readability, and recommended that translators employ footnotes or glossaries to enhance cross-cultural accessibility without compromising the source text's cultural identity.

Keywords: translation, domestication, foreignization, society, culture

Introduction

Translation is a cultural negotiation, merely a linguistic act that mediates the shaping of the cross-cultural understanding through different discourses involving choices that either preserve or reshape the foreignness of the source text. These choices will be made by translators based on the foreignization and domestication theory emphasized by (Venuti, 1995). Accordingly, the translator should decide whether to retain the source text's cultural elements or adapts it for the target reader's comprehensive understanding. This choice is made by translators to a significant extent in literary works deeply connected to culture, idioms, and other social elements.

In this context, this study aims to investigate the domestication and foreignization techniques applied in English translation of *Madol Duwa* by Ashley Halpe, originally written by Marin Wick-

ramasinghe in Sinhala. This novel comprises the cultural, moral, and social values of Sri Lanka in the 20th century. Therefore, Ashly Halpe, in his English translation, sought to reach a wider global readership, posing challenges in balancing cultural authenticity and readability. This study will reveal the navigation strategies applied to preserve the foreign experience and domestic experience of the novel in translating cultural elements of the Sinhala language into English by Ashly Halpe, based on the theory "The Experience of the Foreign" (1984) emphasized by Antoine Berman. In this framework, the scholar argues that translation should not omit the foreign but should allow the target reader to experience the source text's strange culture. Applying this framework, the present study investigates the foreignization and domestication strategies used in the English version of *Madol Duwa* by Ashly Halpe, exploring how these strategies shape the



Table 1: Retention of Sinhala Vocabulary in English Translation

No	Source text (Sinhala)	Translated text (English)
1	api alibabā katāvē palhrun vagē ves māru karagena babun mudalāligē gedaraṭa ræ navāten illagena.....	As soon as you get into the house you break open the almariya.
2	gē bida geṭa ætuḷu vunu hæṭiyē almāriyē tiyena rattaran baḍut sallit aragena geyin piṭa venna ōnē.	We will disguise ourselves like the forty thieves and go to Babun Mudalali's house.
3	eramudu paturat baṭa līt nokapā geṭa ætul venna ōnē.	If I go higher we'll have to cut through bamboo and eramudu.
4	paraṇa kæti talayak tiyēnavānam ēkat gēnna ōnē.	Bring an old Kaththi, if you can.

Table 2: Translation of Personal Names

No	Source text (Sinhala)	Translated text (English)
1	"ammā gahavi " yayi danagadāsa kī ya.	"Mother will beat me" said Danagadasa.
2	ohugē nama jinapāla vuva da mā ohuṭa hanḍagānnē 'jinē' 'jinnā' yana nam dekakin ekakini.	His name was Jinapala but I usually called him 'Jine' 'Jinna'.
3	'maraṇa ēka bohō særa danḍuvamak nisā api ēka nokara arimu' yi siripāla yōjanā keḷēya.	"That is too much let's leave our killing" said Siripala.

Table 3: Translation of Speech Patterns and Emotional Expressions

No	Source text (Sinhala)	Translated text (English)
1	"anē ! ammā næti daruvā".	"Aney! the poor motherless thing".
2	"ohō ! kō geval bandina āyuda?	"Oho! where are the housebreaking tools."
3	ahōyi! kiyamin ohu un tænaṭa divvāya.	Apoi! she shouted and ran at him.

Table 4: Retention of Socio-Cultural Terms

No	Source text (Sinhala)	Translated text (English)
1	pāsalaṭat apē gedaraṭat atara eka tænaka pāḷu ambalamak vē.	Halfway between our house and the school was a deserted ambalama.
2	hæmadāma kaṭṭi paninna bæhæ. maṭa dæn ē sellama epā velā.	I have had enough of Katti said Jinna.

reader's perception of the source culture.

Literature Review

This study is designed according to the long-standing translation theory of domestication and foreignization. This study is framed based on the conceptual idea of Antoine Berman titled "The Experience of the Foreign" (1984). In his study, he argues that a translation should impose foreignness of the source text through clarification, rationalization, and expansion, emphasizing the importance of rendering linguistic and cultural differences instead of generalizing the source text's socio-cultural elements for target readers.

In this context, his theory is particularly relevant for translating Sinhala literature into English because English is considered to be the dominant international language, which often creates pressure on translators toward fluency and readability at the expense of cultural specificities. Moreover, in this study, Berman's framework examines how translation maintains socio-cultural elements in rendering Sinhala cultural specifics in the translation of *Madol Duwa* into English. (Venuti, 1995), on the other hand, in *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), claims about a domestication strategy in translation to build an ethical dimension in translation. His framework of foreignization and domestication has become a sig-

nificant aspect in translation studies, particularly in literary translation. Scholarly works regarding Venuti's claim remain in investigating the balance between readability and cultural preservation in the context of foreignization and domestication. Early translation studies scholar Peter Newmark's categorization emphasizes the translation of cultural elements. He identifies culturally related vocabularies that are particularly significant for studying culturally embedded text. His framework emphasizes systematic translation of socio-cultural reference from the source text to the target text. In contrast, the dynamic equivalence theory of Eugene Nida indicates target reader-oriented translation, justifying domestication strategies in translation.

The role of paratext is another important area in literary studies and translation. Particularly, Gerard Genette claims that elements like footnotes, explanations, glossaries, and prefaces function as main thresholds to communicate with readers. Commonly, translation studies scholars and translators encourage paratext tools to preserve cultural elements of the source text into the target text.

In the Sinhala literature arena, Martin Wickramasinghe in his literatures provide most important portrayal of the rural life of Sinhalese, food culture, customs, social structures, and cultural practices with ethnographic precision. Therefore, translation of such socio-cultural elements creates significant challenges to translation, particularly when considering the English audience as target receivers who are unfamiliar with the Sri Lankan Sinhalese context.

(Fernando, 2020) conducted a comparative study on *Madol Duwa* and its English translation to investigate the translation of cultural and social context across. In his study, he particularly examined translation shifts and their occurrences. Accordingly, he argued that this shift occurs when translating idioms and colloquial expressions where the target language lack in direct equivalence.

Although previous studies have investigated translation shifts in *Madol Duwa*, this particular study examines domestication and foreignization strategies within the Sinhala to English translation, integrating Berman's theory. Moreover, paratextual features in preserving cultural elements have received limited attention in previ-

ous studies. Therefore, this study particularly contributes to translation scholarship by applying the existing theoretical framework in translation studies to examine the preservation of the socio-cultural elements in English translation done by Ashley Halpe.

Methodology

This study applies a qualitative textual analysis to investigate the application of foreignization and domestication strategies in English translation by Ashley Halpe, based on Antoine Berman's "The Experience of the Foreign" (1984) and Lawrence Venuti's foreignization and domestication framework (1995). By combining these two perspectives, this study investigates the translation of linguistic, cultural, and stylistic elements from the Sinhala to the English version. Furthermore, a comparative descriptive approach is employed to analyze both texts and detail the specific lexical, cultural, and idiomatic expressions in English translation.

The Sinhala text *Madol Duwa* (1947) by Martin Wickramasinghe and the target text *Madol Doova* (1976) by Ashley Halpe have been considered as the primary data of this study. The first chapters of both primary sources have been chosen for evaluation. Selected sentences, clauses, phrases, and emotional expressions are chosen for detailed examination within the first chapter.

Results and Discussions

The study's data analysis primarily focuses on the translation strategies employed by Ashley Halpe in his English translation. Particularly aims to identify the foreignization and domestication strategies that are applied to translate culturally embedded elements of the source text.

Furthermore, this part will discuss how the translator's foreignization and domestication strategies are applied to retain Sinhala vocabulary, cultural references and practices, Sinhala speech pattern, and Sinhala metaphors and idioms.

Retaining Sinhala words

Retaining source language vocabulary in the target language is one of the significant features of

the foreignization strategy in literary translation. This strategy allows a target reader to experience the foreignness of the source culture rather than preserving its domestic translation. In the English translation of *Madol Duwa* by Ashley Halpe, this strategy is evident in the frequent use of Sinhala vocabulary throughout the selected chapter.

For instance, Table 1 illustrates several examples. By retaining the above-mentioned Sinhala words in the English translation without translating them, the translator allows the cultural texture of the Sinhala original to resonate in the translation. This strategy is aligned with Antoine Berman's theory of preserving the experience of the foreign. At the same time. This approach is a form of resistance to the domestication strategy in English translation, which often makes the translator invisible, as Lawrence Venuti noted.

The translator frequently employs a foreignization strategy by retaining Sinhala words in Italics to preserve the text's Sinhala cultural identity. However, this strategy is not supported by explanatory footnotes, which will obscure for readers unfamiliar with Sinhala society.

In the aforementioned sentences, the translator retains the Sinhala words *almariya*, *Mudalali*, *eramudu*, and *Kaththi* in Italics to maintain local linguistic texture. However, he does not provide footnotes or explanations for the words. As a result, unfamiliar target readers may not fully comprehend the significance of the words.

Retaining personal names

Foreignization occurs when a translator preserves the linguistic and cultural identity of the source text even at the risk of translating words that feel 'strange' to the target reader (Venuti, 1995). Similarly, (Berman, 2000) argues that the ethical task of translation allows the other to remain other instead of assimilating it into the norms of the target culture. Therefore, personal names are cultural identities that reflect ethnicity, religion, and other socio-cultural signifiers. Accordingly, in the English translation considered in this study, Sinhala names like Jinna, Siripala and Danagadasa are retained. The translator does not convert or modify these personal names into English equivalents for easier pronunciation for the target readers.

For instance, Table 2 illustrates the following ex-

amples.

In the above sentences, Sinhala names such as Danagadasa, Jinapala, and Siripala are retained exactly as in the source text, maintaining the phonetic and cultural authenticity of Sinhalese by the translator based on the concept "receiving the foreign as foreign" emphasized by Antoine Berman. This strategy allows target readers to appreciate the socio-cultural aspects of the Sinhalese rather than receiving a domesticated version in English.

Rendition of speech pattern

Speech pattern is an important part of cultural representation in translation. The source text employs deeply rooted speech patterns that reflect the informal speech form of Sinhala social relations. The translator employs a moderated foreignization approach in rendering the Sinhala speech pattern. Specifically, in rendering Sinhala dialogues into smooth, readable in English, he maintains syntactic rhythms that reflect Sinhala conversational style.

For instance, Table 3 illustrates the following examples.

Among the Sinhalese, exclamatory words like Aney, Oho and Apoi are highly expressive in everyday conversation. By retaining these words in English translation, the translator allows target readers to familiarize themselves with the emotional tone of Sinhalese and connect psychologically with the Sinhalese community, preserving the speech tone, rhythm, and emotion.

Initially, these words may seem strange to the target readers. However, this strangeness is exactly what Antoine Berman argues. The translator allows the target readers to experience the Sinhalese emotion through English sentences.

Rendition of socio-cultural aspects

Socio-cultural aspects are not only carried by narrative content but also by a society's social practices. In the English version, the translator conveys these elements without omitting original socio-cultural identities in some instances. The translator frequently employs foreignization by preserving Sinhala socio-cultural aspects to ensure the English translation remains rooted in the original geographical landscape.

For instance, Table 5 illustrates the following examples.

In the first example, the Sinhala term *ambalama* commonly refers to a wayside rest house or shelter, and connotatively, to the communal generosity of Buddhist hospitality. By retaining this term rather than substituting it with English terms like 'rest house' or 'shelter' in the translation, the translator preserves the cultural identity and invites target readers to understand the rural identity of the Sinhalese.

In the second example, the term *Katti* refers to a traditional Sinhalese village game in Sri Lanka. This game is played collectively. The players stand in a circle while one person stands in the middle. The players on the circle should jump one after another, and the person in the middle should quickly take a place in the circle. Whoever is eliminated from the circle moves to the middle and restarts the game. Rather than substituting the term *Katti* with a general English equivalent, the translator retains it to preserve its native cultural resonance and make the foreign experience visible in the English version. With this approach, the translator preserves vital socio-cultural aspects of the source text, emphasizing cultural uniqueness.

Even though the translator does not provide any footnotes, glosses, or explanations, it is meaningful within the framework of foreignization emphasized by Antoine Berman. The translator decides to retain cultural elements in the translation and let the target readers experience the social identity of the original culture.

While the translator frequently applied a foreignization strategy to retain Sinhala cultural elements in the English version, in some instances, his translation demonstrates domestication. In the source text, some kinship terms such as 'ammā', 'tāttā', 'kuḍammā', and 'nændā' reflect family relations, emotional tone, and social hierarchy among the Sinhalese. However, in the English translation, the translator rendered these kinship terms as 'mother', 'father', 'stepmother', and 'aunt' respectively. This domestication strategy helps target readers immediately understand the text while reducing the source text's localized emotions.

Among the aforementioned kinship terms, the term 'nændā' conveys multiple relational meanings across different family contexts. This kinship

term refers to a father's sister, mother's brother's wife, and mother-in-law, depending on the different family structure of the Sinhalese. Each variation carries distinct emotional and social connotations. However, the translator renders the term as 'aunt' in the English version. The term 'aunt' fails to convey the relational meanings expressed in the source text. According to Antoine Berman, this strategy indicates a loss of cultural specificity through domestication, while reducing the sociolinguistic depth of the Sinhala kinship structure.

Conclusion

The study investigated the domestication and foreignization strategies applied by Ashley Halpe in the English translation of *Madol Duva* (1976) through the theoretical perspective of Antoine Berman's "The Experience of the Foreign" (1984). The result and discussion revealed that the translator employed a consistent negotiation between preserving Sinhalese cultural identities and ensuring readability of the target readers. However, in certain instances, the translator applied domestication as a strategy. This strategy reduced the social and emotional features presented in the original text. Moreover, the translator failed to provide explanatory footnotes or glossaries. This absence creates a barrier to familiarizing unfamiliar readers with the source culture.

Therefore, the translator employed a careful balance between foreignization and domestication throughout the translation to preserve the cultural integrity of the source text while partially adopting domestication to enhance clarity and readability for target readers. To enhance and strengthen cross-cultural understanding through translation, employing the foreignization technique, translators and scholars should consider providing explanatory notes, footnotes, and glossaries to clarify the cultural references of the source text in the target version.

The findings of the study emphasized the pedagogical value of translating of *Madol Duva* in teaching literary translation. In addition, this study may expand this investigation to the rest of the chapters in both source and target texts available in other languages to better understand

Table 5: Representation of Socio–Cultural Elements in English Translation

No	Source text (Sinhala)	Translated text (English)
1	pāsalaṭat apē gedaraṭat atara eka tænakā pālu ambalamak vē.	Halfway between our house and the school was a deserted ambalama.
2	hæmadāma kaṭṭi paninna bæhæ. maṭa dæn ē sellama epā velā.	I have had enough of Katti said Jinna.

the cultural specifications of Sri Lanka.

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