

Analysis of Domestication and Foreignization Strategies in the Translations of *Riyadus-Salihin*

Hussein Ali Hasan AL-Aidaros

Seiyun University, Yemen

alaidaroosh48@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6389-1838>

Abstract

This study investigates the domestication and foreignization strategies in the translation of the book *Riyadus-Salihin*. The study explores how these two translation strategies were employed to balance linguistic clarity and cultural-religious authenticity. Using Lawrence Venuti's framework as an analytical model, the study examined twenty hadiths selected from different chapters in the book through random sampling as representatives of ritual, ethical, and theological discourse. The analysis is conducted through a qualitative descriptive method combined with a quantitative frequency discussion method. This method helps in understanding the translation shifts at the syntactic, lexical, cultural, and paratextual levels. The findings reveal that 55% of the targeted expressions are foreignized, 40% are domesticated, and 5% hybrid, which demonstrates a preference for retaining theological terminology while adapting stylistic structures for readability. The study highlights that foreignization outweighs the rendering of culture-specific and doctrinal terms and religious authenticity, while domestication is applied to abstract moral and stylistic features. It contributes to translation studies by demonstrating how religious translation requires a balance between linguistic intelligibility and cultural faithfulness.

Keywords: Domestication, Foreignization, Translation Studies, *Riyadus-Salihin*, Religious Translation, Cultural Transfer

- **Received:** February 20, 2026
- **Accepted:** April 4, 2026
- **Published:** April 7, 2026

DOI: 10.56540/jesaf.v5i1.140

To cite this article (APA):

Al-Aidaros, H. (2026). Analysis of Domestication and Foreignization Strategies in the Translation of *Riyadus-Salihin*. *Journal of English Studies in Arab Felix*, 5(1), 41-53. DOI:10.56540/jesaf.v5i1.140

Introduction

Translating religious texts has always been a challenge due to the link between language, culture, and faith. The book of *Riyadus-Salihin* stands as one of the most widely studied and translated collections of hadith. It serves not only as a compilation of the Prophet Muhammad's sayings and actions but also as a moral and spiritual guide (Khan, 1999). Translating such a text into English demands careful negotiation to preserve Islamic cultural identity and ensure comprehensibility for readers from diverse linguistic and religious backgrounds. This is captured in Lawrence Venuti's domestication and foreignization, which form the theoretical background of this study. To limit the scope of inquiry, the analysis is based on the translation of Mohammed Amin and Usama Razduq (2015).

Despite the growing research on translations of the Quran, hadith compilations remain unexplored within cultural translation theory. There seem to be very few studies that applied Venuti's (Venuti, 1995) framework to hadith translation. Although *Riyadus-Salihin* has been translated into numerous languages, few studies have used Venuti's framework to analyze its English translations. There is an obvious attempt in Amin and Razdouq's (2015) translation to present the original Arabic meaning faithfully while addressing the expectations of a contemporary global readership. Amin and Razdouq's (2015) work, widely disseminated through Islamic institutions, is notable for its mixture of transliteration, explanatory notes, and contextual interpretation. Previous comparative research (e.g., Hussein 2017) indicates that modern translators of *Riyadus-Salihin* adopt a moderate approach, retaining Arabic terms like hadith, ummah, and du'a, while offering explanatory renderings for cultural metaphors and idioms. This mixed approach reflects an attempt to preserve both readability and authenticity. However, religious discourse, specifically Islamic texts, contains deeply embedded theological terms such as tawhid (oneness of Allah), sunnah (prophetic practice), shirk (polytheism), and salah (prayer), which often defy full equivalence in English. Despite extensive research on Qur'anic translation, limited attention has been paid to hadith compilations such as *Riyadus-Salihin*. Most existing studies either focus on linguistic equivalence or on stylistic analysis without linking them to broader cultural translation theory.

Therefore, this study fills a gap by examining a translated version of the book, with a major focus on the two translation strategies: domestication and foreignization. The study covers the linguistic and religious-cultural dimensions. The central question of this study is how the translators have balanced domestication and foreignization to render these concepts accurately without alienating the target audience. The objectives of the study are twofold:

- Identifying domesticated and foreignized Islamic expressions in Amin and Razduq's translation of *Riyadus-Salihin*.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the translation in maintaining religious authenticity.

In this study, the term domestication refers to an expression as domesticated when a translator: a) replaces Arabic elements with English equivalents; b) removes culturally specific items; c) uses paraphrase or explanation without translation. Foreignization refers to preserving Arabic lexical items using transliteration, retaining Arabic syntactic or rhetorical style, or adding footnotes to maintain cultural specificity.

Literature Review

Translation of Religious Discourse

Translating Islamic discourse involves several linguistic complexities. Arabic syntax relies on rhetorical repetition, rhythm, and ellipsis—features that Baker (2011) thinks are often lost in English translation. Moreover, the Qur'anic and prophetic language employs metaphor and analogy deeply rooted in Arab culture, such as references to desert life, tribal ethics, and spiritual purity. Cultural terms (*'urf*) and ritual expressions (*tasbih*, *takbir*, *du'a*) are not domesticated due to their sacred nature. Religious texts require a balance between linguistic accessibility and doctrinal accuracy. Scholars such as Hatim and Mason

(1997) and Abdul-Raof (2001) note that religious discourse carries an intrinsic speciality that limits the translator's freedom.

Islamic cultural elements such as greetings (*Assalamu Alaikum*), moral idioms, and social values are predominantly foreignized to preserve authenticity (Al-Darwish, 2012; Al-Rahawan, 2020; Hussein, 2017). The greeting, for example, is kept in Arabic and followed by a gloss (peace be upon you) in parentheses. Similarly, cultural practices like *iftar* (breaking the fast) and *sadaqah* (charitable giving) are transliterated with brief explanatory footnotes. This strategy conveys both cultural specificity and religious reverence. However, when dealing with abstract ethical concepts, such as humility, patience, or sincerity the translators tend to domesticate, rendering them into idiomatic English for smooth readability (Nida, 1964; Newmark, 1981; McDonald, 2020). This selective foreignization underscores the translators' sensitivity to audience comprehension. Footnotes and commentary sections play a crucial role as mediating tools (Hatim & Mason, 1997; Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997). The translators often insert brief notes to clarify unfamiliar Arabic terms or theological allusions. For instance, when translating *wudu'* (ablution), they append a note explaining its ritual function in Islamic law. This combination of transliteration and explanation embodies a "moderate foreignization," bridging cultural distance without erasing difference (Venuti, 1995; Myskja, 2013).

Studies on Qur'anic and hadith translation reveal that translators tend to mix both strategies, foreignizing theological terminology to preserve faithfulness while domesticating stylistic or grammatical features for clarity. Al-Rahawan's (2020) assessment of hadith translations demonstrates that domestication dominates in explanatory passages, while foreignization is preferred for key religious terms like *salah* (prayers) and *zakah* (obligatory alms). Similarly, Al-Darwish (2012) emphasizes that religious translators must preserve the spiritual force of Arabic expressions even when natural English equivalents exist, arguing that over-domestication risks theological distortion.

Venuti's Framework

The concepts of domestication and foreignization were first categorized by Venuti (1995). He defines domestication as a translation strategy that adapts the source text to fit the cultural and linguistic elements of the target language, hence producing a natural text that conceals the translator's presence. In contrast, foreignization resists cultural sense by retaining foreign elements that highlight the text's origin and preserve its cultural distinctiveness. Venuti's advocacy for foreignization aims to expose the translator's role that renders the translator invisible. Eugene Nida's (1964) distinction between formal and dynamic equivalence parallels Venuti's theory. While Nida's dynamic equivalence corresponds to domestication through its focus on reader response, formal equivalence resonates with foreignization by emphasizing fidelity to the original form and meaning. Peter Newmark (1981) further expands this debate with his notions of semantic and communicative translation, illustrating the link between literalness and adaptation.

This study employs Venuti's domestication and foreignization theory as its central analytical lens. The framework is supported by complementary concepts from Nida's equivalence theory and Newmark's communicative-semantic distinction. Through foreignization, the translator deliberately maintains the strangeness of the source culture to highlight linguistic and cultural diversity. In contrast, domestication adapts the text to suit the target language conventions and cultural expectations, ensuring smooth readability but risking cultural loss. When it comes to domestication and foreignization, Venuti (1995) discusses issues concerning translational tasks from the seventeenth century until the present time, in linguistic and political terms. The author problematizes some translation theories and translates texts throughout history, proposing two possible procedures to handle cultural elements: Domestication or Foreignization. Venuti (1995) states that "either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (p.19). The act of "leaving the author in peace" may be

equated to foreignizing the text 'as much as possible' and the act of "leaving the reader in peace" may be equated to domesticating it.

Domestication and Foreignization in Previous Studies

In their study related to the strategies of foreignization and domestication in two Persian translation versions of Lewis Carroll's Alice (as cited in Wonderland et al., 2019) found a significant difference between the frequencies of the cultural translation strategies. 'equivalence' was the most frequent one, but the strategies of foreignization were used very rarely. In other words, the domestication strategies were applied noticeably more than the foreignization strategies. They also pointed out that domestication and foreignization have different functions in the target language culture. A translator can adopt either or both to achieve the appropriate functions. Both strategies have positive sides as well as negative ones. The relationship between foreignization and domestication is, in fact, complementary.

Alassaf (2024) conducted a study on using domestication and foreignization in the translation of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, whose results reached the finding that using one strategy rather than the other impacts the readability of the text and its acceptance by the target readers. Neither domestication nor foreignization can be confirmed as good or bad in its nature. Deciding which one to adopt and advocate depends on the specific contexts and the aim of the translation (Zhang, 2022). It is a matter related to the translator. If the focus is on reflecting the foreign elements of the source text more than the target readers, foreignization would be the proper choice. However, if the translator focuses more on the target readers, domestication should be used. In this work, domestication imposes itself as the best choice because Said's style is highly complex and difficult. Thus, it needs clarification and simplification, which can only be achieved through domestication.

Elnaili (2014) conducted a study on domestication and foreignization Strategies in translating *Sinbad of the Arabian Nights*. The analysis of the researcher resulted in the point that domestication and foreignization are both inevitable in the process of translation and that one cannot work alone; they are parallel and complement each other. The amount and the degree of each strategy mainly depend on the translator and their goal and purpose. Besides the translator's intention, audience, text, and context (time and place) are also important factors that could influence which strategy to adopt the most in the process. The researcher also stated that the issue of domestication and foreignization arises with cultural translation. When translating religious texts or cultural texts such as proverbs, idioms, or fixed expressions, a translator must transfer the cultural sense of that text and have the target reader learn the foreign concept or message.

Jianghua (2006) recommended the use of the two strategies set by Venuti. He points out that "domestication and foreignization are supplemented to each other rather than a pair in conflict. We cannot discard either absolutely." (p. 59). This statement has an absolute link to the translation of *Riyadussalihin* by Mohammed Amin and Usama Razduq, through which they tend to use both strategies of foreignization and domestication. Likewise, Machali (2012) discussed how cultural translation is interrelated with Venuti's theory of domestication and foreignization. In this study, the researcher has studied some cases involving the Indonesian English language in the light of this interrelation. As a result of this study, it has been found that when the translator chooses to domesticate meaning, the translation is smooth and becomes highly readable, because the foreign words have been translated. On the other hand, the strategy of foreignization is also adopted in some other cases, which reveals approximately the same effectiveness of both strategies while transferring cultural elements. In this case, the translator can choose to use the foreign words and retain them in the translation.

Riyadus-Salihin

The Arabic syntax of *Riyadus-Salihin* is highly rhetorical and rhythmic, marked by repetition and parallelism. The translators often domesticate such structures to align with English stylistic norms. For example, the Arabic expression: *من كان يؤمن بالله واليوم الآخر فليصل*

رحمه 'He who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honor his guest' is translated fluently into English with conventional syntax. However, in certain cases, the translators retain the foreign rhythm by preserving repetitions, such as "Verily, Allah loves those who repent and those who purify themselves." This maintains the spiritual cadence of the Arabic text and reflects Venuti's principle of "resisting fluency" to expose linguistic difference (Venuti 21).

In the context of *Riyadus-Salihin*, foreignization involves retaining Arabic terms (salah, zakah, ummah) or transliterations accompanied by footnotes, thus preserving theological meaning. Domestication appears when translators substitute Arabic expressions with approximate English equivalents (prayer, alms, community). Both strategies are contextually necessary: foreignization keeps faith-specific meaning, while domestication confirms comprehension for non-Arabic readers. In this study, both strategies are not binary opposites but points on a spectrum. Comparing Amin and Razduq's translation to earlier versions (e.g., those by Nasiruddin al-Khattab and Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali) reveals a shift toward reader-oriented domestication. Amin and Razduq's version display a smoother linguistic flow, with simplified sentence structures and less archaic diction. Yet, unlike purely domesticating translators, they preserve key Arabic lexemes, signaling respect for religious terminology.

Although previous studies were conducted on domestication and foreignization in literary and Quranic translation, few studies made use of Venuti's theory to hadith discourse. Existing studies focus mainly on equivalence, stylistics, or readability rather than cultural translation ethics. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, a systematic analysis of Amin and Razduq's translation of *Riyadus-Salihin* using quantitative analysis is an area with no prior findings. It is this study that sets out to integrate cultural translation theory with structured textual analysis in the context of the book in focus.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive analytical method, examining the English translation of *Riyadus-Salihin* by Mohammed Amin and Usama Razduq in light of Venuti's domestication and foreignization strategies. The study focuses on how these translators managed culturally-embedded and religiously-significant elements within the text. The approach is text-oriented, emphasizing the translator's linguistic and cultural decisions as manifested in the target text.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study consists of twenty selected hadiths from randomly selected chapters of *Riyadus-Salihin*, which represent a variety of moral, ritual, and spiritual themes. The selection of twenty Hadiths is methodologically justified for qualitative purposes while allowing manageable comparative analysis. The random sampling was pursued to avoid researcher bias and enhance representativeness through chapters. These chapters are also a salient example because they contain frequent theological references, culture-bound idioms, and worship expressions. For each hadith, the Arabic source text is compared with its English translation to identify translation shifts and adaptation strategies.

Criteria of Categorization

Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997) indicate that "domestication designates the type of translation in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for TL readers, while foreignization reduces a TT which deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original" (p.59). According to the statement above, the selected aspects of the study are defined as domesticated or foreignized, in addition to setting indicators to decide whether the element is domesticated or foreignized. Domestication Indicators include (a) replacement of Arabic terms with approximate English equivalents, (b) omission of cultural sense, and (c) use of paraphrase or simplified explanation. Foreignization Indicators, on the other

hand, include retention of Arabic lexical items through transliteration, use of footnotes, or commentary.

Procedures

Analysis proceeds in three stages. The first was the identification of culturally or religiously significant terms and expressions (e.g., wudu, zakat, tawbah, hadith qudsi, rahmah). The second is the classification of each aspect by categorizing them as domesticated or foreignized, based on the extent of adaptation to the English concept. The third is evaluating each strategy according to its impact on meaning, readability, and cultural integrity. To ensure validity, the study discusses the results according to the existing framework of Venuti (1995), Nida (1964), and Newmark (1981). In addition, examples are examined in their broader theological contexts, recognizing that in religious translation, lexical choices carry connotative indications and doctrinal implications.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of the selected corpus reveals that Amin and Razduq employ a hybrid strategy, combining domestication and foreignization depending on the communicative and theological demands of each passage. 55% expressions (out of 20) exhibited foreignization features, 40% domestication, and 5% a mixed or hybrid tendency. These percentages were counted by identifying and classifying the total number of expressions taken from the selected Hadiths. Each item was coded in accordance with the operational indicators of domestication and foreignization that were previously stated in the study. The frequency of each classification was then converted into percentage values.

Foreignized Expressions

The targeted expressions were analyzed individually. In this analytical discussion, each Arabic expression appears with its English translation to discuss it with reference to Venuti's theory of foreignization and domestication, including the translators' tendency in transferring these expressions. The translations are to be assessed as well, referring to the theoretical discussion included in the previous section, which is related to the criteria and standards of judging that the expressions are domesticated or foreignized, in addition to how the translations of such expressions are evaluated.

إذا توضأ أحدكم فأحسن الوضوء.

The translator tended to use (wudu) to translate the word وضوء, which represents a case of foreignization. The translator tended here to retain the Arabic Islamic term through transliteration rather than replacing it with a functional equivalent such as *ablution*. According to Venuti (1995), the selection of this method preserves the religious and cultural specificity of the source text. The concept (wudu) is not only physical washing, but an act with legal and spiritual implications in Islam. Thus, by maintaining the Arabic term, the target reader confronts the cultural otherness of the concept.

ما قام رجل من المهاجرين غيره.

Translating the word المهاجرين as *muhajirin* instead of immigrants is an instance of foreignization. Despite the existence of an English equivalent for the term, they may not exactly convey the historical and religious identity implied in the term, which particularly refers to the Prophet's companions who migrated from Makkah to Medina. Venuti states that foreignization is specifically justified when domestication may result in distortion. Based on this, translating *muhajirin* as immigrants would omit its Quranic and historical sense.

الهور العين

The translator here retains (hur), supporting it with a partial English explanation (the virgins). He foreignized the term by offering a short exploitation. The term (hur) is deeply rooted in Islamic culture and implies a deeply connotative reference. Venuti emphasizes that such hybrid strategies maintain the cultural meaning with facilitating comprehension.

اللهم إني أسألك الهدى والتقى والعفاف والغنى.

The translator translated the text above as 'as'alukal-huda wat-tuqa wal-'afafa wal-ghina (*O Allah! I ask You for guidance, piety, chastity, and self-sufficiency*). In his translation, the translator preserves the Arabic supplication when he adopts transliteration in addition to supplementing the text with an English translation. Concerning this point, Venuti refers to this approach as ethically balanced since it resists fluency while still making it clear to the reader.

جنة ربكم

Translating this phrase as 'the *Jannah of your Rubb*' exemplifies foreignization where there is availability of the equivalents Lord and Paradise. The preservation of the Arabic lexicon, the translator ensures doctrinal accuracy and the target culture dominance, even at the cost of fluency.

ابن خليل الله

'The Khalil of Allah (i.e., Ibrahim)

The translator uses foreignization with parenthetical clarification. Khalil, here, which means (close friend), implies theological significance in Islam, referring uniquely to Prophet Ibrahim. Therefore, replacing it with (friend) would omit its elevated spiritual status. Venuti supports such retention, where cultural reference and religious symbolism may be lost. So explanatory addition may enhance accessibility without surrendering cultural authenticity.

خيارهم في الجاهلية خيارهم في الإسلام

Jahiliyyah (Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance)

Accompanying transliteration with explanation indicates foreignization aiming at preserving meaning. *Jahiliyyah* does not only refer to ignorance, but to a distinct moral and historical period. Using domestication would erase this meaning, so the hybrid method balances clarity and authenticity, which matches Venuti's argumentation that foreignization exposes the reader to alternativeness rather than adapting the original text to dominant norms.

يأجوج ومأجوج

Ya'juj and Ma'juj (Gog and Magog people)

In the translation above, the translator retains the Quranic names by using transliteration in addition to offering Biblical equivalents. This strategy maintains Islamic authenticity by creating intersexual bridges. According to Venuti, cited in foreignization, does not exclude explanatory mediation. Instead, it allows cultural difference to remain primary while explanation has a secondary role (Myskja:2013:21).

أستودع الله دينك وأمانتك وخواتيم عملك

I entrust Allah with your Deen, your trust and your last deeds.

In the translation above, the religious term *Deen* is foreignized by the translator, who used the transliteration *Deen* instead of using religion. The word *Deen* includes belief, ethics, and lifestyle, which exceeds the semantic indication of religion. In this sense, Venuti criticizes domesticating such a semantic reduction, which emphasizes that the word *Deen* preserves the concept precisely, though it may sound foreign to non-Muslim readers.

كان رسول الله ﷺ يعلمنا الاستخارة

The Istikharah (seeking guidance from Allah).

This translation retains *Istikharah* with explanation, giving a general Islamic practice with no specific equivalent to the term *إستخارة*, which does not match Venuti's advocacy for foreignization when translating culture-specific terms. So, the strategy used by the translator generalizes the concept rather than adapting it by including 'prayer for guidance'. So, it is balanced and educational. Table 1 (see appendix) reveals an illustrated summary of the analysis of the foreignized aspects referring to the strategy used, the justification of defining it as foreignized based on the above-mentioned criteria, in addition to an evaluation provided for the translation of each aspect.

Domesticated Expressions

ينظر إلى قلوبكم وأعمالكم

hearts and accomplishments

This is a clear representation of domestication, which dismisses the spiritual meaning of *أعمالكم وقلوبكم* (hearts as a central and moral position and deeds which imply a spiritual indication). Venuti, who advocates foreignization, sees that replacing such expressions with neutral expressions will lead to the typical consequence of domestication, which is loss of spiritual sense, but it could be readable to the target reader.

إن الله تعالى يبسط يده بالليل ليتوب مسيء النهار

Allah, The Exalted, stretch His hand

The translators tended to transfer the metaphoric expression *يبسط يده* into English by adopting a literal method while retaining the unique lexeme *الله*. The production reveals that the text above is partially domesticated. The translator tended to focus on comprehensibility while preserving the theological term. Venuti, as an adherent to foreignization, categorizes this as a moderate domestication that still leads to misinterpretation due to the cultural gap in using metaphors.

المسح على الخفين

light boot

In the translation above, the translator used the words *light boots* to replace the word *khuffayn* which is domestication by using cultural substitution. The exact Islamic ad legal indication and the hidden reference of the term *khuffayn* is obviously lost. Such substitutions, ignoring the exact Islamic distinction is criticized by Venuti.

إلا من جنابة

major impurity

The translator here replaces the Islamic concept with a more general abstract term '*impurity*', which is more comprehensible but less faithful. This domesticated rendering removes the precision and appropriateness of the term *جنابة*. It is fluent English but with no sense of fidelity, as viewed by Venuti.

من كان يؤمن بالله واليوم الآخر فليصل رحمه.

let him show hospitality to his guest

The translation of the Arabic text above omits the exact Islamic indication of the original text. The Arabic expression *فليصل رحمه* refers to a kinship connection that is completely lost in the translation. Using 'show hospitality' is a term that conveys moral teaching but removes the hidden indication of the source text. In this sense, Venuti, as cited in Roza, Melani & Zulfahmi (2024:265), notes that such adaptation reflects target-culture norms rather than source-culture values.

كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يعجبه التيمن في شأنه كله

to use his right hand

The term *التيمن* in the Arabic text above is translated as *to use his right-hand* which reveals that the term is domesticated. The translation is clear and smooth, but it loses the exact cultural meaning that the Arabic text intends to convey. Specifying the *right hand* does not indicate the general meaning of *التيمن* in the source text, which implies that Allah, the Almighty, likes the right to be used in all matters.

البركة تنزل وسط الطعام

Blessing

The translator domesticated the Islamic term *البركة* by rendering it as *blessing*, which is readable, but the religious indication is not conveyed appropriately. The word *البركة* as a religious concept implies the abstract increase of something, which refers to a hidden meaning that is not conveyed by using the word *blessing*.

إن كان عندك ماء بات هذه الليلة في شنةٍ وإلا أعرنا

the water-skin

The translator used the explanatory expression *water skin* which is clear and fluent but does not convey the exact content of the original term. Being domestically transferred means losing the foreignness of the term. Translating this term with *Shinnah* by providing an explanatory phrase may appropriately make it readable, conveying the foreignness of the term.

والمنفق سلعته بالحلف

taking false oaths

The table below reveals an illustrated summary of the analysis of the domesticated aspects, referring to the strategy used, the justification of defining it as domesticated based on the above-mentioned criteria, in addition to an evaluation provided for the translation of each aspect.

فغسل وجهه وعليه جبة من صوف

a long woolen cloak

The term *جبة من صوف* translated here as '*a long woolen cloak*', which replaces the specific cultural concept with an equivalent that matches English conventions. The translation is clear but removes the Islamic-Arab cultural side of the term. Venuti argues that domestication aligns with English smoothness and transparency but marginalizes the distinctiveness of the source culture like the loss of the term 'jubbah' in this translated text.

The findings confirm that translation of *Riyadus-Salihin* cannot be confined to either extreme of domestication or foreignization. Instead, Amin and Razduq operate within a dynamic continuum, shaped by linguistic constraints, theological sensitivity, and audience expectations. The foreignized elements, transliterations, footnotes, and syntactic preservation reflect an effort to retain the sacred sense and cultural rootedness of the Arabic original. This aligns with Venuti's notion of making the translator 'visible' by highlighting cultural difference rather than concealing it (Venuti 31). Such visibility is ethically significant in religious translation, as it respects the source culture's sanctity. Simultaneously, the translators employ domestication, where comprehension could be hindered by excessive foreignness. Rendering *tawbah* as 'repentance' or *rahmah* as 'mercy' makes the message accessible to global readers, including non-Muslims. This supports Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence, prioritizing communicative effect over literal form.

The study thus illustrates that religious translation demands a balanced hybrid approach. Total domestication risks theological dilution, while total foreignization risks alienating readers. Amin and Razduq's translation negotiates these extremes. It produces a text that is spiritually authentic and linguistically approachable. Moreover, the study demonstrates that linguistic decisions are inseparable from cultural ethics. Translators of sacred texts assume a moral responsibility to preserve not only meaning but also reverence, tone, and spiritual resonance. Their hybrid strategy aligns with Venuti's call for ethical translation, the one that resists cultural domination while fostering mutual intelligibility.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that applying Venuti's concepts of domestication and foreignization to sacred Islamic texts requires nuanced adaptation. In this context, a hybrid strategy is not merely a choice but an inherent necessity in religious translation. Theological and doctrine-specific terms demand foreignization in order to preserve their exact semantic and cultural significance. At the same time, domestication becomes essential when conveying ethical teachings and stylistic elements that need to be accessible to a diverse readership. Thus, the interplay between the two strategies ensures both doctrinal accuracy and reader comprehension. With these findings, the study contributes to translation studies by suggesting a replicable analytical method that integrates cultural ethics, frequency analysis, and operational indicators. It highlights that translating Islamic texts requires both linguistic skill and theological awareness. Amin and Razduq's work exemplifies how translators can uphold spiritual integrity while ensuring linguistic clarity. There might be future studies to expand this analysis through quantitative methods or reader-response studies to evaluate how target audiences perceive such translations. Analytical comparative studies among different translators of *Riyadus-Salihin* could also reveal and uncover obscurities related to religious translation.

Disclosure Statement

I (the author of this paper) hereby declare that research ethics and citation principles have been considered in all stages of this paper. I take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of a dispute. I confirm that the manuscript has been created by the author(s) and not an AI tool/Large Language Model (LLM).

Conflict of interest: I know of no conflict of interest associated with this publication.

Funding: None

References

- Abdul-Raof, H. (2001). *Arabic rhetoric: A pragmatic analysis*. Routledge.
- Alassaf, F. (2024). The use of domestication and foreignization in the translation of Edward Said's Orientalism: An analytical study. *AWEJ for Translation & Literary Studies*, 8(3), 53–69.
- Al-Darwish, A. (2012). *Translating the language of Islam: A stylistic and theological approach*. Dar Al-Fikr.
- Al-Rahawan, M. S. M. (2020). Assessment of Hadith translations in pursuit of Venuti's domestication and foreignization strategies. *Occasional Papers in the Development of English Education*, 253–276. <https://doi.org/10.21608/opde.2020.145642>
- Amin, M., & Razduq, U. (Trans.). (2015). *Riyadus-Salihin: The gardens of the righteous*. Darussalam.
- Baker, M. (2011). *In other words: A coursebook on translation (2nd ed.)*. Routledge.
- Elnaili, S. (2016). Investigating Domestication and Foreignization Strategies in Translating Sinbad of the Arabian Nights. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, 5, 1-32 <https://awej.org/images/AllIssues/Specialissues/Translation5/2.pdf>
- Hatim, B., & Mason, I. (1997). *The translator as communicator*. Routledge.
- Hussein, A. (2017). Linguistic and cultural strategies in translating Hadith texts. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Translation*, 8(2), 112–129.
- Jianghua, W. (2006). *Towards translation strategies and their application* (Unpublished master's thesis). Shanghai Normal University.
- Khan, A. (1999). *Riyad al-Salihin as a standard textbook of Hadith* (Master's dissertation). University of Durban–Westville, Faculty of Humanities.
- Machali, R. (2012). Cases of domestication and foreignization in the translation of Indonesian poetry into English: A preliminary inquiry. *Journal of Language and Culture*, 3(4), 74–82.
- McDonald, S. V. (2020). Accuracy, readability, and acceptability in translation. *Applied Translation*, 14(2), 21–29. <https://doi.org/10.51708/apptrans.v14n2.123>
- Myskja, K. (2013). Foreignization and resistance: Lawrence Venuti and his critics. *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 12(2), 1–23.
- Newmark, P. (1981). *Approaches to translation*. Pergamon.
- Nida, E. A. (1964). *Toward a science of translating: With special reference to principles and procedures involved in Bible translating*. Brill.
- Rad, N., & Marj, Z. (2019). A study of the strategies of foreignization and domestication in two Persian translation versions of Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland. *Revell*, 3(23).
- Roza, V., Melani, M., & Zulfahmi, M. (2024). Cross-cultural echoes: Exploring cultural nuance through student translation practices. *Journal of English Language Studies*, 6(3), 265–277.
- Shuttleworth, M., & Cowie, M. (1997). *Dictionary of translation studies*. Routledge.
- Toury, G. (1995). *Descriptive translation studies and beyond*. John Benjamins.
- Venuti, L. (1995). *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation*. Routledge.
- Zhang, H. (2022). Domestication and foreignization in English versions of Huawei's new year messages from 2017 to 2022. *Communication across Borders: Translation & Interpreting*, 2(1), 26-43

Author:

Dr. Hussein Ali Hasan AL-Aidaros is an Assistant Professor of Translation Studies and the Head of the English Department at Seiyun University, Yemen. He earned his PhD in Translation Studies from Kuvempu University, India, in 2023. His research interests focus on cultural studies and their intersection with translation, with particular attention to the linguistic, ideological, and cross-cultural dimensions that shape translation practices.

Appendix A

Table 1. Illustrations of the foreignized expressions

Arabic Text	English Translation	Criteria	Assessment
إذا توضأ أحدكم فأحسن الوضوء	wudu	Retains wudu (وضوء) as a transliteration; Maintains Islamic specificity	understandable for religious readers; may confuse non- Muslim audience
ما قام رجل من المهاجرين غيره	muhajirun	Keeps muhajirun transliterated; literal syntax.	Preserves historical identity of early Muslims; context may need a footnote.
الهور العين	The virgins (Hur).	Retains Hur transliteration with gloss; literal preservation of concept	Faithful; culturally loaded; appropriate for scholarly or religious translations.
اللهم اني أسألك الهدى والتقى والعفاف والغنى	O Allah! I ask You for guidance, piety, chastity and self- sufficiency	Full Arabic transliteration preserved with English gloss	Ideal combination of visibility and clarity; balances authenticity and comprehension.
تدخلوا الجنة ربكم	the Jannah of your Rubb.	Retains Jannah and Rubb; culturally specific lexical items	High fidelity; however, may reduce fluency for general readers.
ابن خليل الله	the Khalil of Allah (i.e., Ibrahim (PBUH))	Keeps Khalil and Allah; adds parenthetical explanation.	Preserves meaning and culture; footnote makes it accessible.
خيارهم في الجاهلية خيارهم في الإسلام	Jahiliyyah (Pre- Islamic Period of Ignorance)	Retains Jahiliyyah with explanation; literal syntax..	Effective; balances clarity and authenticity
يا جوج وما جوج	Ya'juj and Ma'juj (Gog and Magog people).	Arabic names retained; explanation given..	Preserves Qur'anic names while ensuring understanding
أستودع الله دينك وأمانتك وخواتيم عملك	I entrust Allah with your Deen, your trust and your last deeds	Keeps Deen (دين) transliterated; literal syntax.	Preserves religious tone; may sound foreign to non-Muslim readers

كان رسول الله ﷺ يعلمنا الاستخارة	The Istikharah (seeking guidance from Allah).	Retains Istikharah with comment; transliteration and explanation.	Balanced and educational; ideal for faith-based translation
----------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------

Appendix B

Table 2. Illustrations of the domesticated expressions

Arabic Text	English Translation	Criteria	Evaluation
ينظر إلى قلوبكم وأعمالكم	accomplishments	Uses fluent English syntax and lexical equivalents; omits the exact religious register	Readable but loses religious tone and metaphorical depth of قلوبكم (spiritual state).
إن الله تعالى يبسط يده بالليل ليتوب مسيء النهار	Allah, The Exalted, stretch His hand	Retains "Allah" instead of "God"; literal rendering of metaphor "stretch His hand"	Preserves theological metaphor, might appear non-idiomatic in English.
المسح على الخفين	light boots	Replaces khuffayn with explanatory phrase; no transliteration	Clear for general audience but loses Islamic term's legal specificity.
إلا من جنابة	major impurity	Abstract term replaces janabah; easy to understand but less faithful	Readable but ignores the technical Islamic concept of impurity.
من كان يؤمن بالله واليوم الآخر فليصل رحمه	let him show hospitality to his guest	Translates idiom into fluent English; omits literal "connect his kinship ties."	Adapts moral teaching to target culture; meaning simplified
كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يعجبه التيمن في شأنه كله	to use his right hand	Adapts Arabic idiom التيمن to natural English expression.	Smooth and clear; loses cultural-linguistic sense. Specifying right hand may not indicate the general term in the ST.
البركة تنزل وسط الطعام	Blessing	Literal but fluent; cultural concept barakah translated as "blessing."	Readable; meaning conveyed but religious indication lost
إن كان عندك ماء بات هذه الليلة في شنة وإلا أعرنا والمنفق سلعته بالحلف	the water-skin	Replaces shinnah with explanatory "water-skin."	Fluent and clear; foreign term lost.
فغسل وجهه وعليه جبة من صوف	taking false oaths	Dynamic paraphrase of the Arabic idiom; natural English syntax.	Accessible; moral sense conveyed; original rhetorical form lost
فغسل وجهه وعليه جبة من صوف	a long woolen cloak	Cultural term jubba paraphrased; no transliteration.	Clear for readers, but domesticates material culture