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The Domestication in Gabrielle Wahbeh's Translation of Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea"

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Abstract:

The Old Man and the Sea is a novel that is written by the American author Ernest Hemingway, . The novel is full of religious utterances and symbols. Different translators have translated this novel into various languages. Gabrielle Wahbeh is a Christian Egyptian writer who translated this novel into Arabic. By reading the source text and the translated text, I can tell that Wahbe's translation of the novel differs from the original text in regards to religious terms paraphrasing them. The results show that none of the Arabic idioms used in this study have equivalences in English language and so, what is shown are the paraphrased meaning for each My study will be based on the comparison and analysis of the translation including some examples from the source text into Arabic. The main aim for this study is to highlight Venuti's translation strategy "domestication "that has been used in translating this novel into Arabic.

Translation is the process of rendering a unit from one language (Source Language) into another (Target Language). When it comes to idioms (fixed expressions consisting of two words or more giving a meaning different from the meaning of the individual words), the translators are going to face a number of troubles. This study focuses on translating the Arabic idioms . The methodology of this study is based on a number of statements collected verbally or through written texts and expressing the meaning by paraphrasing them. The results show that none of the Arabic idioms used in this study have equivalences in English language and so, what is shown are the paraphrased meaning for each.

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Introduction

The translation process conveys the meaning of a certain text from the source language into another language (target language). Translation theories are brought into the translation field in order to describe what is happening in the translation environment. They answer questions such as why some texts were translated in a specific way and what is happening in the mind of the translator. Translators face a lot of challenges while translating some texts regarding different religions, cultures and target readership. Different religions and cultures pose a real challenge to the translator when they are taken into consideration. Translators face obstacles when dealing with the linguistic and cultural aspects of the original text and finding appropriate strategies to produce a fluent and successful translation for the target text.

Translation is not only about giving the equivalent meaning in the target language, but it also involves considering the linguistic cultural values and norms of the target language. As a result of that, some translators prefer to keep the norms and the values of the source language in their translation. On the other hand, some translators prefer to follow the norms of the target language in their translation; this is called domestication.

Linguistically, domestication comes from the verb "domesticate" which means "mak[ing] a wild animal used to living with or working for humans" (Oxford Dictionary). In translation studies, domestication is a basic translation strategy which provides cultural and linguistic guidance through producing a translation that conforms to the norms, language and cultural background for the intended target readers. According to Mark Shuttleworth and Moira Cowie, domestication "designates the type of translation in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for target language readers" (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997:59). According to Lawrence Venuti, domestication refers to "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bring the author back home" (Venuti 1995: 20). Venuti does not advocate domestication because he is against the idea of one dominant culture in translation. He also opposes the invisibility of a translator; he supports both a visible translation and an understandable translation, which "entails translating

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in a transparent, fluent, invisible style in order to minimize the foreignness of the TT [target text]" (Jeremy 2001:146). Venuti puts the translation on a binary opposition and he does not take into consideration target norms, target language and target publishing houses. Domestication concerns cultures and replacing the source culture with the target culture in order to conform to the norms of target readers, therefore it is reader-oriented.

Eugene Nida is a main proponent of the domestication strategy in translation. In 1964, Nida developed the idea of functional equivalence in translation that "aims at complete naturalness of expression" (Nida, 1964: 159). He believes that successful translation ought to have the same effect on target text readers as the source text has on its readers.

The practice of domestication in translation has been used at least since ancient Rome (Baker, 1998). In 300 BC, when Greece was conquered by Rome, the idea of translation was seen as "a form of conquest" (Tan, 1991: 22). As a result of that, "Latin translators not only deleted culturally specific markers but also added allusions to Roman culture and replaced the name of the Greek poet with their own, passing the translation off as a text originally written in Latin" (Baker, 1998 : 241).

Skopos theory, developed by translation and linguist scholar Hans J. Vermeer, is one of the translation theories that discusses the aim or the purpose of translation. According to Skopos, the purpose of translation is identified regarding to the target language, readers and culture. According to Skopos theory, to "translate" means to "produce a text in a target setting for a target purpose and target addresses in target circumstances" (Nord 2001:12). Skopos theory also dictates that domestication may be used depending on the function or the purpose of the translation. It does not mean that a good translation should conform or adapt to target-culture behavior or expectations, although the concept is often misunderstood in this way (ibid 29).

To conclude, I think that domestication theory has some advantages by applying it to translated texts. Domesticating a text causes the text to have a higher level of clarity which allows it to read more naturally for the target audience. As a result, domestication can cause readers to feel closer and more comfortable with the translation. I also believe it is important to take into consideration the norms of the intended audience and respect them. For example, in an excerpt from an article published by the British Broadcast Corporation, "most of the Kuwaiti ruling family fled to Saudi Arabia" was translated into Arabic as *غادرت معظم العائلة الحاكمة الكويتية إلى السعودية* (BBC Special Report, February 19, 1998). The word fled was translated into *غادرت* instead of *هربت* to make it acceptable and less offensive for Kuwaiti people. Also, I support the idea of free

translation as opposed to word for word translation, as I believe free translation creates more successful and fluent texts for readers. For example, when Roman statesman Cicero spoke of free translation, he said, “ I did not translate them as an interpreter, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and forms, or as one might say, the figures of ‘thought’, but in language which conforms to our usage” as to avoid confusion and misunderstanding for the target audience (Munday, 2001: 19). This statement is very powerful in the way that it sheds light on the importance of carrying a message from one language to another that contains its meaning throughout the journey of translation.

In this paper, I will use the idea of domestication to describe the process and final product of the translation of the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* by the American author Ernest Hemingway. This particular study focuses on the translation of *The Old Man and the Sea* from English into Arabic by Gabrielle Wahbeh, published in Egypt in 2007 by the Egyptian-Lebanese Publishing House. This study compares analyzes some examples translated from the source text into the target text by focusing on one question:

Does the translator make any shifts in his translation to meet the expectation of the reception environment?

Application of Domestication in *The Old Man and the Sea*:

Discussion and Analysis:

The following are some examples from the source text which are translated into Arabic:

Source Text :	Target Text :
"God help him to take it."	اللهم اعنهما لتأخذها

In the source text, the author writes “God help him to take it” as a call to God to help the fish take the bait so that the protagonist is able to catch the fish for himself. This is translated into Arabic in a way of requesting and praying to God in the target text, but in a way that conforms to prayer in Islam. I think that the Arabic translation involves a stronger way of praying to God by using اللهم which emphasizes dependence on God and calling out to Him. Also, the word “help” is translated into اعنهما because اعنهما is found in a prayer to God in Islam, for example, in the Arabic Dua’a: رَبِّ اعْنِي وَلَا تُعِنِّ عَلَيَّ . (Sunan at-Tirmidhi , P3551). I think that Wahbeh succeeded in creating the intended meaning of the author which was to invoke God to help the fish to eat the bait by using natural Arabic language. In addition, Wahbeh translated the above religious utterance in a way that is familiar to the target readers according to Islamic customs by using an Arabic Du’aa in the translation instead of translating the text literally.

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Source Text : Christ knows he can't have gone" Christ, I did not know he was so big	Target Text : الله وحده يعلم ياالله لم اكن اعرف أن تلك السمكة بهذه الضخامة
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The original text uses the word "Christ" as a way to express surprise or emphasize the meaning of the rest of the sentence. In the sentence "Christ knows he can't have gone" the character is emphasizing that it is impossible that the fish disappeared by saying that "Christ" knows it, therefore, meaning it must be true because God knows it. The translated version of this uses **الله** instead of المسيح. Here, it is clear that the terms of translation differ between the source text and the target text. Using **الله** in place of "Christ" was a clear choice of the translator to appeal to the overarching existence of Islamic tradition in the Arabic-speaking world. Using المسيح would signify religious ideologies that do not match the expectations of the target audience. Although God and Jesus are both religious figures, God is considered the creator of the world and Jesus, المسيح, is seen as the messenger of God who sacrificed himself to cleanse all humans for their sins. By doing this, he avoids literal translation and domesticates the text. However, the meaning of the source text was retained because the Arabic translation "الله وحده يعلم" means that "only God knows."

Hemingway uses "Christ" a second time to express the protagonist's awe in the source text. In this context, Wahbeh chooses to translate "Christ" as "ياالله," which is an expression in Arabic that expresses shock while using the name of God. As aforementioned in the previous example, using, المسيح in place of "Christ" in this context would not be appropriate if the translator was attempting to match the expectations of the reception environment. Therefore, I believe he succeeded in this case by using domestication.

Source Text : "Tried not to think but only to endure"	Target Text : حاول الا يُفكر , بل أثر ان يوجه كل طاقته الى الثبات والجلد والصبر
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In the Arabic translation, Wahbeh uses the word أثر to show that the protagonist consciously chose to be patient and to have determination despite the difficulty of his situation. Wahbeh also chooses not to translate the utterance "endure" literally; instead, he uses various Arabic words to describe "endure," which means that a person suffers and struggles with no complaint. Here, Wahbeh uses the three words, صبر (patience), الثبات (resolve), and جلد (perseverance) to describe and emphasize the meaning of the word "endure" to show the readers

that the protagonist is having a real problem and he cannot overcome without choosing to be being patient.

Source Text :	Target Text :
But I am too tired - to say them now-	لم يعد في استطاعتي ان اتلوها

In the source text, the protagonist says he is “too tired to say them [the prayers] now”. Wahbeh translated the word “say” into *اتلوها*, referring to “saying” the prayers. However, this specific term is used by Muslims specifically for reciting Qur’an, so it was used by Wahbeh emphasize the holiness of reciting the words of God. In his translation, Wahbeh is influenced by the Qur’an as the word *يتلو*, and its derivatives, are mentioned in the Qur’an many times. For example: ((أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَذِكْرَىٰ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ {51})) العنكبوت. “The Qur’an 29:51”.

By using this word, his translation would make sense for readers because Muslims use the term "تلاوة" for reading Qur’an and praying to God. He domesticates the text by this translation instead of saying *يقول صلواته* or *يقرأ صلواته*.

Source text :	Target Text :
“Hail Mary full of Grace the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.” Then he added, “Blessed Virgin, pray for the death of this fish. Wonderful though he is.”	Omitted.

This part from the source text is not translated by Wahbeh ; instead, it is omitted. In the source text, this Christian prayer is recited by Santiago so that he can catch the fish. I believe that the translator chose not to translate this excerpt because there is no real equivalent to fit the expectations of the reception environment. If Wahbeh chose to select an Islamic Du’aa in place of the Christian prayer, it may convey a different meaning that would stray from the idea of the source text.

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Source Text :	Target Text :
and I promise to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Cobre if I catch him. That is a promise.'^	Omitted.

This part from the source text means that the protagonist Santiago is promising to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Cobre, a sacred place of worship in Cuba, if he catches the fish (Religion in Cuba: Virgin of Cobre). Wahbe omits this part in his translation because the concept of a religious pilgrimage is different between Muslims and Christians. If Wahbe chose to replace the Virgin of Cobre with Mecca, the sacred city to which Muslims make a pilgrimage, it would not make sense to the members of the target audience because Santiago is not a Muslim. On the other hand, if Wahbe chose to translate the Virgin of Cobre as العذراء كوبر it would require explicitation, which would interrupt the narrative and risk confusing the readers.

Source Text :	Target Text :
The old man's head was clear and good now and he was full of resolution but he had little hope. It was too good to last, he thought.	كان ذهن العجوز قد صفا وصار في أحسن حال، وامتلاً عزمًا، غير أن امله كان ضعيفًا. وقال لنفسه : ما أضيّق العيش لولا فسحة الأمل.

In the source text, this sentence shows that the old man has little hope to catch the fish. In the target text, this excerpt was translated into Arabic as فسحة الأمل , which is an Arabic saying that is taken from the Arabic poem "لامية العجم". Wahbeh does not translate this sentence literally; instead, he translates in a way that insists it is difficult to live without hope. He conveys this meaning by using a familiar Arabic saying that readers of the target audience could recognize.

Source Text :	Target Text :
"I am not religious," he said. "But I will say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys that I should catch this Fish."	لست رجل دين تقيا ورعا، ولكنني ابتهل كثيرا الى الله وإلى جميع القديسين والقديسات ان اطفر بتلك السمكة

The protagonist in the source text says “I will say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys” to express his willingness to praise God and Mary in order to catch the fish. In the source text, he says this without using the word “God”; however, Wahbeh translated this sentence using the word “God” (الله) before mentioning “ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys” because in Islam, God is the only one who can answer prayers. Without including الله, the translator may seem like he is neglecting God in helping the protagonist to catch the fish.

Source Text : Do not think about sin, be thought.	Target Text : لا تفكر في الخطيئة ، فقد سبق السيف العذل والوقت متأخر الآن.
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The protagonist is telling himself to forget about sin and to continue focusing. This is not literally translated into Arabic, but is translated by adding the Arabic saying: فقد سبق السيف العذل, which means that “it is too late to change things; we cannot blame ourselves for anything.” In other words, when someone is trying to negotiate something that cannot be changed, فقد سبق السيف العذل is said to help someone keep moving forward and to forget about the past. The translator is making his explication by adding this saying, which allows the translation to be understandable and familiar to the intended readers.

From the examples I have provided, we can notice that Wahbeh is consistent in translating religious terms and other utterances by conforming to target readers’ norms and way of thinking. Although Wahbeh is a Christian from Egypt, he chose to translate according to norms that Muslim Arabs would accept, as Islam is the majority religion across the Arab world. As a result, he avoids translating some Biblical references and books to their names in Arabic and chose other alternatives, such as omitting passages and replacing some excerpts well-known Islamic prayers. For example, he translated the word “Christ” into الله instead of المسيح to avoid being provocative to the largely Muslim target audience.

Conclusion

When reading the Arabic translation of *The Old Man and the Sea*, it seemed as if it were the original version and that Gabrielle Wahbeh was the original author. The Arabic language is not only natural throughout, but because the translation was coherent and included allusions from Arab culture and Islam, it is difficult to notice that this text is translated from English. The translator allowed this to be possible through using the domestication and assuring that his voice as a translator was invisible throughout the text.

Wahbeh applied domestication throughout the text to appeal to the target audience, which consists largely of Muslims. In order to meet the expectations of this particular reception environment, Wahbeh found it appropriate to change, omit, and add several concepts to the text so that it does not seem foreign to the

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target audience. The translator remained respectful to the norms and customs of majority of the target culture by repeatedly including the name of God (الله) and including familiar Arabic sayings and dua'a to clarify the meaning without interruptive explicitation, such as footnotes or explanation in the prose. Instead, the familiarity of these Arabic sayings and dua'a reach the readers of the target audience easily and do not taint the atmosphere of the story with the translator's voice.

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