Abroad or Back Home? Reflecting on Foreignizing and Domesticating Tendencies Observed in Children's Literature Translated into Albanian

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Abstract

This article aims to investigate children's literature translated into Albanian in order to identify tendencies of foreignization and domestication and the degree of visibility of the original author and culture versus the translator in the target text. Firstly, there will be introduced theoretical views from various translation studies scholars such as Schleiermacher, Berman, Venuti, Tymoczko, etc. in order to create the necessary background of the present study. Afterwards, several examples will be extracted from children's literature translated into Albanian, the comparison of which to the original will be crucial to decide on the attitude of translators not only towards the original, but also towards target readers (mainly, but not exclusively children) and their culture. Aiming towards a wide encompassing study, extracted examples from the translated variants into Albanian will be compared not only to the original, but also among themselves (in those cases in which there is more than one translation of the same source text) in order to explore the degree of submission or resistance of source text to target language cultural values through translation. Such a thorough comparison will contribute to a diachronic analysis of the outlined tendencies and considerations about the level of achievement of the intended effect. Finally, the paper will be completed by some conclusions and recommendations referring to the corpus analyzed and overall to the translation of children's literature in general.

Keywords: children's literature; translation; foreignization; domestication, culture.

1. Introduction

A literary text is always contextualized in a specific linguistic and cultural community, and, as such, it is always specific with reference to social, cultural, historical and linguistic conventions. The process of translation makes the search for complete equivalence among different languages and cultures not only difficult, but also futile. Through this paper we aim at identification of cultural specific items (CSIs) in children's literature written originally in English and investigation of the concrete strategies used by translators when they are brought into Albanian language. The inclinations of Albanian translations will be classified into two main tendencies: domestication and foreignization, which will allow us to reflect on the degree of visibility of the original author and culture versus Albanian cultural values in the translated texts.

2. Research questions

Comparison of English texts with Albanian variants will serve the aim of posing answers to the following questions:

- 1. What are some cultural specific items found in the original texts?
- 2. How are they brought into Albanian language?
- 3. Which is the most frequently observed tendency in each Albanian variant?
- 4. Which is the most frequently observed tendency in all corpus?
- 5. Are there any cases in which the translator is not consistent with the general tendency observed within the same Albanian variant? Does this have any kind of impact on the readers' general understanding of the text?
- 6. What can translators who will encounter translation of CSIs in the future benefit from this study?

3. Description of procedure of study and corpus involved

In order to complete this research we have focused our attention on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Gulliver's Travels* as source texts (STs) and their Albanian variants as target texts (TTs). In cases where more than one Albanian

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variant corresponding to the same ST has been found, the comparison has been extended among Albanian variants as well in order to witness on the one hand different tendencies exhibited from different translators towards the same ST, and, on the other hand, to contemplate on the degree of consistency within each variant in itself. Furthermore, such a wide corpus provides helpful insights into the translation of cultural specific items not only in children's literature, but also in literary translation in general. Having said that, we need to emphasize the fact that it is not easy to settle on a final definition of children's literature and that is why examples are taken not only from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, but also from *Gulliver's Travels* (originally not written for children, but mainly read by children today)¹. This corpus selection also relies on the perception of translation as a process of transfer, not only from one language into another but also from the adult system to children's system².

The table below illustrates the corpus we have selected for our study.

Table 1. Corpus of comparative study

Original books in English language - STs	Albanian variar	nts - TTs		
Gulliver's Travels [GT]	TT1 Halit Selfo	(1974) [UG]		
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland [AAiW]	TT1 Hysejn Çela Beqir Çela (1944) [LBÇ - V.I]	TT2 <i>Maqo Afezolli</i> (1961) [LBÇ - V.II]	TT3 <i>Maqo Afezolli</i> (1992) [LBÇ - V.III]	TT4 Taulant and Eri Tafa (2008) [LBÇ - V.IV]

Aiming at explicitation of the general tendency observed in Albanian variants, we have closely read the STs parallel with the Albanian TTs with the intention of identifying CSIs in the STs and the way they (may) have been altered through translation. Examples found to represent the same tendency have been grouped together as evidence of similar behavior from the translator(s). Following this process of identification and comparison, we have analyzed the examples and have extracted important data which laid the foundations for the constructing of several tables and charts, which, in turn, have aided us towards outlining important findings and conclusions mentioned by the end of this paper.

4. Theoretical background on foreignization and domestication

One of the most important decisions the Albanian translators of children's literature have to make is whether to create a text which will preserve the original (British and American) cultural elements or to produce a text which will be accepted in the (Albanian) target cultural environment. These two different tendencies present a dilemma that has been described in different ways and by different terminology by translation scholars through time. In this section of the paper there will be briefly introduced some approaches to this dilemma in order to establish a theoretical background to our study, which will serve as the foundation for the analyses of the examples that follow in the next sections.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, *Schleiermacher* viewed a translation which bore the traces of the foreign peculiarities more suitable than a naturalized translation³. Approaching a similar view, *Berman* praised *Schleiermacher* for his early radical critique and also supports the practice of ethnocentric translations⁴. On the other hand, *Venuti*, the scholar who has contributed significantly to this debate, blames domesticating translation strategies for the invisibility of the translator. According to him, strategies of translation involve firstly selection of the foreign task to be translated and, secondly, developing a method to translate it⁵. The methods can essentially be divided into two groups: domesticating and foreignizing, based on the strategies chosen by the translator.

The terminology used by different scholars is not the same, however, we can surely find similar approaches among them. For example, according to *Schleiermacher*, there are two paths or options for the translator: "*Either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader toward the writer, or he leaves the reader*

¹ The term children's literature can refer to different concepts, such as literature recommended to children, literature read by children and literature published for them (Klingberg, 2008:8).

² Shavit (1986:111).

³ Schleiermacher in Venuti (1991: 128-131).

⁴ Berman in Venuti (2004: 284-297).

⁵ Venuti (1995: 240).

alone as much as possible and moves the writer toward the reader"⁶. Schleiermacher supports the first method and encourages translators to take their readers abroad instead of leaving them at home in their familiar surroundings. These paths are called *foreignization* and *domestication*, using the terminology adopted by *Venuti*. Domesticated translations elude readers by imposing the view that the text is not a translation and that it was originally written in the target language. *Venuti* describes the dominance of domesticated English translations of foreign works, whereby translations are viewed as originals and translators as "invisible" as possible⁷. He also warns against such dangers of domestications as: an attitude of superiority, even colonialism, towards cultures whose language is not English. He favours a more foreignizing approach, which, according to him, would make the reader feel cultural and linguistic differences and motivate the process of reading by preserving characteristic features of the ST and its foreign flavour, i.e. keeping linguistic and cultural differences in TT. Referring back to translation of children's literature, foreignizing can also serve educationalist purposes, since preservation of foreign cultural items involves children into a process of raised awareness about other cultures and peoples. It must be stated, however, that with foreignizing tendencies, although more information is given about the foreign culture, there is always risk of incomprehension as the difficulty of understanding the text is raised to a higher level. However, in the realm of children's literature, domesticating and foreignizing reveal delicate matters since translations have a great impact on how children see foreign cultures.

There are also modern translation scholars, such as *Tymoczko*, who deny the dichotomy mentioned above about the mutual exclusive orientation of the translator towards one strategy or the other. According to *Tymoczko*, a translation may be 'radically oriented to the ST in some respects, but depart radically from the ST in other respects so as to assimilate it to a norm of a receiving culture'⁸. There are still different scholars who contribute to this unsettled debate. Generally, we may state that a domesticated orientation tends to be a smoother reading experience for the readers, whereas a foreignizing approach would require more knowledge and experience about the source language and its authentic cultural values.

To conclude our discussion at this point, we must say that, as translators are constantly involved in decisionmaking processes, they should always be careful when choosing which strategy they are going to use. Their decisions will depend on several factors such as purpose of translation and age of receiving audience among others, but, it is always important to be consistent in their decisions in order not to cause confusion on the readers and to interrupt the natural flow of reading and understanding.

5. Comparative study on translation of CSIs from English into Albanian

5.1 Defining key terms

Domestication and foreignizing can be applied to different aspects of the texts: historical events, cultural and religious rites, personal names, etc. It is the scope of this paper to discover how English cultural specific items (CSIs) have been brought into Albanian: whether traces of them have been retained in translation or whether they have been assimilated in Albanian.

For the purposes of this paper we will be guided by the definition given about culture by Newmark: "the way of life and its manifestations which are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression."⁹ Also, according to him, "culture-bound terms, whether single-unit lexemes, phrases or collocations are those which are particularly tide to the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression".¹⁰ Throughout this paper we are not going to refer to the translation of proper nouns since that would take an even larger time and space which could not be covered within the limits of this single article. Our analysis will be confined to translation of monetary units, measure units and foods and drinks.

5.2 Taxonomy for treating CSIs in translation illustrated by examples from corpus selected

In order to provide a theoretical framework to our study, we will make reference to the Croatian linguist and translation scholar Vladimir Ivir and the taxonomy he introduces in "Procedures and strategies for the translation of culture" about

⁶ Schleiermacher in Mary-Snell Hornby (1988: 145).

⁷ Venuti (1995: 1).

⁸ Tymoczko (1999: 55-56).

⁹ Newmark (1988: p. 94).

¹⁰ Newmark (1988: p. 94).

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translation of cultural words, since it has served as the basis for many later classifications¹¹. This model proposes seven strategies: *borrowing, definition, literal translation, substitution, lexical creation, omission* and *addition*, which will be explained and illustrated below with examples taken from the corpus under study. Since presenting all examples we have encountered would be far beyond the scopes of this paper, we think it is sufficient to mention only representative examples for each tendency observed. However, the results mentioned in the later part of this paper refer to all extracted examples (although they are not mentioned explicitly in this study due to the limited space).

5.2.1 Borrowing

Borrowing involves precise transmission of cultural information. According to *lvir*, this is a strategy frequently used by translators, but in those cases when the reader can recognize the borrowed term and its meaning. Borrowing as a strategy may also be combined with definition or substitution. Also *lvir* adds that borrowing is more acceptable as a strategy when the "*TL is relatively open to foreign influences*"¹².

Example 1

about two months after my arrival, we set out for the	gati dy muaj pas ardhjes sime, u nisëm për kryeqytet, që
metropolis, situated near the middle of that empire, and	bie pothuaj në zemër të perandorisë, nja tri mijë milje nga
about three thousand miles distance from our house (GT, p. 103)	shtëpia jonë. (Udhëtimet e Guliverit, fq. 114)

Example 2

Let me see: that would be four thousand miles down, I	 Prit të shoh, duhet të kem zbritur nja katër milje, besoj
think - "(AAiW, p. 13)	(LBÇ - V.III, fq. 12)

In both examples we can see that the cultural specific item – **miles** – is borrowed into Albanian by preserving the same form.

5.2.2 Definition

Ivir states that this strategy is not widely used in itself, but it is mainly used as complementary to borrowing. There are different ways to introduce definitions, such as in the body of the text or through footnotes¹³. Sometimes, as *Ivir* rightly points out, this strategy may lead towards overtranslation and overemphasis on certain linguistic expressions which would not be otherwise emphasized in SL. He advises against the use of this strategy when the cultural term is just used as cultural background.

Example 1

This liquor tasted like a small cyder,	Pija i ngjante në shije sidrës* dhe nuk më vinte e keqe. [*Cidre
and was not unpleasant. (GT, p. 93)	(frëngjisht), cyder (anglisht) = një farë vere, që nxirret nga
	molla. Mjeda ka përdorur fjalën sider.]

Example 2

"Write than down," the King said to the jury; and the	"Shkruaje këtë! – urdhëroi Mbreti.
jury eagerly wrote down all three dates on their	Anëtarët i shkruan të tria datat në pllakat e tyre, i
slates, and the added them up, and reduced the	mblodhën dhe pastaj e kthyen përgjigjen në shëllings dhe
answer to shillings and pence. AAiW, p. 113)	pencë*. (*para të vogla angleze). (LBÇ - V.II, fq. 131)

In the first example the CSI consists of a drink, which is transmitted in the same form in Albanian, followed by an explanatory definition included in the footnote by the end of the page. The second example shows the use of the strategy of definition for the translation of monetary units, again complemented by a footnote. In both cases, as we may see, definitions are accompanied by borrowings of the CSI terms from SL.

¹¹ Ivir (1987: 39). For later classifications see Newmark (1995: 103), Hervey and Higgins (1992: 28-43), Florin (1993: 125-7), Mailhac (1996: 137), Franco Aixelá (1996: 62-64), Kwieciński (2001: 157-165), Pedersen (2007: 127-155), etc.

¹² Ivir (1987: 38).

¹³ Ivir (1987: 39).

5.2.3 Literal translation

Literal translation is a word-for-word translation of the concept that is unknown for the target culture audience. This procedure, according to *lvir*, is the most common method of cultural transference¹⁴.

Example 1

I saw a stage erected about a foot and a half from	kishin ngritur një palk ndonjë këmbë e gjysmë të lartë
the ground(GT, p. 17)	(UG, p. 23)

Example 2

She took down a jar from one of the shelves as she	Liza ndërsa binte poshtë zgjati dorën dhe kapi një kavanoz
passed: it was labeled "ORANGE MARMALADE," but	në etiketën e të cilit shkruhej me shkronja të mëdha:
to her great disappointed it was empty. (AAiW, p.13)	"MARMALATË PORTOKALLI". Por u zhgënjye shumë kur
	vuri re se kavanozi ishte bosh. (LBÇ - V.IV, fq. 7)

In the first example the CSI consists of a unit of measure, whereas in the second example the CSI is at item of food. In both cases the items are translated word-for-word into Albanian.

5.2.4 Substitution

In cases when the SL culture and the TL culture partially overlap, translators can use the strategy of substitution. In "substitution" an expression denoting a similar concept in the target culture is used as if it were a full equivalent. However, there is always the disadvantage of assimilating foreign culture terms or concepts in the TL culture¹⁵.

Example 1

I wondered how I could forbear when I saw his	Më dukej si e rreme kur shihja pjatat, që më ngjanin sa një
dishes of the size of a silver three-pence, a leg of	qindarkë, kofshën e derrit, që s'ma zinte synë as për
pork hardly a mouthful, a cup not so big as a	kafshatë, ose kupat, që më shëmbëllenin si lëvozhga arre
nutshel (GT, p. 157)	(UG, p. 176)

Example 2

Who stole the tarts? (AAiW, p. 110)	Kush i vodhi boskotat? (LBÇ - V.I, fq. 117)
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The first example is a monetary unit substituted into a familiar concept in Albanian. The same strategy is applied even in the second case, when the CSI consists of a food not so widely known for Albanian readers, which is why the translator has transformed it into another more 'accepted' Albanian sweet. The strategy of substitution, as it can be observed even through the examples, fails to reflect the fact that the original communication was taking place in a different cultural setting and that the source text was an expression of a source culture.

5.2.5 Lexical creation

Through lexical creation translators coin new words to translate nonexistent or non-lexicalised items. These new words may be accepted in the TL, or may not be accepted and are used just once in TL because they are less easily understood than a word that has sprung up naturally.

Example 1

When bending my eyes downwards as	Kur vështrova sa mund të shikoja nga ajo anë, pashë një njeri të gjallë, që nuk e
5 5 5	
much as I could, I perceived it to be a	kishte shtatin as gjashtë gishtërinj të gjatë*; mbante në duar një hark e një shtizë
human creature not six inches high, with	dhe i varej në sup një kukurë. (*Masa e gishtit është baras me një të
a bow and arrow in his hand, and a quiver	dymbëdhjetën e këmbës, ose afro 7 milimetra. Prandaj të gjashtë gishtërinjtë
at his back. (GT, p. 16)	janë pak më shumë se gjashtëmbëdhjetë centimetra.) (UG, p. 21)

14 Ivir (1987: 39).

¹⁵ Reflecting on the use of substitution, lvir points out that its main setback is "that it identifies concepts which are not identical, eliminating the 'strangeness' of the foreign culture and treating foreign-culture concepts as its own" (1987: 42).

Example 2

However, this bottle was not marked 'poison,' so Alice	Ajo u bind se në etiketën e shishes nuk ishte shkruar "helm",
ventured to taste it, and finding it very nice, (it had, in	prandaj e ktheu ta provonte dhe e vërteta është se lëngu i saj
fact, a sort of mixed flavour of cherry-tart, custard,	iu duk shumë i shijshëm. Shija e saj kishte diçka që të kujtonte
pineapple, roast turkey, toffee, and hot buttered toast,)	tortën me qershi, me krem, me ananas, gjelin e pjekur,
she very soon finished it off. (AAiW, p. 17)	kërcitëset dhe kekun e ngrohtë me gjalp. (LBÇ - V.IV, fq. 13)

In the first example, the translator has opted for the creation of a new term to measure distance, which is not normally used in Albanian. In the second example, another term is newly created, this time to "fill" a lexical gap for a sort of candy inexistent in Albanian culture.

5.2.6 Omission

The procedure of omission involves deletion of CSIs. This may be justified by communicative purposes¹⁶.

Example 1

She was very good-natured, and not above forty foot high , being little for her age. (GT, p. 99)	(UG, p. 109)
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Example 2

But she went on all the same, shedding gallons of	Mirëpo përsëri vazhdoi të qante (), derisa rreth e
tears, until there was a large pool all around her,	përqark saj u formua një pellg i vërtetë, afër 10
about four inches deep and reaching half down the	centimetra i thellë, që hapej deri në mes të sallës. (LBÇ -
hall (AAiW, p. 21)	V.III, fq. 21)

As it can clearly be seen through the above examples, the strategy of omission has been used to avoid transference of CSIs: in the first case referring to measure units of distance, and, in the second case, measure units of volume for liquids.

5.2.7 Addition

When using this strategy, translators explicate in the TL cultural information expressed implicitly in the ST, which may be clearly understood by SL readers, but that is not the case with TL readers.

Example 1

and every citizen under that of the principal men in his own city, chosen after the manner of Venice by ballot ? (GT, p. 146)	dhe çdo qytetar ka mbi krye të parin e qytetit të tij, që zgjidhet ai në Venedik, me vota të lira. (UG, p. 162)
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Example 2

She was now only ten inches high (AAiW, p. 17)	Ajo qe katandisur vetëm një pëllëmbë njeri. (LBÇ - V.II, fq. 8).
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We can observe that in both cases the CSIs have been clarified in Albanian language, by adding some more explicit information.

Referring back to Venuti's dichotomy, we can classify the strategies presented as in the table below:

Table 2. Strategies of translation for CSIs (with reference to Ivir's taxonomy and Venuti's dichotomy)

Domestication	Foreignizing
Substitution	Borrowing
Omission	Literal translation

¹⁶ It should be noted that lvir does not consider in his taxonomy omissions used in order to abridge the text, which happens quite often in translation.

Addition	l ovical croation	Definition
	Lexical creation	

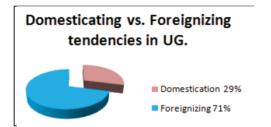
5.3 Illustration of findings through tables and charts

The present study aims at contributing to a qualitative research. After all CSI items are identified in ST and TT, we need to analyze the data in order to estimate the frequency of the strategies individually at first, and, then, to decide whether CSI items are mostly domesticated or foreignized. We have identified a total of 342 CSIs in ST and in Table 3 we will present the different strategies used in the Albanian variant of *Gulliver's Travels* to bring these cultural items to the target readers.

Table 3. Strategies of translation observed in Albanian translation of "Gulliver's Travels"

Tendency	Domestication			Foreignizing			
Strategy	Substitution	Omission	Lexical Creation	Borrowing	Literal translation	Definition	Addition
Number of CSIs	61 17%	14	23	90	144	3	7
Percentage							
	98			244			
Total	29%			71%			

Chart 1. Domesticating vs. Foreignizing tendencies in translation of Gulliver's Travels into Albanian



As it can easily be noticed from the above table and chart, the prevailing tendency is *foreignizing*, which means that foreign elements have been preserved and brought into Albanian language, mostly through literal translation and borrowing. However, a significant amount of CSIs have been *domesticated* or adapted into the TL culture, through substitution, lexical creation or omission.

In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* we have identified 43 CSIs and in Table 4 – Table 7 we will present data which will inform us about the way the cultural items have been brought into the four different Albanian variants.

Table 4. Strategies of translation observed in Variant 1 of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"

Tendency	Domestication			Foreignizing			
Strategy	Substitution	Omission	Lexical Creation	Borrowing	Literal translation	Definition	Addition
Number of CSIs	17	2	1	2	15 34%	0%	6 14%
Percentage	40%	5%	270	5%	34%	0%	14%
Total	47%	20		53%		23	

Table 5. Strategies of translation observed in Variant 2 of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"



Tendency	Domestication			Foreignizing			
Strategy	Substitution	Omission	Lexical Creation	Borrowing	Literal translation	Definition	Addition
Number of CSIs Percentage	18 42%	4 9%	0	4	12 28%	0%	5 12%
Total	51%	22		. 49%		21	

Table 6. Strategies of translation observed in Variant 3 of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"

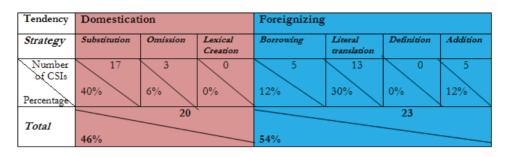
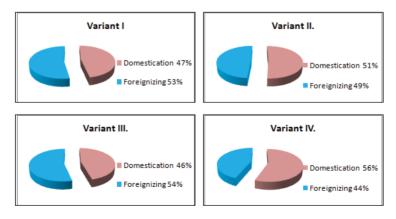


Table 7. Strategies of translation observed in Variant 4 of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"

Tendency	Domestication			Foreignizing			
Strategy	Substitution	Omission	Lexical Creation	Borrowing	Literal translation	Definition	Addition
Number of CSIs Percentage	20 46%	2 5%	2 5%	2	15 34%	0%	2 5%
Total	56%	24		. 44%		19	

Chart 2. Domesticating vs. Foreignizing tendencies in each Albanian variant of AAiW.



The various tables and the illustration of their results into charts clearly show that the tendencies are distributed in almost

the same percentage in all variants with little variation. For example, in V.I and V.III dominates foreignizing, in V.II and V.IV domestication. The degree of the domesticated item is highest in V.IV, which shows that, through the years, less foreign items are brought into Albanian language and culture. However, it has to be said that within each variant, the tendencies are evenly distributed, without showing contrastive inclination towards one tendency or the other, which sometimes implies that translators have approached the translation of CSIs inconsistently, for example, the same CSI has been translated by using different strategies within the same variant. We did indeed find a lot of examples in which we did not know where to position ourselves as readers: in an Albanian context using foreign money, in a British context using Albanian money or units of measure, etc. This shift from one tendency to the other within the same variant causes confusion among the readers' general understanding and perception of foreign culture, and, at a larger scale, a lower quality of translation.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The original texts have been found to be rich in CSIs, however, within the limits of this study, we have only identified and analyzed CSIs consisting of measure units, monetary items and foods and drinks. We have compared STs and TTs and classified all CSIs under specific strategies of domestication versus foreignization. We have found that the dominating tendency in translation of CSIs in *Gulliver's Travels* is evidently foreignization, whereas in the different variants of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* the tendency of domestication prevails in the second and the fourth variant, while in the first and in the third variant prevails the tendency of foreignization. It has to be stated that the two tendencies are distributed almost evenly in each of the variant, with variant IV exhibiting the largest degree of domesticated items, or the lowest degree of foreignized items, that is to say, less foreign elements are brought into Albanian language with the passing of years. Referring to all corpus analyzed, we may assume that the fact that *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is mainly read by children is one of the reasons why more CSIs are domesticated, especially in the last variant. *Gulliver's Travels*, on the other hand, being originally written for adults, demonstrates a significant higher number of foreignized CSIs, most probably, with the translator starting from the general assumption that readers are going to understand them. Even though today the book today is read by children as well, they can greatly be aided in the process of understanding by the footnotes and endnotes which are extensively found in the Albanian variant.

We have to mention that in a considerable number of cases we have observed situational decision-making on the behalf of the translator during translation of CSIs not only within the same variant, but also about the translation of the same CSI within the same variant. These inconsistencies would indefinitely be a source of confusion and misunderstanding among readers and their general perception of the ST.

7. Implication of the study for future research

This study has aimed at a qualitative research which would outline the distribution of the tendencies of foreignization and domestication in children's literature. Parallel reading and careful comparison of STs and TTs has aided us towards determining the predominance of one tendency over the other. We have focused our attention only in the translation of examples food and drinks, monetary and measure units. We can extend the study in the future by identifying and analyzing examples of proper nouns, cultural norms and values, dialects and use of language which would reveal other important insights to support this research in the future. A significant number of inconsistencies found through the analyzed example can also be used as the basis for other research, contemplating on the factors that contribute to the quality of a translation.

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