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**AUDIO VISUAL TRANSLATION: SUBTITLING ENGLISH – ARABIC SUBTITLING: PROBLEMS  
AND SOLUTIONS A COMMENTARY ON THE APPLICATION OF THE THEORY OF  
DOMESTICATION AND FOREIGNIZATION IN SUBTITLING RELIGIOUS TERMS, NAMES,  
VERSES AND BELIEFS**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study focuses on translating and analysing Krishna Consciousness documentary from Sanskrit into Arabic in light of Venuti's framework domestication and foreignization concentrating on certain religious aspects. It concludes that employing domestication and foreignization methods to translate language and culture of the source content could be vary according to the style of the original text in addition to the possibility of opting for other translational procedures than domestication or foreignization.

Keywords: Krishna Consciousness, Domestication, Foreignization, Religious Aspects

**Introduction**

The selected video, An Introduction to Krishna Consciousness, is an informative and educational documentary drawing on the philosophy, faith, and everyday rituals of Hinduism generally, and the faith of Krishna specifically. The length of the video is 6.8 minutes. The tone of the language used is in a low register because the video is non-literary in character. The language direction is from Hindi (Sanskrit) into English. The target audience of this subtitled video is general Arab people. There are many reasons behind choosing this video. Firstly, there is a great deal of friction between Indian communities and the residents of the Gulf States, and openness and communication between them in the scientific, cultural and social fields. There are a large number of male and female workers of Indian nationality in homes, shops and other places of employment. The population of the Arab Gulf States exhibits a great deal of religious variation. This includes the religion of the Indian communities, most notably the Hindu religion. The population of the Arab Gulf States knows about those particular religions if they have encountered any individuals from the Indian community. However, in general, the people of the Arab Gulf states do not know much about the Hindu religion. They tend only to know its name, and most of them think that the Hindu religion involves only the worshiping of cows. In addition, Indian cinema - known as "Bollywood" - has become one of the concerns of the people of the Arab Gulf states in terms of watching movies teeming with Hindu rituals and different forms of worship and religious backgrounds, without the slightest knowledge about these things. For these reasons, I decided to choose the translation of information relating to a religion, creed and sect that relates to Krishna, as the Arab

population hears a great deal about them in the movies. They see Krishna lordships in many movies as well. As a result, the viewers in Gulf countries will be able to obtain basic knowledge and simple information for the purpose of developing their understanding. Secondly, there are no available transcripts for the video to help with the mixture of English and Sanskrit, which makes the task very challenging for me as a viewer and as a subtitler.

The ideas of foreignization and domestication were initially raised by Lawrence Venuti (1995). From Venuti's point of view, foreignization and domestication emerge from the hypotheses of exact interpretation and liberal interpretation, yet they are not the same. Literal and free interpretations concentrate on language structure and semantics, while domestication and foreignization involve wide feelings in terms of language, society and style. As per Venuti(1995), foreignization as a translation technique seems to place an ethno deviant weight on those (cultural) qualities that embody the semantic and social contrast of the remote content, sending the peruser to another country, while domestication alludes to an ethnocentric decrease of the outside content to target language social qualities, bringing the creator back home. As such, foreignization tries to deliver an objective content that purposely breaks target traditions by holding something of the foreignness of the first initial source (Venuti, 2001). In terms of correlation, taming underscores with regard to making interpretations straightforward, and telling the story in a less interesting way, would be prudent when it comes to targeting language perusers (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997).

A few researchers allege that domestication and foreignization cannot be blended in the interpretation process, which is difficult to be followed out in the authentic cases. Translation needs to reliably duplicate the first creator's considerations and style, which will be full of intriguing flavours and will require the utilization of foreignization. At the same time, the translation must be seen as reasonable by the objective language learner, mirroring the significance of domestication. It is surely neither attractive nor reasonable to choose one system and ignore the other.

This commentary will shed light on certain challenges that were encountered in the process of subtitling the video material in terms of religious content, and will focus on the particular strategies that were adopted to resolve the challenges met.

### Problems and possible solutions

In terms of managing interpretations for the screen, they are not at all like an interpretation in print, in that the viewer cannot go back for a brief moment and achieve a better perspective with regard to the interpretation (Altahri, 2013).

Schwarz (2002, cited in Altahri, 2013) stated that the subtitler is confronted with having to work in a multi-media context, where the dialogue works together with the visual picture, soundtrack and music. Another issue to be dealt with here is that the subtitler needs to deliver writings that read normally and are fathomable as a unit (Altahri, 2013). This must be accomplished with the same state of mind and style as the initial movie. This implies that a subtitler needs to have exceptional aptitudes. For example, she/he needs a rich vocabulary of equivalent words and, in addition, the subtitler has to have the ability to adjust and re-compose for an alternative group of onlookers (Altahri, 2013).

- Translating a religious concept "Krishna consciousness"

**ST:** What is Krishna consciousness? (scene 00:12)

**TT:** ما هو وعي كريشنا؟

**BT:** What is Krishna consciousness?

In the process of subtitling, one of the main difficulties was how to translate concepts that are part of a different religion, especially the concept of Krishna Consciousness. The concept of Krishna consciousness does not tend to have an artificial imposition on the mind, but by its connotation, the meaning tends to mean the original energy of the living entity when hearing the transcendental vibration that revives consciousness. It is a process that is recommended by authorities for this day and age. Also, by practical experience, it can be perceived that by chanting the maha-mantra *الدعاء الذي يحرر العقل من مآسي العالم المادي* (a prayer or sound that

frees the mind from the miseries of the material world) one can at once feel a transcendental ecstasy from the spiritual stratum (the Bhagavad Gita, p. 239-245). To solve this issue, I made the decision to apply a calque or literal translation strategy with regard to the word "consciousness" by translating it into "وعي" that is, filling the denotative content. This was necessary as it was difficult to explain the meaning in detail as mentioned above, and a naturalization approach was adopted in order to translate „Krishna“. Thus, understanding could be left to the viewers.

- **Translating of religious verses**

**ST:** Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare (scene 04:32)

**TT:** أيتها الملكة والطاقة الإلهية المبهجة امنحيني نعمتك وادخليني بخدمة محبة كريشنا

**BT:** O queen, and the Lord of venerable energy, grant me your goodness, and let me enter to serve Krishna's love

As the previous verse does not have a direct English translation from Sanskrit, it was a very difficult task for me to translate it into Arabic. This involved a complicated process with regard to each word, especially in terms of different names for the one lord, Krishna, in Hinduism. In other words, the verse contains a sort of synonymous vocabulary. The word Hare refers to the Goddess, which is female. In Hinduism, the devotees of Krishna chant the names of the couple - Krishna and Radha - and they say the female form first Hare الملكة (queen), because it is the energy, followed by the male name Krishna كريشنا. The verse here, with the three words Hare, Krishna, and Rama, are transcendental seeds of the maha-mantra, and the chanting is a spiritual call for the Lord and his eternal energy Hara, in order to provide and protect the conditioned soul. This chanting is like the genuine cry of a child for its mother. Mother Hara helps the devotee achieve the grace of the supreme father, Hare or Krishna, and the Lord reveals himself to the devotee who chants this verse sincerely. As Muslims, this faith is completely different from Islam because we believe in only one Lord, which is Allah, and he is the only and unique one, the creator of the universe, and he does not have either a female partner or sons and daughters. Therefore, the strategy of foreignization was the most suitable choice in this context. So, the verse has been translated directly and the result is close to the ST, as the function of the video content is informative and educational, and my purpose is reflecting this to Arab audiences who might not have an appropriate background.

- **Translation of the term "Lord"**

**ST:** Everything here has been done for the satisfaction of the Lord (scene 00:52)

**TT:** كل شيء هنا يبذل في سبيل رضا الإله كريشنا

**BT:** Everything here is done for the satisfaction of the Lord Krishna

ElSheikh (2016) states that the use of religious terms is focal as well as obligatory. He also points out that there are discrepancies in terms of the selection of Arabic equivalents for English religious terms. While Darwish (2010) stated that certain choices are justified by ideology, whether those choices are reflexive or subconscious decisions informed by traditions at large or by a specific translation tradition, or by the purely intentional conscious determination based on the ideological construction, which differs from cultural construction. Lovell (1980) argues that the artefacts of cultural construction will be important bearers of ideology.

The above example indicates the complexity of the process of subtitling and translating the term „Lord“ as part of the documentary material. As that term is derived from ideology, it was a challenging task to make a decision regarding it. I translated the term Lord into الإله AlElāh, which is target-focused and motivated by the ideology that outcomes in the same cognitive and chasm of Ar-rabb الرب or God, who is not adored or worshipped by Muslims who are Arabic speakers. The reason behind that is that this type of translational action is not only restricted to religious texts, but its use is growing in translation-mediated television, subtitling, voiceovers and other audiovisual forms and modalities (Darwish, 2010, p. 8). Thus, I stuck to that

translation by following the method of conservation because it appears a great deal in movies, specifically the repetition of "Lord Krishna" الإله كريشنا . Additionally, it worth mentioning that I applied the choice of an additional „intra-textual gloss“ of the word Krishna to AlElāh as this: الإله كريشنا throughout the video, in order to specify it and to avoid creating ideological tension.

#### •Translation of the name Japa

ST: Here we have Japa beads (scene 04:05)

TT: هذه هي السبحة

BT: These are the prayer beads

It worth mentioning that the previous name in the example given above and other names mentioned in this commentary are Sanskrit, because Sanskrit is the language of the holy book Bhagavad Gita in the Hindu religion. In particular, it is used by Lord Krishna devotees. The difficulty lies in getting a direct and exact meaning of Japa. Japa derives from the root jap, which means to repeat in a silent voice, so it means muttering or whispering passages from scriptures or deity names. Since it has such a meaning, the problem of translating it into Arabic is difficult as it means Mantra recitation in Sanskrit and is an important aspect of Yoga practice. Once again it is involved in many aspects of meanings and that possibly raises the problem of ambiguity. To resolve this issue, the culturally equivalent procedure has been adopted to translating Japa into Arabic as السبحة the rosary, although it is not an accurate procedure as Newmark (1988) stated. This is because in the video it looks like the rosary that is used by Muslims to glorify and praise Allah.

#### •Translating the term Chanting Mantras using Japa beads

ST: The prescribed amount that I chant is 16 rounds and that is a 108 Mantras within one round (scene 03:23)

TT: أسبح 125 مرة ما يعادل 109 تسبيحة لمجموع الخرزات في السبحة

BT: I glorify 125 time which equals 109 glorifications for the whole string of beads

Linguistically, chant means the state of singing or reciting a chant or psalm with a musical intonation. It has the same denotative meaning in Arabic in terms of chanting the Holy Quran, for example. However, Mantra comes from a Sanskrit word meaning a "sacred message or text, charm, spell, counsel." It is a sacred utterance, one of a collection of orally transmitted poetichymns. Nida (2001:82) points out that "For truly successful translation, biculturalism is even more important than bilingualism, since words only have meanings in terms of the cultures in which they function". In this problematic condition, I adopted a domestication strategy to translate the example above into „I glorify“ أسبح in order to convey the meaning and connotation from the source, as تسبيح glorifying“ is the act of repeating silently. A domestication strategy was adopted for the whole segment. Furthermore, with regard to „I chant 16 rounds and that is a 108 mantras within 1 round“, it is not popular for Arabs and Muslims to glorify by using „rounds“. In other words, we do not say „we glorify in rounds“. Rather, we say „times“ مرات because it is more pragmatic than „rounds“. Also, it was very difficult to translate „16 rounds within 1 round“ based on the number of beads on the rosary. To make it neutral for the audience, I made a simple calculation by adding 16 to the number of the beads, which is 109, and then translating it into أسبح 125 مرة ما يعادل 109 تسبيحة glorify“ 125 times and that equals 109 glorifications. Therefore, Mantras are here translated into glorification“ تسبيحة glorification“. It is important to mention that the speaker in the video in the scene at 03: 23 said „...and that is 108“ while in the scene 04:06 he said „...actually it is 109“. Thus I used 109 in both scenes.

#### •Translating the holy name Aarti

ST: ...for preparing for the first Aarti (scene 01:26)

TT: للاستعداد للصلاة الأولى

BT: For preparing for the first prayer

Aarti is derived from the Sanskrit word “ārātrika”, which means something that removes darkness. There are many forms of worship in Hinduism, and Aarti is one of them. It is a religious ritual that takes place every day by offering lights to one or more deities. Since there is not a direct and exact meaning for that name, I used a substitution to convey it into الصلاة “the prayer”.

**ST:** ...and this was spoken 5000 years ago (scene 00:35)

**TT:** لغته السنسكريتية متحدثة منذ 5 آلاف عام

**BT:** Its Sanskrit language was spoken since 5000 years

In the example given above, the interviewee did not mention that „Sanskrit“ is the language of the Bhagavad Gita. So, it was implicit in the SL. By using the explication method, the information is explicit in the TL (Cintas & Ramael, 2007). Therefore, the segment was translated into „لغته السنسكريتية“, its Sanskrit language“. I transliterated Sanskrit as well, in order to make the image obvious to the audience.

- **Translating the Belief**

**ST:** As a civilization we should not be killing, for instance, the cow (scene 05:20)

**TT:** كشعب متحضر يجب ألا نقتل على سبيل المثال البقر

**BT:** As civilized people we must not slay for instance the cow

As stated at the beginning, according to most Arabs, Hinduism is simply represented by the worship of the cow. That is just an illustration of a huge misunderstanding that Muslims have about the faith of Hindus. On the other hand, the subtitle may every-so-often need to add additional data to help the TL viewers comprehend a point which, for social reasons, may in one way or another be unclear (Altahri, 2013).

Delabastita (1989: 200) additionally states that when a translator needs to recreate what has been said in the source content, they are restricted by three fundamental specialized limitations: the spatial design on the screen, the quantity of lines permitted and the quantity of characters per line. The discourse, consequently, must be diminished or changed and, as a result of the aforementioned confinements, translators/subtitlers end up confronting the troublesome undertaking of picking the most proportionate features in the object language, attempting to avoid any superfluous semantic misfortunes. In fact, it is worth explaining more by translating the notion of „not slaying the cow“. Due to the technical restrictions however, I just went with the foreignization method.

## Conclusion

To conclude, domestication and foreignization are translational procedures. Therefore, there is no need to depend on either one of them as long as the translated work takes the target receiver’s culture and language code into account in the light of the original style, as it is clear that the other procedures were adopted to address the issues and fulfill the work.

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