

Material Culture-Specific Items in İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir and Translation Issues into English

¹ *Heba Salah Ahmed Soliman, ¹ Titik Sudartinah

¹ Applied Linguistics Study Program, Faculty of Languages, Arts and Culture, Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia. Jl. Colombo No.1, Karang Malang, Caturtunggal, Kec. Depok, Kabupaten Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author e-mail: hebasoliman.2024@student.uny.ac.id

Received: March 2026; Revised: April 2026; Accepted: May 2026; Published: June 2026

Abstract

This study investigates the translation procedures employed in rendering material culture items from Turkish into English in Orhan Pamuk's memoir *İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir* (2003), as translated by Maureen Freely in *İstanbul: Memories and the City* (2006). Drawing on Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) taxonomy of translation procedures and Newmark's (1988) classification of culture-specific items, the study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining qualitative textual analysis with quantitative frequency measurement. A corpus of 50 purposively selected material culture items was compiled and categorized into four Newmark-derived domains: houses and towns (72%), food and drink (16%), transport (10%), and clothing (2%). The analysis reveals that literal translation (32%) and borrowing (28%) constitute the predominant strategies, followed by modulation (16%), equivalence (10%), adaptation (6%), generalization (4%), and marginal occurrences of loss and explication (2% each). These findings suggest that the translator prioritized linguistic transparency and cultural fidelity through strategies that either preserve source-culture specificity or facilitate target-language comprehension. Implications for translator training, cultural mediation, and cross-cultural literary reception are discussed.

Keywords: Material culture translation; Culture-specific items; Orhan Pamuk; Turkish-English translation; Translation procedures; Literary translation

How to Cite: Soliman, H.S.A., & Sudartinah, T. (2026). Material Culture-Specific Items in İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir and Translation Issues into English. *Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, 6(2), 804-816. doi:<https://doi.org/10.36312/jolls.v6i2.4792>



<https://doi.org/10.36312/jolls.v6i2.4792>

Copyright© 2026, Soliman et al.

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA](#) License.



INTRODUCTION

In today's globalised world, translation has become an essential means of communication between different cultures and societies. Through translation, literary and non-literary works can cross linguistic boundaries, allowing readers to access the cultural knowledge, values, and experiences of other communities (Khakim et al., 2019). Culture itself can be understood as a complex set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules shared by a particular group (Larson, 1984). Larson's definition highlights the close relationship between language and culture, a view that has been further emphasized in recent studies, which argue that the two continuously interact and integrate (Cao & Zhao, 2022; Zhang & Amirdabbaghian, 2025). Because many texts contain culturally inherent meanings, translators are required to go beyond simply conveying words and act as an intermediary between the source and target cultures (Cherouana, 2023). In this sense, translation plays an important role in facilitating intercultural communication and fostering mutual understanding among people from different cultural backgrounds (Riyanto & Aryanto, 2025).

Since language and culture are closely related, many texts contain expressions that are deeply rooted in a particular cultural context. In translation studies, these expressions are usually called culture-specific items (Aixela, 1996; Nord, 1997). These elements are closely related to the culture in which they emerged, and are often a challenge for translators because the language in which they are transmitted may not contain expressions equivalent to them (Nikolić, 2021; David Katan, 2004). For this reason, many studies have looked at the strategies used by translators in translating these elements, as well as the cultural gaps that may arise during the translation process.

Elements of culture can be classified into several categories. One of the most commonly used classifications in translation studies is the classification proposed by researcher Peter Newmark, where he divided cultural elements into five categories: the natural environment, material culture, social culture, organizations and customs, and gestures and behavioral habits. This classification has been widely adopted and further developed in translation studies, where cultural elements are understood to encompass various domains such as material culture, social practices, and culturally bound activities (Espindola & Vasconcellos, 2006; Chung-ling, 2010; Fitriyantisya & Munandar, 2021). In this classification, material culture refers to tangible objects such as food, clothing, houses, and everyday tools that reflect daily life in a particular society (Newmark, 1988).

Orhan Pamuk's *İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir* (2003), translated into English by Maureen Freely as *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2006), is an important example of the study of translating elements of material culture. The book is a memoir that is closely related to the city of Istanbul and its architectural and sensory details, where the city itself functions as a space of memory and cultural representation (Ertürk, 2021). The narrative includes many references to Ottoman buildings, traditional foods, and historic waterways, as well as various objects from everyday life that carry special cultural connotations for the Turkish reader. These everyday objects and urban elements can be understood as carriers of cultural meaning that contribute to the construction of identity and memory within the text (Narayan, 2024). These elements can also be seen as part of the cultural capital of the source text, as literary translation plays a crucial role in transmitting cultural values and representations from one culture to another (Bîrsanu, 2019). Therefore, it can be said that the text contains a large number of elements specific to culture, especially those related to material culture such as Ottoman architecture, traditional foods, and some aspects of everyday life. When translating this text into English, the translator is faced with the challenge of how to convey this cultural world to a reader who may not be familiar with the details of Turkish culture. The translator's decisions in this context also reflect broader theoretical trends regarding how different cultures are represented in literary translation, particularly in shaping the image of Istanbul for international readers within the framework of world literature (Arslan, 2020).

Several previous studies have addressed the translation of culturally specific elements in literary texts, highlighting the challenges associated with the transfer of culturally relevant expressions from one language to another. For example, Şener (2024) analyzed the specific elements of culture in the translation of Yusuf Attigan's *Anayurt Oteli* novel, and explained that elements that reflect local culture, such as places and social practices, require accurate translation strategies to maintain their cultural meaning. Similarly, Gurova (2023) studied elements of culture in the Turkish translation of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, and emphasized that translators often use different strategies to strike a balance between preserving the cultural character of the original text and the readability of the target language. Sümbül (2021) also addressed the translation of cultural cues in the Turkish translation of Macbeth's play of Shakespeare, and showed that expressions associated with a particular culture may present difficulties for translators because they are

closely related to the culture of the original text. Although these studies have provided important insights into the translation of elements of culture, interest in translating elements of material culture in Turkish literary works is still relatively limited, especially in Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Memories and the City*. Therefore, there is a need for studies that examine how elements of material culture are represented and translated from Turkish into English in this work.

Therefore, this research aims to analyze the translation of material culture items in the memoir *Istanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir* by Orhan Pamuk. The research focuses on identifying the elements of material culture in the original Turkish text, and then studying how to translate them into English. By analyzing the translation strategies used in the transmission of these culture-related elements, the research seeks to provide a better understanding of the challenges facing the transfer of material culture elements from Turkish to English in literary translation.

Based on the foregoing considerations, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What categories of material culture items are present in Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir*, and how are they distributed across the text?
2. What translation procedures does Maureen Freely employ in rendering these material culture items from Turkish into English, and what implications do these choices carry for the cross-cultural representation of Turkish cultural identity?

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive mixed-methods research design combining qualitative textual analysis and quantitative frequency analysis. This design was selected because the study aims not only to identify and interpret material culture-specific items in Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir*, but also to measure how frequently particular categories and translation procedures occur in the English translation, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*. The qualitative component allowed the researcher to examine the cultural meanings of the selected items and interpret how they were transferred from Turkish into English. Meanwhile, the quantitative component enabled the researcher to calculate the frequency and percentage of each material culture category and translation procedure.

The mixed-methods design is suitable for addressing the research questions because the first research question requires both identification and classification of material culture items, while the second research question requires analysis of the translation procedures used by Maureen Freely and interpretation of their implications for the cross-cultural representation of Turkish cultural identity. Therefore, this design provides a more complete understanding of the data than a purely qualitative or purely quantitative approach. Qualitative analysis explains the cultural significance of items such as houses, food, transport, and clothing, while quantitative analysis shows the dominant patterns in the translation procedures, such as literal translation, borrowing, modulation, and equivalence.

Data Sources

The primary data sources of this study were Orhan Pamuk's Turkish memoir *Istanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir* (2003) and its English translation, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, translated by Maureen Freely (2006). The source text was used to identify material culture-specific items, while the target text was used to examine how these items were rendered into English. The unit of analysis was each Turkish material culture item and its corresponding English translation. The data consisted of 50 purposively selected material culture items. The selection criteria were as follows: first, the item had to appear in the

Turkish source text; second, it had to belong to Newmark's category of material culture, including houses and towns, food and drink, transport, or clothing; third, the item had to have a corresponding translation in the English version; and fourth, the item had to carry cultural meaning related to Turkish daily life, Ottoman heritage, Istanbul's urban landscape, traditional food, clothing, or transportation. Items that did not represent material culture or did not carry culture-specific meaning were excluded from the data.

Since this study is a textual translation study and does not involve human participants, demographic information such as age, gender, educational background, or social status is not applicable. Instead, the relevant contextual information concerns the texts themselves: the source language is Turkish, the target language is English, the genre is literary memoir, the cultural setting is Istanbul, and the focus is on material culture-specific items. The final corpus included four categories of material culture: houses and towns, food and drink, transport, and clothing.

Research Instruments

The main research instrument used in this study was a data analysis sheet designed to record, classify, and analyze the material culture-specific items found in the source and target texts. The instrument was developed in the form of an Excel table to organize the data systematically. The table included several columns: item number, Turkish source-text item, English target-text rendering, page number in the source text, page number in the target text, context of occurrence, material culture category, translation procedure, and analytical notes.

The instrument was adapted from two theoretical frameworks. Newmark's classification of culture-specific items was used to categorize the material culture items, particularly those related to houses and towns, food and drink, transport, and clothing. Vinay and Darbelnet's taxonomy of translation procedures was used to identify the procedures applied in translating the items from Turkish into English, including literal translation, borrowing, modulation, equivalence, adaptation, generalization, loss, and explicitation.

To ensure validity, the categories and procedures used in the instrument were based on established theories in translation studies. Each item was checked against the definitions of material culture proposed by Newmark and the translation procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet. The researcher also examined the surrounding textual context to avoid classifying items only on the basis of isolated words. In cases where an item could belong to more than one category or procedure, the researcher considered the dominant function of the item in context. To ensure reliability, the coding process followed consistent criteria for identifying, classifying, and analyzing each item. The researcher first read the source and target texts carefully, then recorded the relevant items in the data sheet, and finally reviewed the classifications to check for consistency. Rechecking the coded data helped reduce errors and ensured that similar items were treated in the same way throughout the analysis. When necessary, dictionaries, previous studies, and theoretical definitions were consulted to support the classification and interpretation of the data.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through both qualitative and quantitative procedures. The analysis began with a close reading of the Turkish source text and the English target text. During this stage, material culture-specific items were identified in the Turkish text and matched with their English translations. Each item was then entered into the data analysis sheet together with its context and page reference. After the items were collected, they were classified according to Newmark's material culture categories. The categories used in this study were houses and towns, food and drink, transport, and clothing. This stage addressed the first research question by showing what types of material culture items

appeared in the text and how they were distributed. The number of items in each category was counted, and the percentage was calculated using the percentage formula.

The next stage involved analyzing the translation procedures used to render the Turkish items into English. Each source-text item was compared with its target-text equivalent and coded according to Vinay and Darbelnet's translation procedures. The procedures identified in the data included literal translation, borrowing, modulation, equivalence, adaptation, generalization, loss, and explicitation. The frequency and percentage of each procedure were then calculated to determine the dominant translation tendencies. The qualitative analysis focused on selected examples from each category and procedure. These examples were examined to explain how the translator preserved, modified, generalized, or clarified the cultural meanings of the original Turkish items. The analysis also considered the implications of the translator's choices for the representation of Turkish cultural identity in English. In this way, the data analysis combined numerical findings with interpretive discussion, allowing the study to explain both the distribution of material culture items and the cultural effects of the translation procedures used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 50 material culture items were found in Orhan Pamuk's *İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir*. These items represent different aspects of Turkish culture and the urban environment of Istanbul. The identified elements include references to traditional food and drinks, clothing, means of transport, as well as various types of houses, buildings, and Ottoman-style elements that form part of the city's cultural landscape. The analysis focuses on how these material culture items were rendered in the English translation and the translation procedures used to transfer their meanings from Turkish into English. The results provide an overview of the ways culture-bound expressions related to material life are represented in translation.

Identification of Material Culture Items

Table 1. Percentage of Material Culture Items in Orhan Pamuk's *İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir*

No	Material Culture Category	Number of Items	Percentage
1	Houses & towns	36	72
2	Food	8	16
3	Transport	5	10
4	Clothes	1	2
Total number of Material Culture		50	100

Table 1 shows that the majority of material culture items identified in the selected data fall under buildings and places, representing 72% of the total data. This is followed by food and drink items, are the second most prevalent type, making up 16% of the data. While transportation-related terms occur less frequently, accounting for 10%. The least common category of material culture items in the selected data is clothing, representing only 2% of the data, respectively.

Categories of Material Culture Items

The classification system proposed by Newmark (1988) for Culture-Specific Items (CSIs) remains one of the most widely adopted theoretical frameworks in translation studies, enabling researchers to identify source-culture-bound elements and analyze the strategies employed in rendering them into the target language. The findings of the present study intersect with several previous studies that have utilized this taxonomy in analyzing cultural elements within literary texts. For instance, Şener's study examined the cultural elements in Yusuf Atılgan's *Anayurt Oteli*, identifying 47 culture-specific items in the source text based on Newmark's categories, and subsequently analyzing their translation

strategies using Eirlys E. Davies's model. In comparison, the current study identified 50 material cultural elements within the examined text, with buildings and locations constituting the largest proportion of these items. This variation reflects the nature of the literary text under investigation and the cultural context to which it belongs, as certain categories of cultural elements may become more prominent than others depending on the spatial and social environment represented in the text.

The findings of the present study also intersect with KULELİ's study, which analyzed cultural elements in Orhan Kemal's *Baba Evi*. The researcher identified 194 culture-specific items in the source text, comprising 31 proper nouns and 163 items classified according to Newmark's categories. This variation in the number of cultural elements across different studies suggests that the identification of such items depends significantly on the nature and length of the literary text, in addition to the researcher's methodology in identifying cultural elements within the text.

Houses

Houses constitute the most prominent category among the material cultural items identified in this study, accounting for 72% of the total items documented. This prominence likely reflects the deep significance of homes, buildings, and Ottoman architecture within Turkish culture. Turkey is renowned for its historic cities and distinctive architecture, with Istanbul standing out as a particularly ancient and historically rich city, celebrated for its unique architectural character and the diversity of its neighborhoods and landmarks. Consequently, the houses and architecture of Istanbul have come to function as significant cultural symbols, laden with historical and cultural connotations.

As Peter Newmark (1988, pp. 97–98) notes, certain names associated with places or buildings are often left in their original language in translation due to their close ties to a specific culture. The findings of this study align with this observation; it is noticeable that many place and building names appearing in Orhan Pamuk's *İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir* have been transferred into the target language without direct translation. This is primarily attributable to the absence of precise semantic equivalents for them in the target language.

In this context, through the text, the reader becomes acquainted with Istanbul neighborhoods such as Nişantaşı and Cihangir, in addition to several famous landmarks like Galata Köprüsü, Tophane Çeşmesi, and Kızkulesi, all well-known historical sites in the city. The text also describes certain styles of Ottoman architecture, such as taş konak, alongside a number of traditional objects and ornaments, including enfiye kutuları, buhurdanlar, and sedef kakmalı rahleler. This detailed representation helps to highlight the cultural and material dimension of Istanbul within the narrative.

TUR: “..ve hemen kalabalık sokaklara dalmak ya da bir kış günü şehrin kalbi Galata Köprüsü’ne çıkıp kalabalıkların burada nasıl hep rengi farkedilmeyen,..” p.25

ENG: “..if it’s winter, every man on the Galata Bridge will be wearing the same pale..”p.60

The previous example includes an element of material culture, specifically a cultural reference to a well-known architectural landmark in Istanbul “Galata Köprüsü”. This bridge is among the most famous landmarks of the city and constitutes a significant part of Istanbul's urban landscape. In the English translation, the translator rendered “Galata Köprüsü” as “Galata Bridge” using literal translation; the name Galata was retained as is, while the word köprü was translated into its English equivalent, bridge. This approach allows the target language reader to understand the meaning of the place while simultaneously preserving its cultural reference linked to the city of Istanbul. By retaining the name Galata, the translator maintains the cultural specificity of the original text, enabling the foreign reader to become acquainted with an authentic element of Turkish

culture. This strategy also contributes to preserving the cultural character of the text while rendering it comprehensible to the target language reader.

Food

Food constitutes the second most frequent subcategory among the material culture elements identified in the Turkish text, accounting for 16% of the total material cultural items. The presence of food in Turkish literary narrative reflects a significant aspect of daily life and social culture, as food extends beyond being a mere basic human necessity to function as a cultural symbol embodying the customs, traditions, and lifestyles within a society. As Peter Newmark (1988, pp. 97–98) indicates, culture-specific items related to food and drink are frequently employed in texts as a means of representing culture and conveying its distinctiveness to the reader. In this context, the author includes in his work multiple references to traditional Turkish foods and beverages, such as simit, cızbız köfte, midye tava, and ayran, all of which are associated with daily life in Turkish society. These references assist the reader in forming a clearer picture of Turkish culture, while also contributing to conveying the atmosphere of life in Istanbul and presenting aspects of its culinary traditions as an integral part of the society's material culture.

TUR: “..üç ayaklı sehpasında simit satan satıcıyı, bir süre sonra unuttuğum pek çok küçük ayrıntıyı yeniden keşfetmekten çok hoşlanırım.” p.38

ENG: “..and his three-legged table is the same as the three-legged tables some simit sellers still use today.”p.104

The previous example refers to the term simit, a traditional Turkish street bread coated with sesame seeds, which stands as one of the most renowned foods associated with daily life in Istanbul. In the English translation, the translator retained the material cultural items simit as it appears in the source text without rendering it into a direct equivalent in the target language, thereby employing the strategy of borrowing. This approach was adopted to preserve the specific cultural connotation attached to this item. Through the use of this strategy, the translator facilitated the transmission of the scene's local character to the foreign reader while maintaining the distinctive cultural element of the original text.

Transport

Transportation ranks third after houses and food, representing 10% of the total cultural elements identified in the Turkish text. Means of transportation constitute a significant aspect of daily life in Turkish culture, particularly those associated with the Bosphorus, given its distinctive place in Turkey and in the city of Istanbul specifically. The author refers in his work to certain traditional modes of transportation that were in use during the time periods covered in the text, such as at arabaları, in addition to some forms of transport linked to the Bosphorus, including Boğaz vapurları. He also mentions various means of public transportation in Istanbul, such as tramvay and dolmuş, which are closely tied to daily life in Turkish society, particularly in the city of Istanbul. These references contribute to familiarizing the reader with the nature of transportation in a major historic city like Istanbul, while also reflecting aspects of its urban life.

TUR: “Babaannemle karşılıklı otururken, perdeler arasından odanın içine tıpkı geceleri Boğaz vapurlarının meraklı projektör ışıkları gibi vuran güneş ışığına gözlerimi dikip kirpiklerimi kırıştırırsam,..”p.16

ENG: “..just like searchlights on the ships passing through the Bosphorus at night..”p.39

The previous example refers to the Bosphorus ferries (Boğaz vapurları), which constitute an element of the material culture embedded in daily life in Istanbul. In the

English translation, the translator employed a modulation technique, shifting the mode of expression to clarify the image for the foreign reader rather than opting for a direct literal translation. This approach preserved the original meaning of the text while rendering the image more vivid and fluid for the English recipient. Instead of referring merely to "ferries," the expression came to describe "the ships passing through the Bosphorus at night like beams of searchlights," thereby conveying the sensory impression of the scene as experienced by the original Turkish reader.

Clothing

Clothing appears in the Turkish text among the least frequent categories within material culture, representing only 2% of the total items. Nevertheless, these references reflect significant aspects of Turkish culture, as they are associated with traditional attire and the social customs related to clothing during specific historical periods. The author refers in his work to certain traditional garments such as fes (the Ottoman fez) and kavuk (the traditional turban), which function as powerful cultural symbols carrying historical and social connotations within Turkish society. Despite their limited frequency, these references assist the reader in forming a precise image of traditional clothing in Istanbul and understanding its cultural significance, while also contributing to conveying the historical and social character of the city.

TUR: “..kolları kırmızı çuhadan "bir nevi asker ceketi giymiş", kırmızı fesli..”p.71

ENG: “..when “all of a sudden” the door new open and a tall man in a red fez wearing..”p.178

This sentence describes traditional Turkish clothing from that historical period, particularly the red fez (fes) worn with military attire. In the English translation, the translator retained the material cultural element fes as it appears in the source text, employing the strategy of borrowing. This approach was adopted to preserve the cultural connotation associated with Ottoman attire and Turkish history.

Translation procedures of Material Culture Items from Turkish into English

This section explains the occurrence and percentage of translation procedures used in translating each category of Material Culture Items from ST in the Turkish language to TT in the English language.

Table 2. Translation procedures percentage of Material Culture Items in ST to TT

Translation procedure	Occurrence	Percentage
Literal Translation	16	32%
Borrowing	14	28%
Modulation	8	16%
Equivalence	5	10%
Adaptation	3	6%
Generalization	2	4%
Loss	1	2%
Explicitation	1	2%
Calque	0	0
Transposition	0	0
Amplification	0	0
Economy	0	0
False Friend	0	0
Compensation	0	0
Total	50	100%

In the English translation, literal translation appears to be the most frequently used translation procedure, occurring 16 times (32%) of the total procedures. This indicates that

the translator often relied on directly rendering the lexical meaning of the source text into the target language. Such a strategy is commonly used when the cultural item in the source language can be clearly understood in the target language without major structural or cultural modification.

The second most common procedure is borrowing, which occurs 14 times (28%). This procedure involves transferring the original term from Turkish into English without translation. The frequent use of borrowing suggests that the translator preferred to preserve certain culture-bound expressions, particularly proper names and culturally specific objects, in order to maintain the original cultural flavor of the source text. Another noticeable procedure is modulation, which appears 8 times (16%) in the data. Modulation involves changing the perspective or semantic structure of the expression while preserving its meaning. This strategy may have been used when a direct translation sounded unnatural in English or when a slight shift in expression was necessary to produce a more natural and readable translation.

Other procedures occur less frequently, including equivalence with 5 occurrences (10%), adaptation with 3 occurrences (6%), and generalization with 2 occurrences (4%). In addition, loss and explicitation each appear once (2%) in the data. These results show that while several translation procedures were employed, the translator primarily relied on literal translation and borrowing when rendering material culture items from Turkish into English.

The results of this study indicate that literal translation came in first place as the most used strategy in translating special cultural elements into English, followed by the borrowing strategy as the second most used technique. This result is partly in contrast to the findings of the Khairunisa (2022) study, which dealt with the translation of cultural words, as it showed that borrowing is the most used strategy, followed by literal translation and then partial literal translation (*calque*). This study was based on the framework of Peter Newmark, along with the translation procedures provided by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), which emphasized the tendency of the translator to use borrowing to preserve the cultural specificity of certain lexical elements. In contrast, the results of the present study show a greater reliance on literal translation, with borrowing being used as a second option when needed. This difference can be explained by the nature of the data and the degree of cultural and linguistic affinity between the source language and the target language. Although previous studies indicate noting that indirect translation techniques are the most common in literary translation (Mathuvanthi, 2022), the results of this study show a greater reliance on direct strategies.

Literal Translation

Literal translation, commonly known as word-for-word translation, transpires when a source language (SL) word or phrase is converted into a target language (TL) word or phrase, prioritizing fidelity over stylistic considerations while adhering to the syntactic conventions of the TL. These modifications guarantee that the translation is accurate and idiomatic, taking into account word order, function words, and other linguistic components. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) characterize this method as the direct transference of a source language text into a grammatically.

The findings of the current study show that literal translation is the predominant technique, utilized 16 times, accounting for 32% of the total data. The researcher thinks that the high frequency of this technique can be related to the features of cultural elements analyzed in the study, primarily emphasizing material culture such as housing, food, transportation, and clothing. These elements refer to practical aspects of daily life, which makes them comparatively simpler to translate directly from the source language to the target language than more abstract cultural elements. Previous studies found that material

culture frequently represents a significant element of cultural lexicon in literary works (Nurjana & Nurlaila, 2024). The following examples explain the use of literal translation in conveying social elements within the text.

TUR: “..üzeri parfüm şişeleri, pudralıklar, rujlar, ojeler, kolonyalar, gül suyu ve badem yağlarıyla dolu tuvalet masasına oturur,..” p.40

ENG: “I would sit at her dressing table and fiddle with her perfume bottles, lipsticks, fingernail polish, colognes, rose water, and almond oils.”p.108

Borrowing

Borrowing emerged as the second most frequently used translation technique in the English translation, accounting for 28% of the data. This technique was mainly employed to preserve culture-specific items related to material culture, such as traditional foods, clothing, housing, and means of transportation. By retaining the original term in the target text, the translator is able to maintain the cultural identity of the source text, while also allowing target language readers to become familiar with the cultural specificity of the original context

TUR: “Bu kalabalık yemekler, şakalaşmalar, amcamın rakı ya da votka..” p.1

ENG: “(under the innuence of vodka or rakı)”p.28

The results of this study indicate that literal translation and borrowing are two of the most commonly used techniques in translating material culture-specific items in İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir. Literal translation is used to facilitate the transmission of meaning in a clear and direct way. In contrast, borrowing is used to preserve the original cultural reference, allowing the foreign reader to learn about the culture of the source text. In addition, the predominance of the use of these two strategies reflects the translator's attempt to strike a balance between preserving cultural authenticity and ensuring ease of use understanding the reader. This is consistent with previous studies in the translation of literary texts, which emphasize the importance of balancing the preservation of culture and the conveyance of meaning at the same time, as in the study that dealt with cultural transmission in the novel *A Passage to India* (Faizullah et al., 2024). However, another study suggests that although the literal translation is clear, it may lead to the loss of some of the cultural and stylistic dimensions of the original text (Suprayetno et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study refers to the analysis of the translation of elements of material culture in the book *İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir* by Orhan Pamuk. 50 specific cultural elements related to material culture were identified in the original Turkish text, and then analyzed how they were translated in the English version translated by Maureen Freely. The study relied on the classification of cultural elements presented by Peter Newmark, as well as the translation procedures developed by Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, with the aim of finding out how these cultural elements were transferred into the English language. The results of the analysis show that the translator used several translation procedures to convey the cultural connotations of the original elements while maintaining the clarity and readability of the text for the English reader.

The results indicate that several translation procedures were used to convey elements of material culture in the book *İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir* by Orhan Pamuk. The most commonly used of these measures were literal translation at 32% and borrowing at 28%. Other measures such as 16% modification and parity of 10% have also appeared in a number of examples. The frequent use of these measures suggests that the translator Maureen Freely tried to preserve the cultural references found in the original Turkish text,

while at the same time ensuring that the translated text was clear and easy to understand for the English reader.

The translation techniques that emerged in this study reflect the way the translator handled the culturally relevant elements of the original text. The frequent use of literal translation and borrowing refers to an attempt to preserve the cultural specificity of the Turkish text while maintaining the readability of the text in the target language. The use of techniques such as modification and parity also indicates an attempt to adapt some expressions when direct transmission is not sufficient. These choices illustrate the challenges that translators face when dealing with elements. It highlights the need to strike a balance between the transmission of the original culture and ensuring the clarity of the translated text in intercultural literary translation.

The results of this study are largely consistent with the results of previous studies that have dealt with the translation of special cultural elements. Several studies have indicated that translators often rely on procedures such as literal translation and borrowing when dealing with culturally related expressions in literary texts. Similarly, the results of this study showed that these procedures were frequently used in translating elements of material culture in the book *Istanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir* by Orhan Pamuk. This similarity suggests that translators tend to preserve the cultural elements of the original text while ensuring that the translated text is clear and understandable to the reader in the target language.

This study focuses on the translation of elements of material culture in the English version of the book *Istanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir* by Orhan Pamuk. Future studies can expand the scope of analysis by examining other categories of special cultural elements or by comparing translations of Turkish literary works into different languages. These studies will contribute to a broader understanding of how cultural elements are transmitted between languages and cultures in literary translation.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that translators dealing with the material cultural items in literary texts adopt a flexible approach. Although literal translation has been the most commonly used strategy in translating the specific material cultural elements contained in *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, it should be used with caution so as not to lead to a loss of cultural meaning. Borrowing can be used as a suitable alternative when there is no direct exchange for the cultural element in the target language. This study was limited to the material cultural items of a single literary work, so future studies could look at other types of cultural elements or different literary texts, to check whether the same translation patterns appear in diverse contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This project/article has been funded with the support of the Kemitraan Negara Berkembang (KNB) Scholarship from the Ministry of Higher Education, Sciences, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia. This publication reflects the view only of the author, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Sciences, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

REFERENCES

- Aixelá, J. F. (1996). Culture-specific items in translation. In R. Álvarez & M. C.-Á. Vidal (Eds.), *Translation, power, subversion* (pp. 52–78). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781800417915-005>

- Arslan, C. C. (2020). Writing as if in the center: World literature and Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Memories and the City*. *International Journal of Turkish Academic Studies (TURAS)*, 1(1), 18–33.
- Bîrsanu, R. (2019). Translating cultural capital: Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul* in Romanian. *The Annals of Ovidius University of Constanța, Philology Series*, 30(2), 238–251.
- Cao, J., & Zhao, B. (2022). Research on cross-language cultural communication and cross-cultural language communication in the era of artificial intelligence. *Journal of Northwestern Polytechnical University (Social Science Edition)*, 82–89.
- Cherouana, R. (2023). The role of a translator as a cross-cultural mediator. *AL-Lisaniyyat*, 29(2), 242–259. <https://doi.org/10.61850/allj.v29i2.596>
- Chung-ling, S. (2010). Ideological interference in translation: Strategies of translating cultural references. *Translation Journal*, 14(3). <https://translationjournal.net/journal/53culture.htm>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Ertürk, Ş. D. (2021). Remediating lost memories of the city through translation: Istanbul as a space of remembering. In S.-A. Harding & O. Carbonell Cortés (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation and the city* (pp. 146–158). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429436468-12>
- Espindola, E., & Vasconcellos, M. L. (2006). Two facets in the subtitling process: Foreignisation and/or domestication procedures in unequal cultural encounters. *Fragmentos*, 30, 43–66. <https://doi.org/10.5007/fragmentos.v30i0.8205>
- Faizullah, A., Arshad, A., & Khizar, S. (2024). Cultural and linguistic transfer in *A Passage to India*: A translation analysis through Vinay and Darbelnet's model. *Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review*, 2(4), 628–640.
- Fitriyantisya, H., & Munandar, A. (2021). Postcolonial translation studies: Foreignization and domestication of culture-specific items in *Of Mice and Men*'s Indonesian translated versions. *Rubikon: Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 8(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.22146/rubikon.v8i1.65478>
- Gürova, E. (2023). An analysis of culture-specific items in the Turkish translation of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* by Halide Edip Adivar and Vahit Turhan. *İstanbul Üniversitesi Çeviribilim Dergisi / Istanbul University Journal of Translation Studies*, 19(19), 164–175. <https://doi.org/10.26650/ijuts.2023.1320638>
- Katan, D. (2004). *Translating cultures* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315759692>
- Khairunisa, F. (2022). *A translation method analysis of untranslatable cultural words in the Indonesian translation of Nujood Ali and Delphine Minoui's I Am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced* [Thesis, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University].
- Khakim, M., Bharati, D., & Mujiyanto, Y. (2019). The use of cultural transposition for rendering culture-specific items in English-to-Indonesian translation of Brown's *Inferno*. *English Education Journal*, 9(2), 234–243. <https://doi.org/10.15294/eej.v9i2.29869>
- Kuleli, M. (2020). Yazınsal metinlerde kültüre özgü öğeler ve “yabancılaştırma” ve “yerleştirme” stratejileri ile çevirileri. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 7, 617–653.
- Larson, M. L. (1984). *Meaning-based translation: A guide to cross-language equivalence*. University Press of America.
- Mathuvanthi, A. (2022). Techniques and strategies used in literary texts: A study based on Vinay and Darbelnet's procedures of translation. *Proceedings of the 9th International*

- Symposium on Socio-Economic Development Through Arabic and Islamic Studies*, 181–192. <http://ir.lib.seu.ac.lk/handle/123456789/6489>
- Narayan, P. (2024). *Pamuk's Istanbul: The self and the city* (1st ed.). Routledge India.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of translation*. Prentice Hall.
- Nikolić, K. (2021). Pedersen, J. (2011). *Subtitling norms for television: An extrapolation focussing on extralinguistic cultural references*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 240 p. *Linguistica Antverpiensia, New Series – Themes in Translation Studies*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.52034/lanstts.v11i.309>
- Nord, C. (1997). *Translating as a purposeful activity: Functionalist approaches explained* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315760506>
- Nurjana, M., & Nurlaila, N. (2024). Indonesian translation of cultural words in “The Book of Lost Things.” *Anaphora: Journal of Language, Literary, and Cultural Studies*, 7(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.30996/anaphora.v7i1.7102>
- Pamuk, O. (2003). *İstanbul: Hatıralar ve şehir*. Yapı Kredi Yayınları.
- Pamuk, O. (2006). *Istanbul: Memories and the city* (M. Freely, Trans.). Vintage International/Vintage Books.
- Riyanto, F. H., & Aryanto, M. (2025). Translation strategies and cross-cultural communication: A study of Indonesian-English text adaptations. *Multilingual and Applied Linguistics*, 1(1).
- Şener, Ö. F. (2024). Analysis upon the town culture and the culture-specific items in the translation of Yusuf Atilgan's *Anayurt Oteli*. *Joinesp*, 2(82173), 1–21.
- Sümbül, F. (2021). Translation of culture-specific references in the Turkish translation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. *LOTUS International Journal of Language and Translation Studies*, 1(2), 16–28.
- Suprayetno, E., Ajmal, M. U., & Khan, M. (2024). A comparative analysis of “Jawab e Shikwa”: A Vinay and Darbelnet model-based examination of two English translations. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 3(2), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.52622/joal.v3i2.1711>
- Zhang, Y., & Amirdabbaghian, A. (2025). Translation of Chinese culture-specific items to English in *Romance on the Farm*. *Comparative Linguistics, Translation and Literary Studies*, 2(2), 66–82. <https://doi.org/10.70036/ctls.v2i2.66>