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TURKISH AND ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF ANNIE ERNAUX'S *LES ANNÉES* AS AN "IMPERSONAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY"

ANNIE ERNAUX'NUN *LES ANNÉES* ADLI KİTABININ "KİŞİSEL OLMAYAN OTOBİYOGRAFİ" OLARAK TÜRKÇE VE İNGİLİZCE ÇEVİRİLERİ

ABSTRACT

This study conducted at the intersection between literary studies and translation studies, examines the Turkish and English translations of French novel *Les Années* by Annie Ernaux, which was published in 2008. It is argued that in this "impersonal autobiography", the author has in a sense transformed, in other words metaphorically self-translated, her own life into a narrative by blending it with social elements and cultural and period-specific references. Then, the novel written by Ernaux as a result of a mental translation process is translated into other languages, and the characteristic features of this "impersonal autobiography" are likely to create translation challenges specific to the genre. In addition, the fact that the novel is considered as a metaphorical translation can contribute to these translation challenges. As a result of the analysis of metaphorical and interlingual translations and an examination of paratexts, it is found that the preferred translation strategies employed in different translations contribute to the repositioning of this impersonal autobiography in English and Turkish.

Keywords: autobiographical writing, metaphorical translation, interlingual translation, Annie Ernaux, *Les Années*.

ÖZET

Edebiyat çalışmaları ile çeviribilimin kesişim noktasında yer alan bu çalışmada, Annie Ernaux'nun Fransızca kaleme aldığı, 2008 yılında yayımlanan *Les Années* adlı eserinin Türkçe ve İngilizce çevirileri incelenmektedir. Bu "kişisel olmayan otobiyografi"de yazarın bir anlamda kendi hayatını toplumsal öğeler ve kültürel ve döneme özgü göndermelerle harmanlayarak bir anlatıya dönüştürdüğü, diğer bir deyişle öz-çeviri yaptığı savunulmaktadır. Ernaux'nun zihinsel çeviri süreci sonucunda kaleme aldığı bu eser, daha sonra başka dillere çevrilmiştir. Dolayısıyla, "kişisel olmayan otobiyografi" olarak adlandırılan bu romanın türüne özgü özelliklerin kendine has çeviri zorlukları yaratması muhtemeldir. Eserin mecazi anlamda bir öz çeviri olarak nitelenmesi de bu sorunlara yenilerini ekleyebilir. Mecazi ve dillerarası çevirilerin ve yan metinlerin incelenmesi sonucunda, farklı dillere yapılan çevirilerde tercih edilen çeviri stratejilerinin, bu kişisel olmayan otobiyografinin İngilizce ve Türkçede yeniden konumlanmasına katkıda bulunduğu görülmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: otobiyografik yazım, metaforik çeviri, dillerarası çeviri, Annie Ernaux, *Les Années*.

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Introduction

Interdisciplinary studies offer different perspectives to researchers from different disciplines and help them find answers to various academic questions with a new angle. Conventional way of thinking is challenged and our understanding of realities is enlarged through constructing new links between different types of knowledge through these approaches. Considering these ideas, this study, which is conducted at the intersection between literary studies and translation studies, aims at exploring the relation between the concepts of "impersonal autobiography", "metaphorical translation" and "interlingual translation". To this end, the metaphorical and interlingual translation processes of *Les Années* (2008) by the French contemporary writer Annie Ernaux are examined.

In the first part of this study, it is argued that Ernaux's practice of translating her life into a novel, which was labeled as "impersonal autobiography" by the author herself, is an act of metaphorical translation, and it is suggested that there are certain characteristics, which are unique to this genre, which can be challenging during an interlingual translation process. Considering these ideas, the second part of the study consists of the comparative analysis of this impersonal autobiography and its English (2017) and Turkish (2021) translations, namely *The Years*¹ and *Seneler*², with special emphasis on paratexts. Our aim is to observe whether the special literary characteristics of the novel are transferred into another culture and whether the translation strategies preferred contribute to its reception in different cultures.

Les Années, to which Ernaux owes her literary fame (Hugueny-Léger, 2018)³, covers the years 1941-2006, and Ernaux is said to "invent a singular voice and path in the landscape of contemporary autobiography" (Montémont, 2011) with this novel. The work is also an important point on impersonalisation, as it is both the anonymized narrative of the life of a woman born in the forties and that of a generation (Snauwaert, 2012, p. 102). *Les Années*, a journey into the author's own past, has become an adventure of narrating the events of the French society that have remained in the past and are destined to be forgotten (Aksoy Alp, 2020, p. 248).

As for the translations, *Les Années* was translated into English by Alison L. Strayer in 2017. Strayer, who also translated *J'écrirai pour venger ma race* as *I Will Write to Avenge My People*, *Se Perdre* as *Getting Lost* and *Mémoire de fille* as *A Girl's Story* by the same author, was awarded with the 2018 French-American Translation Prize in the non-fiction category with *Les Années* [*The Years*].

As for the Turkish translation, it was recently made by Siren İdemen in 2021 and published by Can Publishing. She also translated *L'Évènement* as *Kürtaj/Olay*, *La Place* as *Babam/Babamın Yeri*, *Les armoires vides* as *Boş Dolaplar* by Ernaux as well as Georges Perec's *La Boutique Obscure: 124 Rêves*, for which she was awarded with the Talât Sait Halman Translation Prize in 2015⁴. In the Turkish context, it would be appropriate to say that Ernaux's popularity increased after she received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2022.

¹ The English translation of the novel is by A. L. Strayer and it was published in 2017 by Seven Stories Press.

² The Turkish translation of the novel is by S. İdemen and it was published in 2021 by Can Sanat Yayınları.

³ Unless otherwise stated all translations from French and Turkish are by the present authors.

⁴ The prizes both translators were awarded with are actually one of the proofs that they are both professional and acclaimed translators who are expected to be efficient in translation.

***Les Années* as an impersonal autobiography and a metaphorical translation**

Most of the time researchers of translation studies focus on the interlingual characteristic of translations and insist on the bilingualism in translation, however, thanks to the interest in intralingual and metaphorical translation processes in translation studies, some researchers conduct research focusing on the enlarged meanings of translation, for example on expanding the definition of translation and empowering translators (Tymoczko, 2007), translator studies covering issues of sociology, culture and cognition through focusing on the translator's agency (Chesterman, 2009), intralingual translation processes within Turkish context (Berk Albachten, 2014), intralingual self-translation (Canlı, 2018, 2019; Baydere & Karadağ, 2019), and metaphorical meaning of translation within the context of migration and translation (Erkazancı-Durmuş, 2022) among many others.

Within the framework of this study, Ernaux's "impersonal autobiography", *Les Années* is considered as a metaphorical translation; since she transformed her own life into a narrative by blending it with social elements and references. In other words, one can talk about a mental translation process which results in a novel at the end. Panichelli-Batalla (2015), for example, claims in her article, which was also conducted at the intersection between literary studies and translation studies that autofiction could be considered as a fictional metaphorical self-translation, because "the writer translates his/her own life experiences and memories into written language and, more specifically, into a literary text" (2017, pp. 32-33).

The idea suggested by Ernaux in *Les Années* that "she feels as if a book is writing itself just behind her; all she has to do is live" (2017, pp. 165-166)⁵ actually illustrates the relationship between translation and autobiography mentioned by Panichelli-Batalla. Just as the source and target texts are intertwined, Ernaux's life is also intertwined with the narrative, and the text that she has created by living has been put into a narrative. This process differs from the process an author involves while he/she is writing a fiction. *Les Années'* being an impersonal autobiography makes the difference and causes an act of metaphorical translation. Ernaux attaches importance to this transformation and suggests that through using "a draft of thousands of notes" (p. 281), she will make herself exist through writing.

Ernaux's existence as a woman through writing reminds us the idea that women are constantly translating from the patriarchal language to the feminine language in order to express themselves and in order to survive in a patriarchal world. Here, translation is used in its figurative meaning, which can be better explained with Godard's definition of translation. Godard (1989) defines translation, in its figurative meanings of transcoding and transformation, as a topos in feminist discourse used by women writers to evoke the difficulty of breaking out of silence in order to communicate new insights into women's experiences and their relation to language. Although Ernaux did not define herself as a feminist, the discourse she used, the style and the content of the novel⁶ contribute to the visibility of women in general, and made this metaphorical translation a feminist act⁷.

⁵ Unless otherwise stated, examples are extracted from the English translation.

⁶ For further study about Annie Ernaux and "the new literary forms and styles she creates" (Thomas, 2006) within the framework of class and gender see Ladimer, 2002 and Thomas, 2006 among other studies.

⁷ For further research at the intersection between translation and gender see Simon 1996; Castro & Ergun, 2017; von Flotow & Kamal, 2020 among others.

In terms of her style, Ernaux's, for example, use of pronouns contributes the visibility of women in her novels. In *Les Années*, as she herself puts it: "There is no "I" in what she views as a sort of impersonal autobiography. There is only "one" and "we," as if now it were her turn to tell the story of the time-before" (2017, p. 285). Emphasis on "her turn to tell the story" is important in this sense. Although it may be ironic that the omission of "I" contributes to the existence of the author as a woman, Ernaux probably wants us to see that this can be any woman's story, which is important for their visibility, only the speaker changes. In other words, through the omission of the "I" narrative Ernaux translates her own essence and pushes the reader to question it. Moreover, this act of writing, and thus translating her own self allows her to express herself so openly as a woman.

In *Les Années*, Ernaux also states that she wishes to write about a woman's destiny (2017, p. 185). However, she expresses doubt about how to organize the memory of the events and the thousands of days that had brought her to the present (p. 185). However, she organized all these memories, newspaper reports, photographs and translating them into a narrative, and actually created a copy of her life through her work and her identity is being constructed throughout this journey.

In terms of content, Ernaux suggests that this narrative sheds light on both her physical and spiritual development. In *Les Années*, there are many memories and events which are closely related to gender identities and representations such as love affairs, marriage, women's liberation, sexuality and abortion, most of which depend on Ernaux's own experiences. She, for example, underlines that birth control pills, which used to be forbidden, became legal. However, they "didn't dare ask the doctor for a prescription and the doctor didn't offer, especially if one wasn't married" (p. 103). Anyway, they felt that they would "be so free in [their] bodies it was frightening. Free as a man" (p. 103) since they can use these pills. For abortion, she reminds the reader about the 343 women who stated they'd had illegal abortions in *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Even if they knew it would be frowned upon they called for free access to medical abortion and the abolishment of the law of 1920, and printed leaflets on the high school photocopier and slipped them into mailboxes after dark (pp. 127-128). Moreover, she mentions about the important figures while explaining their activist stance such as the lawyer Gisèle Halimi, "who was radiant in the glare of flashbulbs on leaving the Bobigny trial after defending Djamila Boupacha" (p. 128).

As one can observe, the important symbols and symbolic figures, Ernaux mentions throughout her narrative, are important in terms of impersonal autobiography, and may cause challenges while rewriting them in different cultures through translation.

Figuratively, in line with what Godard says, we may perceive that, during her academic years, Ernaux aspired to find an enigmatic language that would facilitate the uncovering of mysterious things (2017, p. 285). As a young girl and as a woman, she wants to use language as a tool to communicate with the world, which is "contaminated by patriarchal ideology" (Moi, 1989, p. 118). We can't help but think of the sixties, when the second wave of feminism has started, when women realized that language was being used as a tool to suppress themselves, and then did the opposite, making language an instrument of women's liberation. In the same token, Ernaux constructs this new language, which she has been dreaming of since her student years, through her novel. As she herself puts it, she was going to write in her own language, "from inside her language" (2017, p. 285), the language of everyone, the only tool she trusted to take action against

what made her rebel. With these words, it is possible to say that Ernaux makes “everyone's language” (2017, p. 285) “her own language”, in a way translates and uses language as a tool to oppose. For Ernaux, the book to be written takes on the role of an instrument of struggle.

Ernaux suggests that she would have given anything to become a writer (2017, p. 285), while she is aware that the act of writing, like other freedoms, is reserved for men (p. 125). However, in a world where being an author has long been reserved for male, where women use male names to appear on the literary scene, Ernaux does not give up and shelve her relationship with writing and literature and expresses herself as a woman in *Les Années*. She mentions that when she was young, she didn't feel like she belonged anywhere (p. 97), she feels that she belongs only to the world of knowledge and literature: The life of the subject is characterized by a lack of coherence and a sense of being adrift, with no sense of belonging or identity. She feels that she is not anchored in any particular place or context, and that her existence is defined by her engagement with knowledge and literature (p. 97). She believes that only writing, and perhaps a man, can keep her from going mad (p. 98).

We can see that she read a lot to create herself and that she was influenced by the feminist movements of the period. While “the Women’s Liberation Movement had arrived in the provinces” (p. 126), they read “*The Female Eunuch* by Germaine Greer, *Sexual Politics* by Kate Millett, *Stifled Creation* by Suzanne Hörer and Jeanne Socquet” (p. 126). In addition to the frequent references to Simone de Beauvoir, who paved the way for the feminist movement in France, the novel includes many authors and books that have shaped feminist theory. When referring to these books, Ernaux states that they were reading “with the mingled excitement and powerlessness one feels on discovering a truth about oneself in a book” (p. 126). We can observe on every page that these works increase Ernaux’s awareness and develop her.

Just as women contribute to the equality between men and women through using translation to get on the literary stage, Ernaux fulfills her dream by getting on the literary stage through this metaphorical act of self-translation. At first, her sentences that begin with the wish if only she had time to write and her eagerness to become a writer, change as soon as she starts writing a novel and her ego is liberated.

While creating this narrative, Ernaux feels the need to base the work she wants to write on a real experience (2017, p. 241). As a result of narrating the real experience, the readers frequently encounter culture-specific items such as proper names, brands and songs as well as period-specific sayings in the novel, which are probable to cause challenges during an interlingual translation process.

***Les Années* and its Turkish and English translations**

Translating a novel, which intrinsically connected the life and narrative of an author, into different cultures is challenging and may have certain characteristics. Moreover, if we insist on the idea that this novel is a result of a metaphorical translation, then its Turkish and English translations from French are actually translations of a self-translation.

Considering the features discussed in the previous part, we can classify challenges into two main categories. One of them includes the style of the novel with special emphasis on the translation of pronouns.

The second main category may include the culture specific and period specific items, which are composed of local events, important figures of the time, brand names, songs, idioms, proverbs and such.

The use of "nous" and "on" in interlingual translation

Les Années is conceived as a "nous" and "on" (eng. "we" and "one") narrative. Ernaux's choice for these pronouns as mentioned in the previous part is important: She links individual and collective experience through an innovative form of autobiographical writing alternating "I" ("je"), "she" ("elle") and "we" ("nous") (Hugueny-Léger, 2018, p. 260).

In the following two examples (Example 1 and 2), translation of "nous" and "on" is comparatively examined:

Example 1

ST	"Sur fonds commun de faim et de peur, tout se racontait sur le mode du 'nous' et du 'on' (2008, p. 23).
English TT	"From a common ground of hunger and fear, everything was told in the "we" voice and with impersonal pronouns " (2017, p. 19).
Turkish TT	"Açlık ve korkunun ortak zemininde her şey, ya özne belirtilmeden 'yapıldı', 'edildi' diye ya da " biz " diye anlatılıyordu" (2021, p. 22).

Example 2

ST	" Nous mutions. Nous ne connaissions pas notre forme nouvelle" (2008, p. 225).
English TT	" We were mutating. We didn't know what our new shape would be" (2017, p. 266).
Turkish TT	"Mutasyona uğruyorduk. Yeni biçimimizi tanımiyorduk" (2021, p. 208).

In Example 1, Ernaux uses pronoun "nous" which was translated into English as "we" and "on", which was explained in English as "impersonal pronoun". In Turkish, the translator used "biz" (eng. we) for "nous" and passive constructions for "on". While the pronoun "we" is conveyed with its literal translation in both translations, the pronoun "on", which is important for Ernaux's style is either explained or translated into a passive form. Although the translation choices are different one can say the essence of the pronoun is reflected in target texts.

In Example 2, "nous" is translated into English as "we", as in the previous one, while it was translated into Turkish with "we" form as a suffix. In this context, it is possible to say that the pronoun used for "nous" tends to show consistency throughout the book⁸.

However, it is not possible to speak of a similar pattern when it comes to the use of the impersonal pronoun "on", which also means "we" in French. The following passages exemplify this inconsistency.

Example 3

ST	"Ce temps même commençait à être souvenir de jours dorés dont on éprouvait la perte en entendant à la radio [...]" (2008, p. 27).
English TT	"But even this time started to become a memory of golden days, whose loss we keenly felt when the radio played [...]" (2017, p. 23).

⁸ In order to refer to this consistency, we actually consider other examples we have analyzed but cannot add in our study due to space limitations.

Turkish TT	“Artık bu zaman bile ışılıtlı günlerin anısı olmaya başlıyordu, radyoda [...] nakaratını dinlerken parlak günlerin yitip gittiğini hissediyorlardı” (2021, p. 25).
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Example 4

ST	“un moment d’inattention au calendrier Ogino aidant, on se retrouvait mariés et bientôt parents” (2008, p. 93).
English TT	“ we fell in love more purposefully and, aided by a moment’s lack of attention to the Ogino calendar, found ourselves married and soon to be parents” (2017, p. 104).
Turkish TT	“Ogino takvimindeki bir anlık dikkatsizliğin de katkısıyla kendimizi evlenmiş ve kısa süre sonra da anne ya da baba olmuş buluyorduk” (2021, p. 87).

In the sentence in Example 3, “on” is translated into English as “we”, and into Turkish as “they”; while in Example 4 the expression in ST is conveyed in English and Turkish TTs as above, and the pronoun “on” is replaced by “we” form in English and Turkish both.

As mentioned in the first part of this study, the omission of “I” ironically contributes to the existence of the author as a woman. Through her use of “nous” and “on”, Ernaux’s narrative gives voice to society in general. Through using these personal pronouns, “which are a social representation in *Les Années*” (Yücedağ, 2017, p. 385) and “in fact embody the voice of society” (p. 385), the author-narrator envisions a community. In other words, “nous, on” represents voice of a silenced class (Baisnée, 2018, pp. 81-82).

All in all, considering the representative examples above, it is observed that the French pronoun “nous” is generally conveyed consistently as “we” in both languages, while the pronoun “on”, which is inherently difficult to translate into different languages, is sometimes translated as “we”, sometimes translated as “they”, and sometimes translated in a passive form in Turkish and English translations.

While the pronoun “on” is also used instead of “nous” in French, in Ernaux’s novel, the distinction between “nous” and “on” plays a key role, and not paying attention to this can cause shifts in translation. As Aksoy Alp has mentioned the Ernauxian *nous* has different senses within the novel, for example it refers to a simple narrator-character or one of the characters in the author’s/narrator’s environment⁹ (2012, p. 131). In addition, the Ernauxian *on* has different meanings; for example it sometimes reveals the social consciousness of one’s class (p. 139). English translator actually acknowledges the shift in the pronouns in her Translator’s Note, and explains her choice as follows:

To write in the “je collectif,” in French Annie Ernaux uses the nous or the on (which I translate mostly as “we” but sometimes as “one” for formality or rhythm or simply because it is the only choice that presents itself; very occasionally I use the impersonal “you”). She also uses ils/elles (they) or les gens (people), and later in the paragraph switches pronouns, often more than once (on, nous, ils...). Each pronoun clearly refers to the same subject or subjects. In French it is quite striking, and presents a certain translation challenge. The shifts imply that “we” and “one” (that is, nous and on) contain an “I” or a “them,” a “her,” “him,” and “you,” a “someone” or “some people”—truly collectif ! It is very common in French to English translation, in sentences where the subject is on, to translate into the passive voice. I know the passive voice can be windy and unwieldy, but in *The Years*, it is sometimes appropriate to use it in order to maintain the impersonal tone. (2017, pp. 289-290)

⁹ For further analysis on the use of personal pronouns and their different senses in Ernaux’s novels see Aksoy Alp, 2012.

Thus, the translator is aware of the impersonal tone and chooses to convey the tone through passives, even though it sometimes hinders the fluency. She sometimes uses "we" both for "nous" and "on", which may cause failure in conveying the style of the author. However, through the translator's preface, the reader may become aware of the importance of the use of pronouns. Thus, one can say that although the translator cannot convey the form and style due to the differences between the languages; she/he may use different tools such as paratexts in order to successfully transfer the style and message which are unique to the certain genre.

Culture specific and period specific items

The second main category may include the culture specific and period specific items, which are composed of local events, important figures of the time, brand names, songs, idioms, proverbs and such. Due to space constraints, we will mostly focus on idioms and proper names, brand names, and songs. However, before presenting the analysis of cultural features, it is important to highlight the need for a linguistic translation analysis for examination of Ernaux's novel as an impersonal autobiography.

While we are aware of the importance of a less literal and broader concept of translation useful for the field of Translation Studies, there is always danger that "Translation Studies may lose its genuine object and scope" (qtd. in Gambier & van Doorslaer, 2016, p. 14) as a result of interdisciplinarity. Thus, in order interdisciplinarity not to "weaken the status" (Gile, 2004, p. 29) of translation and interpreting research, we suggest keeping the linguistic translation analysis part of our research. Rather than neglecting the analysis, we suggest merging the metaphorical and enlarged meaning of translation from interdisciplinary perspective with the so-called old-fashioned linguistic translation analysis.

This approach makes even more sense since the subject of this study is English and Turkish translations of Ernaux's novels. Literary critics writing about Ernaux after she received the Nobel Prize, mostly focus on the importance of Ernaux's literary depiction of a very ordinary working-class lifestyle. This feature of her novels and her focusing on class and gender are sometimes met with negative criticism and sometimes with praise. According to some, her literary presentation of everyday events by blending them with history is the most important part of her literary genius. Therefore, the lifestyle of the working class, the brand names, foods, songs, idioms and sayings that were prominent in France during that time are the indispensable elements of the "impersonal autobiography" genre that we underlined in the first part of the study.

Within this approach, first examples to be examined (Example 1-5) include idioms and sayings, most of which reflect the French society in those years.

Example 1

ST	"les métaphores si usées qu'on s'étonnait que d'autres osent les dire, la cerise sur le gâteau " (2008, p. 18).
English TT	"metaphors so tired, we were astonished when others dared to utter them, the icing on the cake " (2017, pp. 13-14).
Turkish TT	"hâlâ kullanan birilerinin olmasına hayret ettiğimiz bayatlamış mecazlar, daha iyisi Şam'da kayısı " (2021, p. 17).

In this example above, the idiom "la cerise sur le gateau" is translated into English as "the icing on the cake", while Turkish translator uses "daha iyisi Şam'da kayısı", which literally means

“better than that, apricots in Damascus”. Both translators used cultural equivalents of the idiom in the ST.

Example 2

ST	“les mots dont on s’étonne qu’ils aient existé déjà autrefois, <i>mastoc</i> (lettre de Flaubert à Louise Colet), <i>pioncer</i> (George Sand au même)” (2008, p. 18).
English TT	“—words that we are astonished ever existed— mastoc , hefty (Flaubert in a letter to Louise Colet), pioncer , to kip down (George Sand to Flaubert!)” (2017, p. 13).
Turkish TT	“vaktiyle var olduğuna şaşırdığımız kelimeler, <i>mastoc</i> [irikiyım] gibi (Flaubert’in Louise Colet’ye yazdığı mektuptan), <i>pioncer</i> [sızaki olmak] gibi (Georges Sand’in Flaubert’e mektubundan)” (2021, p. 17).

In this example, the italicized French words in ST are rendered as they are in the translations with their intralingual definitions. Both translators used descriptive equivalents of these French words.

Example 3

ST	“appelait ses parents ‘mes vieux’ et disait <i>ciao</i> pour au revoir ” (2008, p. 63)
English TT	“called their parents ‘the oldsters,’ and said <i>ciao</i> instead of goodbye ” (2017, p. 67).
Turkish TT	“ au revoir yerine <i>ciao</i> diyen, anne babalarından ‘bizim moruklar’ diye bahseden” (2021, p. 59).

In this example, “ciao” is preserved by both of the translators as it is. As for the expression “au revoir”, English translator preferred literally translating it as “goodbye”, while Turkish translator repeated the expression in the translation, which in a sense contributed the creation of the French atmosphere in the TT.

Example 4

ST	“moi aussi j’ai passé le bac , sur la Seine à Caudebec !” (2008, p. 71).
English TT	<i>Null</i>
Turkish TT	“Ben de kaldırım mühendisliği diploması aldım!” (2021, p. 67).

In this example, the “bac” is not the abbreviation for baccalaureat, which comes to mind first. “Bac” is a flat-bottomed boat typical of Normandy. In other words, it is not a question of passing the “bac” exam, but of crossing the Seine with the “bac” in the boat sense. This joke is omitted in English translation. In Turkish translation, the expression “kaldırım mühendisliği diploması almak” literally means “having a degree in pavement engineering”, and it is generally used as a phrase of mockery in Turkish and means a person who wanders the streets without a job. Thus, we can say Turkish translator tried to find the cultural equivalent of the joke, while English translator preferred omitting the joke all together.

Example 5

ST	“ chacun sa merde ” (2008, p. 190).
English TT	“ to each his own shit ” (2017, p. 234).
Turkish TT	“ Her koyun kendi bacağından asılır ” (2021, p. 176).

In this example, the expression is translated into English as “to each his own shit”, while it is translated into Turkish as “her koyun kendi bacağında asılır”, which literally means, “every sheep is hung by its own leg”. Both translators preferred cultural equivalent of the expression.

Thus, one can see in the examples above both English and Turkish translators mostly preferred finding the cultural equivalent of the expressions and made the source text accessible for the target text readers.

According to Meizoz “Most of the images and formulas conjured up in *Les Années* make sense in a very specific French national cosmos, that of the post-war period, which only makes complete and shared sense to readers from that same cosmos: songs, car brands, TV presenters, politicians, toponymy, references to wines, and so on” (2012, p. 186). Considering these ideas, differences in translation strategies are observed in the transfer of these features.

The following examples between 6 and 10 mostly include brand names, TV shows, commercials, and such, and they are actually significant parts of this novel as suggested by Aksoy Alp:

In *Les Années*, which the author describes as a “total novel” (“roman total”), she deals with the social life of a whole generation of men and women in post-war France, a period spanning more than sixty years. This novel [...] reflects not only the consciousness of the different strata of society, but also the cultural life of this generation through lyrics and quotations from songs, books, magazines and films of the period. Thus, once again starting from her own life, in *Les Années* the author gives a social, cultural and political history of post-war France. (2013, p. 198)

Example 6

ST	“avec Babybotte Bébé trotte et pousse bien” (2008, p. 12).
English TT	“With Babybotte, Baby trots and grows well” (2017, p. 7).
Turkish TT	“ <i>Babybotte</i> 'la tıpış tıpış yürü, güzel güzel büyü” (2021, p. 12).

In this example, the expression in ST is literally translated into English, while an expression known by Turkish readers are used in Turkish translation (“*Babybotte*'la tıpış tıpış yürü, güzel güzel büyü” means “Walk with *Babybotte* and grow up beautifully”). Although the brand is preserved, the slogan was replaced by a common one in this translation.

Example 7

ST	“en chantant <i>Pirouette cacahouète</i> ” (2008, p. 72).
English TT	“singing <i>Pirouette cacahouète</i> ” (2017, p. 78).
Turkish TT	“ <i>orda bir köy var uzakta</i> diye şarkı söyleyerek” (2021, p. 68).

Similarly, in this example a children's song “*Pirouette cacahouète*” in ST is preserved as “*Pirouette cacahouète*” in English TT, while it is replaced by its cultural equivalent, which is a different song based on a poem about Anatolian life in the Turkish translation (“*orda bir köy var uzakta*” literally means “there's a village far away”). It is possible to state that the element of geographical proximity is important here.

Example 8

ST	“le thon c'est bon” (2008, p. 191).
English TT	<i>Null</i>
Turkish TT	“sağlık için ton ton ton” (2021, pp. 176-177).

In another example, “le thon c'est bon” in ST does not appear in English translation, while in Turkish translation the translator refers to the commercial jingle of the Dardanel brand (canned tuna fish) in Turkey (“sağlık için ton ton ton” literally means “tuna tuna tuna for health”).

Example 9

ST	“à chanter <i>La Marseillaise</i> pour l’oral du certificat” (2008, p. 48).
English TT	“and singing <i>La Marseillaise</i> for the oral certificate” (2017, p. 49).
Turkish TT	“Diploma sözlü sınavı için <i>La Marseillaise</i> ezberlemekle uğraşıyordu” (2021, p. 45).

The French national anthem *La Marseillaise* in ST is translated as *La Marseillaise* in both TTs while preserving its foreignness. Although English readers may be familiar with this national anthem, it is highly probable that Turkish readers are not.

Example 10

ST	“Canal+ Les Guignols” (2008, p. 190).
English TT	“Les Guignols” (2017, p. 253).
Turkish TT	“Canal+ ‘kuklalar!’” (2021, p. 176).

Finally, the name of the television channel Canal+ in ST is omitted in English translation but preserved in Turkish translation; however, the program Les Guignols broadcast on this channel is preserved as Les Guignol in English translation, while in Turkish translation it is literally translated as “kuklalar” (eng. puppets) (2021, p. 176) without indicating that Les Guignols is a proper name.

Thus, one can observe that translating these culture specific items, similarities and differences emerge in English and Turkish translations. While the English translator sometimes apply to omissions, the Turkish translator does not employ such omissions at the expense of foreignness, but follows strategies such as repetition and literal translation. However, some cultural references are difficult for the Turkish reader to understand. In English, on the other hand, due to “cultural proximity”, the translator more comfortably employs repetition and literal translation strategies. In addition to these strategies, both Turkish and English translators prefer cultural equivalents of the features in the source texts in some examples, which can be sometimes problematic, when the characteristic of the genre of impersonal autobiography are considered.

Translators also use footnotes or add the descriptive equivalent of the item in brackets within the text itself. In terms of footnotes, we should add that the English translation includes 28 footnotes, while the Turkish translation includes 130 footnotes, which is relatively high when compared to its English version. Some of the footnotes in Turkish translation belong to the

translator and some to the publisher. In the *Translator's Note* at the end of the book in English translation, the English translator talks about her translation process as: "I have added a few footnotes. I had to look up quite a number of names, and incidents, which would perhaps be clear to many French readers but not to every English reader" (2017, p. 293). This statement is important, since it shows that even translating a text into a target culture, which relatively close to the source culture, one may need extra explanations.

Considering the most frequently encountered challenges while translating this impersonal biography, the variety of strategies preferred by different translators is significant. In order to create the same effect in the target culture, translators make efforts, and manage to create the text in another culture.

Conclusion

In this study, after the metaphorical and interlingual translation processes of *Les Années* (2008) by Ernaux are examined, it is firstly argued that Ernaux's *Les Années* can be interpreted as a metaphorical translation, since the "she" author has in a sense transformed, or translated, her own life into a narrative by mixing it with social elements and references. The use of concepts unique to womanhood, surprising pronouns and culture specific items and period-specific sayings contributed to this translation process. Through writing, Ernaux created her identity, and her life and her narration have become intrinsically connected.

Secondly, as a result of the analysis of translations, it is found that the preferred translation strategies by two different translators born in two different cultures contributed to the reception of this impersonal autobiography in English and Turkish.

In the beginning of this comparative analysis, translation of pronouns are examined, and it is seen that the use of "we" and "on" by Ernaux is important, however, translation of "on" into English and Turkish causes translation challenges. Especially English translator acknowledges the importance of "on" for the style of Ernaux and through her preface states that she has tried to convey the style sometimes for the sake of fluency. As for the Turkish translator, it is seen that "on" is translated into Turkish through passive sentence structures, which may relatively contribute to the impersonal style of the novel.

As for translation of culture-specific items in English and Turkish translations, it is seen that the foreignized language is preserved especially in songs, hymns, proper nouns, brands names and such, whereas idioms and sayings are mostly domesticated in both translations.

Because these events happened to Ernaux herself or because they are socially real, the author herself is not very free, and this lack of freedom is reflected in the translations. Keeping the culture-specific items as they are and replacing some of them with their cultural equivalents in the Turkish translation point to the hybrid nature of the translation of this text. In some places, the Turkish reader feels as if the text is written in his/her language as if the text overlaps with something in his/her memory, and in a sense, places the text in the local literature, but in other places, the reader is distanced by "unfamiliar" choices or by the translator's deliberate choice to say that the work is set in France and it was written in French by a French author. An important decision to be made in interlingual translation is therefore which of these elements should be left as they are in the source culture and which should be adapted.

Rather than going between two extremes, the choice of a hybrid method may increase the readability and contributes to the transfer of this impersonal autobiography, which can also be discussed as a metaphorical translation.

It is our humble wish that this study, conducted at the intersection of translation studies and literary studies, would pave the way for further research on comparative analysis of Ernaux's other works and their translations into other languages.

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Contribution Rate Declaration of Researchers / Araştırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı: Bu araştırmada 1. yazar katkısı %50, 2. yazar katkısı %50'dir. / In this research, the first author's contribution is 50% and the second author's contribution is 50%.

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