Self-Back-Translation by Haruki Murakami: A Self-Translator's Perspective

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Abstract: Self-back-translation is an uncommon practice in which a bilingual author retranslates the already translated text of their writing back into the original source language. A good example of self-back-translation comes from one of the short stories by Haruki Murakami, a renowned Japanese author and translator, who back-translated the English translation of his short story "Rēdāhōzen [Lederhosen]" into Japanese and published it as a new version. This peculiar practice of self-back-translation has led a handful of translation researchers to probe into some of the ongoing debates in translation studies from new perspectives—e.g., to examine the relationship between intralingual and interlingual translation, the originality and translation, the translator's (in)visibility, and more. Asking questions such as these, this paper examines the nature and purpose of self-back-translation and the role of translation in general, particularly from a self-translator's perspective, by comparing Murakami's self-back-translation with another example by a self-translator. The study has found that much could get lost while going through the filtration process of self-back-translation, but much could be gained. Whether it is interlingual or intralingual translation, the end-product of this process could be an improvement from the source text—i.e., the translation sometimes exceeds the original. This is why some writers self-(back-)translate.

Keywords: self-translation, back-translation, Haruki Murakami, intralingual and interlingual translation, translator's invisibility, originality and translation

1. Introduction

Self-translation is a type of interlingual translation in which a bilingual or translingual writer writes a text in one language and translates it into another (see, e.g., Cordingley [2013] and Montini [2010]). Back-translation also called "reverse translation" sometimes referred to as "double translation," is the process of retranslating an already translated text back to the original source language (SL). "Self-back-translation" (Sato, 2013) is a type of self-translation and back-translation but is distinct in that a bilingual author retranslates the already translated text of his or her own writing back into the original SL in which he or she originally wrote the text.

A good example of self-back-translation comes from Haruki Murakami (Sato, 2013), a renowned Japanese author and translator who back-translated Alfred Birnbaum's English translation (Murakami, 1993) of his short story レーダーホーゼン ("Rēdāhōzen" [Lederhosen]; "Rēdāhōzen" hereafter), originally written in Japanese (Murakami 1985), back into Japanese and published it as a new version (Murakami, 2005b). In the new Japanese version, Murakami faithfully translated Birnbaum's English translation into Japanese by accepting all the alterations made by the translator (Engetsu, 2010; Nihei, 2016; Sato, 2013).

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Self-back-translation is an uncommon practice. The only other example readily available comes from my own experience of what resembles self-back-translation, which is presented in this study for comparison with Murakami's in order to understand the nature and purpose of self-back-translation. In my case, I first authored サムライと綿：日本とアメリカ (*Samurai to Wata: Nihon to Amerika [Samurai and Cotton: Japan and America]; Samurai to Wata* hereafter) in Japanese (Takahashi, 2010), and then self-translated it into English (Takahashi, 2011): and my experience as the self-translator of *Samurai to Wata* has been described and discussed in several studies (Takahashi, 2013, 2014, 2019a, 2019b, 2020a, 2022). When I revised the 2010 Japanese edition for republication in 2020. While revising it, I retranslated the English translations of some of the sections into Japanese and incorporated them into the Japanese revision (Takahashi, 2020b). That is, I was both the self-translator in English and the self-back-translator (or reviser/editor) in Japanese, whereas Murakami had someone else—i.e., an allographic translator—translate the original story into English but acted as the self-back-translator into Japanese. Although quite distinct in nature, my experience seems to shed some light on Murakami's practice of self-back-translation.

The practice of self-back-translation makes translation researchers ponder the ongoing debates about translation and self-translation. Among them, this study focuses on the relationship between intralingual and interlingual translation, the originality and translation, and the translator's (in)visibility. Asking questions such as these, this paper examines the nature and purpose of self-back-translation, particularly from a self-translator's perspective, by comparing examples from Murakami's self-back-translation with those from my own work as a self-translator.

2. Three Versions of "Rēdāhōzen" (Murakami 1985, 1993, 2005b)

Haruki Murakami published his short story "Rēdāhōzen" in the 1985 anthology 回転木馬のデッド・ヒート (*Kaiten Mokuba no Deddo Hīto [Carousel Dead Heat]*) (Murakami, 1985). This short story was translated by Alfred Birnbaum into English and published as "Lederhosen" in the anthology entitled *The Elephant Vanishes* (Murakami, 1993). Murakami then back-translated "Lederhosen" into Japanese and published it as a new version under the title "Rēdāhōzen"—the same as the 1985 version—in the 2005 collection of short stories 象の消滅 (*Zō no Shōmetsu [The Elephant Vanishes]*). Among the 19 stories included in the collection, "Rēdāhōzen" was the only story that was back-translated from English to Japanese.

Murakami explains why he back-translated "Lederhosen" into Japanese in the foreword to the 2005 anthology:

> […] at the request of the magazine publisher, Alfred Birnbaum acquired the original text ["Rēdāhōzen" (Murakami, 1985)] and shortened it for English translation. American magazines often ask for editorial alterations like that. This is partly unavoidable given the cultural differences and various preferences of the readership. As it turned out, though, this shortened version by Alfred was found to be not bad at all as a literary work. That is why I used Alfred's version as the source text for myself to translate into Japanese this time. And this "reimport version" is included in this collection. That is to say, I tasked myself with such a complicated role—to be the author as well as the translator in this case. I hope you won't find it too trifling but will just enjoy it as a kind of amusement. (Murakami, 2005a, p. 24, *trans.* by author)

The 1993 English translation by Birnbaum is not only a shortened version but also far from a faithful translation of the source text (ST). His translation in general, tends to be extremely domesticated—as translator Jay Rubin comments, "Alfred Birnbaum is quite free" (Monkey Business, 2013, n.p). Birnbaum himself claims that he firmly believes that it would be best to "revitalize" the translation by editing the original in order to help international readers feel comfortable with the target text (TT) as well as to satisfy the American and British publishers (2006, p. 205)—a typical reason why an American translator would domesticate his translation (see Venuti [2018]).

Murakami, on the other hand, faithfully translated Birnbaum's English translation back into Japanese (Engetsu, 2010; Nihei, 2016; Sato, 2013). In his back-translation (2005b), Murakami accepted virtually all the domestication effects, edits, and alterations that Birnbaum had made in his English translation—including changes such as omitting details, reordering and restructuring paragraphs, etc. For example, the original 1985 version opens with the narrator's explanation of how he began writing the story, but Birnbaum skips all the lengthy narrative explanation and opens the story in English more dramatically with the conversation between the storyteller 僕 (*boku* [I]) and his wife's friend—as detailed in [1a] through [3] below.

In the original "Rēdāhōzen" (Murakami 1985), after a lengthy narrative explanation, the conversation used as the opening in the English version finally appears—the omission in the following excerpts (as indicated by […]) from the original story amounts to a few pages of the storyteller's narrative:

[1a] Original Text by Murakami (Murakami, 1985, pp. 18–21)

　僕がこの本に収められた一連のスケッチのようなものを描こうと思いたったのは、何年か前の夏のことだった。**[...]**

　「母が父親を捨てたのよ」とある日彼女は僕に教えてくれた。「半ズボンのことが原因でね」

　「半ズボン？」と僕はびっくりしてききかえした。

　「変な話なのよ」と彼女は言った。「あまりに突拍子もない話で、他の人にあまり話したこともないんだけど、あなたは小説書いているから何かの役に立つんじゃないかしら。聞きたい？」

　ぜひ聞かせてほしいと僕はいった。

[1b] Literal Translation of [1a] (Murakami, 1985, pp. 18–21, *trans.* by author)

　It was during the summer several years ago when I suddenly got an idea of describing this series of sketchy stuff as told in this book. **[…]**

　"My mother dumped my father," she told me one day, "all because of a pair of shorts."

　"A pair of shorts?" I asked her, surprised.

　"It's a strange story," she said. "Because it's such a crazy story I haven't told others, but since you are a writer, I wonder, it might be of use to you. Do you want to hear?"

　I told her I'd love to hear it.

In Birnbaum's English translation (Murakami, 1993), the story opens without those pages of explanation.

[2] English Translation of [1a] by Birnbaum (Murakami, 1993, p. 120)

"MOTHER DUMPED MY FATHER," a friend of my wife's was saying one day, "all because of a pair of shorts." I've got to ask. "A pair of shorts?" "I know it sounds strange," she says, "because it is a strange story."

In Murakami's back-translation of [2] into Japanese (Murakami 2005b), this conversation appears as the opening of the story, exactly the same as in [2]:

[3] Back-translation of [2] by Murakami (Murakami, 2005b, p. 168)

「うちのお母さんはお父さんを捨てたの」と妻の女友だちがある日、僕に言う。「半ズボンがその原因だった」

　僕は質問しないわけにはいかない。「半ズボン？」

「妙な話に聞こえることはわかっているんだけど」と彼女は言う。「でもね、そもそもが妙な話なわけ」

This alteration at the narrative level in the self-back-translation is narratologically significant as this type of rhetoric is not commonly practiced in Japanese. This point will be discussed further with

reference to, and in comparison with, a similar example found in the case of my self-back-translation discussed in Section 3.0.

A comparison between [1a] and [3] in Japanese—or [1b] and [2] in English—reveals several more differences. For example, in [1a] (see [1b] for English translation), the past tense is used, while the present tense is used in [3]. The expression びっくりして [surprised] in [1a] is missing from [3]. 彼女 [she] in the original story [1a] appears as 妻の女友だち [a friend of my wife's] in [3]. The explanation that the storyteller is a writer, etc. found in [1a] is omitted from [3]. The sentence ぜひ聞かせてほしいと僕はいった。[I told her I'd love to hear it.], which appears in [1], is missing from [3]. All of these changes found in [3] are adaptations from [2].

Overall, Murakami's back-translation [3] of Birnbaum's English translation [2] is a faithful translation—so faithful that Murakami even translated Birnbaum's mistranslation (Engetsu, 2010; Nihei, 2016; Sato, 2013). The following excerpts present a good example:

[4a] Original Text by Murakami (Murakami, 1985, p. 27)

僕は肯いた。

「私はそれまでずっと母の側に立っていたし、母も私のことを信頼してくれていると思っていたの。それなのに母は何の説明らしい説明もなく父親と**こみで**私を捨ててしまったのよ。それは私にはとてもひどい仕打ちに思えたし、それから長いあいだ私は母を許すことができなかったの。私は母に何度も手紙を書いて、いろんなことをきちんと説明して欲しいと要求したんだけれど、母はそのことについては何も語ってはくれなかったし、私に会いたいとさえ言ってくれなかったわ」[emphasis added]

[4b] Literal Translation of [4a] (Murakami, 1985, p. 27, *trans.* by author)

I nodded.

"I had always stood on my mother's side until then, and I thought my mother had always trusted me. But without any reasonable explanation, my mother threw me out with my father **like an inclusive set**. I thought it was such horrible treatment [by her] that I wasn't able to forgive my mother for a long time. I wrote a letter to my mother many times and asked her to explain various matters, but my mother never said anything about them. She never even said she wanted to see me." [emphasis added]

In the English translation by Birnbaum [5], the expression こみで (*komide* [like an inclusive set]) is replaced with "like so much garbage."

[5] English Translation of [4a] by Birnbaum (Murakami, 1993, p. 124)

I nod.

"Up to that point, I'd always taken Mother's side, and Mother would always stand by me. And yet here was Mother throwing me out with Father, **like so much garbage**, and not a word of explanation. It hit me so hard, I wasn't able to forgive Mother for the longest time. I wrote her who knows how many letters asking her to set things straight, but she never answered my questions, never even said she wanted to see me." [emphasis added]

As pointed out by other researchers (e.g., Engetsu, 2010; Nihei, 2016; Sato, 2013), it appears that Birnbaum misread こみ (*komi* [inclusive]) as ごみ (*gomi* [garbage]). This mistranslation is translated by Murakami as まるで生ゴミか何かみたいに [like kitchen garbage or something] as seen in [6] below:

[6] Back-translation of [5] by Murakami (Murakami, 2005b, p. 173)

僕は頷く。

「そういうことが起こるまでは、私はいつもお母さんの側についてきた。そしてお母さんもいつも私の味方をしてくれた。それなのにお母さんは、ほとんど何の説明もなしに、私をお父さんと一緒に、**まるで生ゴミか何かみたいに**あっさり捨ててしまった。私はそれですごく参ってしまって、それからずいぶん長いあいだ母親のことが許せなかったの。私はお母さんにずいぶん何度も手紙を書いて、何があったの

か事情を説明してほしいと頼んだ。でも彼女は私のそんな訴えかけに、一度も答え
てくれなかった。私に会いたいとすら書いてこなかった」[emphasis added]

This short passage also reveals other differences between the original story [4a] and the back-translation [6]. First, as seen in the comparison between [1a] and [3] in Japanese—or [1b] and [2] in English, the present tense is consistently used in [6]—e.g., 僕は頷く (*boku wa unazuku* [I nod])—just as in [5], where Birnbaum "uses a continual present tense" (Slocombe 2004, 4), while the past tense is used in the original story [4a]—e.g., 僕は肯いた (*boku wa unazuita* [I nodded]). Secondly, the woman in the story [4a] talks about her mother as 母 (*haha* [my mother]) and her father as 父親 (*chichi-oya* [*lit.* paternal parent; my father]), but in [6], she calls her mother お母さん (*okāsan* [Mother/Mom]) and her father お父さん (*otōsan* [Father/Dad])—expressing more intimacy toward her parents as well as informalizing the conversation style as done by Birnbaum in the English translation [5]. Thirdly, the overall conversation style in the back-translation [6] is more gender-neutral than in [4a]. (See Section 4.1 for further discussion of kinship terms.)

All in all, Birnbaum's translation is freely and unreservedly domesticated, and those domestication effects were accepted by Murakami and reflected in his faithful (and thus foreignized) back-translation.

3. Three Versions of *Samurai to Wata* (Takahashi 2010, 2011, 2020b)

I published *Samurai to Wata* in Japanese in 2010 (Takahashi, 2010), then self-translated it into English and published it as *Samurai and Cotton: A Story of Two Life Journeys in Japan and America* (Takahashi, 2011; *Samurai and Cotton* hereafter). Ten years later, I revised the 2010 Japanese edition for republication (Takahashi, 2020b). When doing so, I back-translated the changes I had made in the English edition into Japanese. That is, I did not retranslate the English version in its entirety: rather, I adopted some of the alterations made in the English translation and edited/revised—not entirely rewrote—the original version by incorporating the changes into the revision. On the other hand, Murakami back-translated the English translation into Japanese in its entirety. Another difference is that I was both the self-translator and the self-back-translator/editor/reviser, whereas Murakami had an allographic translator in English but acted as the self-back-translator from English to Japanese.

Murakami's case and mine are different, yet there are similarities. Since the English translation by Birnbaum was altered so drastically from the ST, the difference between Murakami's original and his back-translation can clearly be seen as distinct. I, too, made quite a few alterations while self-translating *Samurai to Wata* (Takahashi, 2010)—the ST of *Samurai and Cotton* (Takahashi, 2011). For instance, I tried to dramatize the story by making rhetorical changes to the ST (see Takahashi [2013] Chapter 4)—this is reminiscent of Birnbaum having dramatized the opening of "Rēdāhōzen" as seen in [2] above. Take the following as an example. In the ST of *Samurai and Cotton*, a section entitled 秘密 [The Secret] opens as follows:

[7a] Original Text (Takahashi, 2010, p. 42)

さて、喜助のひ孫・喜儀（四代目／私の父）に話を戻しましょう。

少年時代の喜儀は、時折

「なぜオフクロは自分にだけ冷たいのだろう」

と悩みながらも、喜助とスイの御陰でしょうか、素直に成長しました。[emphasis added]

[7b] Literal Translation of [7a] (Takahashi, 2010, p. 42, *trans.* by author)

Now, let us go back to the story of Kisuke's great-grandson, Kiyoshi (the Fourth Generation/my father).

Kiyoshi often wondered when he was a young boy,

Why is my mother so cold to me?

Although he was puzzled and troubled by it, he grew up to be a gentle and kind boy, thanks to Great-grandpa Kisuke and Grandma Sui. [emphasis added]

As Fludernick (2009) explains, the writer can create suspense "by pre-empting the story's climax," for instance, by "start[ing] off with a key utterance from the protagonist and only then fills in the necessary background details" (p. 47). Following this principle, in the English edition (Takahashi, 2011), I opened the same section entitled "The Secret" with the protagonist's internal questioning.

[8] English Translation of [7a] (Takahashi, 2011, p. 24)

Why is my mother so cold to me?   Kisuke's great-grandson Kiyoshi often wondered about when he was a young boy.

Although he was puzzled and troubled by it, he grew up to be a gentle and kind boy, thanks to Great-grandpa Kisuke and Grandma Sui's loving attention. [emphasis added]

The first line in the original text [7a]—literally translated as "Now, let us go back to the story of Kisuke's great-grandson, Kiyoshi (the Fourth Generation/my father)" [7b]—functions as a metanarrative explanation to bring the ST reader back into Kiyoshi's story from the episodes previously told at length about his great-grandfather Kisuke. But I omitted this sentence in the English translation [8] in order to dramatize the opening. Likewise, Birnbaum omitted all the explanation and background information and opened "Lederhosen" with a conversation between the narrator and his wife's friend—as seen in [2].

Fludernik (2009) points out:

We all know how frustrating the tellers of anecdotes can be if they go into tiresome and unnecessary detail before finally getting round to the point of their stories. By using the trick described above [i.e., dramatization], an oral storyteller can retain the interest and attention of the listener who can, after all, demonstrate her/his impatience by yawning, not paying attention, or even by getting up and leaving. (pp. 47–48)

If this is a typical rhetorical style in English, then dramatization can be considered a type of domestication, which Murakami accepted in his self-back-translation (Murakami, 2005b). I, too, accepted the dramatization used in my English translation (Takahashi, 2011) in the revision (Takahashi, 2020b):

[9] Back-translation of [8] or revision of [7a] (Takahashi, 2020b, p. 40)

「なぜオフクロは自分にだけ冷たいのだろう」

少年時代の喜儀（喜助のひ孫／私の父）は、時折悩みました。しかし、喜助とスイの御陰でしょうか、素直に成長しました。

This is a faithful translation of the English translation [8].

In the original edition in Japanese [7a], I did not get to the point of the story right away because I was following the Japanese rhetorical rule. At the same time, the dramatizing effect achieved in the self-translation process later (as in [8]) was not immediately available at the time of authoring [7a]. That is, it did not occur to me to open this section dramatically as done in English. This dramatization effect became available only after the self-translation process, and I was able to use it for the revision of the original edition. Similar to the alternation made by Murakami for dramatization (see Section 2.0), this alteration was also narratologically significant as this type of rhetoric is not commonly practised in Japanese.

While self-translating *Samurai to Wata* into English, I made many other alterations (see Takahashi [2013]). For instance, the act of reminiscing in the form of flashback or analepsis is often achieved by narrative turns that "are frequently signaled by metanarrative utterances of the type: *That reminds me of when I was at school"* (Fludernik, 2009, p. 47). As the narrator in the ST of *Samurai and Cotton*, I often used such an expression to signal a time change and juxtaposition of text-time events (see Takahashi [2013] Chapter 4). These reminiscing acts are normally about the third person—or "heterodiegetic" analepses:

[…] analepses dealing with a story line (and thus with a diegetic content) different from the content (or contents) of the first narrative. Such analepses deal, classically, either with a character recently introduced whose "antecedents" the narrator wants to shed light on […], or

they deal with a character who has been out of sight for some time and whose recent past we much catch up with […]. (Genette, 1972/1980, p. 50)

Most of the metanarrative expressions used in the ST of *Samurai and Cotton* are thus heterodiegetic, signaling the narrator's act of reminiscing about or commenting on the event involving a third person. In the TT, these expressions are used much less frequently. This finding applies to other metanarrative expressions as well—e.g., それにしても (*sorenishitemo* [in any case]), ちなみに (*chinamini* [incidentally]), which are used numerous times in the ST, but rarely in the TT. For instance, the expression equivalent to "That reminds me" in the SL is そういえば (*sōieba*), which was used nine times in the ST, but it was translated and preserved in the TT in only one instance. In the revision of the ST of *Samurai and Cotton* (Takahashi, 2020b), I realized that many of those alterations made in the TT were "translatable" back into Japanese and thus adopted them, which, in my opinion, improved the revised edition.

[10] Original Text (Takahashi, 2011, pp. 48–49)

　しかし、喜儀は進学を望みました。勉強ができましたし、むしろ学者肌だったようですから、さらに上の学校を目指したとしてもおかしくありません。

　<u>そういえば</u>、父（喜儀）から、横浜国立大学経済学部の前身である横浜高等商業学校（通称／横浜高商）に進学が決まっていたという話を聞いたことがあります。
[emphasis added]

In the TT section that corresponds to the above, the target language (TL) equivalent of *sōieba* is missing from the second paragraph:

[11] English Translation of [10] (Takahashi, 2011, p. 27)

Kiyoshi wished, however, to go on to enter the next stage of education. He was smart and rather a scholarly type, and naturally, he wished to continue studying.

[Ø] My father once told me that he had been accepted to, and had almost enrolled in, the Yokohama Higher School of Commerce under the old system of education, known as "Yokohama Kō-Shō," the predecessor of the present-day Yokohama National University's Economics Department. The school offered a program in international trade, which interested my father. [zero added to indicate the absence of the metanarrative expression]

Here the text-time shift in the TT does not interrupt the flow of the narration even without the metanarrative expression, while in the ST, without *sōieba* [that reminds me], the transition from the event about "Kiyoshi" to the reminiscing act about "my father" might be perceived as abrupt by the Japanese reader so accustomed to metanarrative connectors helping texts cohere through transitions. In other words, a signal for a rhetorical or narrative transition can be omitted in English, but it is strongly preferred and often necessary in Japanese.

The addition of "That reminds me" in the TT would be acceptable and appropriate, and yet it would make the tone rather informal or colloquial. As I examine the above pair of ST and TT excerpts, I am convinced that the TT without the metanarrative expression is much smoother and sounds more sophisticated than their ST counterparts loaded with metanarrative connectors. In the revision of the ST of *Samurai and Cotton* (Takahashi, 2020b), I realized that some of those alterations made in the TT might be "translatable" back into Japanese. I thus adopted this dramatization effect by omitting the metanarrative expression and replacing it with かつて (*katsute* [once]) in the revision of the ST of *Samura and Cotton*.

[12] Back-translation of [11] or revision of [10] (Takahashi, 2020b, p. 46)

しかし、喜儀は進学を望みました。勉強ができましたし、むしろ学者肌だったようですから、さらに上の学校を目指したとしてもおかしくありません。

<u>かつて</u>、父（喜儀）から、横浜国立大学経済学部の前身である横浜高等商業学校（通称／横浜高商）に進学が決まっていたという話を聞いたことがあります。
[emphasis added]

What I did here was to take advantage of and utilize the English rhetorical technique learned through self-translating the original text from Japanese into English.

Similarly, in the process of self-translation, I reduced the number of conjunctions (see Takahashi [2013] Chapter 2) and consequential conjunctions (see Takahashi [2013] Chapter 4), which are frequently used in Japanese, when self-translating the Japanese text into English. This adjustment is also reflected in the revision of the ST (Takahashi, 2020b) along with several other ingenuities discovered through the preceding self-translation process. In sum, the process of revision, retranslation, or self-back-translation allowed me to see great gains from the domestication (or westernization) of the text in English, which could also be effectively adopted in Japanese.

4. Discussion

4.1. Back-translation vs. self-back-translation

Back-translation, also called "reverse translation" or sometimes referred to as "double translation," is the process of retranslating an already translated text back to the original SL. It is often used as

> a method of ensuring that the translation of an assessment instrument into another language is adequate, used primarily in cross-cultural research. A bilingual person translates items from the source language to the target language, and a different bilingual person then independently translates the items back into the source language. The researcher can compare the original with the back-translated version to see if anything important was changed in the translation. (APA, 2020, n.p.)

Back-translation, therefore, is done by different translators in order to verify the accuracy of the translation of the original text.

Self-back-translation, on the other hand, as discussed above with reference to Murakami (2005b) and Takahashi (2020b), is distinct in that back-translation is done by the author of the original text. The purpose of self-back-translation is also different from that of back-translation done in cross-cultural research—i.e., to ensure and verify the accuracy of the translation of the original text but rather derives from the recognition that the translation has exceeded the original and the alterations made in the translation are found to be of value.

In the process of back-translation, a translator may translate, for example, the Japanese word 父 (*chichi* [my father]) as "Father" in English, and another translator may back-translate it as お父さん (*otōsan* [Father/Dad]). Are these translations the same—or considered accurate? Some may say "yes" because they are both kinship terms denoting the paternal parent, but others may say "no" because they are sociolinguistically and connotatively different.

> The difference between *chichi* and *otōsan* is significant: the former is used when speakers refer to family members (father in this case) to someone outside the family (out-group), but the latter is used when they refer to or address someone within their own kinship group (in-group). (Takahashi, 2019b, p. 125)

Likewise, following this rule, 母 (*haha* [my mother]) and お母さん (*okāsan* [Mother/Mom]) are considered different.

As discussed earlier (see [2] and [5]), Birnbaum translated *haha* and *chichi* as "Mother" and "Father," making the conversation more casual or domesticated (or westernized). And Murakami back-translated them as *okāsan* and *otōsan*, respectively. Using these in-group kinship terms in Japanese makes the conversation between the woman and the narrator casual and intimate. In other words, Murakami retranslated the English translation into Japanese, faithfully adopting Birnbaum's domestication efforts, including connotative adjustments.

While self-translating *Samurai to Wata* (Takahashi, 2010) into English, I also encountered issues relating to those kinship terms—the following passage is about myself as the narrator as well as the author-translator:

In the ST, to refer to her father, the narrator had to adhere to this Japanese rule and use *chichi*. This is a linguistic constraint posed by the SL, not the narrator's choice—as a mature adult you must use this term to refer to your father when speaking to your out-group. As the author-translator, however, being free from this SL constraint, I had the option of using the TL term "Dad," and this lack of distinction between in- and out-groups in the TL helped me easily converge toward the TL audience and express my emotion more freely. (Takahashi, 2019b, p. 125)

Even though I used "Father" and "Dad" to refer to my father in the English translation, the linguistic constraint in Japanese was too strong for me to back-translate it as the in-group term *otōsan* as the narrator in the revised edition of *Samurai to Wata* (Takahashi, 2020b). This experience of my own leads me to understand how intentional Murakami's use of *okāsan* and *otōsan* in his back-translation was. But at the same time, he was able to adopt such in-group terms because it was done in a conversation, not in a narrative. Regardless, he seems to have done it intentionally in order to create a more intimate feeling between the narrator and his interlocutor, while faithfully retranslating Birnbaum's domesticated translation.

These examples of Murakami's intentionally faithful back-translation well indicate how he tried to preserve the American flavor deriving from Birnbaum's domestication. By so doing, Murakami foreignized (or westernized) his back-translation in Japanese. At the same time, Murakami's use of foreignization is nothing new because his Japanese writing is already westernized. An English-Japanese translator himself, Murakami seems to be *intentionally* influenced by English in his Japanese writing.

During a panel discussion about Murakami and his literary translation, translator Motoyuki Shibata mentions that Murakami often writes Japanese like translation from English, which makes him a good writer in Japanese. On the same panel, Shibata's fellow discussants, Jay Rubin and Roland Kelts, agree that "the translation can sometimes exceed the original" (Monkey Business, 2013, n.p.: also see Inoue [2011] for similar views).

The statement "the translation can sometimes exceed the original" also applies to the translations of Murakami's work by Birnbaum, who had originally discovered Murakami and introduced his work to the English-speaking readership with his translations that captured Murakami's westernized Japanese voice in English. In turn, Murakami retranslated one of Birnbaum's translations, "Lederhosen," into Japanese. And critics in general agree that Murakami's self-back-translated version (Murakami, 2005b) is better than the original (Murakami, 1985): e.g.,

As I give those two [Japanese] versions a quick read, I get completely different impressions from the two versions. For one thing, the entire structure has been changed [in the revised edition], and I get a feeling that the revised version is more sophisticated than the original, making me feel as though I were reading a tasteful American short story. (Suzuishi, 2020, n.p., *trans.* by author)

Obviously, Murakami's self-back-translation—as a kind of 遊び [amusement, play, game] (Murakami, 2005a, p. 24)—has turned the original story into a much-improved version. That is, again, the translation can sometimes exceed the original. Furthermore, it is also the domestication effects created by Birnbaum that are imported into the back-translation and making Murakami's self-back-translation version more favoured by the Japanese readership, who desires and pursues stories that are "American."

3.1. 4.2. Intralingual vs. interlingual translation

Since Jakobson's famous definition of the three types of translation (1959), interlingual translation (or *translation proper*) has received more attention than the other two types—intralingual and intersemiotic. There are also many other neglected topics relating to interlingual translation as well: e.g., the relationship between intralingual translation and interlingual translation remains a neglected area (Zethsen, 2007, 2009). The practice of self-back-translation makes the relationship between intralingual and interlingual translation complex and offers curious perspectives into the distinction between the two.

Self-translation is a type of interlingual translation by the same person writing in two languages. It is also regarded as "rewriting" (Lefevere, 1992), "creative reworking" (Bassnett, 2013, p. 24), and "(a form of) creative writing" (Wilson & Gerber 2012, p. ix). Such views are not limited to self-translation but can be extended to translation in general: Lefevere states that "every translation is a rewriting" (1992, p. vii). Based on Lefevere's claim, Canli (2018) asks if it is possible to call a rewriting a translation. Writers—bilingual or monolingual—rewrite the same text for various reasons. When monolingual writers edit, revise, and/or rewrite their original text, it is done in one language. If rewriting is a type of translation, the monolingual practice of rewriting in one language is considered "intralingual translation."

Self-back-translation is done by a bilingual author. Although "retranslation" is involved, the end-product could appear to be a rewrite or revision in the same language (Japanese in Murakami's case). This process is visually presented in Figure 1:
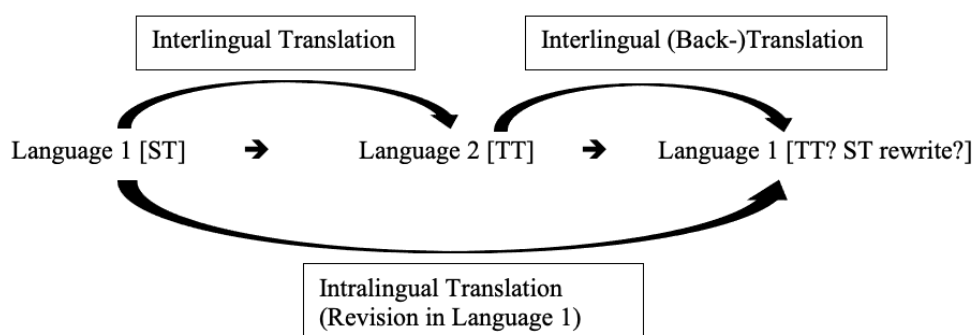

Figure 1. Relationship between Interlingual and Intralingual Translation in the Practice of Self-back-translation.

The translation process from Language 1 to Language 2 is clearly that of interlingual translation, and if done by a different person, it's allographic translation, and if done by the same person (author-translator), it's self-translation. When the TT in Language 2 is translated back into Language 1 by the author of the ST, this process is interlingual (back-)translation, or what Sato (2013) calls "self-back-translation." At the same time, given that this rewrite is done in Language 1—i.e., the same language used for the ST, this process resembles that of intralingual translation. What, then, should the end-product of this process be called? TT? ST rewrite?

In my case (Takahashi, 2020b), the process was dominantly that of revising but included back-translations of some sections and rhetorical styles influenced by the English translation. The revisions made are, for instance, modernization of certain expressions, elimination of politically incorrect terms, addition of footnotes to update certain events, etc. Overall, as the author-translator who went through the process, I feel comfortable claiming that it was more of an intralingual translation (or revision of the original). Murakami's case is different. He back-translated the entire English translation into Japanese. That is, his back-translation is interlingual (back-)translation. In this process, Birnbaum's translation, initially the TT, served as the ST for the back-translation. Murakami's original and back-translated versions are both in Japanese, and the latter may appear as a revision of the former, which may give an appearance of intralingual translation—e.g., with decreased formality, gender-neutralized language, dramatization, etc. Yet, the process clearly indicates that it was interlingual translation.

The above observation leads to an inquiry into the relationship between the original and translation. In this regard, Cordingley (2013) casts an important question regarding originality in relation to self-translation.

> Research to date has shown that self-translators bestow upon themselves liberties of which regular translators would never dream; self-translation typically produces another "version" or a new "original" of a text. What is being negotiated is therefore not only an "original" text, and perhaps the self which wrote it, but the vexatious notion of "originality" itself. (p. 2)

In the case of *Samurai and Cotton*, I even consider the ST "provisional" or "pretext," and the TT the "finalized" and intended version—the true original (see Takahashi [2020a] for further discussion). Indeed, this TT served as the ST for the revised and polished version (with back-translated sections) in the intralingual translation process. In Murakami's case, too, his original story (Murakami, 1985) was provisional but was revitalized by Birnbaum's translation (Murakami, 1993) to render an improved version through self-back-translation (Murakami, 2005b). I thus agree with Nihei (2016), who maintains that Murakami "strives for faithfulness in his own translation while thinking highly of his translator's creative adaptations" (p. 390).

It is, then, not so much the originality that needs attention here but rather the creativity inherent in the act of translation and the translator (see Takahashi [2020a] for further discussion). This shift of focus from the original to the creativity and power of translation gives legitimacy to self-back-translation as well as translation itself. Furthermore, self-translation is a dynamic creative process, as Santoyo (2013) points out:

> Because the relationship between a self-translation and its original, or vice versa, is not static, as in other types of translation, quite frequently there is a dynamic relationship, one specific to self-translations, that makes an original look at itself in the mirror of its self-translation and adopt or incorporate the textual changes the author may have brought into the translated text. (p. 29)

In this dynamic creative process, the TT may become "a second original" (Santoyo, 2013, p. 28), which indeed becomes the ST in self-back-translation. Self-(back-)translation, therefore, gives "the author-translator the artistic license or autonomy to recreate the ST, allowing such a dynamic relationship between the original and translation" (Takahashi, 2019a, p. 866).

4.3. 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 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." However, his visibility as a translator

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).

4. Conclusion

Murakami presents translation researchers with examples that make them question and examine translation from unconventional perspectives—e.g., the relationship between intralingual and interlingual translations, the original and translation, and the translator's visibility and invisibility, and more. The translator, or translation itself, is "the filter through which the original text is converted" (Slocombe, 2004, p. 2). Much could get lost while going through the filtration process of (self-)translation, but much could be gained or improved thanks to this process (also see Takahashi, 2013, 2014, 2019a, 2019b, 2020a, 2022). Whether it is interlingual or intralingual translation, the end-product of this process could be an improvement from the ST—i.e., the translation sometimes exceeds the original. Murakami's self-back-translation of the English translation rendered a better text than the original.

As a self-translator, I observed the same in my experience of self-translation (Takahashi, 2011) and revision with a touch of self-back-translation (Takahashi, 2020b). That is, translation acted to produce a TT better than the ST, and then a RT better than the ST/TT This is why some writers self-(back)-translate (also see Takahashi [2019a] for similar discussion).

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