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The Self-translator's [In]Visibility: Domestication, Foreignization, and More

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Abstract: This paper examines the translator's invisibility and visibility in applying the translation strategies of domestication and foreignization used in autobiographical self-translation from Japanese to English. This study is part of a larger research project investigating the self-translation process I experienced while self-translating my autobiography, originally written in Japanese, my native language, into English, my second language. In this autobiographical self-translation process, the roles of the author, first-person narrator, protagonist, and translator are coterminous. Therefore, the narrative's translation process must be examined from multiple perspectives, which involve, for instance, the author-translator's perceptions of the new target audience, the events, and participants described in the story, etc. Focusing primarily on the influence of the audience, the present study examines, from a social-psychological perspective, the translator's style-shifting behavior as manifested in the application of the two translation strategies. Domestication, for instance, can be seen as the translator's convergence toward the target text audience (*i.e.*, readers) and foreignization as a divergence from them. Self-translators may apply foreignization, not only for divergence but for other reasons—*e.g.*, their emotional attachment toward the source text, story, and characters. In self-translation, the author and translator are identical. This fact may make the issue of translators' invisibility insignificant. Yet, self-translators may still become invisible when they apply domestication and converge toward the target text audience. But at the same time, the application of domestication or foreignization by self-translators may be regarded as their expression of their selves, which makes them truly visible as translators—likely not to the audience but to themselves.

Keywords: self-translation; autobiographical translation; L1 to L2; Japanese to English; foreignization and domestication; translator's invisibility

1. Introduction

This paper examines the translator's invisibility and visibility in autobiographical self-translation, particularly in the application of the translation strategies of domestication and foreignization. This study is part of a larger research project entitled "Lost and Found in Self-translation," investigating the self-translation process I experienced while translating my autobiography, originally written in Japanese, my native and first language (L1), into English, my second language (L2). Entitled *Samurai and Cotton*, the English edition was published in the United States (U.S.) in 2011. Before that, the original work in Japanese was published in Japan in 2010. And my experience as the self-translator of *Samurai and Cotton* has been described and discussed in several studies (Takahashi 2013, 2014, 2019a, 2019b, 2020, 2022a, 2022b).

In self-translation, the author and translator are identical, the translated work carries the author's name, and the author *is* the translator. In this sense, the translator is invisible. It can thus be assumed that this fact makes the issue of the translator's [in]visibility insignificant in self-translation. Yet, the translator can still become visible. The question is: to whom, how, and when?

As in the case of *Samurai and Cotton*, L2 translation, influenced by several factors, becomes intricate when the author-translator serves as the autobiographical narrator and plays the role of one of the protagonists, who becomes "a migrant from one culture to another to reflect on what it means to be 'translated' both geographically and textually" (Wilson, 2009, p. 186) (see Takahashi [2019a] for further discussion on the process of autobiographical self-translation from narratological perspectives). Furthermore, the spatiotemporal stages shift dramatically from the world of the

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samurai and the collapse of feudalism to postwar and modern Japan and the US, covering a period of more than 150 years, with two cultures being juxtaposed.

I wrote in the afterword to the English edition, "I didn't translate the book. Rather, I rewrote it in English" (Takahashi, 2011, p. 268). Sentiments reminiscent of mine are expressed by self-translators such as the Algerian-Italian translingual writer Amara Lakhous, as reported by Wilson (2012):

> First, I write my text in Arabic. Then I say that I re-write it in Italian, because it is not simply a case of self-translation; as I am not obliged to respect the original text, I re-create it as I wish. (p. 45)

As the author-translator of *Samurai and Cotton*, I had the freedom and autonomy to "rewrite" the ST in the target language (TL) while "enriching the [ST] by, for example, 'activating' meanings which were only 'between-the-lines' in the original" (Wilson, 2009, p. 192).

Translation is a form of rewriting, according to Lefevere (1992), who even "called for translations to be re-termed 'rewritings,' to both raise the status of the translator and get away from the limitations of the term 'translation'" (Bassnett, 1998, p. 29). Concurring with him, Bassnett (2013) claims that "translation is rewriting" in the sense that "a text is composed again in a second language" (p. 20). Self-translation, then, is, she further contends, not only rewriting but also "creative reworking" (24). Santoyo (2013) calls the self-translated text "a second original, rendered into a second language with all the liberty an author always enjoys (but never a translator)" (pp. 28–29). The above statements by Bassnett and Santoyo are valid because self-translators can release their creativity more freely than allographic translators, thanks to their ownership of the ST.

Unlike scientific and technical translations, rewriting is commonly done, favored, and considered necessary in literary translation. Similarly, domestication or foreignization "has been allowed only to translators of literary and scholarly texts, not to translators of technical materials" (Venuti, 1995/2018, p. 34). In this paper, to characterize the process of self-translation that I went through, I first focus on the self-translation process as regeneration, particularly in the forms of domestication and foreignization. I then ask: Is regeneration in self-translation a deviation (or divergence) from the ST? If yes, does the deviation make the self-translator visible or invisible?

2. Influence of the audience/readers on self-translation

In works of fiction, the narrator and the author are not necessarily coterminous. Still, in the case of autobiographical narratives, the author, who is the protagonist by definition, serves as the first-person narrator *and as the translator* in the case of self-translated autobiographical narratives. In *Samurai and Cotton*, the roles of the author, first-person narrator, protagonist, and translator are coterminous. The narrative translation needs to be examined from multiple communicative perspectives, which involve, for instance, the author-translator's perceptions of the new target audience, the events and participants described in the story, etc.

One of the most significant differences between the original narrative in the source language (SL) and its translation in the target language (TL) is the audience—whom the self-translator addresses (Nord, 1988/2005, p. 57). That is,

> the audience of the source text (ST) and that of the target text (TT) clearly differ, while the story, events, and participants described by the narrator remain constant. It is inevitable, however, in translation, that these narrative elements—supposedly constant—are destined to go through transformations from the ST to the TT, while the translator him/herself is unavoidably influenced by the new target audience. (Takahashi, 2019b, p. 119)

The ST of *Samurai and Cotton* is geared toward the Japanese-speaking audience, while the TT is intended for the English-speaking audience. At the same time, the translation process was greatly influenced by my relationship with the target audience and the host society.

Style-shifting behaviors of bilinguals have been studied in the past by sociolinguists. "Accommodation" is a notion introduced by Howard Giles (1980) to describe adjustments or modifications that make one's speech style either more similar (*i.e.*, convergence) or less similar (*i.e.*,

divergence) to that of the listener or interlocutor—the audience. Although those studies of linguistic variation have been developed to account for patterns in face-to-face or conversational communication, I see them as applicable to the study of self-translation as well. That is, a self-translator's choice of a particular style, voice, or strategy may be regarded as analogous to a bilingual's style-shifting behavior.

Instead of being in face-to-face or conversational communication with the listener/ interlocutor, a textual bilingual (*i.e.,* self-translator) addresses the audience whose existence is not tangible but rather hypothetical or imaginary. The self-translator may thus be reacting to or being influenced by the characteristics that the target audience is perceived to have collectively. As the narrator, for example, I tried to make the narration as "correct" and sophisticated as possible and applied domesticating strategies to a great extent, which reflected my desire to converge toward the TL audience. But when describing my father, for instance, I tried to keep his words and expressions as original as possible, which reflected my emotional attachment to those words in the source language, but at the same time, resulted in divergence from the TL audience.

The choice of a particular translation strategy, in turn, can be explained similarly to a bilingual's style-shifting behavior. For instance, a translator's choice of either "domestication" (TL-audience-based orientation) or "foreignization" (ST-based orientation) can be explained as a case of divergence or convergence to achieve a social psychological purpose.

3. Domestication v. foreignization

While working on *Samurai and Cotton*, I shared the early drafts with a few close friends, all American native speakers of English. With no proficiency in Japanese, they only read the drafts in English and offered their opinions based on their knowledge of English and American culture. They provided me with feedback—*e.g.,* how some of my expressions and descriptions might be revised so that the American audience would understand and appreciate the Japanese culture described in the book. One of the reviewers was particularly keen on culture-specific expressions and concepts. He thought some expressions were too Japanese and insisted they needed to be made more Americanized. In this regard, although mine was not a collaborative translation, I find the following comments by Keene (1971) amusingly perceptive:

> Collaboration is often suggested as an ideal solution to the problem of translating from obscure languages, but I can scarcely think of a successful example. What usually happens is that a strong-willed polisher imposes herself (or himself) on the gentle Oriental translator, and over his faint little protests sets to work bringing out the exquisite charm of the original which she believes she has instinctively detected. (p. 326)

Regarded as "smooth" or "polished," *domesticated* translation tends to be preferred by the TT recipients, and Venuti (1995/2018) disapprovingly summarizes this tendency:

> The critical lexicon of literary journalism since World War II is filled with so many terms to indicate the presence or absence of a fluent translation strategy: "crisp," "elegant," "flows," "gracefully," "wooden," "seamlessly," "fluid," "clunky." There is even a group of pejorative neologisms designed to criticize translations that lack fluency, but also used, more generally, to signify badly written prose: "translatese," "translationese," "translatorese." In English, fluent translation is recommended for an extremely wide range of foreign texts—contemporary and archaic, religious and scientific, fiction and nonfiction. (p. 4)

Venuti, who introduced the term "domestication," views this translation strategy unfavorably since it involves "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values." He argues against fluency because it negates the foreignness and originality of the text, making the translator invisible. On the other hand, he considers foreignization favorably as "an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (p. 15). Venuti's translator (in)visibility paradigm can thus be summarized as follows:

> A translated text is judged successful—by most editors, publishers, reviewers, readers, by translators themselves—when it reads fluently, when it gives the appearance that it is not

> translated, that it is the original, transparently reflecting the foreign author's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text. (Venuti, 1992, p. 4)

4. Convergence and domestication

One's insistence on domestication comes from their receptor-based (or reader-based) orientation according to the TL standards. Translators, on the other hand, have multiple perspectives, looking at not only the TL but also the source and target languages and cultures, and more. The author of the original text may have different opinions on how it should be translated. That is, there are at least three different orientations to be considered—*i.e.*, (1) reader-based, (2) translator-based, and (3) author-based.

In *Samurai and Cotton*, evidence of convergence or domestication is ubiquitous. For instance, I changed some of the chapter and section titles of the book *to* make them more "American." The chapter and section titles that were domesticated include the following:

Table 1: Chapter and Section Titles in Source and Target Texts Contrasted

	ST	**Literal Translation of ST in TL**	**TT**
1	幼稚園嫌い	Dislike for Kindergarten	**No Angel**
2	我が家	My Home	**Home, Sweet Home**
3	母親代わり	Substitute Mother	**Mr. Mom**
5	ジュニア (三年生)	Junior (Third-Year Student)	**Working "My Ass Off"**

Here, the TT titles are made so culture-specific—American or Western—that back translation into Japanese would not be feasible or would not fully convey the cultural nuances condensed in the TL expressions, based on the episode in each of the referenced sections. I made those changes consciously because I believed they would make the titles easier for American readers to relate to. The following episode explains why "Dislike for Kindergarten" became "No Angel" in the target text.

> I commuted to kindergarten every day, but I never came to like it. All the games, songs, and class activities were boring to me. Things got even worse before Christmas because we were made to memorize incomprehensible lines to perform in the Nativity play. I had a good memory, so memorizing those words was not a problem. I just hated being dressed as an angel and being forced to practice the play with other children.
>
> I don't know how she was selected, but the girl who played the role of Mary got a lot of the spotlight. Those who played angels were made to line up and stand in the back, looking more like a backdrop. They were secondary and minor—simply "many others."
>
> Being one of the angels, I was doing my role out of obligation, utterly bored and uninterested. Calling it "my role" sounds a bit grand; I had only one speaking line and then had to stand there for the rest of the play.
>
> *I'd rather be playing in the swamp,* I said to myself.
>
> I was such a critical child and so hard to please. What's more, I would wear my displeasure right on my face. I was such a difficult child to deal with. (Takahashi, 2011, p. 84)

I hated going to kindergarten, especially disliked being dressed as an angel in the Nativity play. I was "no angel," but this nuance can only be understood by the English-speaking audience, but not by

the Japanese.

Another example of domestication comes from the ST section title ジュニア (三年生) [*lit.* Junior (Third-Year Student)]. I intentionally (and boldly) changed this title to "Working 'My Ass Off'" in the TT. This section describes how hard I, as the protagonist, had to study for classes conducted in English, being an international transfer student at an American college right after my arrival in the U.S. In the TT, I chose to reinforce this fact with the Americanized title, which was inspired by the following episode introduced in the same section:

> I had fun learning new slang terms and phrases. Meg in turn would get such a kick out of hearing me, a foreigner, use those vulgar expressions. She was kind enough(?) to continue teaching me more. And, she often suggested, "Why don't you use those expressions in front of the nuns?" smiling with impish eyes.
>
> One day, I said to Meg,
>
> "I just saw Sister Joan. I told her 'I'll work my ass off.'"
>
> "Did you really say that?" Meg asked, astonished.
>
> "Yeah. And I told her that I had learned this expression from my roommate Meg". I said with a straight face.
>
> "No way! You must be kidding!" She was instantly flustered.
>
> "Yep! Kidding!"
>
> We both laughed. (Takahashi, 2011, p. 162)

It was rather an audacious choice to use such crude slang for a section title. It must be understood, however, that this boldness itself is an expression of the excitement that the protagonist (*i.e.,* I) was experiencing at the time as an adventurous newcomer. It also expresses the sense of humor and the frankness of Americans, which I became quite fond of and was trying to imitate. This example of domestication seems to reveal the psyche and view of the protagonist being eager to acculturate herself in the new country.

The distance between the translator and the TL reflects a psychological distance between the selves manifested in the two languages. The self-translator's frustration in this regard might be related to emotional adjustments to a new text in the TL. In my autobiographical self-translation, I created new TL images or personas for the Japanese-speaking characters who had only lived in Japan. While translating my father into English (the TL), for example, I imagined myself addressing him as "Dad," 'Daddy," etc. in the TT. He was still the same person, but at the same time, his original image was lost in translation and his new image and persona emerged.

> **Dad** liked drinking saké warm even in the summer, but when it got extremely hot, he would switch to ice-cold beer. At dinner, then, he would drink beer, and we children would drink soda.
>
> Since both beer and soda had bubbles, **Dad** didn't think we would notice any difference.
>
> One day, his youngest, Moko-suke (author), attacked him,
>
> "**Daddy**, how come yours has some color, but mine doesn't?"
>
> A bit tipsy, **Dad** responded to my protest, by saying,
>
> "Okay, then, I will add some color to your glass," and he poured a little bit of beer into my glass.
>
> **Dad** was thinking,
>
> *Moko-suke is not going to listen to me even if I tell her that kids can't drink beer, but she will give it up once she tastes the bitterness of beer.*
>
> To his surprise, he heard,
>
> "**Daddy**, this tastes delicious!"
>
> He was dumbfounded.
>
> Even though I was a young child, I really thought it was tasty, especially liking the harmonious mixture of the bitterness of the beer and the sweetness of the soda.
>
> (Takahashi, 2011, p. 111) [emphasis added]

Finding a TL image for someone familiar is one challenge, and adjusting to it emotionally is another. Using such American terms, I, as his daughter, had to adjust psychologically and

emotionally to this new TL image of my father (see Takahashi, 2019b for further discussion). Translation of kinship terms is difficult due to their cultural uniqueness reflecting variables such as age, gender, and social and psychological distance. As noted above, autobiographical self-translators would feel even more disrupted as these kinship terms are closely related to their personal feelings toward the person referred to by them or using them.

5. Divergence and foreignization

In several instances, as the self-translator, I chose foreignization over domestication. In this regard, I identify with the self-translator Francesca Duranti, who "insisted on keeping certain linguistic quirks and neologisms created on the model of the Italian lexicon, so as to mirror the 'accented' English spoken by the Italian protagonist" (Wilson, 2009, p. 195). I felt the same urge and kept my insistence on foreignization, "highlighting the foreign identity of the ST and protecting it from the ideological dominance of the target culture" (Munday, 2008, p. 145). Eventually, it was up to me, as the self-translator, to determine when/what/how to foreignize—or "Japanize" in my case—the text since I knew and understood perfectly well what was meant and intended by the author—*i.e.*, myself. Even if the readers might not appreciate the foreignness of the TT, I still felt compelled to express my sentiments in such a manner.

In *Samurai and Cotton,* examples of foreignization are also found in section titles. One of them was literally translated with the original "foreign" (or Japanese) flavor being preserved. In the TT of the ST section entitled 定期便と慰問袋 [*lit.* Letters and Comfort Bags], the terminology "comfort bags" is explained as follows:

> […] my father sent me care packages frequently. He called them "*imon-bukuro* [comfort bags]." This term was used during the war. He also called meals set out for me "*kagezen*," another wartime term. Dad must have felt as if he had sent me to the battleground. (Takahashi, 2010, pp. 138–139)

"Comfort bags" are basically "care packages," so this more familiar English term could have been used in the section title as in "Letters and Care Packages." But I did not even think of entitling this section in such a domesticated way.

The translation "comfort bags" is a calque derived from 慰問袋 (*imon-bukuro)—i.e.,* 慰問 (*imon* [comfort]) + 袋 (*bukuro*, a variation of *fukuro* [bag]). Even though this calque is in English, its meaning and cultural nuances might not be immediately grasped or appreciated by the TT reader. But I still chose to use the direct translation (or calque) of the Japanese term here. Why? It was my deliberate choice in this case because my father had always used this Japanese term, and I believed its calque in the TL carried enough foreign flavor and his special sentiment, as described in the excerpt quoted above. In other words, my sentiment was preserved in the foreignness of the wartime terminology in the form of "Letters and Comfort Bags." This example implies that foreignization does not necessarily mean divergence from the audience but rather is triggered by the translator's emotional attachment to the ST or the words used by her father in the SL.

Other examples of foreignization relating to section titles also come from those that echo my father's actual words—*e.g.,* 鶏口となるも牛後となるなかれ [*lit.* Be a chicken head rather than an ox tail], rendering the TT section title "Better to Be a Chicken Head than an Ox Tail." This is a commonly used Japanese proverb—favored especially by my father's generation (those born before World War II). The following episode introduced in the section describes how he quoted this saying after I had failed to get into the high school of my first choice:

> Although I had wanted to go to Ura-Ichi [the high school of my first choice] so badly, the shock from not having been admitted gradually faded. At the same time, I was able to examine myself closer and realized that Akenohoshi [my second choice] might be a much better fit for me. I wasn't just trying to deceive myself in order to cover up my disappointment. I truly began to think it was the school for me.
>
> […]
>
> My father said to me,

"Better to be a chicken head than an ox tail."[8]
His remark clinched my decision.
"You're right, Dad! All I need is to become number-one at Akenohoshi!"

[8] This is equivalent to a Western saying: "Better to be a big fish in a small pond than a small fish in a big pond." In Western culture, however, it might be used as a putdown for the big fish in the small pond. In Eastern culture, on the other hand, being the head of a group is considered better than being just another "fish" in any group, big or small. (Takahashi, 2010, pp. 101–102) [emphasis added]

The footnote to the proverb mentioned in the above quote provides its Western equivalent—"Better to be a big fish in a small pond than a small fish in a big pond"—and describes the cultural differences between those Japanese and Western proverbs. However, the choice of the literal translation of the Japanese saying was not because of the unavailability of its Western equivalent reflecting precisely the same cultural meaning. It was, again, because of my sentiment toward the proverb used by my father. He often referred to old sayings and quoted the words of Confucius. When translating them, I favored direct translations of those expressions in the TT because of my emotional attachment to his actual words and quotes. The choice of foreignization in this case, again, was not a case of divergence from the audience but rather triggered by the translator's emotional attachment to the ST or the character in the ST.

When I translated the description of my father, on the other hand, I tended to domesticate his image, as in the case of "Mr. Mom"—the TT title given to the section that describes my father. That is, his actual words were kept as original as possible, while I chose to domesticate the description of him as a person and father. I did so as the narrator, having lived in the U.S. for decades at the time of storytelling (see Takahashi, 2019b for further discussion on self-translation from a narratological perspective). Overall, as the author-translator, I felt privileged to apply translation strategies with more autonomy than when translating someone else's work, which resulted in the form of "rewriting" or "regeneration" than "translating."

In the present study, I have witnessed how much foreignization I applied to *Samurai and Cotton.* At the same time, I have also been reminded of how eager I was to explain Japanese culture to my TL audience. In this sense, I was not trying to diverge psychologically from the TL audience. I did not simply apply the strategies of foreignization and domestication in a polarized way; some usages did not belong to either category. For instance, in the TT of the narrator's language, I used such well-known Japanese loanwords in English as "harakiri" and "samurai" even though different equivalents were used and preferred in the SL—"切腹 (*seppuku*)" and "武士 (*bushi*)," respectively. I called the use of such loanwords "hybrid domestication"—half domesticated and half foreignized. Occasionally, I also used American expressions to describe an event involving a Japanese object—*e.g.,* to depict how well *futon* beddings were sold, I translated "よく売れました [*lit.* sold well]" in the ST of *Samurai and Cotton* (Takahashi, 2010, p. 103) as "sold like hotcakes" in the TT (Takahashi, 2011, p. 63). I found it pleasantly amusing to describe something Japanese with American expressions. This positive feeling about hybrid domestication and the mixture of Japanese and American images coexisting in the TT made me see and appreciate my bilingual biculturalism.

Different translation strategies and styles are available for the self-translator to choose from to accomplish the difficult task of regeneration. In some instances, it may be done out of necessity, while it may sometimes be deliberately chosen for specific purposes—*i.e.,* arising from the need or the desire:

> When [bilingual writers] translate their singular texts into other languages, they make changes that seem almost always to arise from the need, the desire, or the delightful occasion to re-address the text to a new audience. The dimensions of this task are infinite, given the cultural complexities of the new literary field, and each writer selects his or her different means to this end. (Hokenson & Munson, 2007, p. 206)

Cultural untranslatability occurs when there is an absence in the TL culture of a relevant

situational feature for the ST, and linguistic untranslatability occurs when "there is no lexical or syntactical substitute in the TL for an SL item" (Bassnett, 2002, p. 37). Whether it was cultural or linguistic untranslatability, in order to overcome or compensate for it, as the author-translator of *Samurai and Cotton*, I needed to regenerate the ST into something understandable to the TL audience and yet still suitable to the context as well as satisfactory to myself as the author-translator. Take 頑張る (*ganbaru*—dictionary form), for instance. This expression—often labeled as "untranslatable"—is commonly translated as "do one's best," but much of the intended meaning gets lost in this English translation. Japanese-English dictionaries list several other English equivalents, such as "work hard" and "exert oneself," and explain that the core essence of 頑張る is "perseverance" and "sacrifice." Its meaning also changes depending on the context.

In *Samurai and Cotton*, the source language (SL) expression 頑張れ (*ganbare*—imperative form of *ganbaru*) is translated in several different ways. In the following example, I translated it as "strive":

> "Dad, an unbelievable thing happened. I'm in trouble". I explained to my father about the contest.
>
> "That's great! It's good to challenge yourself at your weakest points. Compete fair and square just as you are. Do your best not to have any regrets later. Plus, for the sake of your school you are obligated to try your best. So, ***gambare gambare*** **[strive, strive]**!" said my dad, patting on my back.
>
> This expression "*gambare gambare*" was Dad's stock phrase.
>
> (Takahashi, 2010, p. 103) [emphasis added]

Here I deliberately chose the word "strive" rather than the most common translation "do your best" because of its brevity and rhythm—*i.e.*, I used a single word for "*gambare"* rather than a phrase because of its repetition, as in "*gambare gambare* [strive, strive]!" Although the English word "strive" does not carry the sense of "perseverance" and "sacrifice" as the Japanese expression does, as the author-translator, I find it most fitting in this context, especially as my father's words and to express his optimism.

Regeneration or modification in translation tends to be promoted by the necessity of filling the gap between the two languages and cultures, but it might also be done deliberately in an effort to make the translation better suit the feeling, atmosphere, and context familiar to the author-translator. For example, in my translation of "*gambare gambare"* mentioned above, I borrowed the SL expression and added its approximate meaning in the TL "strive, strive" as in:

> "[…] So, *gambare gambare* [strive, strive]!" said my dad, patting on my back.
>
> This expression "*gambare gambare*" was Dad's stock phrase.
>
> (Takahashi, 2010, p.103)

This could have been presented without the SL expression "*gambare gambare"* as in:

> "[…] So, strive, strive!" said my dad, patting on my back.
>
> This expression "strive, strive" was Dad's stock phrase.

The TT recipients—especially those with no knowledge of Japanese—may favor this simplified version, considering it "smoother" or less distracting. Still, I deliberately chose to borrow the Japanese expression "*gambare gambare"* into the TL. I did so because of my desire to preserve the SL flavor and cultural innuendos of the original expression used by my father, whose voice still remains in my ear. That is, what drove me to Japanize the TT here was my sentiment toward my father's stock phrase itself and my desire to keep it as original as possible, while I was very much aware that the Japanese expression there would sound odd in the TL. This is another good example of foreignization driven by the author-translator's sentiment toward the SL expressions.

6. Translator's invisibility vs. visibility

Murakami is not only a renowned writer but also an avid and extremely popular translator.

> A voracious reader of American novels, Murakami has himself translated novels, non-fiction work and children's literature by English-speaking authors. Starting with the works of Raymond Chandler, Truman Capote, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Irving and Tim O'Brien, he has expanded the scope of his translations and now has over 50 works in his translation list. (Nihei, 2016, p. 383)

And there is an intricate relationship between his being a translator and being a writer: "Murakami's work begins and ends in translation" (Snyder, 2016, p. 138). And Murakami himself "emphasises the significance of the role of translation for his career and as an important tool for training his writing skills, regarding translation as a 'mentor' of writing'" (Nihei, 2016, p. 384):

> Murakami started his career as a writer through the act of translation. According to an anecdote often repeated by Murakami himself, when he first attempted to write a novel, he tried to develop his own writing style through translation. He wrote the first paragraph of his debut novel, *Kaze no uta o kike* (*Hear the Wind Sing* [Murakami 1979]) in English and translated it into Japanese by keeping it as close as possible to English syntax. He liked the translational sound of the resulting Japanese because of its freshness and wrote the rest of the novel in the same style. His translational Japanese came to be a hallmark of his writing, a difference that Murakami used to distinguish himself from other Japanese writers. (p. 385)

In the early stage of his career, however, Murakami's translational language was occasionally criticized by Japanese critics, but criticisms "encouraged his self-assurance as 'an independent writer named Haruki Murakami'" (Nihei, 2016, p. 385). Murakami's writing style in Japanese, therefore, is unique or "idiosyncratic" (Akashi, 2018; Hadley & Akashi, 2015) and characterized by a foreignized (or westernized) flavor due to the English translational style or *hon'yakuchō* (Kazamaru, 2006) ["translationese tone" (Strecher, 2014)].

> It is Murakami's peculiar representation of the Japanese language that has led him to be labelled as an "un-Japanese writer." Murakami's unconventional narrative style has a light and whimsical touch, demonstrating the influence of modern and contemporary American literature, often regarded as one of the main reasons for his global popularity. (Nihei, 2016, p. 386)

In other words, translation has played a unique and significant role in Murakami's literary work. In addition, Murakami has done something unconventional with translation—self-back-translation. By faithfully back-translating "Lederhosen" into Japanese, Murakami adopted Birnbaum's domestication, which made the back-translated Japanese version foreignized—sounding more foreignized than the original Japanese version, which was written in the translational language reflecting an American flavor.

Murakami's popularity as a "celebrity translator" (Akashi 2018; Hadley and Akashi 2015) and a "literary star" (Franssen, 2018) can be seen as a unique phenomenon—often dubbed "the Murakami Phenomenon" (Zielinska-Elliot, 2015, 2020), "the Haruki Effects" (Franssen, 2018), or "Murakamimania" (Strecher, 2014).

> Haruki Murakami is a world-renowned novelist […] In Japan, he is also a celebrity translator […], and his career as a translator attracts readers as much as his reputation as a writer does for his original works (Hadley and Akashi 2015, p. 1). […] The leading Japanese literary critic Yoshihiko Kazamaru (2006, p. 52) argues that naming Murakami as the translator can be seen as a branding strategy, something which is borne out by the fact that his name is printed in a larger font than those of the source text authors. (Akashi, 2018, p. 271)

Murakami is indeed the most "visible" translator in modern Japan, and his popularity and work as a translator leads to another question—about the translator (in)visibility paradigm:

> A translated text is judged successful—by most editors, publishers, reviewers, readers, by

> translators themselves—when it reads fluently, when it gives the appearance that it is not translated, that it is the original, transparently reflecting the foreign author's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text. (Venuti, 1992, p. 4)

That is, "[t]he more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text" (Venuti, 2018, pp. 1–2). Venuti argues against fluency because it negates the foreignness and/or originality of the text, making the translator invisible. He also views the translation strategy of domestication unfavorably since it involves "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values" (p. 15). Foreignization, on the other hand, he considers favorably as "an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (p. 15).

It must be noted here that Venuti's argument is based on "the translator's situation and activity in contemporary British and American cultures" (2018, p. 1), from which the translator's situation in contemporary Japanese culture, particularly Murakami's, is obviously quite different. Akashi and Hadley (2014), for instance, point out that "much of the discussion relating to this paradigm has historically centered on […] the ideological specificities of the American context in which Venuti produced the paradigm" (p. 183). Ohsawa (2014) elucidates one of the major differences between Western and Japanese translation cultures:

> In the European literary world since the Romantic movement there has been a strong emphasis on original creativity, translations have been regarded as a secondary literary achievement, and translators have been expected to be invisible. The Japanese case illustrates the other extreme of the translator's visibility. In modern Japanese literary history translators played an important and visible role in "modernizing" literature, and Japanese novelists read translations of Western literature for literary inspiration. This is why translations in modern Japan were and are expected to be "faithful" reproductions of foreign cultures. Japanese readers relied on translators to reflect the new foreign ideas and literary techniques contained in the source texts. (p. 142)

Even in pre-modern Japan, "source-oriented attitudes formed through early contacts with Classical Chinese texts led to an acceptance of 'translationese' in Japan and continued to shape translators' attitudes throughout subsequent contacts with texts in European languages" (Ohsawa 2014, p. 135). Then, "European texts newly imported in the Meiji Period (1868–1912) sparked moves for a new vernacular-based written language and a revitalization of native literary traditions by drawing on translations for inspiration" (p. 135).

In general, Murakami actively employs the translation strategy of foreignization through faithful translation—as he did in his back-translation of "Lederhosen." His visibility as a translator, however, is not due to his adherence to foreignization. Hadley and Akashi (2015) caution not to assume that "this chosen translation strategy is the source of Murakami's high prominence in Japan" (p. 470).

> Firstly, it is not the case that, as Venuti's conceptualization assumes, the translator in this case would be invisible by default. On the contrary, in this case, the translator is eminently well-known and visible from the outset, so much so that his translations, unlike those of many other translators, are read as works in their own right. That is, in Japan, Murakami's translations acquire a similar cult following to his original literature […] (pp. 470–471)

In the examination of the self-back-translation of "Lederhosen," another issue arises. Although it is indeed a translated work, "Rēdāhōzen" (Murakami, 2005) is not presented as Murakami's translated work but rather his own (original) work. In this instance, how can his (in)visibility as a translator be determined or measured? Most of the general readership is not even aware that the 2005 version of "Rēdāhōzen" is Murakami's translated work—unless they carefully read the foreword to the 2005 anthology (Murakami, 2005a, p. 24).

Moreover, according to Venuti's invisibility paradigm, Murakami's translator Alfred Birnbaum should be considered "invisible" as his translation is heavily domesticated and fluency focused. On the contrary, he's quite visible. According to Nihei (2016),

> Venuti's association of faithfulness with visibility […] does not appear straight-forward in

> the performance of Murakami's translators. Murakami's global popularity has brought his translators under a spotlight of their own. They are often invited to symposia and conferences as spokespeople who can contribute their interpretations of Murakami's stories and their opinions about his phenomenal popularity. His American translator Jay Rubin has gained a particular reputation for media appearances and public comment. (p. 388)

As discussed earlier, Birnbaum himself believes that it would be best to "revitalize" the translation by editing the original in order to help international readers feel comfortable with the translation (2006, p. 205). And "the majority of the changes made were to help Murakami reach American audiences—something Murakami desired" (Buchanan, 2020, n.p.). In other words, his translators have helped Murakami reach American audiences and become world-renowned, and in turn, his popularity has possibly helped them become visible as translators. As Hadley and Akashi (2015) advocate, "an inversion of the traditional, Venuti-inspired visibility paradigm must be considered when it comes to Murakami and the other celebrity translators of Japan" (p. 471).

7. Conclusion

In *Samurai and Cotton,* domestication was found in the narrator's language more than anywhere else, whereas the depictions of family members' conversations and personal letters, for instance, were translated faithfully with more foreignization. It must be noted here that the narrator of the story is also one of the protagonists. The voice adopted in the narration in the TT is that of a mature translingual and transcultural woman, who had adopted the U.S. as her new home and struggled to achieve linguistic citizenship in the TL community. This is the narrator who addressed, and was influenced by, the TL audience.

Self-translators possess multiple perspectives, which would lead to different opinions as to how the work should be translated. For instance, from the reader's perspective, fluent or domesticated translation may be preferred, but self-translators may want to express their sentiments or themselves in the translation, sometimes resulting in an effect that the TT reader may find foreign, not fluent, and/or unpolished. But thanks to their ownership of the ST, self-translators should be able to care about their own perception and expression of their own *self* in the TL (see Takahashi [2020] for further discussion of self-translation as the translation of the self). In this creative activity, the self-translator could become "invisible" to the audience when domestication is applied, but at the same time, it could result in the expression of the translator's creativity and self expression. Here I intentionally use the spelling "self expression" (without a hyphen) rather than "self-expression" as ordinarily used. The latter is normally defined as "the expression of one's feelings, thoughts, or ideas," while the former implies the nuance of "the expression of *one's self*." I thus use "self expression" to mean "the expression of one's own self." When self-translators express themselves this way, they could become visible as translators.

In a way, that was how I wanted to express my own self as the narrator. That is, I, as the protagonist, on the other hand, went through various stages of life in the story. Unlike the narrator, who is constant, the protagonist is transformative going through various emotions toward her host society and its people, culture, language, etc. Events and characters in the story were seen through the eyes of the narrator, who is the end product of the protagonist's transformation. Inevitably, the narrator was in turn influenced by the stories depicting the various events and emotions that the protagonist had experienced during those transitional periods. Such factors and effects must be accounted for in addition to the influence of the audience on the narrator.

As Venuti (1995/2018, p. 29) points out, foreignizing translation is a subjective and relative term that still involves some domestication. I also see that each strategy serves different purposes. At the same time, and most importantly, the translation work must satisfy the self-translator's sentiments and needs stemming from his or her personal feeling and attachment toward the original text.

As I noted above, self-translators possess multiple perspectives, looking at the source and target languages and cultures, which lead to different opinions as to how the work should be translated. For instance, from the reader's perspective, fluent or domesticated translation may be preferred, but the self-translator may want to express his or her sentiments—or him- or herself—in the translation,

sometimes resulting in an effect that the TT reader may find it foreign, not fluent, and/or unpolished. It is then eventually up to the self-translator's judgment to choose how the bridge between the ST and the TT reader should be built while caring about his or her self expression in the TL.

Translators are usually receptor-based (or thinking of the audience primarily), but self-translators can translate for the audience as well as for themselves. And when they can express themselves through self-translation, self-translators can become truly visible as translators—perhaps, primarily to themselves but not to the readers.

Notes:

A shorter version of this paper was presented at the *Translators' [In]visibilities Workshop* organized by the Translation Studies Working Group of the Calgary Institute for the Humanities at the University of Calgary, February 25–26, 2022.

This paper references some of the examples initially discussed in my unpublished doctoral dissertation (Takahashi, 2013), and there is a slight overlap with other papers (Takahashi, 2019a, 2019b) that are also based on Takahashi (2013). The present study discusses the same examples from different perspectives.

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