

# **Cross-Cultural Communication via Literary Translation: Sri Lankan culture into French**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Translation of culture signifies how far a text that has been written in a foreign context be brought towards a new cultural context. In this research paper, we analyse how Sri Lankan culture could be transmitted to a French reader through translation. The two cultures being far apart, the translator faces a difficult challenge and undertakes to do a difficult task. The objective of this research is to show the strategies that a translator uses to bring into his culture, the specificities of a foreign culture. In these strategies, he succeeds in communicating the message that was said in the original text but the complexities of a culture make it difficult sometimes to capture the exact meaning of what has been expressed in a precise context. This has been the case in the two Sri Lankan novels that we are going to analyse along with their French translations. We try to understand why certain aspects and notions have been misunderstood or misinterpreted. This is not a harsh criticism but a constructive analysis that shows how certain unique characteristics of a culture cannot be properly transposed into another culture, another language.

## **PURPOSE**

Translation Studies have defined two main strategies that a translator could use to communicate a message that comes from a foreign context. They are Domestication and Foreignization. In 1831, Schleiermacher stated that there are two ways of translating: Either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him. In the first case, the translation will carry traces of the foreign land from which the text comes. There will be foreign words, foreign names, and lots of

traces of the source context. This is what Lawrence Venuti calls Foreignization (1995). The reader of the translation will travel towards a foreign land. While reading a book, the reader will feel that he is in a foreign land. In the second case, the particularities of a foreign culture would be appropriated to render the reading more comfortable for the reader of the translation. Equivalents in the target culture would be found to efface the differences that are too complicating. This is what Venuti calls the Naturalising strategy. In this strategy, the translator will use his or her own terms to substitute certain realities that cannot be said in his or her own language. The substitution will give the impression that the foreign reader captures the full meaning of the source text but in this way, the complex identity of the source land would be erased.

## **METHODOLOGY**

We would study *Funny Boy* by Shyam Selvadurai (McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1994) along with its French Translation, *Drôle de garçon* (Frédéric Limare, Susan Fox-Limare, 10/18, Paris, 2000) and *Running in the Family* by Michael Ondaatje (W.W.Norton, New-York, 1982) along with its French translation, *Un air de famille* (Marie-Odile Fortier-Masek, Edition de l'Olivier, Paris, 1991). In analysing the two texts, we would show the two strategies the translators have used and how far they have succeeded in preserving the Sri Lankan culture.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, we would like to show that despite these two strategies, there are still certain particularities that remain untranslatable or mistranslated due to the originality of the source culture. This will be presented in the form of ellipses or misunderstandings. What is highlighted is the unique quality of certain Sri Lankan notions that escape all methods of

transmission, transposition and translation towards a foreign culture and a language.

## **REFERENCES**

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## **KEYWORDS**

Domestication, Ellipses, Foreignization, Mistranslation

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