UNIVERSITY OF MALAYSIA

PROCEDURES AND STRATEGIES IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF CULTURAL WORDS IN MOWLANA JALALUDDIN RUMI’S MATHNAVI

MOZHGAN MOHAJERIN KERMANI

FBMK 2013 55
PROCEDURES AND STRATEGIES IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF CULTURAL WORDS IN MOWLANA JALALUDDIN RUMI'S MATHNAVI

By

MOZHGAN MOHAJERIN KERMANI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, University Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2013
DEDICATION

To my dear parents
Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of University Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

PROCEDURES AND STRATEGIES IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF CULTURAL WORDS IN MOWLANA JALALUDDIN RUMI'S MATHNAVI

By

MOZHGAN MOHAJERIN KERMANI

June 2013

Chair: Associate Professor Mardzial Hayati Abdullah, PhD
Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

Western culture has long had a hegemonic influence on translation, resulting in the choice of strategies and procedures that favour the Western readers, for instance, domestication strategies that bring the text closer to the target reader instead of maintaining the original cultural elements. This position also influenced Persian-English translation.

This research is on the use of domestication and foreignization strategies in the translation of cultural elements from Persian into English in Jalaluddin Rumi’s Mathnavi. Its purpose is to describe and compare the application of domestication and foreignization strategies utilized by five renowned translators in order to find out the dominant overall strategy used as well as the dominant procedures employed in translating specific categories of cultural words. The research also discusses the
socio-cultural factors contributing to the choice of strategies and procedures used by translators.

The analysis was based on Venuti’s (1995) dichotomy of domestication and foreignization. Cultural words were identified and classified on the basis of Newmark’s (1988) categorization of cultural words. Newmark’s model had to be expanded and refined to include all cultural words found in the *Mathnavi* before the analysis could be carried out. In line with the objectives of the study, Toury’s (1995) methodology of descriptive translation studies (DTS) was selected, thus locating the source and target texts in their socio-cultural and historical contexts. Translators’ individual backgrounds were considered as another factor influencing translators’ selection of strategies.

The findings show that the procedures employed most frequently were literal translation, cultural adjustment, and explanation; while the most dominant overall strategy used is domestication. The findings also indicated a variation in individual translators’ use of the main strategies. The choice of the strategies seemed to be influenced by factors related to socio-cultural and historical contexts, such as Western cultural hegemony, and individual factors such as translators’ prior familiarity with Persian culture and their interest in the culture, as well as their academic backgrounds and fields of study.

The findings of this research contribute to a more in-depth understanding of the process involved in the translation of cultural words in Rumi’s *Mathnavi* within the context of Western cultural hegemony, which has hitherto been lacking. Information
on translators’ choice of translation procedures for translating each category of
cultural words also provides a useful guideline for translators of similar literary
pieces from Persian to English.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

PROSEDUR DAN STRATEGI DALAM PENTERJEMAHAN BAHASA INGGERIS ISTILAH BUDAYA DALAM PUISI MATHNAVI MOWLANA JALALUDDIN RUMI

Oleh

MOZHGAN MOHAJERIN KERMANI

Jun 2013

Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Mardziah Hayati Abdullah, PhD

Fakulti: Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi

Budaya barat telah lama mempunyai pengaruh hegemoni pada terjemahan, menyebabkan pilihan strategi dan prosedur yang memihak kepada pembaca barat, misalnya, strategi domestication yang membawa teks lebih dekat kepada pembaca sasaran dan bukannya mengekalkan unsur-unsur budaya asal. Kedudukan ini juga dipengaruhi terjemahan Parsi-Bahasa Inggeris.

Kajian ini adalah berkenaan dengan penggunaan strategi domestication dan foreignization dalam penterjemahan elemen budaya dari Bahasa Parsi kepada Bahasa Inggeris dalam karya Jalaluddin Rumi yang berjudul ‘Mathnavi’. Kajian ini bertujuan menerangkan dan membuat perbandingan tentang penggunaan strategi domestication dan foreignization oleh lima orang penterjemah terkenal untuk mengenal pasti strategi keseluruhan yang dominan serta prosedur yang paling dominan digunakan dalam penterjemahan kategori istilah budaya (cultural words)

Dapatatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa prosedur yang paling banyak digunakan adalah prosedur penterjemahan literal, perubahan budaya dan penerangan, manakala strategi keseluruhan yang paling banyak digunakan adalah *domestication*. Dapatatan kajian juga menunjukkan variasi dalam penggunaan strategi oleh para penterjemah. Pemilihan strategi dipengaruhi oleh faktor yang berkait dengan konteks budaya dan sejarah seperti hegemoni budaya penjajah Barat serta faktor individu seperti pemahaman dan minat terhadap budaya Parsi, latar belakang akademik dan bidang pengajian.

Dapatatan kajian ini menyumbang kepada pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang proses penterjemahan istilah budaya dalam karya Rumi yang berjudul *Mathnavi*, dalam konteks hegemoni budaya barat kerana setakat ini, maklumat tersebut agak
berkurangan. Maklumat tentang pilihan prosedur yang dibuat penterjemah dalam menterjemahkan kategori istilah budaya tertentu juga sangat berguna sebagai panduan untuk penterjemah yang ingin menjalankan kerja penterjemahan dari Bahasa Persi kepada Bahasa Inggeris.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All gratitude is due to The Almighty, The Most Gracious, Most Compassionate and Most Benevolent, who bestowed upon me the great power of will to make this research a rewarding journey. All my thanks and praise is due to God, for giving me the physical and mental strength and patience and guiding my every step, to complete my Ph.D. thesis. I wish to appreciate Molana Jalaluddin Rumi for creating such a great poetry and bow to the Persian culture he manifested in his *Mathnavi*. I would also like to record my thanks to the translators of the *Mathnavi* for their valuable contribution to Persian culture and literature. I express my heartfelt thanks to the following people. Without their on-going supports and encouragements this study would not have reached fruition.

I wish to express my special thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Mardziah Hayati Abdullah, for her patience, persistent encouragement, guidance and supports. And my sincere gratitude is also due to Dr. Haslina Haroon for her encouragements and inspiring ideas. My supervisors Dr Mardziah Hayati Abdollah, Dr. Haslina Haroon, and Dr. Noritah Omar corrected my mistakes and have done every effort to enhance the quality of this thesis. I am also thankful to Dr. Hussein Mollanazar at Allameh University for his continuous assistance and encouragements. His advices have been very helpful in resolving different kinds of problems that came across my way from the very beginning to the end.

I am deeply grateful to my parents; to my mother for her patience, encouragement, forbearance and understanding that helped me a lot throughout the period of this study, to my father, and to my uncles Bahman Boudi and Saeed Behrouzmanesh for
their constant support and encouragement, and to other members of my family for their support and prayers.

I received equally important assistance from my friends; Mr. Martin John Frost, Mrs Llyn Frost, Mrs Suzan Gallop, Serit Anak Banyan, Azah, and many other friends in Malaysia, England, United States of America, and Iran. My special thanks to Mr. Martin John Frost for his great contribution in technical and instrumental helps such as editing the whole thesis, and providing the required books in addition to his continuous support, encouragement, and the effort he has done throughout this thesis.
This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The Members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

**Mardziah Hayati Abdullah, PhD**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

**Haslina Haroon, PhD**
Senior Lecturer
Malay Language, Translation and Interpreting Section
Universiti Sains Malaysia
(Member)

**Noritah Omar, PhD**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

**BUJANG BIN KIM HUAT,PhD**
Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:
DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

MOZHGAN MOH AJERIN KERMANI

Date: 24 June 2013
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

| ABSTRACT | iii |
| ABSTRAK | vi |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | ix |
| APPROVAL | xi |
| DECLARATION | xiii |
| LIST OF TABLES | xvii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xix |

## CHAPTER

### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Background of the Study 3
1.2.1 Western Cultural Hegemony 3
1.2.2 Various English Translations of the *Mathnavi* since Nineteenth Century Onwards 8
1.3 Previous Research 8
1.3.1 Previous Research on Domestication and Foreignization 8
1.4 Statement of the Problem 21
1.5 Purpose of the Study 22
1.6 Objectives of the Study 23
1.7 Research Questions 23
1.8 Scope of the Study 24
1.9 Significance of the Study 25
1.10 Definitions of the Key Terms 28
1.11 Outline of the Thesis 34

### 2 HISTORY OF TRANSLATION

2.1 Introduction 35
2.2 Translation Studies and Theories 43
2.2.1 Historical Outline of Translation Studies 45
2.2.2 Development of Translation Studies in Europe 51
2.2.3 The History of Translation in Iran 59
2.2.4 Translation Theory in The Second Half of the Twentieth Century: Linguistic-based, and Cultural-based Translation Studies 63
2.3 Definition of Culture 70
2.4 Categories of Culture 72
3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction 91
3.2 Domestication and Foreignization Translation Procedures 91
   3.2.1 Domestication Procedures 92
   3.2.2 Foreignization Procedures 94
3.3 The Concept of Equivalence 95
3.4 Research Design 103
3.5 Concept under Study 106
3.6 Corpus of the Data 107
   3.6.1 Criteria for Selecting the Corpus 110
   3.6.2 Brief Biography of Five Selected Translators 111
3.7 Data Collection 114
3.8 Data Analysis 119

4 THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF PERSIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN BRITAIN AND AMERICA

4.1 Introduction 123
4.2 Socio-cultural Context of Translation in Britain and America 123
   4.2.1 The Development of Persian-English Translation 124
   4.2.2 Socio-cultural Conditions that Influence the Position of Translations from Persian 126
4.3 Socio-Cultural and Historical Contexts of the Source and Target Texts 131
   4.3.1 Overview of the Original Mathnavi-e-Ma‘navi (Mathnavi) 132
   4.3.2 Overview of the Translated Mathnavi 140
4.4 Summary 154

5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction 156
5.2 Categories of Cultural Words 157
5.3 Procedures Used in Translating Cultural Words 163
   5.3.1 The Translation of Ecology Items 163
   5.3.2 The Translation of Material Culture Items 169
   5.3.3 The Translation of Social Culture Items 181
   5.3.4 The Translation of Organization Items 189
   5.3.5 The Translation of Gestures and Habits Items 192
5.3.6 The Translation of Linguistic System and Expression Items 198
5.3.7 The Translation of Cultural Heritage Items 219
5.3.8 The Translation of the Spiritual Element Items 228
5.3.9 Most dominant Procedures in Translating Persian Cultural Words into English 249
5.4 Procedures Used in Translating Cultural Categories 252
5.5 Foreignization and Domestication Strategies Used in Translating Persian Cultural Words into English 257
5.6 Translators’ Use of Procedures and Strategies 258
5.6.1 Translators’ Application of Procedures and Strategies 258
5.6.2 Similarities and Differences in Translators’ Application of Procedures and Strategies 265
5.7 Socio-Cultural Factors in Translators’ Preference of Strategies and Procedures 274
5.8 Summary 278

6 CONCLUSION 281
6.1 Discussion of Findings 282
6.2 Implications and Contributions 290
6.3 Limitations 291
6.4 Suggestions for Further Research 292

REFERENCES 294
APPENDICES 304
BIODATA OF STUDENT 380