

# STRATEGIES APPLIED IN THE VIETNAMESE-ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF TERMS OF ADDRESS IN NGUYEN HUY THIEP'S SHORT STORIES

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**Abstract:** This paper resulted from my study into the translation of Vietnamese terms of address (TODs) used in three stories written by Nguyen Huy Thiep, namely *A drop of blood* (ADOB), *Lessons from the Countryside* (LFTC) and *Remembrance of the Countryside* (ROTC). The aim is to investigate the strategies adopted in translating these terms and how effective they are in conveying the nuance of the terms. Analyses revealed that most of the translations were strictly adherent to the target language (TL)-oriented side. The strategies, in most cases, resulted in the incomplete conveyance of the nuance of the terms, and the effects on the readers were also not similar to what received by the readers of the source language. Therefore, the translator should attend more closely to the linguistic and cultural elements of both the target texts (TTs) and the source texts (STs) to ensure the complete conveyance of both meanings and implications of the terms.

**Key words:** Domestication, foreignization, literary translation, translation strategies, Vietnamese terms of address

## 1. Introduction

Within the expansion of intercultural communication, the interaction between people from different nations and cultures is becoming more frequent. In communications, it is inevitable to use TODs which differ because of the cultural diversity. TODs refer to the collocutor; hence, contain a strong element of deixis and are the reflection of national cultures (Braun, 1988). During thousands of years of development, Vietnam has formed a sophisticated addressing system, while TODs in Western countries are relatively simple. The Vietnamese system of TODs including kinship terms, personal pronouns (PPs), proper names and occupational titles is significantly different from and much more diverse than the English system (Luong, 1990). Hence, to specify exactly the relation between people, it is of importance for the translators to consider carefully the linguistic and cultural features of both the original and the translated texts.

It is generally accepted that TODs have two functions. The first one is 'vocative' by which TODs are used to call someone directly, and the second is 'referential' by which they are used to refer to people (Trudgill, 1983). Within the scope of this thesis, TODs are chosen on the basis of these two functions. The study focuses on the strategies used in the translation of three short stories by Nguyen Huy Thiep to examine the effectiveness of these strategies in conveying the rich nuance of the terms from Vietnamese into English. The three STs are taken from the book entitled *The collection of Nguyen Huy Thiep Short Stories*, and the translations are from the book named *Crossing the River: Short Fiction by Nguyen Huy Thiep*, edited by Nguyen and Sachs.

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The aim of the research is not only to describe how the strategies are used, but also to raise the need for translators of Vietnamese-English literature texts, particularly in treating TODs, to consider carefully the linguistic and cultural features of both the original and the translated texts. During the analysis process, the similarities and differences regarding semantic features between Vietnamese and English TODs are clarified before the considerations and generalizations for the translations of Nguyen's stories are proposed.

The research is to seek answer to the following questions:

1. What types of TODs are used in *A Drop of Blood*, *Lessons from the Countryside*, and *Remembrance of the Countryside*?
2. Which strategies are used in the Vietnamese-English translation of TODs in three above stories?
3. What degree are these strategies effective in conveying the nuances of the terms?

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Classification of Vietnamese terms of address

According to Luong (1990, p. 2), the Vietnamese system of TODs is much more diversified and intricate compared to the English system. The English *I* and *You*, for instance, “have as their counterparts in the Vietnamese system dozens of linguistic forms of various grammatical subclasses.” Cooke (1968) and Luong (1990) classify Vietnamese TODs into four types: personal pronouns, kinship terms, job/title terms and personal names. Adapted from the classification by Cooke (1968, p. 186-193) and Luong (1990, p. 124-128), the system of Vietnamese PPs is summarized in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Vietnamese personal pronouns

Persons			Number
First-person pronouns (Addressor) (English: “I/we”)	Second-person pronouns (Addressee) (English: “you”)	Third-person pronouns (English: “he, she, it/they”)	
<i>Toi</i>		<i>Han, No, Y</i>	<b>Singular</b>
<i>Tao</i>	<i>May, Mi</i>		
<i>To</i>			
<i>Ta</i>			
<i>Minh</i>			
	<i>Minh</i>	<i>Chung no, Chung, Ho</i>	<b>Plural</b>
<i>Chung toi</i>			
<i>Chung tao</i>	<i>Chung may, Bay, Chung bay</i>		
<i>Ta/ Chung ta</i>			
<i>Chung to, Chung minh, Minh</i>			

As shown in Table 1, there are five common pronouns for first-person singular reference. Their corresponding plural forms are created by adding *chung* to the singular forms. *Minh* and *ta*, meanwhile, can also be used in plural reference. The terms *chung minh* and *chung ta* are inclusive of the addressee, and hence mean *you* and *I*. *Chung toi*, *chung tao*, *chung to*, in contrast, refer to a group containing the speaker and some people other than the addressee, hence are exclusive and mean *I* and *he, she, or they* (Cooke, 1968, p. 198).

Regarding the second-person pronouns, there are three singulars and three corresponding plural forms. Not all the first-person pronouns have their corresponding pronouns in the second-person system. One point of noticing is that *tao* can be used reciprocally with second-person pronouns (*may* or *mi*) while others are commonly paired with job/title terms, kinship terms, or even personal names (Ngo, 2006). The third-person pronouns include three commonly used pronouns in singular forms and three in plural. Based on this description, it is clear that the relationship between English PPs and Vietnamese PPs is one-to-many.

In Vietnam, kinship terms, used pronominally, play a much more important role in Vietnamese system of TODs than the PPs (Cu Dinh Tu, 2001; Luong, 1990). Cooke (1968) defines kinship terms as “nouns, most of which have a primary meaning denoting blood kin” (p. 125). Luong (1990) observes that not only are they used for third-party reference, but also pervasively for reference and self-reference among related and non-related people, to express a wide range of meaning, from disrespect to great respect, and from an extreme distance to a high level of intimacy.

Vietnamese terms have their equivalents with most of the kinship terms available in English (Ngo, 2006), however, there are many Vietnamese terms for which no English equivalents can be found, such as those translated as *younger uncle*, *older aunt*, *maternal brother*, *female cousin*, to name just a few. It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a detailed explanation of all the Vietnamese kinship terms. Adapted from Cooke (1968, p. 214-219), Table 2 summarizes the meanings and usages of the Vietnamese kinship terms. The list is representative rather than exhaustive.

**Table 2.** Vietnamese kinship terms

Kinship terms	Literal meaning	Usages		
		Usages in both first and second persons	Usages in first person	Usages in second person
<i>Co</i>	Great-great grandparent	Very old person addressing or addressed by a much younger person		To a very old person
<i>Cu</i>	Great grandparent	Very old person addressing or addressed by a much younger person		To a very old person
<i>Ong</i>	Grandfather (Great uncle)	Male of about grandparent's age addressing or addressed by young person	Male (arrogant)	Terms among male equals
<i>Ba</i>	Grandmother (Great aunt, Ranking step mother)	Female of about grandparent's age addressing or addressed by young person	Female (arrogant)	Terms among female equals
<i>Bo/Cha/Tia</i>	Father	Father addressing or addressed by offspring		Young man (humorous or ironical tone)
<i>Me/Ma/Bam</i>	Mother	Mother addressing or addressed by offspring		Young woman (humorous or ironical tone)
<i>Bac</i>	Parent's elder sibling or cousin	Person of parent's age or above addressing or addressed by young person		Person of speaker's age or above
<i>Co</i>	Father's younger sister/female	Woman of parent's age or under addressing or addressed by child		Woman younger than speaker

	cousin			
<i>Chu</i>	Father's younger brother/male cousin	Man of parent's age or under addressing or addressed by child		Man younger than speaker
<i>Cau</i>	Mother's younger brother/male cousin	Man of parent's age or under addressing or addressed by child		Terms among intimate friends Man younger than speaker
<i>Anh</i>	Elder brother/male cousin	Husband addressing or addressed by wife Older male addressing or addressed by younger person	Older to Younger	General terms for male equals
<i>Chi</i>	Elder sister /female cousin	Older female addressing or addressed by younger person	Older to Younger	General terms for female equals
<i>Em</i>	Younger sibling/ cousin	Wife addressing or addressed by husband Younger female addressing or addressed by older person	Younger to older	Man and woman younger than speaker (intimate situations)
<i>Con</i>	Child/ offspring	To or by person about the same age as offspring		
<i>Chau</i>	Grandchild, nephew, niece	To or by person much younger than speaker		

In addition to PPs and kinship terms, Vietnamese people also use job/title terms, such as *bac si* (“doctor”), *dong chi* (“comrade”) and personal names as means of address and reference. As Luong (1990) observes, occupational titles, in Vietnam, are used to address others and refer to oneself more commonly than in English. As indicated by Jones (1970, p. 217), the similarities between Vietnamese addressing system and other addressing systems in mainland Southeast Asia, such as the emphasis on age, social rank, and status, are obviously cultural factors extending to all Asia; nevertheless, the ways of how they are handled are unique to each. Therefore, the study of TODs contributes to revealing the cultural values, beliefs, and attitudes of the country that they originate and of the people who use these terms.

## 2.2. Domesticating and foreignizing strategies

### 2.2.1. The domesticating strategy

Venuti's theory is often compared with that of Nida. They are different from each other in their responses to equivalence, particularly on the functions of translation and aspects of acceptable translation. The ‘domesticating’ strategy involves “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values” (Venuti, 1995, p. 20). It, therefore, allows the tailoring of the source message to both linguistic and cultural expectations of the receptors. Its typical characteristics as defined by Venuti (1995) include ‘fluency’, ‘transparency’, ‘naturalness’, and ‘readability’. According to Nida (1964, p. 167), naturalness is the central element of this type of translation; it creates an impression that the text is no longer a translation, but appears as if it is written in the TL. This approach allows the alliterations or adaptations of the SL terms, such as “shifting word order, using verbs in place of nouns, and substituting nouns for pronouns” (Nida, 1964, p. 159). If there are some linguistic and cultural elements in the ST alien to the TL readers and cultures, they are likely to be avoided in the TT.

This translation approach is the predominant mode in Anglo-Saxon cultures since English readers seem reluctant to read those that appear to be translations (Bassnett, 1997). Venuti also asserts that fluency and naturalness have become expected modes of translation, especially in Anglo-American cultures, with the fluency and domestication being the recurrent themes of commendation. Within the prevalence of domestication, Venuti points to an issue of translation, referring to it as the invisibility of translator.

### **2.2.2. *The foreignizing strategy***

In the contemporary translation field, Nida is seen as the person who initiates the controversy between ‘domesticating’ and ‘foreignizing’ (mainly in his translation of Bible). He is regarded as the representative of those supporting ‘domesticating’ translation. Venuti, meanwhile, is the spokesman of those favoring the ‘foreignizing’ strategy. This strategy puts the “ethno deviant pressure on TL cultural values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the target reader abroad” (Venuti, 1995, p. 20). Therefore, the translator intentionally disrupts the linguistic and cultural expectation of the TL to signify the otherness of the translation.

Venuti emphasizes that ‘foreignizing’ is not the same as ‘literalism’. Foreignness in terms of linguistic and culture can be criteria to judge whether the translation is domesticated or foreignized. Literal translation, meanwhile, is the technique dealing mostly with the linguistic forms (Yang, 2010). In ‘foreignizing’ strategy, the translator is expected to keep the linguistic and cultural difference of the SL by seeking the “purely formal replacement of one word or phrase in the SL by another in the TL” (Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 40). Nida (1964, p. 159) refers to it as ‘gloss translation’, which is designed to allow the TL reader to fully identify himself as a person in the SL context and to fully understand the customs and means of expressions of the SL. According to Yang (2010), ‘foreignizing’ translation can inform the readers of the SL culture, but the alien cultural and linguistic features might cause the information overload to the target readers. This type of translation may require footnotes to make the text easier to comprehend, and such footnotes might disrupt the fluidity of text; hence, they are not commonly utilized.

Venuti’s ‘domestication’ and ‘foreignization’ are not the approaches without any drawbacks. According to Tymoczko (2000), Venuti’s concepts are not clearly defined. She adds that if necessary and sufficient criteria are not established, how can the writer take it to achieve the desired result. Tymoczko indicates that Venuti’s project seems to lose much of its importance if we end up seeing the ‘domestication/foreignizing’ as a universal standard of evaluation. Venuti, of course, does not frame his study in this way; he sees his approach both as a potential basis for the translation practice and as an analytical tool in relation to contemporary and historical translation texts by other translators.

Baker (2010, p. 115), meanwhile, concerns that the translated texts might contain both domesticating and foreignizing elements on the same level which are likely to be disguised by Venuti’s generalizations; hence, she points out the problems of using dichotomous systems in translation studies. In the second edition of *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*, Venuti (2008) asserts that his system is not a true dichotomy. The two terms “do not establish a neat binary opposition that can simply be superimposed on ‘fluent’ and ‘resistant’ discursive strategies” (p. 19). In this study, I apply Venuti’s approach to individual translation choices, considering it as one of many possible considerations to minimize the problems inherent in a dichotomy (accepting that the approach is indeed dichotomous).

### 3. Methods and materials

In doing this study, I selected three stories written by Nguyen Huy Thiep and their translations extracted from the book *Crossing the River: Short Fiction by Nguyen Huy Thiep*. The STs were scanned to locate the TODs used in dialogs, and then the English versions were scanned to determine the parallel expressions. TODs were identified when they fitted criteria and classifications of Cooke (1968) and Luong (1990). Once one term was detected, I rechecked its original meaning in *A Vietnamese Dictionary* (Hoang et al., 2003) and the meaning of the translated term in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 8<sup>th</sup>* (OALD) (2010). During this process, 853 TODs were found in the STs, which were then classified into five types: kinship terms, personal pronouns, proper names, occupational titles and others. After all the TODs in dialogs of the STs and their equivalents in the TTs were picked up, they were classified into different columns (TODs were written in bold). Conclusions were drawn based on the tables to decide which types of TODs are popular in the STs and which strategy dominates in the translation of these Vietnamese terms into English. Finally, based on how effective these strategies are in conveying the nuances of the terms, I proposed the suggested strategies.

### 4. Findings

#### 4.1. Translation strategies for each type of terms of address

Table 3 below is the summary of translation strategies for each type of TODs identified in the STs, with the data being ordered by descending frequency.

**Table 3.** Summary of translation strategies for each type of terms of address

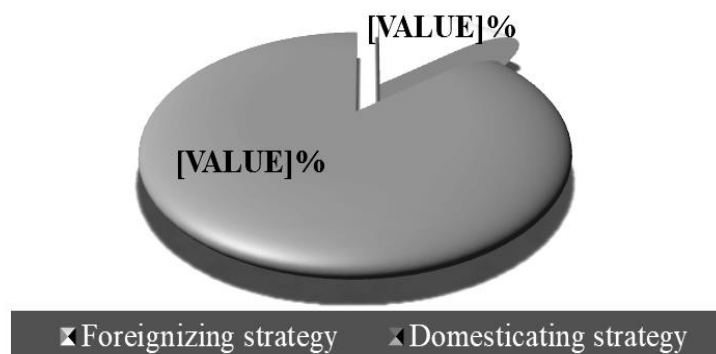
Translation strategies for kinship terms	
Translation by using a more neutral word	
Literal translation	
Translation by omission	
Translation by cultural substitution	
Translation by using a more general word	
Translation by paraphrasing	
Translation strategies for personal pronouns	
Literal translation	
Translation by using a more neutral word	
Translation by omission	
Translation by cultural substitution	
Translation by using a more general word	
Translation by paraphrasing	
Translation by expansion	
Translation strategies for proper names	
Retention of the name	Use the name as such
	Use the name, adding some guidance
Omission of the name	Omit the name but transfer the sense by other means

	Omit the name and the allusion altogether
Omission + using the name	
Literal translation + using the name	
Cultural substitution + using the name	
The last three strategies are for names composed of two elements: kinship term/personal pronoun and a name.	
<b>Translation strategies for occupational titles</b>	
Translation by cultural substitution	
Translation by using a more general word	
Translation by omission	
Literal translation	
Literal translation+ using the name (1)	
Omission+ using the name (2)	
Cultural substitution + using the name (3)	
(1), (2), (3) are the strategies used for the term composed of a title and a name.	
Translation by paraphrasing	
Translation strategies for other TODs	
Translation by paraphrasing	
Translation by using a more neutral word	
Translation by cultural substitution	
Literal translation	
Translation by omission	

With the purpose of analyzing the translation strategies, the framework suggested by Baker (1992), Leppihalme (1997), Newmark (1988), and Venuti (1995) were adopted. Regarding the strategies used for each type of TODs, it was found that ‘using a more neutral word’ was the most prevalent strategy for translating kinship terms. ‘Literal translation’, meanwhile, was popular among personal pronouns and occupational titles – two types that were often used with literal meanings in the STs and had ‘one-to-one’ equivalents in the translations. Regarding the proper names, most of them were kept in the translation, which means the strategy of ‘using a loan word’ was adopted in this case. In case the name was preceded by a kinship term or PP, the translator combined two strategies to fully transfer the meaning and implications of the term. Of all the strategies, translating by expansion was the least popular, being used only two times in the translations and for PPs only.

#### 4.2. Domesticating and foreignizing strategies in the translation of terms of address

Based on the strategies for each type of TODs discussed in section 4.1, I classified all of them into either ‘domesticating’ or ‘foreignizing’ to see whether or not they are reliable as far as the achievement of equivalent effect is concerned. As shown in Figure 1, ‘domesticating’ strategy dominated with 86.4%, while only 13.6% of 853 TODs were translated by the ‘foreignizing’ strategy. The translations of all three stories adhered more extensively to the principle of ‘domesticating’ strategy; hence, were more on the side of the TL-oriented approach.



**Figure 1.** Translation strategies for Vietnamese terms of address

## 5. Discussion and implications

### 5.1. Domesticating strategy and equivalent effects

**Table 4.** Examples of terms of address and the translated versions

Source texts	Name of story	Translated versions
1. <i>Con</i> than yeu. <i>Bo</i> rat buc minh vi <i>bo</i> di vang thi <i>me</i> tu tien tha con ve nong thon. <i>Tao</i> xin bao cho may biet, do cho, rang nha may o thanh pho, tuong lai cua may o day. <i>Con</i> oi hay nghe loi <i>bo</i> , <i>con</i> phai ve ngay (p. 157).	LFTC	Dear <i>son</i> , <i>I</i> was very upset because <i>your mother</i> decided on her own to let <i>you</i> go into the countryside when I was away. <i>I</i> want to let you know that your dog, your house is in the city, your future is here... <i>Son</i> , listen to <i>me</i> , you have to come back at once. (p. 37).

The father, being angry about his son's decision to come to the countryside without his permission, keeps switching the terms he uses for self-addressing and for addressing his son, from the pair *bo* ("father") - *con* ("son") to *tao* ("I" with angry tone) - *may* ("You" with angry tone). As observed by Luong (1990) and Ngo (2006), the shift in the choice of TOD concurrently signals a change in the speaker's attitude and feelings towards his listener. In this case, the use of the pair *tao* - *may* used by the father expresses his extreme anger towards his son's behavior, thus indicating a temporary negation of their blood relation and the denial of "their co-membership in a unified unit" (Luong, 1990, p. 129). Later, the father switches back to the intimate and affectionate kinship pair *father* - *son* to persuade his son to come back to his home in the city. Since both *bo* ("father") and *tao* are rendered into *I*, the target readers are unable to experience this shift. Although they may be able to understand the change in the father's attitude towards his son via some words such as *son* (at the end) or *dear son* (at the beginning), it is impossible for them to comprehend the father's significant sway in his feeling in the same way as it could be felt and understood by the readers of STs.

2. <i>Co chu</i> khong can tien, chi can tinh cam (p.361).	ROTC	<i>We</i> don't need money. <i>We</i> only need feelings (p. 265).
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In (2), the aunt uses the kinship term *co chu* (“junior paternal aunt and junior paternal uncle”) for self-addressing and for referring to her husband when she talks with her niece. The term *co chu* with the first element meaning junior paternal aunt and the second meaning junior paternal uncle is rendered into *we*. The back translation for *we* will be *chung ta* – a more general word than the term *co chu*. A possible reason for the translator’s choice is that this translation will make it easier for the target readers to understand the referents indicated by the term. On the one side, if they are translated literally, the translation will be lengthy. Vietnamese kinship terms differentiate between people from the paternal and maternal side; therefore, the literal translation, in this case, might confuse the target readers. However, on the other side, the kinship term *co chu* is used to reinforce the relation within members of the family; hence by translating it into a more general English term, the solidarity carried by the term is lost.

3. Dung mua Tam Cuc cho <i>no</i> . Lon len <i>no</i> ham choi thi chet (p. 141).	LFTC	Don’t buy Tam Cuc for <i>him</i> . When he grows up <i>he</i> ’ll be addicted to it, and that will be the death for him. (p. 13).
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The use of *no* (“it”) in (3) indicates the high degree of intimacy and is used to refer to human beings. The only case that *it* in English refers to the human beings, as indicated by OALD (2010), is for a baby, especially the one whose sex is unknown. In the translation, *no*, depending on the referents, is substituted by the corresponding pronouns or objects for human beings (adults) to avoid unnaturalness and oddness. In (3), it is translated into *he* when functioning as the subject of the sentence (male person) and into *him* when functioning as the object. The translation of the term *no* into several forms in English is because Vietnamese does not differentiate the use of TODs for subject and object as English does. In this case, the translator might see it necessary to use a term which suits the English language much better than the literal translation. However, as *no* (“it”) implies the attitude of the addressor (intimacy and affection), the substitution fails to convey the nuance of the term. Based on these examples, we can see that ‘domesticating’ strategy does not guarantee the equivalence in terms of effect. In certain cases, it causes a great loss of socio-cultural meanings and pragmatic implications, thus making the equivalent effect impossible.

## 5.2. Foreignizing strategy and equivalent effects

Since the ‘domesticating’ strategy cannot always result in the equivalent effect, one question arisen is that whether or not the ‘foreignizing’ can be a solution to that problem. In the stories analyzed, this strategy was used much lesser than its counterpart (13.60% compared to 86.40%).

4. Day la <i>co Lan</i> , sinh vien truong thuoc, chau cua <i>ong Tan Dan</i> lam bao ngoai Ha Noi (p. 199).	ADOB	This is <i>Miss Lan</i> , student of school medicine, niece of <i>Mr. Tan Dan</i> make newspaper outside Ha Noi (p. 160).
5. May ma doi con co <i>Bao Cong</i> (p. 145).	LFTC	Luckily the world still had <i>Bao Cong</i> (p. 19).
6. Sang nao toi cung di chua lay <i>Phat to Nhu Lai</i> cho chet (p. 147).	LFTC	Every morning I go to the temple and pray to <i>Buddha Nhu Lai</i> for death (p. 22).

In (4), the speaker introduces his girlfriend to his sister. He addresses the girlfriend as *co Lan* (“Miss Lan”) and her uncle as *ong Tan Dan* (“Mr. Tan Dan”). The names in both phrases are transferred

into the TL while two kinship terms *co* (“junior paternal aunt”) and *ong* (“grandfather”) are rendered in to *Miss* and *Mr.* respectively to preserve the politeness and respect expressed by the kinship terms. It is not natural in English to use *Mr.* or *Miss* before first names such as before *Lan* and *Tan Dan*; however, this translation is still effective in helping the readers understand the speaker’s respect and affection for his lover. Should these two kinship terms be omitted, the nuance of the whole sentence will obviously be affected. Although these equivalent forms might not sound very natural in English in such situations, they evidently do not make the TT non-fluent, neither do they result in any disruptions to the flow of the TT. In these cases, they successfully accommodate linguistic and cultural differences of the original text. However, the study of these texts found that such attempts to produce formal equivalence translation were rare. This is understandable since giving the equivalent forms to all TODs would make the TTs highly unnatural and influent. Also, doing so would frequently require lengthy footnotes or explanations to make the target text comprehensible.

In the last two examples, the translator either keeps the name as in the SL (5) or literally translates the first constituent and then keeps the second (6). The choice to foreignize the translations in these cases can perplex the readers who never know the meanings or representative of those names. *Bao Cong* or *Justice Bao*, which features a famous Chinese Mandarin, is a 236 television series hugely popular in many countries in East and Southeast Asia; hence, it is easy for the readers of the SL to know who *Bao Cong* is. Regarding the readers of the TL, this name has never existed in their culture, thus causing a comprehension problem for them. For example, they may wonder why the speaker mentions the name *Bao Cong* and what contributions he made that makes his existence become that important.

Regarding the name *Phat to Nhu Lai* (Buddha Nhu Lai), Vietnamese people easily understand to whom this name refers, as the dominant religion in Vietnam is Buddhism. However, this religion is far less popular in Western countries; therefore, the ‘foreignizing’ strategy might result in the confusion among the target readers who might understand the term Buddha but might have no idea about *Nhu Lai*. If this translation is strictly evaluated, we can see that the name *Nhu Lai* is kept as it appears in the SL (a sign of ‘foreignizing’), but the term *Phat to* is not completely translated. There is an omission in meaning in this translation. *Phat* is equivalent to *Buddha* and *to*, if translated, should be equivalent to *Lord*. Therefore, the term should be *Lord Buddha Nhu Lai*. In this case, there are both ‘domesticating’ and ‘foreignizing’ elements in the translated phrase. Due to this mixing, the term in the SL is not fully rendered into the TL, making it harder for the target readers to get the meaning and referent of the term. From this point, it can be seen that the translator did not concentrate on his readers or it might be that the translator did not understand the original name. No matter which prediction is right, the effect on the target readers when keeping these names is negative. Hence, the clue to smoothing out these ‘cultural bumps’ (Leppihalme, 1997) is that the translator should consider using either a footnote or a descriptive equivalent to describe who *Bao Cong* is and who *Nhu Lai* is.

To overcome those problems, I propose below the suggested strategies which can be applied to different types of TODs. Kinship terms for family members and relatives can be translated into English equivalents. In the cases where they are used among non-relatives, these terms, depending on the contexts, can be rendered literally. To minimize the unnaturalness caused by the literal translation of kinship terms, a suggestion by Ngo (2006) is that where there is a need for the linguistic and cultural elements of the original terms to be conveyed in the translation, the translator can give the equivalent forms in the TL and implications of the use of terms in the body of the text as part of it, instead of

footnotes. PPs can also be rendered in this way so that the implications of the terms are preserved in the TL. Following the suggestion above, the sentence “Dan ong no chang thuong minh dau, ruou thi *no* ngoi mam tren” can be rendered into “Men really don’t love us at all. When *it* drinks, *it* sits at the better food tray.” This translation could then be followed by a sentence like “the speaker is upset because of the inequality among men and women in the society; hence, she uses *it* to refer to men, who always has a higher social status compared to women.” Such a translation, although not as transparent and natural as a fully dynamically equivalent approach, would not be vague or interrupt the flow of the narrative; therefore, would successfully convey the attitude of the speaker signified by the use of the term in the ST.

## 6. Conclusion

The strategies for each type of TOD provided the preliminary basis for judging the extent to which these strategies could be classified into either ‘domesticating’ (TL-oriented) or ‘foreignizing’ (SL-oriented). Not only were these two utilized in the translation of different types of TOD, but they are also used within one TOD, such as in example 6. The translations of all three stories adhered more extensively to the principle of the TL-oriented approach. This strategy claims to create an equivalent in terms of effect among the target readers, but evident from the data is that there were cases where the terms translated by ‘domesticating’ strategy failed to convey the socio-cultural meanings and implications of the richly nuanced Vietnamese TODs. Those meanings were found to be important to an adequate understanding of the original text; therefore, the effects that the translations create are not equivalent to the ones experienced by the readers of the SL.

The impossibility of the TL-oriented translation in creating the equivalent effects, however, does not necessarily mean that the SL-oriented translation could always do so. The findings regarding these two, to some extent, run counter to the conclusion made by Ngo (2006). According to her, the ‘domesticating’ (TL-oriented) translation causes the loss of meaning and pragmatic implications of the original terms, thus making the ‘foreignizing’ (SL-oriented) translation a more effective choice. The results of my study showed that neither of these two could fully convey the rich nuance of the terms. In the case of kinship term and PPs, the SL-oriented translation helped the target readers to develop a similar understanding about the TTs as the readers of the STs have with their original stories. Nevertheless, when being applied to the names that carry meanings in the SL, it confused the target readers, as the translator kept these names without any explanation. In the translation between close languages and cultures, the loss may be minimal, but between such distant languages and cultures as English and Vietnamese, the loss, as previously demonstrated, was significant.

This study has opened up possibilities for further research into equivalence in Nguyen’s stories from Vietnamese to English, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of ‘foreignizing’ and ‘domesticating’ strategies in translating literature texts. However, because of the time limit, it was only conducted on a small size of the population, namely three short stories. Hence, the following studies should have a larger corpus, considering the likelihood of including all fifteen short stories by Nguyen Huy Thiep or other stories by other writers. Including texts by different writers also helps researchers to see how style and cultural orientation of each translator influence his use of language in the translation. Texts of different genres should also be considered, as it will allow the researchers to examine the influence of genre on the translator’s use of language. Although document analysis was useful in helping me gather the data, it seems not to provide enough evidence regarding the reasons for the translator’s choice of one strategy instead of another. Hence, interviews with the translators should be carried out to

increase the reliability of the data and to understand more about the translators' decisions. To conclude, it is hoped that the results and conclusions drawn in the study can motivate further studies in this area to seek answers to those questions that could not be addressed in this one.

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