

Literary Transmission of Cultural Features (CFs) in Bestsellers: A Case Study on *Eat Pray Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert

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Abstract

Elizabeth Gilbert is an award-winning writer who has both fiction and nonfiction books. Her short-story collection *Pilgrims* was a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway award, and her bestseller, *Stern Men*, was a New York Times Notable Book. Her book *The Last American Man*, published in 2002, was a finalist for the National Book Award. Moreover, she is also the author of the New York Times hardcover bestseller *Committed: A Sceptic Makes Peace with Marriage*. In 2008, Time magazine named Gilbert one of the hundred most influential people in the world. This case study aims to descriptively investigate cultural features in literary translations of Elizabeth Gilbert's bestseller, *Eat Pray Love* (2006). The primary objective of this study is to contribute to the understanding of cultural features (CFs) of the bestsellers. The different categorizations of translation strategies were employed using these features in the source material: domestication and foreignization strategies of Javier Franco Aixelá (1996) were used within the context of Lawrence Venuti (1995), skopos theory of Hans Vermeer (2000). This study also aims to underline the shifting effects of translation strategies on the transmission of the source text (ST) through the target text (TT) in the case of Turkish English translation of CFs in the bestsellers. The main question of the study is whether using different translation strategies in addressing CFs affects the meaning of the ST while delivering it through the TT or not. In this study, the stylistic aspect was identified by focusing on a bestseller. It was determined that an applied cultural substitution strategy inevitably has a direction toward the target culture's reader. The findings were further discussed, examined, and categorized within the framework of domestication and foreignization. In conclusion, several recommendations regarding the translation of bestselling books were proposed, emphasizing that the translations of bestselling books as popular fiction will constitute a significant and productive field of study for translation scholars in the future.

Keywords: literary transmission, source text (ST), target text (TT), cultural features (CFs), *Eat Pray Love*

En Çok Satanlarda Kültürel Özelliklerin Edebi Aktarımı: *Ye Dua Et Sev* Örneği

Öz

Elizabeth Gilbert hem kurgu hem de kurgu dışı alanlarda ödüllü bir yazardır. Kısa öykü derlemesi *Pilgrims* PEN/Hemingway ödülü için finalist olmuş, çok satan romanı *Stern Men* ise New York Times'ın dikkat çeken kitapları arasında yer almıştır. 2002 yılında yayımlanan *The Last*

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American Man adlı kitabı Ulusal Kitap Ödülü finalist olmuştur. Son olarak New York Times'ın en çok satan ciltli kitabı *Committed: A Sceptic Makes Peace with Marriage*'ın yazarıdır. Time dergisi, 2008 yılında Gilbert'i dünyanın en etkili yüz kişisinden biri olarak seçmiştir. Bu örnek incelemesi, Elizabeth Gilbert'in en çok satan kitabı *Eat Pray Love*'ın (2006) edebi çevirilerindeki kültürel özellikleri betimleyici bir şekilde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, çok satan kitaplardaki kültürel özelliklerin anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmaktır. Kaynak metinde bu özellikler kullanılarak çoklu bir yöntem yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır: Javier Franco Axiela (1996), ve Lawrence Venuti'nin (1995) yerileştirme ve yabancılaştırma stratejileri, Hans Vermeer'in (2000) skopos kuramı kapsamında kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda, çok satan kitaplardaki kültürel özelliklerin Türkçe-İngilizce çevirisi örneğinde, çeviri stratejilerinin kaynak metindeki anlamın hedef dile aktarılmasında değişen etkilere dikkat çekmeye çalışmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel sorusu, kültüre özgü öğeler aktarırken farklı çeviri stratejileri kullanmanın anlamı iletmede etkili olup olmadığıdır. Bu çalışmada çok satan bir kitaba odaklanılarak biçimsel boyut belirtilmiştir. Uygulanan kültürel ikame stratejisinin kültürel özelliklerin aktarımında zorunlu olarak hedef kültür okuyucusuna yönelik bir yaklaşım olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu stratejiler ayrıca, yerileştirme ve yabancılaştırma çerçevesinde tartışılmış, incelenmiş ve kategorize edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, çok satan kitapların çevirisine dair bazı önerilerde bulunulmuş ve popüler kurgu olarak çok satan kitapların çevirilerinin gelecekte çeviribilimciler için son derece önemli ve verimli bir çalışma alanı oluşturacağı vurgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: yazınsal aktarım, kaynak metin, hedef metin, kültürel özellikler, çok satan *Ye Dua Et Sev*

INTRODUCTION

Language and culture are interconnected in various ways. It might be claimed that the latter only exists with the first. Besides that, languages usually develop within the boundaries of a culture, and things that start in one culture but become essential in another only get names after they cross cultural boundaries and become relevant to that society. Hence, cultural differences can be challenging to translate because there are sometimes no suitable equivalents in the target language and culture.

Nevertheless, the word "cultural-specific items" (CFIs), by definition, refers to culture-specific features such as locality, folklore, and social life. These features refer to things intertwined with culture, such as geography, sociolinguistics, history, etc. The definition of "cultural features" is associated with a specific community and used to express a cultural concept in this community. There is a strong relationship between cultural features (CFs) and the problem of translating literary texts. Translation becomes significantly difficult in the case of a cultural distance between the source culture and the target culture.

Newmark (1988) advocates that literary language differs from speeches and scientific language because it has two main characteristics. These characteristics include being allegorical and being directed to a narrow readership. These two characteristics are acquired because of the difference between literary and daily language. There is a major difference between literary and

daily languages. Literary language reflects the cultural heritage and traditions of the society of literary work and the language of literary language is associated with culture as well.

This study examines the CFs in Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love* and its translations into Turkish by Gamze Bulut and Zeynep Kumruluoğlu. In this regard, the primary aim of this article is to analyse the methods in the translation of CFs in bestseller Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love* and, how English culture is reflected in Turkish translation of it. The results of this investigation will be analysed according to Venuti, and Aixelá's translation approaches in terms of both general and specific strategies.

The following sections of this article will introduce some fundamental principles, difficulties, and technical aspects of literary transmission. This article starts with the definition of cultural features, an examination of CFs, and a discussion of how they present a challenge for translation. Following that, some background information on defining things that are specific to a culture and incorporating them into this classification is addressed, the state of various languages and cultures, as well as the effect that translation has on both, will be explored, along with the translation tactics of cultural features. After that, the research material and techniques will be examined. Then, the analysis will be carried out, beginning with the modal distribution of data, continuing with the semantic categories, and finally addressing the translation strategies.

One of the main objectives and outcomes of translation is to help people become more sensitive to other cultures. Since the beginning of translation, one of the hardest things to do has been to find a way to say something in the target language that matches the cultural meaning of the source text. Many scholars believe that the lack of vocabulary in the target language or the translator's lack of cultural and encyclopaedic knowledge is responsible for this challenge (Leppihalme 2011, p.127).

This study focuses on enlightening the readers as to the literary aspects of transferring cultural features. Overall, based on these perspectives, the theoretical background for the study entails Javier Aixelá's (1996) classification and strategies for translating CFs supported by Lawrence Venuti's (1998) domestication and foreignization method. This study aims to address the following questions:

1. Which strategies are proposed by analysing the translation process of the CFs in *Eat Pray Love*'s Turkish rendering?
2. Which reasons have led the translators to utilize these strategies in the bestseller?

METHODOLOGY

Scholars such as Newmark (1988), Venuti (1995), Aixelá (1996), Chesterman (1997), Leppihalme (1997), and Davies (2003) proposed some translation methods to clarify the cultural differences. Venuti (1995) addressed the idea of translating literary texts through two processes. These processes are "domestication" and "foreignization". Basically, by adapting foreignization, the translator pays attention to the ST. They try to be as loyal as to the ST; thus, they use some strategies such as literal translation or transliteration. The translator does not pay attention to whether these cultural aspects are clear to the target reader or not. The second choice is "domestication", in which the translator pays attention entirely to the TT and readers. Thus, they use some strategies of translation that make

the cultural aspects of the ST comprehended by the target readers such as normalization or universalization.

Table 1. Categorization of Translation Strategies

Venuti (1995)	Aixelá (1996)
Domestication	Absolute Autonomous Creation Deletion Extra-textual Gloss Intra-textual Gloss Limited Universalization Universalization
Foreignization	Repetition Orthographic Adaptation Linguistic Translation Preservation Synonymy

As such, Venuti (1995), and Aixelá (1996) translation strategies were categorized in the tab above strategies from Aixelá, which are explained below, were chosen. Venuti's domestication and foreignization strategies were adopted as inclusive terms. Nevertheless, Venuti lays emphasis on the dominance of foreignization over domestication, his only aim is that the translator conveys a classification of revision of the foreign text but without concession to the target culture patterns. He asserts that the translator's preference for strategies in the guidance of domestication or foreignization can be examined in the approach he handles on CSIs (Tekalp&Tarakcioğlu 2016).

Aixelá (1996) tries to highlight all the possible strategies for translating CFs in literary texts. He provided the translators with two major categories under which there are many strategies. These strategies are:

A. Conservation Strategies:

1. Repetition: This strategy relies on using the direct equivalence of the word. The translator translates the words of the ST to their equivalences in the TT.

2. Orthographic Adaptation: This strategy is based upon other strategies such as transcription and transliteration. These strategies rely on expressing the original word of the ST using the alphabetic system of the target language.

3. Linguistic (Non-cultural) Translation: This strategy depends on using a denotative very close reference to the cultural word.

4. Extratextual Gloss: This strategy refers to translating the cultural words using any strategy plus adding the explanation of their meaning in a (glossary, footnote, endnote, commentary, etc.)

5. Intratextual Gloss: This strategy is similar to the strategy given above. However, in this one, the translator believes that it is preferable to include the gloss within the text itself (Aixelá 1996, p. 62).

B. Substitution Strategies:

1. Synonymy: This strategy is used when the same cultural word is repeated in the ST; thus, instead of repeating the translation of it in the TT, the translator uses one of its synonyms.

2. Limited Universalization: When the translator thinks that the ST cultural words are farfetched for the target readers, he searches for another word that expresses the same cultural function in the source culture. Moreover, this word should be acceptable and understood by the target readers.

3. Absolute Universalization: This strategy is like the one specified above, but the translator uses this strategy when he cannot find another culturally acceptable expression comprehended by both the target reader and the source language. Thus, he deletes any cultural connotations and uses a neutral word.

4. Naturalization: This strategy allows the translator to omit the cultural source word and involve a cultural target word. By doing so the translator gives the text the color of the target culture. This strategy is not preferable in literary translation because literary texts depend on cultural words. Children's literature is considered an exceptional case allowing for using naturalization (63).

5. Deletion: Although this strategy is not preferable in the idealistic world, translators may omit the source word when they believe that it is too obscure to be understood by the target readers.

6. Autonomous Creation: In this strategy, the translator inserts some target cultural words to reinforce the meaning (64).

Among all the above-mentioned categories, Venuti's (1995) "domestication and foreignization" strategies as an umbrella term, in line with Aixelá's (1996), strategies have been found as the most suitable one to meet the purpose of this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

It was observed that the strategies most frequently used in expressing cultural features in bestsellers include Aixelá's repetition strategy. These strategies are categorized under the conversation method, with Venuti's foreignization strategy maintaining the essence of bestsellers' translations. Aixelá explains these categories in line with Venuti's foreignization strategy, defining them as "extra-textual gloss" and "intra-textual gloss".

In this section, in line with the translators' preferences, the most striking and revealing examples will be selected and analysed. Moreover, as the main character wishes to learn Italian and visits Italy for this purpose, there are so many translations of Italian words in some parts of this bestseller. Gilberts expresses multilinguistic feelings in her bestseller related to this situation with the quotation below:

"I am alone, I am all alone, I am completely alone. Grasping this reality, I let go of my bag, dropped to my knees, and pressed my forehead against the floor. There, I offer up to the universe a fervent prayer of thanks. First in English. Then in Italian. And then just to get the point across in Sanskrit." (Gilbert 2010, p. 10)

In this section of the present study, the cultural features in Gilbert's bestseller *Eat Pray Love* are analysed through detailed commentary on sample Turkish translations by Gamze Bulut and Zeynep Kumruluoğlu. In this context, all specific concepts, individuals, locations, and objects in this bestselling book are conveyed using footnotes at the bottom of the page, explicit explanations within the paragraphs, and italicized expressions in parentheses. The primary reason for this approach is the main character's presence in three distinct countries-Indonesia, India, and Italy. Table 2 below presents these examples in a comprehensible way via Aixelá's conservation and repetition strategies and Venuti's domestication and foreignization strategies within the context of Vermeer's Scopus theory.

Proper names or nouns- (PNs) are explained as "a word or group of words (...) that is the term of a definite person, place, or thing and that generally begins with a centre" (Proper Name, n.d.). They have a meaningful function in the analysis of literary works. In translation studies, it is significant to handle PNs within the frame of CSIs (Tekalp&Tarakcioğlu 2016).

Table 2. Translations of Proper Names and Concepts by Gamze Bulut &Zeynep Kumruluoğlu.

ST (<i>Eat Pray Love</i>)	TT (<i>Ye Dua Et Sev</i>)
Ashrams, japa malas, yogis (2010, p.1)	Aşrams, japa malas, yogis (2006, p. 13)
Penthouse (p.8)	Penthouse (p.21)
Jehovah, Allah, Shiva, Brahma, Vishu or Zeus (p. 15)	Yehova, Allah, Şiva, Brahma yada Zeus (p.27)
The Newyorker (p.20)	The Newyorker (p.33)
Guru (p.32)	Guru (p.44).
Telefonino (p.44)	Telefonino (p.57)
Molte stupido (p.56)	Molte stupido (p. 69)
Gelateria, carpaccio, lampascione (p.73)	Gelateria, carpaccio, lampascione (p.87)
Diligence and Meekness (p.79)	Diligence Meekness (p.93)
Trattoria, bruschette (p.97)	Trattoria, burschette (p.111)
Oy vey (p.129)	Oy vey (p.143)
Kundalini shakti (p.210)	Kundalini shakti (p.229)
Thumbs Up (p.211)	Thumbs Up (p.229)
Seva (p.254)	Seva (p.272)
Turiya (p.260)	Turiya (p.278)

There are so many examples of repetition and orthographic adaptation transmission of CFs in the bestseller as seen in Table 2. For instance, the translation of "ashram" (2010, p.1) as "aşram" (2006, p. 13), "Jehovah" (2010, p.11) as "Yehova" (2006, p. 27) or proper names "The Newyorker, Penthouse" (2006, p.8) or Italian words in original form are the examples of repetition and

orthographic adaptation within the framework of conservative strategy. In addition, using of “diligence and meekness” concepts and “trattoria, bruschetta” (p.97) in SL were displayed with footnotes by translators. This is explained through Davies’ subcategories of conservative strategies such as repetition, intratextual gloss, and orthographic adaptation in line with Venuti’s domestication approach. Furthermore, the term “guru”, as it is used in the SL, represents an example of the repetition strategy. The expression of “Oy vey” (2010, p.129) (2006, p.143), “kundalini shakti” (2010, p. 210; 2006, p.229), “thumps up” (2010, p. 211; 2006, p. 229) “seva” (2010, p.254; 2006, p.272) and “turiya (2010, p. 260; 2006, p. 278) are the examples of repetition and orthographic adaptation and intratextual gloss by the translators’ footnotes, parentheses and explanation in paragraphs.

Additionally, in line with Venuti’s domestication approach, there are many examples of intratextual gloss (additional information within the text) for transmission of CFs in Italian, Indian, and Indonesian by additional information in parentheses since the protagonist travels to different cultures and languages in her inner journey. For instance, she says “sti cazzo,” for strikers (exact translation: «these bastards» or, in a form that we cannot say «I don’t care») (2006, p. 150) is an example of intratextual gloss in conservation strategy within the framework of Venuti’s domestication method as well.

In the poem below, “betwixt and between” are the repetition elements of TL and an example of orthographic adaptation. It is translated as “ne bir ne öteki”, which can be regarded as a conservation strategy.

Table 3. Translations of Poem by Gamze Bulut & Zeynep Kumruluoğlu in *Eat Pray Love*.

ST (<i>Eat Pray Love</i>)	TT (<i>Ye Dua Et Sev</i>)
Elizabeth, betwixt and between Italian phrases and Bali dreams, Elizabeth, between and betwixt, Sometimes as slippery as a fish... (2010, p.272)	Elizabeth, ne biri ne öteki İtalyan deyimleri ve Bali hayalleri Elizabeth, ne öteki ne biri, Bazen kaygan bir balık gibi... (2006, p. 289)

There are so many words translated from Sanskrit and Italian words and expressions with examples because of the journey and memoir of the protagonist. In this regard, footnotes are added to explain the different languages. They are also seen in italics, parentheses, and sometimes with explanations in the paragraph as seen below. This bestseller makes us think about the concepts and the magic of the words as well. These are the examples of extratextual gloss and intratextual gloss under the sub-category of Aixelá’s conversation strategies.

“By the way, I found my word.... A Sanskrit word appeared in the paragraph: ANTEVASIN. It means “one who lives on the border.” In ancient times this was a literal description. It indicated a person who had left the bustling centre of worldly life to go live at the edge of the forest where the spiritual masters dwelled. The antevasin was not one of the villagers anymore a householder with a conventional life. But neither was he yet a transcendent one of those sages who live deep in sight of both worlds, but he looked toward the unknown. He was a scholar...I’ve spent so much time these last year’s

wondering what I'm supposed to be...I'm just a slippery anteversion-between- a student on the ever-shifting border near the wonderful, scary forest of the new (Gilbert 2010, pp.270, 271, 272).

Bu arada sözcüğümü buldum.... ANTEVASIN. "Sınırdaki yaşayan kimse" anlamına geliyor. Eski zamanlarda bu tıpatıp aslına uygun bir tanımdı. Dünyevi hayatın merkezindeki hareketliliği bırakıp ruhani üstatların yaşadığı yerlerde yaşamak üzere orman kıyılarına giden kişiyi belirliyordu. Antevasin artık köylülerden biri değildi, geleneksel hayat süren bir ev sahibi değildi. Ama henüz aşkın biri de değildi; kefedilmemiş ormanların derinliklerinde yaşayan, tam farkındalığa erişmiş bilgilerden değildi. Antevasin ikisinin arasında bir yerde yaşıyordu. Sınırdaki yaşıyordu. İki dünyanın da gözü önünde yaşar ama bilinmeyene doğru bakardı. Ve o bir bilim insanıydı." (Bulut&Kumruluoğlu 2006, pp. 288, 289).

The concept of "antevasin" is transferred as "antevasin" as the example of the "repetition" subcategory. In this context, "bu tıpatıp aslına uygun bir tanımdı" which is an example of an orthographic translation and autonomous creation under the subcategories of conservation and substitution strategies.

There is another example of the repetition strategy "turiya" which is explained via the following quoted passage:

The topic of the retreat, and its goal, is the turiya the elusive fourth level of human consciousness.... This constant awareness and experience of the God-experience within can only happen on a fourth level of human consciousness, which is called turiya...Here is how I can tell If you've reached the turiya state.... One is living from within turiya is not affected by the swinging moods of the mind...Yogis...who has reached the turiya state...Gurus..., they are all living in the turiya state.

There are so many footnotes and translators' notes in line with the intratextual gloss strategy in bestseller. One of them is presented below:

"There is a reason they call God a presence-because God is right here, right now. The present is the only place to find Him and now is the only time (2010, p.175).

Tanrı'ya varlık demelerinin bir nedeni var; Tanrı hemen şu anda, buradadır. Onu bulmak için tek yer şimdiki zamandadır vet tek zamanda şimdidir. * (*Buradaki varlık kelimesinin İngilizce karşılığı presence kelimesi olup, şimdiki zamanda present olarak ifade edilir; yani yazar, Tanrı'ya verilen bu ismin kendisinin şimdi anlamı içerdiğine işaret etmektedir." (Ç.N.) (2006, p. 191).

Translation of "shippa, shippa, shippa" (2010, p.290), and "şip, şip, şip" (2006, p.288) are another example of repetition strategy in the translations. In short, the conservation category is mostly preferred by translators in the transmission of cultural features, creating a foreignizing effect on the TT. For instance, "by some divine fate" (2010, p.150) is translated as "İlahi bir kader aracılığıyla" and "plot" as "olay örgüsü" (2006, p. 165) As encountered in the bestseller, the use of substitution strategy causes domesticating effects on the TT. Table 4 below also shows the names of strategies adopted in the translations of this bestseller and their categories.

Table 4. Categories and Translation Strategies in *Eat Pray Love*.

Categories	Translation Strategies
Domestication	Autonomous creation
	Absolute Universalization
	Autonomous creation
	Deletion
	Extratextual gloss
	Intratextual gloss
	Limited Universalization
	Naturalization
Foreignization	Linguistic translation
	Literal Translation
	Preservation
	Repetition
	Synonymy

Given the results achieved and considering all the transmission of CFs and their translations, the results and findings show that translators both use the strategies of domestication (extra-textual gloss, intra-textual gloss) and foreignization (repetition, orthographic adaptation). The selected excerpts from the bestseller *Eat Pray Love* that include the transmission of cultural features were analysed under the categories and subcategories mentioned in the table above. The interpretations of the cultural features expressed through Gilbert's spiritual reflections were addressed using these strategies by making use of translation's scopus. The results were comprehensively analysed within the framework of Venuti's domestication and foreignization strategies, utilizing Aixelá's for a more detailed examination with Vermeer's Scopus theory. The results reveal that the dominance of Venuti's domestication and foreignization strategies in the translations ensures the cultural and literal values of the ST and presents a deeper insight to the TT reader.

CONCLUSION

Considering the information gathered from the analysis of this bestseller, it is evident that the translator made use of different strategies to determine the most appropriate method for the transmission of CFs. Vermeer's Scopus theory is an umbrella term in translation to maintain the spirit of the original meaning in this bestseller, it was observed that domestication and foreignization strategies are employed with equal frequency in the transmission of cultural features. The analysis of the translations indicates that the most common strategy is repetition, whereas the least common strategy is limited universalization. The reason for the frequent use of repetition and intra-textual gloss strategies is that there are many concepts in Italian, Indonesian, and Indian languages incorporating cultural features. Likewise, the second most frequently used strategy is orthographic adaptation as it can be seen in the whole context and examples. The reason behind this is the translators' preference not to reveal the cultural differences of the ST and to effectively convey the

meaning for reflection of CFs to TT. In the same vein, the originality of the ST and its foreign concepts were transmitted within the scope of Venuti's domestication and foreignization approach for displaying the cultural differences of the ST.

Selected examples consisting of CFs were analysed in terms of translation strategies selected from Aixelá's categorizations, alongside Venuti's strategies. The translators' preferences were evaluated using tables to express the reasons for each strategy. They both use the strategies of domestication (extra-textual gloss, intra-textual gloss) and foreignization (repetition, orthographic adaptation). As a repetition foreignization and intratextual gloss as domestication are among the most frequently used strategies.

Considering the second question posed at the beginning of this study, the reason that prompted the translator to employ these strategies is the effort to preserve the authenticity of cultural features and ensure the most accurate conveyance of meaning into the TL. The potential reason why the translator prefers the repetition strategy is to transmit the meaning to the TL in an equal way. The preference for intratextual gloss is to express the CFs to TL in an effective manner. Because there is no explanation of the concepts in TL.

Overall, the transmission of CFs reflects the translator's cultural diversity. Thus, during the transmission of CFs, the translator needs to adopt the most suitable strategy which preserves the original meaning of the word and conveys the message to the TT effectively. In the analysis of *Eat Pray Love* as a bestseller, the effects of all the situations discussed were observed. In future studies, further examples are expected to provide clearer insights sociologically.

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This is a research article, containing original data, and it has not been previously published or submitted to any other outlet for publication. The author followed ethical principles and rules during the research process. In the study, informed consent was obtained from the volunteer participants, and the privacy of the participants was protected.

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