



## Cultural Elements in the Turkish Translations of Hemingway's Short Stories

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### Abstract

This paper investigates two Turkish translations of fifteen short stories written by Ernest Hemingway. The first, published in 1972, belongs to Yaşar Anday and the second is a more recent translation from 2018 by Elif Derviş. Derviş's translation is the only work in Turkish that includes all Hemingway's short stories. Several challenges arise when the source and the target language do not share the same or a similar cultural background, as in the case of English and Turkish; one of these challenges is transferring the culture-specific elements. The aim of this paper is to discover which strategies are employed by the translators when translating Hemingway's short stories into Turkish, with a focus on culture-specific items. The findings are discussed mainly in relation to the writings of Javier Franco Aixelá and Eirlys E. Davies. The latter draws on Aixelá's translation strategies and creates a more flexible categorization consisting of seven strategies employed by translators when dealing with culture-specific items: preservation, addition, omission, globalization, localization, transformations and creation. The significant time span between the two translations, their different cultural and social background and the translators' style result in rather different texts. The strategies employed most often are preservation, in particular regarding proper nouns, words, and expressions foreign to both English and Turkish, and localization. Omissions are extremely rare and they appear only in the first translation, whereas additions are more often in Derviş's case. Nevertheless, both Anday and Derviş preserve the foreign flavor of the source text, thus keeping the Turkish readers aware of the fact that what they read is a translation of a text written in a different cultural context.

**Keywords:** translation, culture, Hemingway, Turkish

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## Introduction

There are many available approaches to translation, a practice which started many hundreds of years ago. Even though the research departed from characterizations such as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ translation and deviations from the source text can even be seen as improvements, one of the main points of debate in the field of translation studies continues to be faithfulness or not to the source text. The degree of faithfulness may refer to linguistic, stylistic or ideological perspectives; hence the translators have to pay attention to numerous aspects. One of these aspects is culture, i.e. the culture-specific items present in the source text. The aim of our study is to discover the ways in which culture-specific items present in Ernest Hemingway’s short stories have been translated into Turkish.

The translation scholar Katharina Reiss (2014) stresses the importance of analyzing a translation always in comparison with the source text and argues that:

One of the most important principles for translators is complete fidelity to the intent of the original author. Only by a comparison with the source language can it be discovered whether this fidelity has been achieved, how well the intent of the author has been understood, how it has been interpreted, and how successfully it has been expressed in the target language. (p. 16)

In our study, we take this guideline into consideration and consistently turn to the source text to understand the use of a particular word or phrase. As it happens, the actual nature of the study requires it: we investigate culture-specific items and it is important to find their exact use in Hemingway’s short stories, in the context in which they were created. Reiss identifies four types of texts: content-focused texts, form-focused texts, appeal-focused texts and audio-medial texts (pp. 25-27). Short stories belong to the second category, i.e. form-focused texts, and according to Reiss “the expressive function of language, which is primary in form-focused texts, must find an *analogous form* in the translation to create a corresponding impression so that the translation can become a true equivalent” (p. 32). However, it is debatable whether this statement can be applied to the translation of culture-specific elements; more often than not, these elements work independently from the expressive function of language.

Another significant line of criticism addresses the ideological aspect of the translation process and two examples are Venuti and Aixelá who describe it in similar ways. For Aixelá (1996) it is a matter of ‘power’:

The fact that for any case and for any moment, translation mixes two or more cultures [...] implies an unstable balance of power, a balance which will depend to a great extent on the relative weight of the exporting culture as it is felt in the receiving culture, the one in whose language the target text is nearly always elaborated, and, therefore, the one that generally takes the decisions concerning the way a translation is done (beginning with the decision as to whether a text is translated at all). (p. 52)

Similarly, for Venuti it is a matter of ‘violence’ and the aim of his book, *The Translator’s Invisibility. A history of translation* (1995), is “to force translators and their readers to reflect on the ethnocentric violence of translation and hence to write and read translated texts in ways that seek to recognize the linguistic and cultural difference of foreign texts” (p. 41). Moreover, he

identifies two possible strategies for translation: domestication, when the foreign aspect of the source text is minimized and foreignization, when it is brought to the surface (p. 23). The two theorists' viewpoints do not imply that the source text should be disregarded; on the contrary, both texts and their cultures should be taken into consideration.

Culture belongs to the category of concepts that can be defined in a number of ways. Here, we draw on Newmark (1988) who defines it as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression" (p. 94). He distinguishes five groups of foreign cultural words: 1) ecology: flora, fauna, winds, plains, hills; 2) material culture: food, clothes, houses and towns, transport; 3) social culture: work and leisure; 4) organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts: political and administrative, religious, artistic; and 5) gestures and habits (p. 95). Even though such explicit categorizations do exist, it is challenging to identify words and phrases specific to a particular culture, especially in Hemingway's short stories, in which there is not only one culture involved, the American, but also Spanish, French and others.

Several studies explore the ways in which culture-specific items from different literary works have been translated into various languages. Ajtony (2017) argues that in the case of the Hungarian translations of George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*, there is a balance between the strategies of domestication and foreignization even if English and Hungarian are not cognate languages and the translators face difficulties regarding culture-specific vocabulary, phrasal verbs, idioms and other aspects. One study that also deals with the work of Hemingway is Karavin's (2016) systematic analysis of two Turkish translations of *The Old Man and the Sea*. On a macro level, she employs Venuti's concepts of domestication and foreignization; on a micro level, Vinay and Darbalnet's translation procedures. With regards to ideological words, the study found that both Turkish translators "have failed to convey the intended message because the target readers have not been provided with the relevant footnotes that would help them to understand them more appropriately" (p. 141). In general, the translators tried to maintain the foreignness of the source text, but were not always able to compensate for the cultural differences. A study from the same year investigates the domestication and foreignization of culture-specific items in two Persian translations of the same novel by Hemingway. Shahabi and Abad (2016) use a mixture of theories, including Aixelá. This quantitative study found that the foreignization strategy surpassed the domestication strategy, and that the most common strategies for translating culture-specific items were transformations and preservation, whereas creation was the least frequent (p. 198). In Davies' (2003) study, the source texts are J K Rowling's *Harry Potter* books and the target languages more than one: Chinese, German, French and others. She challenges Aixelá's hierarchy of translation strategies and proposes a somehow different classification consisting of preservation, addition, omission, globalization, localization, transformations and creation. Her findings agree with Aixelá in the sense that the translators were not consistent in using one procedure over another. Davies also suggests that culture-specific items should be investigated overall and not in isolation (p. 96). Her model was adopted by Petruilionè (2012) in a paper examining the Lithuanian translations of Joanne Harris' novels. The results showed that the strategy of localization was used more often and creation and transformations were not found (p. 43). It appears from the findings of the above

studies that creating new culture-specific items is a strategy generally avoided by the translators, either since they do not find it necessary or for being more time consuming.

### Analysis and discussion

Hemingway's short stories analyzed in this paper are: *Mr. and Mrs. Elliot* (1924), *Cat in the Rain* (1925), *Hills Like White Elephants* (1927), *A Canary for One* (1927), *An Alpine Idyll* (1927), *Now I Lay Me* (1927), *The Killers* (1927), *On the Quai at Smyrna* (1930), *Homage to Switzerland* (1932), *One Reader Writes* (1933), *A Day's Wait* (1933), *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* (1933), *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* (1936), *Old Man at the Bridge* (1938) and *Fifty Grand* (1948).

The first Turkish translation belongs to Yaşar Anday, a hardback edition published in 1972 by Cem Publishing House as part of a collection of Nobel Prize winning books of fiction and it is not being published anymore. The second is a more recent translation, from 2018 by Elif Derviş, published by Bilgi Publishing House as a paperback edition. Anday chose, or it was required from the publishing house, to translate only the above mentioned fifteen short stories. It should be mentioned that it also includes the novel *The Old Man and the Sea*, whereas Derviş's translation is the only Turkish translation that includes all Hemingway's short stories. The collection of all Hemingway's short stories was published after his death, in 1987; therefore, it is not surprising that until that time at least, there was no Turkish translation to include them all. The time span between the two translations is nearly half a century, which seems a period long enough to discover different tendencies in the strategies adopted by the translators.

The first step of the analysis was to identify the culture-specific elements through close reading. This process has not been easy and we often had doubts, particularly since there is an abundance of culture-specific items and in addition, more than one culture are integrated into the narrative. After this step, these words and phrases have been separated into proper nouns and common expressions following Aixelá. He reproduces T. Hermans' characterization of proper nouns as either conventional 'unmotivated' or loaded 'motivated' (p. 59). With regards to common expressions, Aixelá divides and grades the possible translation strategies "from a lesser to a greater degree of intercultural manipulation" into strategies of conservative or substitutive nature (p. 61). There are five different strategies of conservative nature. When a translator uses the strategy of *repetition* s/he keeps as much as possible of the reference from the source text, but this can sometimes lead to an increase in the exotic character of the reference. *Orthographic adaptation* includes procedures like transcription and transliteration, especially when the source and the target alphabet are different, which is not the case with the Turkish language since it uses the Latin alphabet, with only few changes. In the *linguistic (non-cultural) translation*, units of measure, currencies, objects and institutions can be found, which, although foreign to the target culture, are yet understandable. *Extratextual gloss* and *intratextual gloss* refer to some kind of explanation of the meaning of the culture-specific item; the first appears as a footnote, endnote, glossary or commentary; the second as explanation embedded within the text. This strategy can also be called explicitness, since it makes something only partially revealed in the source text, explicit. The first—out of six— substitutive strategy is *synonymy*, used by the translators in order to avoid repeating the culture-specific item. When the translators want to make the meaning of a term more understandable to her/his readers by replacing an obscure reference with one, still belonging to the source language, but less specific, Aixelá calls it *limited universalization*. Something similar happens with *absolute universalization* but in this case the translator chooses to delete any foreign

connotation and finds a neutral reference. *Naturalization* is called the strategy of bringing the culture-specific item into the intertextual corpus felt as specific by the target culture. The last two strategies are *deletion* and *autonomous creation*, the latter being very uncommon. Here, the translator adds some non-existent cultural reference to the target text (pp. 61-64). There are many converging points between Aixelá and Davies and we briefly described the strategies proposed by the former in order to point out to the similarities between the two scholars' strategies. When a translator maintains the source text in the translation, Davies calls it *preservation*, the opposite of which is *omission*. Keeping the item as it appears in the source text but adding information considered necessary by the translator is what she calls *addition* and these additions can be found either in the text or as footnotes. *Globalization* and *localization* are opposing terms; the first happens when culture-specific references are replaced with more neutral or general ones, whereas the second, when the translator chooses to anchor the reference in the culture of the target readers. The last two procedures are *transformations* and *creation*. Transformations occur when the source text is altered or distorted and creation when culture-specific items that are not present in the source text are created in the target text (pp. 72-89).

The first category of culture-specific items is represented by proper names, the vast majority of which was repeated in the Turkish translations of Hemingway's short stories. Some examples are: Jack, Helena, Johnson, Nick, Cornelia, George, Sam and Harry. City names were preserved as well, regardless of their connection to the States or other countries such as Washington, Havre, Barcelona, Cannes, New York and Paris. One particular case is represented by proper words which have a certain importance for Turkey. Some of them are places which exist in Turkey, more precisely in Istanbul and they appear in the short story with title *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*. They were translated with the Turkish equivalents: Rimmily Hissa *Rumelihisarı* (p. 192) and *Rumeli Hisarı* (p. 84), Bosphorus *Boğaz* (p. 192) and *İstanbul Boğazı* (p. 83), Pera Palace *Perapalas* (p. 192) and *Pera Palas* (p. 84) and most significantly Constantinople *İstanbul* (p. 191) and *Konstantinopolis* (p. 83). These words are foreign items in the source text, but in the Turkish translations they become naturalized. It can be argued that Istanbul falls into the category of 'loaded' proper nouns. Other examples of proper nouns significant for the Turkish culture are Mecca and Lausanne. They are both present in the short story *Homage to Switzerland*. Mecca was translated in both cases as *Mekke* (p. 159; p. 437) although, as we mentioned before, the majority of the city names were retained, and Lausanne was translated by Anday as *Lauzanne* (p. 159), just with a letter changed, and by Derviş as *Lozan* (p. 438). The Treaty of Lausanne was signed in 1923 and it was a significant event in the history of Turkey. From this change in the choice of the translators, we can understand that this 'loaded' proper noun is currently so interrelated with the treaty, which in Turkish is called 'Lozan Antlaşması' (The Treaty of Lausanne) that it is natural for Derviş to refer to the city by using the same word. We can conclude that city names which are more or less neutral in the Turkish culture were preserved in the translations, whereas words which have a special place in the Turkish culture, or are 'loaded' proper nouns, were naturalized according to Aixelá, or the procedure of localization was employed according to Davies' terminology.

There are only two proper names deleted from the translations, more precisely from the first translation: Scott Fitzgerald and Cook. The reference to Scott Fitzgerald can be found again in *Homage to Switzerland*. A certain Mr. Johnson flirts with a waitress and asks her where she had learnt English. Her answer was at the Berlitz School, which was first opened in Providence, Rhode Island; by the time the short story was written there were many other schools with the same name

in Europe. During their dialogue, Mr. Johnson asks if there were many physical, implying sexual, interactions between the girls at the Berlitz School and if she ever ran into Scott Fitzgerald. The narrator seems to establish some connection between these types of interactions and Scott Fitzgerald. This may be the reason, the uncertainty of the reference, for Anday to delete the question entirely. Or perhaps he was reluctant to present Fitzgerald in this light to the Turkish readers. The second proper name that was deleted is present in the short story *A Canary for One* and it appears twice. An American woman was travelling by train and when the train arrived in Gare de Lyon she “put herself in charge of one of three men from Cook’s” and her name “had been found by the man from Cook’s on a typewritten page” (Hemingway, 1987). The word must refer to the Cook Islands, but it is possible that the Turkish translator did not think that it was significant for the story; therefore, he omitted the word in both instances. Anday used instead a more general phrase to refer to these men: *vagon memuru* (wagon officer) (p. 176).

The names of countries were generally replaced with their Turkish equivalents: China (*One Reader Writes*) *Çin* (p. 109; p. 424) or Switzerland (*Homage to Switzerland*) *İsviçre* (p. 146; p. 426) and this is what Davies names localization. The word America was translated as *Amerika* (*Homage to Switzerland*) (p. 157; p. 436), but in the source text we can also find States (*Homage to Switzerland*) and United States (*Mr. and Mrs. Elliot*), which was translated as *Birleşik Devletleri* (United States) (p. 436; p. 177) by Derviş. In the first translation, both America and States are translated in the same way (*Homage to Switzerland*) (p. 157), which can be seen as the globalization strategy. In the short story with the title *Fifty Grand*, we encounter the word Bohemian when Jack asks Solly Freedman “what nationality is this Walcott?” and he receives the answer: “He’s a Bohemian” (Hemingway, 1987). Anday translated the word as *Çekoslovakyalı* (p. 229) and Derviş as *Bohemialı* (p. 332). Bohemia was a historical region in the present Czechia, and it sometimes refers to the whole Czech territory. It is normal for the first translator to translate it as *Çekoslovakyalı* (Czech) since, at that time, in 1972, the dissolution of Czechoslovakia did not happen yet. In the most recent translation, it was rendered with a word closer to the source text, although adapted to the grammar rules of the Turkish language; the suffix *-li* in *Bohemialı* showing the nationality of a person. In the first translation, the strategy of localization was adopted and in the second case, partial preservation.

Words related to Christianity, like My Christ, Hail Mary and Our Father were translated in the first case as *Tanrım* (*One Reader Writes*) (My God) (p. 109), *Selam Sana Meryem* (Greetings to You Mary) (*Now I Lay Me*) (p. 163) and *Babamız* (*Now I Lay Me*) (Our Father) (p. 163). The most recent translation either kept the foreign elements *Hail Mary* (p. 371) and *Our Father* (p. 371), and included footnotes to explain their meaning for the target reader, or translated them, as in the case of *Yüce İsa* (*One Reader Writes*) (Holly Jesus) (p. 425), thus employing the procedure of localization. The translator explained to the target readers that *Hail Mary* is a special prayer ascribed by the Catholics to Holy Mary and that *Our Father* is the most important prayer taught by Jesus Christ to his apostles (Derviş, 2018, p. 371). Unlike Anday’s translation, which includes no extratextual gloss, in the most recent translation, footnotes appear very often, either to translate words and expressions foreign to both English and Turkish, or to offer an explanation.

Hemingway’s short stories include a great number of words and expressions in foreign languages, such as Signor (Italian), mademoiselle (French), and hombre (Spanish) and even entire conversations. These words, foreign both to English and Turkish, were generally preserved in the translations. Even if the words were translated into Turkish, there seems to be a lack of consistency

from the translators' part. For example, the Spanish word *hombre* (man) (*A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*) was translated by Anday as *canım* (literally: my soul, dear) (p. 117), whereas Derviş retained it and included a footnote explaining its meaning (p. 386). Nevertheless, for the French word *madame* (*A Canary for One*), which actually became a neologism in many languages, including Turkish, Anday retained it in a slightly modified form *madam* (p. 176) and in the most recent translation it was replaced by *hanımefendi* (lady) (p. 351). The translators oscillate between preservation and localization in these cases.

One of the most interesting passages can be found in the story *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*, where two waiters are preparing to close the café, and one of them is carrying on a conversation with himself about the meaning or, better said, the meaninglessness of life.

What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was a nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too. It was only that and light was all it needed and a certain cleanness and order. Some lived in it and never felt it but knew it all was *nada y pues nada y nada y pues nada*. Our *nada* who art in *nada, nada* be thy name thy kingdom *nada* thy will be *nada* in *nada* as it is in *nada*. Give us this *nada* our daily *nada* and *nadaus* our *nada* as we *nada* our *nadas* and *nada* us not into *nada* but deliver us from *nada; pues nada*. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee. (Hemingway, 1987)

Hemingway has a minimalist writing style called as *iceberg principle*. According to this principle, he creates his literary themes, ideas and fiction through as few words as possible. The effect he wants to arouse in the reader is like an iceberg. Under the visible part of the iceberg lies the literary effect Hemingway primarily wants to create. *Nada philosophy* associated with Hemingway is also a result of this writing technique. 'Nada' is a recurrent theme in Hemingway's works, and it can be defined as nothingness; in particular, this short story presents the meaninglessness of life in the words of the waiter. Hemingway uses *nada* conceptually in moments of silence with severe psychological implications for the characters (Gültekin & Çıraklı, 2017), as is the case in the quoted paragraph where the man questions one of the fundamental pillars of his religion. The word was preserved in both translations, and Derviş included a footnote translating a sentence from Spanish: *nada y pues nada y nada y pues nada* as "nothing, but nothing at all" (p. 387). This information helps the target readers understand what the passage is about, which does not happen in the first translation. Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that Hemingway himself did not include any footnote explaining the meaning of this foreign word in the source text; actually, he never translated foreign words and expressions. Thus, Anday's decision not to supplement his translation with any additional information can be understood in terms of 'fidelity' to the author's intention. What the target reader or even the translators may not be aware of is the fact that this paragraph is actually a parody of the prayer mentioned earlier *Our Father*, in which some words were replaced by the word *nada*, presumably to point to the meaninglessness of praying or faith in general. The readers of the source text are well aware of the prayer; particularly if they are Christians; however, for the Turkish readers a footnote explaining the reference might have meant a better appreciation and understanding of Hemingway's intention.

Other significant culture-specific items are words related to beverages and food. The first category includes a variety of drinks. The items were translated in different ways by the two Turkish translators, with few exceptions, such as liquor (*Fifty Grant*) *içki* (liquor) (p. 218; p. 322) and cervezas (*Hills Like White Elephants*) *cervezas* (p. 127; p. 286). We can observe the seemingly random choice of rendering the source text with an expression which either shows that it is an

alcoholic drink or covers this aspect. This is the case with ginger ale (*Fifty Grant, The Killers*) *zencefil birası* and *ginder-ale* (ginger beer) in Anday's translation (p. 218; p. 91) and *zencefilli gazoz* (ginger soda) (p. 322; p. 292) in Derviş's translation. Another example is sweet pink cider (*Homage to Switzerland*), which was translated differently, in the first case *pembe tatlı elma suyu* (pink sweet apple juice) (p. 154) and in the second *tatlı pembe elma şarabı* (sweet pink apple wine) (p. 433). In other instances, the strategy of globalization was used, as is the case with brandy (*A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*) which was retained in the first translation, but was rendered as *kanyak* (cognac) (p. 384) in the second. A similar example is bevo (*The Killers*), translated as *alkolsüz bira* (non-alcoholic beer) (p. 292). In these examples the source text was replaced with more general references by Derviş and it is precisely what Anday did in the case of red wine (*An Alpine Idyll*) *şarap* (wine) (p. 141). These types of translation decisions make it difficult to draw general conclusions about each translator's strategies.

In the short story *The Killers*, many items related to food can be found and none of them is specific to Turkish cuisine, particularly since in their majority, they are made out of pork meat which is not consumed in Turkey. These dishes are roast pork tenderloin *domuz rostosu* (roast pork) (p. 90), for which Derviş gave an exact translation *kızarmış domuz filetosu* (roast pork tenderloin) (p. 291), ham *jambon* (p. 91; p. 291), and bacon rendered as *pastırma* (pastrami) (p. 91) and *domuz pastırma* (pork pastrami) (p. 291). In the last example, the translator wanted to make sure that the target readers are aware of the fact that bacon is not the equivalent of Turkish pastrami, which is specific to certain parts of Turkey, but that it is made out of pork meat. It is surprising that both translators rendered chicken croquettes as *tavuk köftesi* (chicken meatball) (p. 91; p. 291) when in Turkish there is a closer option, the neologism *kroket* (croquettes). Poorhouse cake is an item which already in the source text does not seem very appetizing, but the way Derviş rendered it, as *yoksullar evindeki bayat kekler* (old cakes from poor people's houses) (p. 316) accentuates this aspect, whereas Anday opted for a more direct translation *fakir ekmeği* (poor's bread) (p. 211). This item can be found in the *Fifty Grand* short story.

### Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to discover which strategies were employed by the translators when translating Hemingway's short stories into Turkish, with a focus on culture-specific items. The analysis is significant since the American and the Turkish cultures are not similar; therefore, these items ought to be handled carefully. The resulting text represents a source of information for the target readers and participates to the way they perceive the culture of the source text. Moreover, Hemingway's stories incorporate more than one culture and this only complicates the process.

In conclusion to our findings, we argue that both Turkish translations give to the target readers the feeling that they are reading a translation of a foreign writer's work, especially due to the presence of proper nouns. Moreover, the places and the characters are foreign; same are religion, food items and beverages. Thus, the degrees of 'power' and 'violence' as described by Venuti and Aixelá are kept to a minimum in the two Turkish translations we investigated. The strategies employed most often are preservation, in particular when it comes to proper nouns, words, and expressions foreign to both English and Turkish, and localization when the source proper nouns have a special place in the Turkish culture. Omissions are extremely rare, in number of two, and they appear only in the first translation without however altering the text in a significant manner, whereas additions are very often in Derviş's case. She supplemented the text with



footnotes whenever she considered that the target readers need that particular information to better understand the story. The strategies of transformations and creation could not be identified. We also observed that there seems to be no general rule in the translators' decisions, thus making difficult to draw clear conclusions. Our study agrees from this standpoint with both Aixelá and Davies. Translation is a creative process and the translators adapt their strategies according to each situation.

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