# Understanding the Use of Domestication and Foreignization: A Systematic Literature Review of Translation Strategies in English–Chinese Cultural Contexts

Na Yao[1,2], Mohamed Abdou Moindjie[1], Salasiah Che Lah[1]

[1] School of Languages, Literacies & Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Minden, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

[2] Anhui University of Applied Technology, Wenzhong Lu 2600, Xin Zhan District, Hefei, Anhui Province, China

Correspondence: Mohamed Abdou Moindjie, School of Languages, Literacies & Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Minden, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. E-mail: mohdmoindjie@usm.my

## Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of this study is to critically examine the application of domestication and foreignization in English–Chinese translation, outlining how the two strategies have been theorized, applied, and debated in scholarly research. It attempts to identify their advantages and disadvantages, as well as cultural implications, and fill theoretical and empirical research gaps.

**Method:** Systematic review method was employed, reading 28 peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 and 2025. Keyword search was undertaken on databases like Scopus, Web of Science, CNKI, and Google Scholar. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines were employed to screen the studies, extracting and synthesizing the data for the evaluation of the roles and impacts of each strategy.

**Findings:** Domestication is favored where readability, access, and acceptability by readers are required, such as in the context of journalism, education, and technical translation. Foreignization is applied more frequently to literary, cultural, and historical writing where authenticity and cultural purity are priorities. Each has advantages and disadvantages, domestication being criticized for cultural dilution and foreignization for alienating readers. Both, however, contribute to the construction of cultural identity and ideological representation.

**Originality/Implications:** By situating Venuti's framework within the English–Chinese context, this study provides a comprehensive synthesis of how translation strategies mediate intercultural communication, advance theoretical debates, and inform translators, educators, and policymakers in fostering balanced cultural representation.

**Keywords:** Domestication, Foreignization, Translation Strategies, English–Chinese Translation, Cultural Representation

## 1. Introduction

Translation has always been known as more than a linguistically pure operation; it is a rich cultural practice that enables the crossing of ideologies, beliefs, and values from one language to another. where two fundamentally distinct linguistic systems and cultural traditions meet, most especially, translation is a space of negotiation between preservation and adaptation of culture (Abdullah & Tian, 2024; Shamsuddin & Raza, 2025). Theories of translation have gradually moved away from word-for-word sameness to performing just as equally broad socio-cultural and ideological horizons. Amidst such a trend, domestication and foreignization, both widely debated strategies, have discovered convergence points as prevailing methodologies (A Gang, 2021). Domestication is employed to propose adjusting the translated item to conventions and expectations of the target culture to reduce the sense of foreignness (Abdullah & Tian, 2024). Foreignization, on the other hand, preserves some of the source culture, emphasizes cultural difference, and resists total assimilation (Chen & Zeng, 2025). All of these actions reflect the ways in which translation does not just transmit meaning, but also facilitates power, identity, and global contact.

Translation is especially important in English-Chinese, given the political, cultural, and historical significance of interactions between the two language realms (LIU & GAO, 2023). English is the lingua franca of the world, but Chinese is one of the most culturally diverse languages in the world (Ping & Ni, 2025). English-Chinese translation is vital in intercultural communication in literature, journalism, diplomacy, education, and technology (An, 2024). But the translations are not so innocent; they depend on the translator's ideological position, readership, and socio-cultural environment (Chuanwei et al., 2025).

Foreignization and domestication are therefore handy tools that are handy mediating tools of cultural worth, ideological leanings, and vision across borders (Fäldt, 2024). Accordingly, the present review examines these approaches as strategies shaping intercultural communication between English and Chinese, where pronounced linguistic distance increases the need to negotiate semantic accuracy alongside cultural representation. English is an Indo-European language with greatly differing structures compared to Chinese's Sino-Tibetan linguistic system (Ping & Ni, 2025). These differences go much farther than syntax and lexis to involve idiomatic usage, rhetorical modes, and

stylistic practices (Zhang, 2021). Therefore, translators tend to be forced to balance semantic accuracy and cultural refinement. Moreover, the entanglement of global English hegemony and Chinese cultural heritage introduces one more level of complexity, forcing translators to sacrifice target audience accessibility against source culture authenticity (Wei et al., 2024).

Besides linguistic issues, cultural factors provide a major impediment to English and Chinese translation. The two societies are widely disparate in their worldviews, values, and beliefs. For example, Chinese translation cultures have historically been collectivistic, Confucian, and contextual-intelligence-based (Zhang, 2021), whereas English translation practice has been individualistic, literalistic, and based on Western philosophy (Azizov, 2024). These cultural differences make it difficult to make a decision about when to foreignize and when to domesticate a text. A foreignizing translation will preserve cultural specificity but at the risk of alienating target readership, whereas a domesticate translation will optimize readability but potentially sacrifice cultural specificity (Sadiqzade, 2025). The comparison between the strategies is an invitation to close scrutiny of the establishment of cultural negotiation in the practice of translation.

Despite added volumes of research into foreignization and domestication, there is much more to be undertaken in the shape of a comprehensive review limited to the Chinese and English settings. Most reviews are disjunctive, discussing standalone case studies such as literary translation, subtitle translation, or political discourse without incorporating dominant trends (Guo, 2023).. Theoretical descriptions of domestication and foreignization are disparate, and researchers have not been consistent in their definitions, application, or impact. Data from English and Chinese contexts is also disparate and does not enable us to determine whether, when, and why these strategies are applied (Wei et al., 2024). The fragmentation is a sign of the vast gap in the scholarship: the lack of a comprehensive review that synthesizes theoretical models, aggregates patterns of application in practice, and examines the cultural and ideological implications of translation practices in English and Chinese relations.

The objective of this study is to conduct a systematic literature review to critically review the use of domestication and foreignization as translation strategies in English and Chinese cultural contexts. Synthesizing existing scholarship, the study seeks to foreground how these strategies have been theorized, debated, and applied and what remains to be explored in future research. Lastly, the study hopes to contribute to a more complete understanding of translation as a cultural practice that not merely transcends linguistic variation but crosses cultural and ideological divides.

- To summarize existing research on domestication and foreignization in English and Chinese translation
- To study how domestication and foreignization have been conceptualized and applied in English and Chinese translation studies
- To find out the advantages, disadvantages, and criticisms of domestication and foreignization translation strategies
- To explore the cultural and ideological implications of each translation strategy
- To identify factors influencing the choice of domestication versus foreignization in English and Chinese translation

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Translation Strategy: Domestication

Domestication refers to a method of translating in which the source text is altered such that it adapts to the target culture's linguistic, cultural, and stylistic conventions (Fäldt, 2024). This strategy is geared towards making the target language sound more fluent and natural so that the readers can read something which is familiar and easy to comprehend (An, 2024). By re-framing the source material in the mode of expectation of the target audience, domestication simplifies reading and decreases cultural dissonance (Abdullah & Tian, 2024). With regard to English and Chinese translation, domestication has worked best where cultural familiarity is at the core of audience comprehension and involvement in some areas like literary translation and audiovisual translation (Ji, 2025). Through this process, the translators are able to retain the affective power of the source as they make it contextually meaningful to target audience lived experience.

Although beneficial, domestication is flawed. In its target culture orientation, it risks erasing or weakening cultural particularity filled in the source. In English to Chinese translation, over-domestication can conceal Western literary traditions or conventions, and the end result is homogenized translation (Ma, 2024). In translation from Chinese to English, culturally anchored allusions grounded on Confucianism, idioms, or metaphors that hold cultural relevance can be changed or removed, leading to a loss of cultural identity of the original (Yu & Hirzel, 2024). Such conflict between accessibility and authenticity underscores the boundaries of domestication in a manner that it is a strategy which needs serious consideration in terms of the goals of the translation task.

### 2.2 Translation Strategy: Foreignization

Foreignization is the preservation of source culture features in the translation with the preservation of a trace of original linguistic as well as cultural otherness (Zeng, 2025). Foreignization does not make the text friendly to the target audience but makes readers experience cultural difference of the source language (Zhang, 2023). Foreignization advocates for cultural authenticity and makes it possible for the target audience to be exposed to the foreign culture as found in the source text. Foreignization has been used as cultural homogenization resistance and maintenance of minority cultural identities in English and Chinese translation (Chen & Zeng, 2025). As an example, in literary translation, foreignization can maintain Chinese idioms, sayings, and traditional concepts in the process of translating to English, and thereby be able to achieve richness of the source culture (Yi et al., 2025).

Yet foreignization has its weaknesses too. While it is a guarantor of authenticity, it is an obstacle to readers' comprehension when they are not aware of the preserved cultural allusions. A Chinese-reading public would be facing untransliterated Chinese words or symbolic

allusions without direct counterparts (Zhang et al., 2024). Chinese readers, therefore, will equally struggle to read foreignized English when cultural material is preserved without explanation (Abdullah & Tian, 2024). In all those technical translating fields such as business, law, or diplomacy, foreignization can end up making things more unclear and ineffectual, a requirement in such settings. Therefore, although there is potential in foreignization to maintain culture unperturbed and resist ideology, it can lose reach and alienate some readers as well.

*2.3 Theoretical Foundation*

Theoretical foundation for the current research resides in the model formulated by Lawrence Venuti in his work "The Translator's Invisibility" published in 1995. Venuti had identified domestication and foreignization as two complementary but differing approaches shaping translation practice that also possess ideological connotations (Venuti, 2017). Venuti considers domestication to be conformity to the dominant cultural norms, which militates in favour of the target culture's power. Foreignization, however, militates against such monopoly by making visible the otherness of the source culture and thus working against ethnocentricity in translation (Shan, 2021). This has provided scholars with an instrument of analysis for the study of the cultural, political, and ideological aspects of translation outside the domain of language exchange.

Venuti's theory remains highly relevant in English and Chinese translation contexts. The large cultural and linguistic difference between the two languages makes the choice between foreignization and domestication very crucial (Sadiqzade, 2025). Translators between the two languages are constantly dealing with questions of cultural transmission, reception, and ideological alignment. Foreignization has been employed as a strategy to maintain the philosophical and cultural wealth of the original within English translations of classical Chinese literature (Abdullah & Tian, 2024). Nevertheless, domestication has been the favored method for translating Western literary or cultural works into Chinese as a means of enhancing accessibility and readership (Wei et al., 2024). Venuti's paradigm provides an account of how translation activities in turn mirror broader cultural and ideological forces, providing an appropriate foundation for an account of English-Chinese intercultural contacts.

## 3. Methodology

*3.1 Systematic Literature Review Approach*

The current research employed a systematic literature review (SLR) method to integrate existing knowledge on the domestication and foreignization strategies of English-Chinese translation. The SLR method was selected because it offers an open, repeatable, and systematic way of finding, analyzing, and summarizing existing research information (Balogun et al., 2022). Relative to traditional narrative reviews, the systematic approach reduces bias by following a clearly defined process and choosing studies that are sound and thorough enough (Brignardello-Petersen et al., 2024). The scattered nature of research in this subject renders SLR approach best suited to synthesize information, reveal patterns, and identify areas of literature gaps.

*3.2 Search Strategy*

Prolevant research was hunted in four big scientific databases: Scopus, Web of Science, CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), and Google Scholar. The databases were selected to provide broad international and Chinese scholarship coverage. Boolean operators and keywords were used to ensure maximum retrieval of pertinent studies. The key words were "domestication," "foreignization," "translation strategies," "English–Chinese translation," and "cultural translation." These keywords were also searched using common variants, including domesticate, domesticating, and domestication, as well as foreignize, foreignizing, and foreignization, together with alternative spellings such as foreignisation, to reduce the risk of excluding relevant studies. Lists of references of the articles selected were also searched to incorporate studies that may not have appeared on the database search.

*3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria*

To filter out the relevance and quality of the chosen studies, certain inclusion and exclusion criteria were used. Peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers only were evaluated for inclusion. Non-peer-reviewed materials like blogs, editorials, dissertations, and unpublished manuscripts were excluded to ensure academic rigor. In addition, studies that were not on domestication or foreignization were excluded, as were those not germane to English–Chinese translation contexts. To be included, only publications between 2015 and 2025 were considered. Excluded were studies considering other language pairs or overall translation strategies not considering domestication and foreignization.

*3.4 Screening and Selection Process*

The selection of studies was a multi-stage process according to Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. During the initial identification stage, 1,153 studies were identified from the four databases. 896 studies were left after excluding duplicates. During the screening phase, titles and abstracts were screened out, leading to the exclusion of 723 irrelevant studies to the research interest. During the eligibility phase, 173 full-text articles were screened thoroughly, and 146 of them were excluded due to factors like no emphasis on foreignization/domestication, alternative language pairs, or inadequate discussion of cultural and ideological factors. Then, 28 studies were included in the systematic review. This selection ensured that the most pertinent and highest quality studies were the foundation of the synthesis.

*3.5 Data Extraction, Coding and Synthesis Process*

Data extraction was performed in a systematic manner through a coding sheet. All the papers chosen for synthesis were grouped

according to bibliographic information (publication origin, author, year), study topic, design (methodology), kind of translation (literary, technical, audiovisual, political), and use of domestication or foreignization strategy. Cunning was also applied to evaluate the merits, demerits, and limitations of each method as they emerged in the research, as well as observations by the authors regarding cultural and ideological implications. Findings in data were synthesised thematically for the purpose of discovering trends and divergences across research. This supported the building of knowledge about how domestication and foreignization have been performed and perceived in English-Chinese translation contexts.

*3.6 Quality Assessment*

To ensure the quality and reliability of included studies, a quality assessment was carried out against criteria such as research aim clarity, appropriateness of methodology, transparency of data analysis, and pertinence to the review objectives. Each of the studies was evaluated using an unsubcomplicated checklist on these criteria. Those with poor methodological quality, providing weak evidence, or with poor clarity were excluded during eligibility. This mechanism guaranteed that the last 28 studies to be included in the review were not only relevant to the research objectives but also methodologically sound.

*3.7 PRISMA Flow Diagram*

The PRISMA flow diagram was used to depict the process of study identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. 1,153 studies were found in databases. After duplicates and title/abstract screening had been removed, 173 full-texts were evaluated for eligibility. 28 studies were finally included in the synthesis. The PRISMA diagram (Figure 1) provides a clear depiction of the study selection process, thus enabling replicability and transparency.
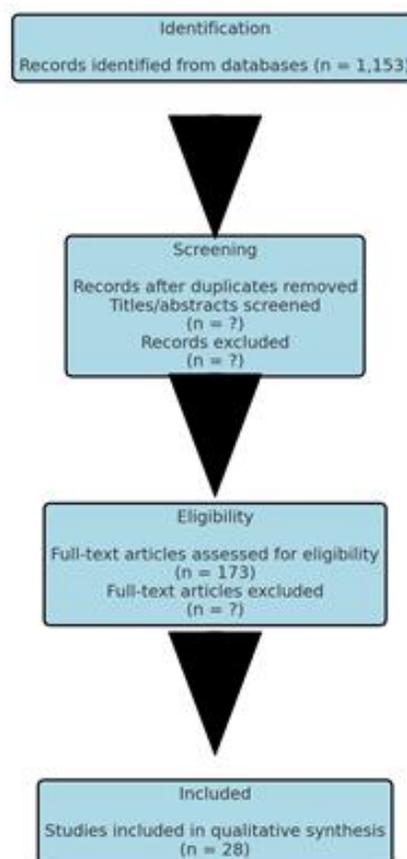


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

## 4. Findings

*4.1 Overview of Selected Studies*

The final review included 28 studies published between 2015 and 2025, representing a ten-year span of scholarship on domestication and foreignization in English–Chinese translation contexts. The distribution of studies shows that early contributions appeared around 2015–2017 with a steady increase from 2018 onwards, reaching a peak between 2020 and 2024. This trend suggests a growing academic interest in the cultural, linguistic, and ideological dimensions of translation, particularly in the wake of intensified global communication and China's expanding cultural influence worldwide. The selected works include both empirical case studies and theoretical reflections,

covering a range of text types such as literary works, classical Chinese novels, audiovisual translation, corporate communication, and political discourse. Table 1 further shows that publication activity was concentrated in the later part of the period. 16 of the 28 included studies were published between 2021 and 2024, and one additional study was published in 2025. Earlier contributions were more sporadic, with seven studies published between 2015 and 2017, two studies in 2018, and no included study in 2019. This distribution suggests growing scholarly attention to domestication and foreignization in English and Chinese translation contexts in recent years.

Across the literature, general trends point to the dominance of applied studies, particularly those examining literary translation and subtitle translation, where the tension between cultural accessibility and authenticity is most visible. While early studies were often limited to single case texts, more recent research explores comparative approaches, neologisms, idiomatic translation, and translator visibility, signaling a diversification of focus. Furthermore, several studies highlight the ideological undertones of strategy choice, where domestication often aligns with accessibility and reader-friendliness, while foreignization is more closely associated with cultural preservation and authenticity. This reflects the dual role of translation: facilitating intercultural communication while also preserving distinct cultural identity (Le, 2024).

In terms of frequency of strategy usage, domestication appears more frequently in contexts such as subtitle translation, movie titles, and corporate communication, where fluency and accessibility for target audiences are prioritized. By contrast, foreignization is more prevalent in the translation of classical Chinese literature, idioms, and philosophical texts, where maintaining cultural and historical authenticity is valued. Several studies adopt a balanced approach, employing both strategies flexibly depending on textual features and intended readership. Over time, there has been a discernible shift toward integrated or hybrid strategies, indicating that rigid adherence to one approach is increasingly being replaced by situational, purpose-driven choices. This reflects the recognition in contemporary scholarship that domestication and foreignization are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary strategies that must be navigated carefully in the English–Chinese cultural translation space (Tian & Abdullah, 2024).

Table 1. Selected Studies on Domestication and Foreignization in English–Chinese Cultural Contexts

| No. | Title / Focus | Context / Corpus | Strategy Orientation | Author(s) & Year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Application of Domestication and Foreignization in Chinese Literature | Chinese literature | Both | (A Gang, 2021) |
| 2 | Domestication & foreignization of culture-specific items in Tayeb Salih's **Mawsim Alhijrah ila Alshamal** | Arabic–English novel translation | Both | (Al Salmi, 2018) |
| 3 | Domestication & Foreignization in Chinese Translation of **Friends** subtitles | Audiovisual translation | Domestication | (Dong & Li, 2021) |
| 4 | Translator's (In)visibility in Goldblatt's **Red Sorghum** | Modern Chinese literature | Foreignization | (Fang, 2024) |
| 5 | Postcolonial study: **Of Mice and Men** Indonesian translations | Literary translation | Both | (Fitriyantisyam & Munandar, 2021) |
| 6 | Strategies in tourism brochures | Tourism texts | Domestication | (Fuadi, 2016) |
| 7 | Strategies in English translations of **Liao Zhai Zhi Yi** | Classical Chinese literature | Both | (Gong, 2017) |
| 8 | Translation of Chinese neologisms | Contemporary neologisms (2018–2021) | Both | (Guo, 2023) |
| 9 | Strategy choice in two English versions of **Honglou Meng** (**Dream of the Red Chamber**) | Classical Chinese novel | Foreignization | (Hu, 2020) |
| 10 | Bridging **The Symposium** and **Niezi** through imagery | Cross-cultural philosophical texts | Foreignization | (Hui, 2016) |
| 11 | Measuring domestication & foreignization | Theoretical framework | Both | (Kudashev, 2017) |
| 12 | Translation of Mo Yan's **Frog** | Modern Chinese novel | Both | (Li, 2022) |
| 13 | Subtitle translation of **Hi, Mom** | Audiovisual translation | Domestication | (LIU & GAO, 2023) |
| 14 | Movie titles' EC translation | Film titles | Domestication | (Mai, 2017) |
| 15 | Idioms in Yang's **Dream of the Red Chamber** | Classical Chinese idioms | Foreignization | (Ping & Ni, 2025) |
| 16 | Strategies in English & Chinese movie titles | Film titles | Both | (Shan, 2021) |
| 17 | **Beloved** in Chinese translation | Cross-cultural novel | Both | (Shen, 2015) |
| 18 | Translating metaphors in satirical literature | Satirical Chinese texts | Foreignization | (Tian et al., 2024) |
| 19 | Literary translation application | General literary works | Both | (Tian, 2023) |
| 20 | Indonesian cultural words in English translation | Literary translation | Both | (TOER'S, 2018) |
| 21 | Strategies in translation of government report | Political discourse | Domestication | (Yan, 2020) |
| 22 | Strategies in cross-cultural perspective | Theoretical / multiple texts | Both | (Yang, 2017) |

| 23 | **The Secret Garden** in English–Chinese children's literature | Children's literature | Domestication | (Yin, 2023) |
| 24 | Interlingual subtitling: systematic review | Audiovisual translation | Both | (Yonamine, 2022) |
| 25 | English translation of Chinese film titles | Film titles | Domestication | (Yuan, 2022) |
| 26 | **Journey to the West** translations | Classical Chinese literature | Foreignization | (Zeyu, 2023) |
| 27 | English versions of Huawei's New Year messages | Corporate / business texts | Domestication | (Zhang & Xu, 2022) |
| 28 | **Lun Yu** (Confucius' Analects) translations | Classical Chinese philosophy | Foreignization | (Zhang, 2023) |

*4.2 Application of Domestication in English–Chinese Contexts*

Domestication has frequently been applied in English–Chinese translation to adapt foreign texts into a form that is linguistically smooth, culturally familiar, and easily accessible to target readers. This strategy is often chosen when the goal of translation is to maximize reader comprehension and reduce cultural barriers, especially in mass communication domains such as film subtitles, tourism texts, corporate messages, and children's literature. For instance, (Dong & Li, 2021) found that domestication was widely used in translating the sitcom *Friends* into Chinese subtitles, as it ensured cultural jokes and idiomatic expressions were reshaped into equivalents understandable to Chinese viewers. Similarly, (Yuan, 2022) showed that in translating Chinese film titles into English, domestication helped to make titles resonate with global audiences, highlighting marketability and immediate recognition. In children's literature, (Yin, 2023) demonstrated that domestication was necessary in the Chinese translation of *The Secret Garden* to align cultural values with child readers' experiences. These examples illustrate that domestication is often preferred when fluency, readability, and accessibility are prioritized, ensuring that cultural nuances do not obstruct communication.

Though popular, domestication has its criticisms and shortfalls. Domestication is criticized on the grounds that it threatens to erase or simplify cultural difference to the extent that (Venuti, 2017) described as the "translator's invisibility." In favor of fluency, translations can sacrifice authenticity and curtail chances of enriching cultures (Shen, 2015). In the instances of official documents or philosophical writings, over-domestication distorts meanings or shifts ideological intent (Yan, 2020). Further, scholars like (Fang, 2024) argue that domestication tends to promote ethnocentricity, where the values of the target culture take center stage and drive the source culture to the margins. In practice, domestication can also produce generic translations that are non-unique, particularly in literary and historical materials where cultural authenticity is of the highest importance (Gong, 2017). While domestication accommodates accessibility and audience acceptance, its downsides are that it leans towards assimilation over culture preservation. Thus, research also states that domestication is most effective in entertainment, business, and education contexts but has strong theoretical resistance to restricting cultural diversity in the context of translation.

*4.3 Use of Foreignization in English–Chinese Situations*

Foreignization, on the other hand, has been used in English–Chinese translation when source culture identity and authenticity are prioritized over readability at the moment. It is often used in literary, philosophical, and historical writing where cultural specificity is central to meaning. (Fang, 2024), for instance, pointed out that Howard Goldblatt's translations of Mo Yan's novels, such as Red Sorghum, utilized foreignization to preserve cultural imagery and metaphors representative of Chinese countryside life. In the same vein, (Tian et al., 2024) highlighted the importance of foreignization in translating metaphors in Chinese satirical texts, contending that it helped to maintain the stinging cultural critique embedded in the original text. Foreignization also best applies to ancient works like Journey to the West (Zeyu, 2023) and Lun Yu (Zhang, 2023), where cultural and philosophical values are susceptible to weakening if translated too smoothly. These researches prove that foreignization is usually opted for when ideological correctness, authenticity, and cultural maintenance are valued even if it means some reading difficulty for the public.

However, foreignization is also subject to criticisms and pragmatic constraints. Readers who are used to fluency tend to find foreignized translations difficult, foreign, or unapproachable (Yonamine, 2022). Over-foreignization can also produce cultural distance, minimizing the involvement of the audience with the text, especially in mass communication situations like film or business translation (Shan, 2021). From a critical view, (Hui, 2016) contended that foreignization has the unintended consequence of exoticizing source cultures, depicting them as unchanging or "other," not dynamic and developing. In addition, while foreignization serves to preserve cultural authenticity, it may be commercially unviable in the case of subtitle translation or tour brochures, where there is a need for instantaneous intelligibility (Fuadi, 2016; LIU & GAO, 2023). Research consequently indicates that foreignization is most effective in environments where the reader is engaged to transact in depth with the source culture, e.g., literary, philosophical, and historical translations. Its weakness occurs in popular culture and everyday communication, where accessibility comes to be prioritized over authenticity. Foreignization is a highly effective technique for cultural conservation and ideological transmission, but its vulnerabilities occur in balancing reception with authenticity in English–Chinese settings.

**5. Critical Discussion**

The translation study of domestication and foreignization in English–Chinese translation reveals that these techniques are complementary but also frequently conflicting methods. Domestication is mainly used when the aim of translation is to increase fluency, accessibility, and ease of comprehension among the target readers (Dong & Li, 2021; Yuan, 2022). It enables the translated message to read smoothly within the linguistic and cultural standards of the target culture, thus being effective in entertainment media, children's books, and business

communication (Yin, 2023; Zhang & Xu, 2022). Despite this, critics protest that domestication threatens to undermine meaning and destroy cultural identity through its focus on target culture readability at the expense of source culture authenticity (Fang, 2024; Shen, 2015). Foreignization, then, is most frequently used when the translator seeks to maintain the cultural integrity, distinctiveness, and ideological values of the source text. This can be seen in translations of classics from China, satire, and philosophy where cultural specificity is a must (Tian et al., 2024; Zeyu, 2023). Its strength is that it exposes readers to foreign cultural structures, fosters intercultural understanding and maintains authenticity, but its weakness is that it has the potential to alienate readers without knowledge of the cultural context (Yonamine, 2022). The literature suggests that while domestication emphasizes readability and accessibility, foreignization emphasizes authenticity and cultural preservation, yet both attract criticism for overemphasizing one side of the translation spectrum at the expense of the other.

Both approaches are closely related to the theory of Lawrence Venuti (1995), according to which domestication and foreignization are not technical devices of translation but ideological decisions influencing the translator's visibility (Venuti, 2017). Venuti complained about the dominance of domestication in Anglo-American translation theory as a means of rendering the translator invisible and ethnocentrism naturalized. In the English–Chinese context, this theoretical stance is prominent. (Fang, 2024) on Goldblatt's transnational translations of Mo Yan and (Shen, 2015) on Toni Morrison's Beloved illustrate how foreignization highlights the translators' active labor in cultural mediation by keeping uncodable cultural references. At the same time, the heavy reliance on domestication in film subtitles and corporate messaging (Dong & Li, 2021; Zhang & Xu, 2022) confirms Venuti's claim that domestication is often the default strategy when readability is prioritized. Venuti's theory thus helps to frame the choice between the two strategies not as a binary of correct or incorrect, but as a reflection of broader ideological, cultural, and commercial priorities. The theoretical basis also explains that the strategies are not value-neutral but influence the way cultures are represented, interpreted, and indeed consumed by people, reinforcing or subverting prevalent ideologies in translation practice.

The cultural and ideological differences of foreignization and domestication run deep, essentially with respect to representation and identity. Domestication, while securing understandability, can homogenize cultural difference and strengthen target culture dominance, suppressing source culture identity (Shen, 2015). In Western sitcoms translated into Chinese and domesticated for example, cultural humor and colloquialisms were made local to such a degree that foreign cultural identity was all but imperceptible (Dong & Li, 2021). Foreignization, on the other hand, celebrates difference and refuses accommodation, giving source cultures freedoms to assert their identity in intercultural communicative spheres. Foreignization upheld such unique rhetorical patterns that refused Western explanatory dominance with respect to satirical Chinese writing, for example, that was critically explored by (Tian et al., 2024), with foreignization preserving cultural identity assertions with respect to metaphor translations contained in such writing. Here again, however, cultural identity reinforcement with respect to foreignization risks exoticizing and "othering" source culture, presenting it once again as unapproachable or inert (Hui, 2016). Inasmuch, therefore, while cultural adaptation and assimilation converge with domestication, cultural maintenance and resistance converge with foreignization. In either case, therefore, both strategies take ideological positions: domestication reflects conformity with dominant norms, while foreignization reflects cultural assertive action and ideology of resistance, giving their adoption politically and socially significant legitimacy with respect to the English–Chinese field of translations.

The choice of applying domestication or foreignization is mediated by several interacting factors, such as cultural, political, textual, media-related, and purposive considerations. Culturally, Confucian collectivism in China values community and harmony over individuality and tends to opt for domestication to accommodate texts to common social norms and values (Hu, 2020; Yuan, 2022). Western translation environments composed of individualism, on the other hand, might accept foreignization to promote cultural diversity and authenticity (Fang, 2024). Politically, state regulations and ideologies of nationalism in China can influence translation tactics, especially when cultural or ideological sensitive content comes into play. For instance, (Yan, 2020) demonstrated that for official government reports to be translated, domestication was chosen to conform to ideological consistency with national policy documents. Textual variables also decisively play their part: philosophical and literature works, where cultural authenticity is of crucible importance, tip the balance toward foreignization (Zeyu, 2023; Zhang, 2023), while technical and business writing favors domestication for communicative efficiency (Fuadi, 2016; Zhang & Xu, 2022). Media type further conditions the decision—subtitles, ads, and tourist brochures often require domestication for instant understandability (Dong & Li, 2021; Fuadi, 2016), while novels and historically contextualized writing permit foreignization to conserve depth and background (Tian, 2023). Lastly, translation purpose—entertainment, cultural safeguard, academic scholarship, or political diplomacy—definitively dictates the level of balance between domestication and foreignization. These considerations confirm that not only is translation tactic a linguistic decision but one that is mediated by wider sociocultural, ideological, and communicative forces.

Although domestication and foreignization are still at the heart of debates in translation, other strategies and theory models also feature prominently in transcending linguistic and cultural differences. Hybrid models, for example, overlap between domestication and foreignization to attain readability together with cultural safeguarding, especially in literary versions where aspects are localized and others preserved (LIU & GAO, 2023; Mai, 2017). Skopos theory, coined by (Vermeer & Chesterman, 2021), moves the attention away from obligatory strategy selection to that of purpose (Skopos) of translation, proposing that the most appropriate strategy is reliant on that of future function of that textual object to be translated and that from that, appropriate strategies of control and adaptation can be applied accordingly. In English-Chinese translations, Skopos has been utilized in subtitle translations, whereby entertainment value and cultural transmission balance demands functional adaptation (Yonamine, 2022). Functionalist frameworks move further from there from that perspective, orienting communicative function above dichotomic opposition of strategies, whereas cultural adaptation frameworks allow translators to translate selectively based on anticipation of target market with maintaining hard cultural values (Fuadi, 2016; Tian, 2023).

These alternative frameworks emphasize that though domestication and foreignization are strong, each alone cannot sufficiently account for complexities of translation practice. Instead, they compete with other models that are similarly related but provide more situational and flexible solutions, highlighting integrative observations in translation studies beyond dichotomical opposition proposed by (Venuti, 2017).

## 6. Implications of the Study

### 6.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this review lend weight to the theoretical discussion of translation strategy by demonstrating how the deployment of domestication and foreignization in English–Chinese settings enhances our understanding of translation as an ideological and linguistic practice. The study refines existing theoretical perspectives, including Venuti's visibility framework, Schleiermacher's dichotomy of "bringing the reader to the author" versus "bringing the author to the reader," and Nida's principle of dynamic equivalence, by revealing how these ideas operate differently in Chinese cultural and political contexts (Venuti, 2017). In particular, the criticism does point to contradictions between Western theory—that is prone to promoting foreignization as a counterpoint to ethnocentrism—and Chinese practice, which consistently imposes domestication to enable harmony, readability, and state discursive alignment (Fang, 2024; Yan, 2020). This means that although Western theories offer an excellent premise, they are not applicable everywhere without adaptation to local ideological and cultural contexts. In addition, the incorporation of Skopos theory into the analysis brings to the fore that the function and aim of translation have an equally important impact on shaping the choice of strategy. Through the integration of these views, this research not only explains how domestication and foreignization are negotiated in the English–Chinese context but also provides a theoretical platform for subsequent studies to build more sophisticated, hybrid, and culture-adjusted translation models.

### 6.2 Practical Implications

In addition to theoretical contributions, this research has significant practical implications for translators, teachers, policymakers, and cultural institutions. At the national level, successful translation policy plays an important role in determining Chinese culture's representation around the world and the way Western thought is integrated into Chinese society. To policymakers, the research illustrates that translation is a powerful tool of cultural diplomacy by which soft power may be spread and facilitate ideological storytelling. Professors can help by incorporating into translator training programs the controversies surrounding foreignization and domestication in order to prepare students with critical abilities to make strategic choices between accessibility and authenticity. Professional translators, the evidence concludes, are reminded of the necessity of balancing cultural loyalty and reader understanding since neither foreignization nor domestication can satisfy all demands on translation. In order to prevent such neutrality, translators are rather asked to use context-sensitive methods that consider intended communicative intent as well as socio-political context of the translation. In its interaction with all these different stakeholders, the review highlights the key place that is occupied by translation in making cultural exchange and identity possible, and outlines a utilitarian model for how translation strategy can be constructed in order to be both responsive to audience need and sensitive to cultural authenticity.

## 7. Limitation and Future Research

While the present study offers insightful evidence of foreignization and domestication procedures in English-Chinese translation, there are some gaps in the existing literature that have to be acknowledged. Much of the writing is extremely theoretical, relying on the work of Venuti and comparative frameworks, but there is no large-scale empirical data to underpin assertions about the reception of readers and effects on culture (Venuti, 2017). Much of this work is also based on micro case studies of literary or political texts, and it is not known whether those represent more standard translation practice in other genres such as technical writing, audiovisual, or internet media. Also, while the binarism of domestication vs. foreignization is a helpful shortcut, it risks being overly reductionist in the face of actual practice's complexities, which typically falls somewhere in between or interpolates among hybrid strategies (Tian et al., 2024). They believe that the discipline requires less of a monolithic methodological base and greater breadth to more accurately encompass the changing realities of translation in a more globalized and electronically interlinked society.

Subsequent research would then need to be more longitudinal and comparative in nature because it would allow researchers to see how translation strategy unfolds over time and across various political or cultural environments. Audience-oriented research, for instance, would enable us to gain a better sense of how Chinese and English readers themselves react and receive different ways in different manners to different translation choices, thus bridging the theory-practice reception divide. Furthermore, greater machine translation and artificial intelligence capability needs to be taken into account because these technologies can facilitate domesticating or foreignizing tendencies that redefine translation norms (Chuanwei et al., 2025). Hybrid designs combining corpus studies, interviewing, and reception studies would also provide stronger insights into strategy selection. Lastly, one has to look beyond narrow binary models and search for more general, hybrid, and functionalist models of translation that consider purpose, context, and medium. These paradigms will not merely expand on current theory but provide useful suggestions to translators, policymakers, and translator educators on how to manage increasingly complicated intercultural transactions.

## 8. Conclusion

The study scrutinized critically the application of foreignization and domestication as basic translation norms in the English-Chinese cultural context and how they are used, function, are weak and strong, and have more cultural importance. The study shows that domestication would be utilized whenever readability, usability, and readers' familiarity were crucial, particularly in education, journalism,

and technical translation scenarios where acceptance and clarity are significant. Foreignization is more common in cultural magazines, historical prose, and literary fiction, where chief purposes are foreignness maintenance, cultural nuance preservation, and culture standardization resistance. Although domestication has been criticized for diluting foreignness in texts, it is responsible for facilitating intercultural communication; foreignization, however, although occasionally perceived to be alienating or too literal, is most important in maintaining cultural identity and resisting cultural imperialism. Combined, these approaches demonstrate translation is not simply a linguistic process; it is an ideological act that determines how cultures understand and portray themselves in intercultural contact. Based on synthesis of findings from 28 studies, this research stresses that translators must seriously reflect upon values, political ideology, genre, and purpose when choosing between methodologies because each has significant effects on reception and identity formation. Finally, the study makes a unique contribution to translation theory by situating Venuti's model within the context of English-Chinese relations, bridging Western theoretical discourse and Chinese cultural practice, and presenting an advanced realization of how translation strategies can function as mechanisms of cultural diplomacy, identity negotiation, and intercultural relationship mediation.

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## Authors' contributions

Na Yao contributed to the conceptualization of the study, developed the methodology, and wrote the original draft of the manuscript. Dr. Mohamed Abdou Moindjie contributed to the conceptualization of the study and was responsible for review and editing of the manuscript as well as supervision of the research. Dr. Salasiah Che Lah contributed through review and editing of the manuscript and supervision of the study. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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## Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence (AI) or AI-assisted technologies were used to generate, analyze, or interpret data in this study. All substantive ideas, arguments, analyses, and conclusions presented in this work are entirely the responsibility of the authors. The authors take full accountability for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the content.

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