DOMESTICATION AND FOREIGNIZATION IN CHINESE-VIETNAMESE BUSINESS TRANSLATION AND THEIR APPLICATION IN BUSINESS CHINESE TEACHING

Phan Thi Hinh[1,2]
Email: Hinh.phanthi@hust.edu.vn, ORCID: 0009-0002-8533-2372

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Abstract: *With the increasing frequency of economic and trade exchanges between China and Vietnam, the demand for business Chinese-Vietnamese translation is constantly growing. Maintaining the source text's cultural characteristics while aligning with Vietnamese expressive conventions is crucial in Chinese-Vietnamese business translation. The domestication translation strategy prioritizes the target text's natural fluency, making it easy for target readers to understand. Conversely, the foreignization translation strategy emphasizes preserving the source language's cultural elements and cross-cultural distinctions. Using specific examples, this paper compares how domestication and foreignization are applied and how effective they are in business Chinese-Vietnamese translation. It offers practical guidance for cross-border business communication and for teaching Business Chinese.*

Keywords: *business Chinese teaching, Chinese-Vietnamese translation, domestication, foreignization*

I. Introduction

With the advancement of China's Belt and Road Initiative and the implementation of RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), business cooperation between China and Vietnam has grown stronger across various sectors, leading to a growing demand for the translation of business texts such as contracts, product manuals, advertisements, and correspondence. The quality of these translations is crucial to effective communication, corporate image, and the success of economic cooperation.

Despite historical and cultural ties, Chinese and Vietnamese differ significantly in linguistic structure, expression patterns, cultural connotations, and business conventions. As a result, business translation has shifted from simple linguistic transfer to cross-cultural communication.

Translators typically choose between domestication and foreignization. Domestication aligns with target-language norms, while foreignization preserves source-language features. The choice depends on purpose, text type, audience, and context. For instance, when translating company names or culture-specific terms, translators must decide between transliteration and functionally equivalent Vietnamese expressions.

Existing studies mainly explain the theories of domestication and foreignization

[1] Hanoi University of Science and Technology, Hanoi, Vietnam
[2] Research student, University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi, Vietnam

and their application in literary translation. Still, they lack systematic criteria and analytical frameworks for selecting strategies in Chinese-Vietnamese business contexts. In particular, research on their application in Business Chinese teaching remains exploratory. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a translation strategy selection model based on communicative purpose and cultural factors and explore its practical application in Business Chinese teaching.

Therefore, this study examines the application of domestication and foreignization in Chinese-Vietnamese business translation. Through the analysis of representative cases, it aims to clarify their principles of use, highlight their complementary relationship, and provide both theoretical and practical insights to improve translation quality and effectiveness.

This study aims to address the following three research questions:

(1) What factors influence the choice between domestication and foreignization strategies in Chinese-Vietnamese business translation?

(2) Is it possible to construct a model for selecting domestication and foreignization strategies based on communicative purpose, cultural factors, and audience characteristics? If so, what are its key components and operational mechanisms?

(3) How can domestication and foreignization theories be effectively incorporated into Business Chinese teaching to enhance students' translation competence?

II. Theoretical background

In 1992, Schleiermacher proposed two fundamental approaches to translation: either moving the reader toward the author or bringing the author closer to the reader. Building on this foundation, Venuti (1995) formalized the concepts of foreignization and domestication. He defined domestication as an ethnocentric strategy that adapts foreign texts to the target language's linguistic and cultural norms. Conversely, foreignization preserves cultural differences and deliberately guides readers toward the source culture. Foreignization retains source-text cultural characteristics, allowing readers to experience cultural authenticity. Munday (2001) in discussing Venuti's perspective, explains that translators should adopt strategies that challenge the target culture's dominant norms. By prioritizing the source text, foreignization preserves cultural elements and introduces new linguistic expressions into the target language. This approach helps readers understand foreign cultural contexts more directly and enriches the reading experience.

In contrast, domestication adapts the source text to the target audience's cultural and linguistic expectations. It transforms unfamiliar cultural elements into more accessible forms, ensuring clarity and fluency. By striving for cultural equivalence, domestication facilitates cross-cultural understanding and communication, making the translated text more readily accepted by target readers.

As complementary yet contrasting strategies, foreignization and domestication each have advantages and drawbacks. Effective translation requires a flexible, context-sensitive application of both approaches, balancing readability with cultural authenticity to achieve optimal communication.

In Chinese-Vietnamese business translation studies, no single theory fully explains how translators select strategies. Therefore, this study integrates domestication and foreignization with Skopos theory, functional equivalence, and the genre-based approach to build a comprehensive analytical framework.

Skopos theory emphasizes communicative purpose, functional equivalence focuses on reader response, and the genre-based approach highlights differences across text types (e.g., contracts vs. advertisements). Taken together, domestication and foreignization form a dynamic continuum rather than a binary opposition.

When selecting a translation strategy, consider communicative purpose, reader reception, and genre features. This framework enhances both the systematic nature and practical applicability of translation analysis, while providing theoretical support for Chinese-Vietnamese business translation and teaching.

III. Research methods

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, combining literature review, case study, and comparative analysis to examine domestication and foreignization in Chinese-Vietnamese business translation and Business Chinese teaching.

The corpus comprises corporate websites, product promotional materials, and other business texts, selected for authenticity, representativeness, and relevance. The data are organized and slightly adapted while preserving their original meaning.

The literature review establishes the theoretical foundation; case studies analyze representative business texts; and comparative analysis evaluates each strategy's strengths and limitations. In addition, the study applies a critical perspective to identify potential limitations and alternative translation choices, deepening the analysis.

Finally, the study proposes pedagogical implications for Business Chinese teaching to improve learners' intercultural communicative competence.

IV. Research result and discussion

Among various translation strategies, foreignization and domestication are central to this study as they reflect the cultural orientation and value judgments inherent in translation. These strategies reveal the translator's balance between fidelity and readability, as well as translation's role as a cultural mediator. When applied flexibly across different text types and purposes, they help achieve both effective information transfer and cultural exchange.

4.1. Domestication

Domestication focuses on adaptation, ensuring the translated text conforms to the target audience's linguistic norms and cultural expectations. Its goal is to create a natural and familiar reading experience. This strategy typically shows up in how it handles vocabulary, grammar, and cultural elements. Its main advantage is producing fluent, easily understandable translations that readers readily accept. However, overuse may lead to the loss of source-language features and cultural nuances. Common domestication methods include free translation, imitation, adaptation, and creative translation.

4.1.1. Free Translation

Free translation is characterized by its flexible treatment of lexical meaning and rhetorical expression, often employing adaptive or interpretive techniques. It can be divided into two main types: the explicative method and the idiomatic (formulaic) translation method.

Example 1:

(Original) 本公司实力雄厚，资金和技术人才储备充足，能够为客户提供强有力的支持。

(Translation) Công ty chúng tôi có tiềm lực mạnh, có nguồn vốn và đội ngũ nhân sự kỹ thuật dồi dào, luôn sẵn sàng hỗ trợ hiệu quả cho đối tác.

In this example, the phrase "储备充足" conveys the idea of abundance and readiness for use. Instead of translating "储备" literally, the translator takes

an explicative approach, captures its functional meaning, and renders it as "dồi dào," a natural Vietnamese equivalent for plentiful resources. This reflects a shift from the surface structure to the underlying meaning.

At the same time, the phrase "资金和技术人才储备充足" is idiomatically translated as "có nguồn vốn và đội ngũ nhân sự kỹ thuật dồi dào". The structure "có…" is a common pattern in Vietnamese business discourse, while "nguồn vốn" and "đội ngũ nhân sự kỹ thuật" are more formal and natural equivalents than literal translations.

By replacing the original structure with conventional target-language expressions, the translation reads like an authentic Vietnamese business text. This demonstrates the essence of idiomatic translation under the domestication strategy, ensuring both fluency and naturalness.

4.1.2. Imitation-based translation

Imitation-based translation is an approach in which the translator does not strictly follow the source text's meaning, wording, or structure, but treats it as a reference model. The translator may omit, add, or reshape information to achieve equivalent communicative and rhetorical effects. A typical example of adaptive translation in business discourse is presented below.

Example 2:

(Original) 这款新产品是我们公司的拳头产品，在市场上非常有竞争力。

(Translation) Sản phẩm mới này là sản phẩm chủ lực/sản phẩm mũi nhọn của công ty chúng tôi, có sức cạnh tranh rất lớn trên thị trường.

The word "拳头" literally means "the fist," but translating it directly as "nắm đấm" would sound unnatural in Vietnamese. The translator therefore identifies its metaphorical meaning-a company's strongest, most competitive product. Rather than retaining the original image, the translator renders it as "sản phẩm mũi nhọn" ("spearhead product"), a common Vietnamese metaphor for key or leading sectors. This preserves the rhetorical function while ensuring cultural appropriateness.

Alternatively, the translator uses "sản phẩm chủ lực" ("core product"), a non-metaphorical but semantically equivalent expression that clearly conveys the product's central role. Although it omits the original imagery, it maintains the core meaning. Both renderings exemplify adaptive translation by prioritizing functional equivalence over literal form.

4.1.3. Adaptation

Adaptation results in a target text whose main idea diverges from the original. This method is relatively infrequent and is typically used only when a specific translational purpose must be achieved, such as avoiding sensitive implications or preventing potential misunderstandings.

The following example illustrates how modified translation is employed in business communication to manage sensitive information and corporate image.

Example 3:

(Original) 由于不可描述的技术原因，本次产品发布将推迟一周。

(Translation) Vì một số lý do kỹ thuật cần kiểm tra và khắc phục, lịch ra mắt sản phẩm sẽ được dời sang tuần sau.

In this example, the vague and potentially negative expression "不可描述" is not translated literally; instead, it is reformulated to emphasize transparency and a proactive attitude. Rather than suggesting ambiguity, it becomes "cần kiểm tra và khắc phục" ("requiring inspection and rectification"), conveying that the issue has been identified and is being addressed.

In sensitive business contexts, effective communication often takes priority over strict fidelity. This adaptive translation shifts the focus from the

problem itself to the solution, helping maintain the company's image, avoid negative speculation, and reinforce trust. Although it departs from the original wording, it better fulfills the communicative purpose, representing a goal-oriented domestication strategy.

4.1.4. Creative translation

Creative translation represents the most liberal form of translation. Together with "zero translation" under the strategy of foreignization, it occupies one of the two extremes of the translation-method spectrum. This approach lets the translator abandon both the meaning and form of the source text and rework it creatively. As a result, the source and target texts may retain little to no direct textual connection. Creative translation is most often used for slogans and brand names.

Example 4:

(Original) 好物低价，就在天天抢购！

(Translation) DEAL SẬP SÀN, SALE TỚI BẾN.

The source text aims to create urgency and attract consumers through the message of "high-quality products, low prices, and limited-time offers." A literal translation would sound flat and unpersuasive, failing to align with Vietnamese advertising conventions or motivate consumer engagement.

Instead, the translation abandons the original wording and reconstructs the slogan to capture its core commercial appeal-deep discounts and urgency. Expressions like "DEAL SẬP SÀN" vividly convey extremely low prices, while "SALE TỚI BẾN" emphasizes the promotion's intensity. Integrating popular English loanwords such as "DEAL" and "SALE" adds a modern, trendy tone.

The result is a concise, dynamic, and impactful slogan that aligns with Vietnamese e-commerce language and effectively attracts consumers. This example highlights how creative translation prioritizes emotional impact and communicative effectiveness over literal fidelity in commercial contexts.

4.2. Foreignization

Foreignization is a translation strategy that prioritizes the source language and preserves the original text's stylistic and cultural features, even if this challenges target-language norms. Venuti (1995) argues that translation should highlight, rather than eliminate, linguistic and cultural differences. Similarly, Munday (2001) notes that foreignization may enrich the target language by introducing new expressions and expanding its stylistic range.

The advantages of foreignization are threefold. First, it brings source-language structures, expressions, and cultural elements into the target language, contributing to its development. Second, it allows readers to experience the uniqueness of the source culture, promoting cross-cultural understanding. Third, in certain contexts, it can preserve cultural identity and resist cultural dominance (Venuti, 1995).

Common methods associated with foreignization include zero translation, transliteration, word-for-word translation, and literal translation.

4.2.1. Zero translation

"Zero translation" refers to directly retaining elements of the source language without translating them, often used for orthographic differences or for alphabetic words and acronyms. It is especially common in marketing and communication, where preserving original forms helps avoid ambiguity and ensures accuracy.

Contemporary Vietnamese readily accepts loanwords, especially in technology and branding, making zero translation a natural and effective

choice. This strategy preserves the text's authenticity and international character while improving readability and practicality and reducing the risk of cultural misunderstanding.

Example 5:

(Source) 本次展会，我们重点展示了在AI和IoT领域的最新解决方案，吸引了众多专业访客的关注。

(Translation) Tại triển lãm lần này, chúng tôi đã giới thiệu những giải pháp mới nhất trong lĩnh vực AI và IoT, thu hút sự quan tâm của đông đảo khách tham quan chuyên nghiệp.

In this example, "AI" and "IoT" are globally recognized terms widely used by Vietnamese professionals and media, functioning as standard terminology in technology and business. Retaining these abbreviations directly ensures technical accuracy and international consistency, while translating them into Vietnamese full forms would sound unnatural and could be confusing.

Their use also aligns with the conciseness and efficiency of business texts, as abbreviations are shorter and easier to process. Given the high acceptance of foreign acronyms in modern Vietnamese, especially in technical and business contexts, this approach matches readers' linguistic habits and facilitates clear communication.

Thus, adopting "zero translation" for "AI" and "IoT" is a strategic choice that ensures accuracy, professionalism, and communicative effectiveness.

4.2.2. Transliteration

Transliteration represents the written symbols of one language using written symbols in another language with the same or similar pronunciation. When translation cannot proceed directly through lexical, grammatical, or semantic conversion, transliteration (that is, conversion based on phonology) can be considered.

Example 6:

(Source) 这款新产品采用了先进的太极芯片，大幅提升了能效比。

(Translation) Sản phẩm mới này sử dụng con chip TaiChi tiên tiến, hiệu suất năng lượng được cải thiện đáng kể.

In this example, "太极" (Taiji) is a culturally rich concept in Chinese philosophy, used by Huawei to highlight the balance between performance and energy efficiency. Translating it as "TaiChi" through transliteration preserves its cultural significance and maintains the brand's unique identity.

In technology, transliteration of product names is common to ensure global consistency. As a proper noun, "TaiChi" is treated as a unified brand term rather than an expression requiring semantic translation. Vietnamese consumers and media are familiar with such international names and often prefer them because they convey authenticity and global positioning, while literal translations may seem unnatural.

This approach retains the "foreignness" of the original term, allowing readers to recognize its Chinese origin and cultural background. As a typical application of the foreignization strategy, transliteration prioritizes cultural preservation and brand identity, even at the cost of immediate comprehension.

4.2.3. Word-for-Word translation

"Word-for-word translation" is a translation method in which the translator ignores differences between the two languages in morphology, syntax, and semantics and matches each word (or character) one by one.

Although word-for-word translation may fail to reproduce the source text's meaning accurately or appropriately, it can fully display the original's lexico-syntactic and semantic structure. It is a methodological tool to reveal similarities

and differences between two languages in their lexico-syntactic and semantic structures (Nord, 1997).

Example 7:

(Source) 这个登录页面已经很清晰了，流程也非常顺畅。我建议就保持现在这样，再加上那个动画效果，完全是画蛇添足，不仅会拖慢加载速度，还会让用户觉得眼花缭乱，反而忽略了主要的登录功能。

(Translation) "Trang chủ này đã rất rõ ràng, quy trình cũng vô cùng trơn tru. Tôi đề nghị cứ giữ nguyên như hiện tại. Việc thêm hiệu ứng hoạt hình đó vào chính là 'vẽ rắn thêm chân', không những sẽ làm chậm tốc độ tải trang mà còn khiến người dùng thấy hoa mắt, ngược lại còn bỏ qua chức năng đăng nhập chính."

In this example, the translator re-expresses the meaning naturally in Vietnamese while deliberately retaining the cultural idiom "画蛇添足" as "vẽ rắn thêm chân." This is not a literal or careless translation, but a conscious choice to introduce an image from the source culture. Due to cultural similarities, Vietnamese readers can easily grasp its meaning of "redundancy" or "overdoing something."

The expression is already somewhat familiar and intuitively understandable, preserving Chinese cultural features while remaining fluent in Vietnamese. This approach enriches the target language and reflects cultural transmission. It is a typical example of foreignization through word-for-word translation that maintains the original text's rhetorical effect.

4.2.4. Literal translation

The defining feature of literal translation is that it avoids semantic substitution or paraphrasing. When handling linguistic form (i.e., lexico-syntactic structure), it allows appropriate adjustments or transformations (such as changes in word order). Thus, the translation conforms to the target language's lexico-syntactic norms.

Example 8:

(Source) 中国政府推行"一带一路"倡议，旨在促进沿线国家的经济合作与发展。

(Translation) Chính phủ Trung Quốc thực hiện sáng kiến "Một Vành đai, Một Con đường", nhằm thúc đẩy hợp tác và phát triển kinh tế của các quốc gia dọc tuyến.

In this example, "一带一路" is a condensed and metaphorical policy term. Rather than using a domesticating paraphrase, the translator renders it literally as "Một Vành đai, Một Con đường," preserving its symbolic meaning and reflecting a typical foreignization approach.

At the same time, minor grammatical adjustments are made to fit Vietnamese, such as adding "một" and appropriate classifiers, ensuring readability and correctness. This shows that for culture-specific terms with political significance, literal translation under foreignization is both common and necessary.

Example 9:

(Source): 革新开放

(Translation): Cải cách mở cửa

The translation of political terminology illustrates the choice between domestication, which draws on familiar expressions in the target culture, and foreignization, which preserves the distinctive features of the source culture. Vietnam has implemented its "Đổi mới and opening-up" policy since 1986. Using an analogous expression in the target language, this policy could be translated into Chinese as "改革开放" (reform and opening-up). However, this rendering fails to reflect the distinctive nature of Vietnam's policy and instead makes it appear equivalent to China's policy.

In this case, a direct translation is therefore necessary, yielding "革新开放" (renovation and opening-up). This choice reflects a foreignizing strategy by preserving the policy's Vietnamese identity (Nguyễn, 2023).

This method effectively preserves the original imagery while introducing Chinese concepts into the target context. It suits policy terms, brand names, and specialized expressions, balancing cultural transmission with linguistic clarity.

V. Conclusion

Business Chinese teaching has shifted from language instruction to intercultural communicative competence. Domestication and foreignization are complementary strategies on a continuum, adaptable to teaching stages and objectives. Domestication improves comprehension by aligning with learners' backgrounds, while foreignization preserves cultural features to enhance cultural awareness. A balanced, progressive application-domestication in early stages and foreignization in advanced stages-supports both linguistic proficiency and intercultural competence and promotes a shift toward culture-oriented Business Chinese pedagogy.

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ĐỒNG HÓA VÀ DỊ HÓA TRONG DỊCH THUẬT THƯƠNG MẠI TRUNG - VIỆT VÀ ỨNG DỤNG TRONG GIẢNG DẠY TIẾNG HÁN THƯƠNG MẠI

Phan Thị Hinh[1,2]

Tóm tắt: *Trung Quốc và Việt Nam đang không ngừng phát triển giao lưu kinh tế và thương mại. Dịch thuật Trung - Việt đóng vai trò là cầu nối quan trọng trong giao thương giữa hai nước. Việc gìn giữ các đặc trưng văn hóa của văn bản nguồn, đồng thời bảo đảm bản dịch phù hợp với thói quen diễn đạt của người tiếp nhận, là một vấn đề then chốt trong dịch thuật thương mại Trung - Việt. Thông qua việc phân tích so sánh các ví dụ cụ thể, bài viết làm rõ việc vận dụng hiệu quả của hai chiến lược "đồng hóa" và "dị hóa" trong dịch thuật thương mại Trung - Việt, nhằm cung cấp tài liệu tham khảo thực tiễn cho hoạt động dịch thuật và giảng dạy tiếng Hán thương mại.*

Từ khóa: *đồng hóa, dị hóa, dịch thuật Trung - Việt, giảng dạy tiếng Hán thương mại*

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[1] Đại học Bách Khoa Hà Nội, Việt Nam

[2] Nghiên cứu sinh, Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội, Việt Nam