

# **A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Foreignization and Domestication Strategies in German Translation**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the application and effectiveness of foreignization and domestication strategies in German translation from a cross-cultural perspective. the research adopts a theoretical analysis approach combined with comparative studies to examine how these two translation strategies contribute to cultural communication and understanding. By reviewing relevant literature, theoretical frameworks, and practical cases, the study systematically analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of foreignization and domestication in different cultural contexts. the research process involves three main stages: first, establishing the theoretical foundations of foreignization and domestication based on Venuti's translation theory and cross-cultural communication studies; second, analyzing the specific characteristics of German language and culture that influence translation strategy selection; and third, evaluating the impact of these strategies on cultural preservation and target audience reception. the findings reveal that there is no absolute superiority between foreignization and domestication; instead, their effectiveness depends on multiple factors including text type, cultural context, target audience characteristics, and communication purposes. Foreignization tends to be more effective in preserving cultural uniqueness and promoting cultural diversity, while domestication enhances readability and acceptance among target readers. the study concludes that a flexible and context-Sensitive approach to translation strategy selection, rather than a rigid adherence to one method, is essential for successful cross-cultural communication in German translation. This research contributes to the advancement of translation theory by providing a more nuanced understanding of strategy selection in cross-cultural contexts and offers practical implications for professional translators

working with German texts.

**Keywords:** German Translation; Foreignization; Domestication; Cross-Cultural Communication; Translation Strategies

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Research Background and Significance**

Globalization processes have intensified interactions between different linguistic communities, making translation an indispensable component of intercultural communication. the German language, with its rich cultural heritage and complex linguistic structures, presents unique challenges for translators seeking to balance linguistic accuracy with cultural authenticity. the choice between foreignization and domestication strategies represents a fundamental decision point that significantly impacts the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication [1-3].

Translation studies have evolved from mere linguistic transfer to a sophisticated discipline that encompasses cultural, social, and ideological dimensions. the German context demands careful consideration of historical developments, philosophical traditions, and cultural values that shape both source and target texts. As international business, academic exchange, and cultural interactions continue to expand, the need for nuanced translation strategies that respect both linguistic integrity and cultural context becomes increasingly critical. [406]

### **1.2 Review of Domestic and International Research Status**

Academic discourse on translation strategies has generated substantial literature over the past few decades. Western scholarship, particularly Venuti's work on foreignization, has challenged conventional approaches by advocating for the preservation of cultural difference. This

perspective contrasts with earlier functionalist theories that prioritized target audience comprehension through domestication techniques. [7-9]

Contemporary research in China emphasizes the importance of cultural confidence in translation practice, advocating for strategies that maintain cultural uniqueness while ensuring effective communication. Recent interdisciplinary approaches have integrated insights from linguistics, cultural studies, and cognitive science to develop more comprehensive models of translation strategy selection. These developments reflect a growing recognition of translation as a dynamic process that negotiates between multiple linguistic and cultural systems. [10-13]

### **1.3 Research Objectives and Questions**

This study aims to contribute to existing scholarship by providing a systematic analysis of foreignization and domestication strategies specifically in the context of German translation. the research addresses several key questions: How do cultural differences influence the selection of translation strategies in German texts? What factors determine the effectiveness of foreignization versus domestication approaches? Can a dynamic model be developed that optimizes strategy selection based on contextual variables?

The investigation seeks to move beyond binary conceptualizations of translation strategies by examining their application within specific cultural and linguistic contexts. By focusing on German translation, the study aims to identify patterns and principles that may have broader implications for translation theory and practice.

### **1.4 Research Methods and Innovation Points**

The research employs a mixed-methods approach combining theoretical analysis, comparative studies, and empirical investigation. Theoretical analysis establishes the conceptual foundations of foreignization and domestication, while comparative studies examine their application across different text types and cultural contexts. Empirical research involves case studies of German translations and evaluation of reader responses.

Innovative aspects of this study include the development of a contextualized strategy selection model that incorporates linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic factors. the research also

introduces quantitative measures for evaluating translation effectiveness across different cultural contexts, providing a more objective basis for strategy assessment.

### **1.5 Thesis Structure**

The dissertation is organized into seven chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 establishes the theoretical foundations by examining the evolution of translation theories and their application to cross-cultural communication. Chapters 3 and 4 provide detailed analyses of foreignization and domestication strategies respectively, exploring their theoretical bases, practical applications, and effectiveness. Chapter 5 develops a dynamic model for strategy selection based on contextual factors. Chapter 6 presents empirical research findings through case studies and comparative analysis. the final chapter summarizes key findings, discusses theoretical and practical implications, and suggests directions for future research.

## **2. Theoretical Foundations**

### **2.1 Origins and Development of Foreignization and Domestication Theories**

Translation theory has undergone significant evolution, reflecting changing perceptions of the translator's role and the nature of cross-cultural communication. Early approaches focused primarily on linguistic equivalence, with scholars debating the merits of literal versus free translation. the emergence of functionalist theories shifted attention to the communicative purpose of translation, emphasizing the importance of target audience reception.

The conceptual distinction between foreignization and domestication gained prominence through the work of Lawrence Venuti, who critiqued the dominance of domestication in Anglo-American translation practice. Venuti argued that domestication strategies tend to erase cultural differences, reinforcing ethnocentric values and cultural hegemony. This critique sparked widespread debate about the ethical dimensions of translation and the responsibilities of translators in cross-cultural communication. [10-15]

Contemporary theories recognize the complexity of translation as both a linguistic and cultural practice. Scholars increasingly view foreignization and domestication not as mutually

exclusive options but as points on a continuum, with optimal strategy selection depending on multiple contextual factors. This perspective acknowledges the dynamic nature of translation and the need for flexible approaches that can adapt to different communicative situations.

## **2.2 Core Concepts of Venuti's Foreignization Theory**

Lawrence Venuti's foreignization theory represents a significant departure from traditional translation approaches by prioritizing the preservation of cultural difference. This approach aims to resist the homogenizing tendencies of globalization and promote cultural diversity.

Key concepts in Venuti's theory include "resistancy" and "visibility." Resistancy refers to the translation's ability to resist dominant cultural values by preserving linguistic and cultural differences. Visibility emphasizes the translator's active role in mediating between cultures, rejecting the ideal of the "invisible translator" that characterizes domesticating approaches.

Venuti's work has generated substantial debate within translation studies. Critics argue that excessive foreignization may impede communication and alienate readers, while proponents maintain that the preservation of cultural difference is essential for genuine cross-cultural understanding. This tension reflects broader questions about the nature of translation and its role in promoting intercultural dialogue.

## **2.3 Application of Cross-Cultural Communication Theory in Translation Studies**

Cross-cultural communication theory provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics of translation by examining how cultural differences influence communication processes. Scholars in this field identify numerous factors that affect intercultural communication, including cultural values, communication styles, and cognitive patterns.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework offers a systematic approach to understanding cultural differences that impact translation. Dimensions such as individualism-collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance help explain why certain translation strategies may be more effective in specific cultural contexts. Cultures with high uncertainty avoidance may prefer

more domesticated translations that minimize unfamiliar elements.

Communication accommodation theory provides another useful perspective by examining how individuals adjust their communication styles to facilitate interaction. Translators engage in similar accommodation processes when selecting between foreignization and domestication strategies, balancing the need for cultural authenticity with the goal of effective communication.

## **2.4 Analysis of German Language and Cultural Specificity**

The German language exhibits unique characteristics that influence translation practice and strategy selection. Grammatical features such as complex compound words, flexible word order, and extensive case systems present specific challenges for translators. These structural elements often carry cultural significance, requiring careful consideration in the translation process.

German cultural values, shaped by historical developments, philosophical traditions, and social structures, also impact translation strategies. Concepts such as "Ordnung" (order), "Pünktlichkeit" (punctuality), and "Gründlichkeit" (thoroughness) reflect cultural priorities that may need to be preserved or adapted in translation.

The German literary tradition, with its emphasis on philosophical depth and linguistic precision, provides rich material for examining translation strategies. Works by authors such as Goethe, Kafka, and Grass demonstrate how linguistic innovation and cultural specificity challenge translators to balance faithfulness to the original with accessibility for target readers.

## **3. Analysis of Foreignization Strategies in German Translation**

### **3.1 Theoretical Basis and Implementation Methods of Foreignization Strategies**

Foreignization strategies in translation are grounded in theoretical perspectives that prioritize cultural authenticity and linguistic integrity. Drawing on Venuti's resistance theory, foreignization aims to preserve the foreignness of the source text by retaining linguistic and cultural features that may be unfamiliar to target readers. This approach challenges ethnocentric tendencies in translation and promotes cross-

cultural understanding through exposure to different ways of thinking and expression.

Implementation methods for foreignization include literal translation, calques, neologisms, and preservation of cultural-specific terms. Literal translation maintains the syntactic structure and lexical choices of the source language, while calques directly transfer linguistic patterns from the source to the target language. Neologisms create new expressions in the target language to capture concepts that may not have direct equivalents. Cultural-specific terms are often retained through transliteration or borrowing, with explanatory notes provided when necessary.

The effectiveness of these methods depends on various factors, including the cultural distance between source and target languages, the text type, and the intended audience. Successful foreignization requires careful consideration of these factors to ensure that the resulting translation maintains both linguistic accuracy and communicative effectiveness.

### **3.2 Application of Foreignization Strategies in Translating German Cultural Elements**

German cultural elements present unique challenges for translation due to their historical depth and conceptual complexity. Cultural-specific terms related to history, philosophy, literature, and everyday life often carry meanings that cannot be fully captured through direct translation. Foreignization strategies offer approaches for preserving these cultural nuances while making them accessible to target readers.

In translating historical concepts such as "Lebensraum" or "Weltanschauung," foreignization strategies retain the original German terms, allowing target readers to engage with these concepts in their original cultural context. This approach preserves the historical specificity of these terms while encouraging deeper exploration of their meanings and implications.

Philosophical concepts in German thought, such as "Dasein," "Zeitgeist," and "Schicksal," present particular challenges due to their conceptual density and cultural embeddedness. Foreignization strategies for these terms often involve retaining the original German expressions with extensive contextualization and explanation, enabling target readers to grasp their philosophical significance while appreciating their cultural origins.

### **3.3 Positive Impact of Foreignization Strategies on Cultural Transmission**

Foreignization strategies play a crucial role in promoting cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding. By preserving linguistic and cultural differences, these strategies challenge readers to expand their cultural horizons and develop greater appreciation for alternative perspectives. This process contributes to the enrichment of target language cultures through the introduction of new concepts, expressions, and ways of thinking.

In educational contexts, foreignization enhances language learning by exposing students to authentic linguistic structures and cultural expressions. Research indicates that learners exposed to foreignized translations develop greater cultural competence and intercultural sensitivity compared to those encountering only domesticated versions. This enhanced cultural awareness facilitates more meaningful cross-cultural interactions and promotes global citizenship.

Foreignization also contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage by maintaining the integrity of original texts and ensuring that cultural knowledge is transmitted accurately across linguistic boundaries. This is particularly important for minority languages and cultures that face the risk of marginalization in globalized contexts.

### **3.4 Challenges and Limitations of Foreignization Strategies**

Despite their theoretical advantages, foreignization strategies face practical challenges that can limit their effectiveness in certain contexts. One significant challenge is the potential for reduced readability and comprehension when source language features are retained excessively. Readers unfamiliar with the source culture may struggle to understand foreignized translations, leading to communication breakdowns and reader frustration.

Cognitive load theory suggests that processing unfamiliar linguistic structures and cultural references requires greater mental effort, which can impede understanding and retention. This effect is particularly pronounced for readers with limited exposure to the source culture or lower language proficiency.

Foreignization may also face resistance from

publishers, educators, and other stakeholders who prioritize accessibility and marketability. Economic considerations often favor domesticated translations that appeal to broader audiences, creating tensions between commercial viability and cultural authenticity.

#### **4. Analysis of Domestication Strategies in German Translation**

##### **4.1 Theoretical Foundation and Operational Methods of Domestication Strategies**

Domestication strategies in translation prioritize the target language and culture, adapting source text features to conform to target audience expectations and cultural norms. This approach is grounded in functionalist translation theories that emphasize the communicative purpose of translation and the importance of reader reception.

Key operational methods for domestication include adaptation, substitution, and simplification. Adaptation involves modifying cultural references and linguistic structures to make them more familiar to target readers. Substitution replaces source culture-specific elements with equivalent concepts from the target culture. Simplification reduces linguistic complexity by eliminating unusual structures or expressions that might impede comprehension. Theoretical justifications for domestication include the principle of reader-oriented translation, which argues that effective communication requires translations to be natural and accessible. Proponents maintain that excessive foreignization can create barriers to understanding and undermine the communicative function of translation.

##### **4.2 Specific Practices of Domestication Strategies in German Text Translation**

German texts present particular challenges for domestication due to their linguistic complexity and cultural specificity. Translators employing domestication strategies must carefully balance the need for accessibility with the requirement to preserve meaning and cultural significance.

In literary translation, domestication often involves adapting complex sentence structures and philosophical concepts to make them more accessible to target readers. This may include breaking down long German sentences into shorter units, explaining cultural references through context, and using more familiar

expressions while retaining the original meaning. Technical and scientific texts require special considerations for domestication. German technical vocabulary, with its precise compound terms, often needs to be adapted to target language conventions while maintaining terminological accuracy. This process involves creating equivalent technical expressions that convey the same meaning while conforming to target language usage patterns.

##### **4.3 Enhancement Effect of Domestication Strategies on Target Reader Acceptance**

Domestication strategies significantly enhance reader acceptance and comprehension by reducing cultural and linguistic barriers. Studies have shown that domesticated translations generally achieve higher readability scores and reader satisfaction compared to foreignized versions, particularly among readers with limited cultural background knowledge.

The enhancement effect is particularly evident in educational materials and popular literature, where accessibility is crucial for reaching broad audiences. Domesticated translations enable readers to focus on content rather than struggling with unfamiliar expressions or cultural references, facilitating deeper engagement with the material.

In commercial contexts, domestication contributes to market success by making products and services more appealing to target consumers. Marketing translations often employ extensive domestication to ensure that messages resonate with local audiences and conform to cultural preferences and values.

##### **4.4 Cultural Loss Issues Potentially Caused by Domestication Strategies**

While domestication enhances accessibility, it also carries the risk of cultural loss through the adaptation or elimination of source culture elements. This process may oversimplify complex cultural concepts or reduce the diversity of perspectives available to target readers.

Cultural loss is particularly problematic in literary and historical texts, where specific cultural references and linguistic nuances contribute significantly to meaning. Over-domestication can result in translations that lack the depth and authenticity of the original, depriving readers of the opportunity to engage with different cultural perspectives.

The ethical implications of cultural loss have sparked debate within translation studies. Critics argue that excessive domestication can perpetuate cultural hegemony by imposing target culture values and perspectives on source texts. This concern has led to calls for more balanced approaches that preserve cultural diversity while ensuring effective communication.

## **5. Strategy Selection Mechanism from Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **5.1 Analysis of Key Factors Influencing Strategy Selection**

Strategy selection in translation is influenced by multiple factors that must be carefully considered to ensure optimal results. Linguistic factors include structural differences between source and target languages, lexical availability, and syntactic complexity. Cultural factors encompass cultural distance, value differences, and the significance of cultural-specific elements in the source text.

Contextual factors play a crucial role in strategy selection. the purpose of translation, whether for literary appreciation, information transfer, or educational purposes, significantly impacts the appropriate balance between foreignization and domestication. the intended audience's cultural background, language proficiency, and reading expectations also influence strategy choice.

Professional considerations, including translator training, institutional norms, and industry standards, shape strategy selection practices. Translators must navigate these multiple influences while maintaining ethical standards and professional integrity.

### **5.2 Research on Strategy Preferences for Different Text Types**

Different text types exhibit distinct characteristics that influence optimal translation strategies. Literary texts often benefit from more foreignized approaches to preserve artistic expression and cultural authenticity. the poetic qualities of literary works, including word choice, imagery, and rhythm, may require careful handling to maintain their aesthetic impact.

Technical and scientific texts typically prioritize accuracy and clarity, often favoring domestication to ensure precise communication of specialized information. the emphasis on terminological consistency and readability in

these genres supports more target-oriented approaches.

Business and marketing texts present unique challenges, requiring translations that balance cultural adaptation with brand consistency. These texts often employ hybrid strategies that maintain key brand elements while adapting messaging to local cultural preferences.

### **5.3 Impact of Target Reader Cultural Background on Strategy Selection**

The cultural background of target readers significantly influences the effectiveness of different translation strategies. Readers with extensive cross-cultural experience may appreciate and benefit from more foreignized translations that preserve cultural differences. These readers often have the background knowledge and cognitive flexibility to engage with unfamiliar cultural elements.

Readers from monocultural backgrounds or with limited foreign language experience typically respond better to domesticated translations that minimize cultural and linguistic barriers. These readers may find foreignized elements distracting or confusing, impeding their ability to engage with the text content.

Age, education level, and professional background also influence reader preferences. Educational materials for younger learners generally require more domestication to ensure comprehension, while academic texts for specialized audiences can accommodate more foreignized elements.

### **5.4 Construction and Validation of Dynamic Balance Model**

The dynamic balance model proposes a flexible approach to translation strategy selection that adapts to changing contextual factors. This model conceptualizes foreignization and domestication not as fixed approaches but as adjustable parameters that can be calibrated based on specific translation requirements.

Model construction involves identifying key variables that influence strategy effectiveness, including text characteristics, audience attributes, and communication purposes. These variables are weighted according to their relative importance in specific translation contexts, creating a decision-making framework that guides strategy selection.

Validation of the model involves testing its effectiveness across different translation

scenarios and evaluating the quality of resulting translations. This process includes both quantitative measures, such as readability scores and comprehension metrics, and qualitative assessments of cultural authenticity and communicative effectiveness.

## **6. Empirical Research and Case Analysis**

### **6.1 Research Design and Data Collection Methods**

The empirical research employs a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative analysis. The research design includes multiple case studies examining the application of foreignization and domestication strategies in German translations across different text types and cultural contexts.

Data collection methods include textual analysis, reader response surveys, and expert evaluations. Textual analysis involves systematic examination of translation strategies employed in selected texts, identifying patterns and variations in approach. Reader response surveys gather feedback from target audience members regarding comprehension, cultural relevance, and overall satisfaction.

Expert evaluations involve assessments by professional translators and translation scholars, providing insights into the quality and effectiveness of different translation approaches. This multi-faceted data collection strategy ensures comprehensive understanding of strategy effectiveness across different dimensions.

### **6.2 Case Analysis of German Literary Works Translation**

Case analysis of German literary translations reveals interesting patterns in strategy selection and application. Examination of translations of works by Thomas Mann demonstrates how translators balance the preservation of philosophical depth with accessibility for target readers. Different translators employ varying degrees of foreignization and domestication, reflecting their theoretical orientations and assessment of reader needs.

Analysis of Kafka translations highlights the challenges of conveying surrealistic elements and existential themes across cultural boundaries. Successful translations maintain the distinctive narrative voice and philosophical undertones of Kafka's work while adapting linguistic structures

to target language conventions.

Comparative analysis of multiple translations of the same literary work reveals how different strategic approaches impact the final product. These comparisons provide valuable insights into the relationship between strategy selection and translation quality.

### **6.3 Research on German Technical Text Translation Strategies**

Technical text translation presents unique challenges that require specialized approaches. Analysis of German engineering and scientific texts shows that translation strategies must balance terminological accuracy with readability. Technical vocabulary, with its precise compound terms, often requires careful adaptation to target language conventions.

The research identifies specific patterns in technical translation practice, including the use of standardized terminology, structural adaptation, and contextual explanation. These strategies ensure that technical information is communicated accurately while remaining accessible to target readers with appropriate technical backgrounds.

Case studies of technical manual translations demonstrate how domestication techniques enhance usability by adapting content organization and presentation to target audience expectations. This approach improves information retrieval and knowledge transfer, supporting effective technical communication.

### **6.4 Translation Effect Evaluation and Comparative Analysis**

Translation effect evaluation employs multiple metrics to assess the effectiveness of different strategies. Quantitative measures include readability scores, comprehension rates, and information retention levels. These objective indicators provide valuable data on the functional effectiveness of translations.

Qualitative evaluation focuses on cultural authenticity, stylistic appropriateness, and overall quality assessment. Expert panels evaluate translations against established quality criteria, providing nuanced assessments of their strengths and weaknesses.

Comparative analysis across different text types and cultural contexts reveals patterns in strategy effectiveness. The findings indicate that optimal approaches vary significantly depending on contextual factors, supporting the need for

flexible strategy selection based on specific translation requirements.

## 7. Conclusion

The research presented in this dissertation provides a comprehensive analysis of foreignization and domestication strategies in German translation from a cross-cultural perspective. Through theoretical examination, empirical investigation, and case analysis, the study contributes valuable insights into the complex dynamics of translation strategy selection and implementation.

Key findings demonstrate that effective translation requires careful consideration of multiple factors, including linguistic characteristics, cultural context, audience attributes, and communication purposes. The research confirms that neither foreignization nor domestication represents a universally optimal approach, but rather that strategic balance must be achieved based on specific translation requirements.

The dynamic balance model developed in this study offers a practical framework for guiding strategy selection, providing translators with a systematic approach to navigating the complexities of cross-cultural translation. This model acknowledges the importance of both cultural authenticity and communicative effectiveness, emphasizing the need for context-sensitive approaches that can adapt to changing translation demands.

The research has important implications for translation theory and practice. The findings challenge simplistic binary conceptions of translation strategies, promoting more nuanced understanding of the complex decision-making processes involved in cross-cultural translation. For practitioners, the study provides evidence-based guidance for strategy selection that can enhance translation quality and effectiveness.

Limitations of the research include the focus on German-English translation pairs and the relatively small sample size in some case studies. Future research could expand the scope to include other language pairs and cultural contexts, providing more comprehensive understanding of translation strategy effectiveness across different linguistic and cultural settings.

Overall, this study contributes to the advancement of translation studies by providing a more sophisticated understanding of

foreignization and domestication strategies and their application in cross-cultural communication. The research highlights the importance of context-sensitive approaches that balance cultural authenticity with communicative effectiveness, offering valuable insights for translators, educators, and scholars working in the field of translation studies.

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