An Analysis of Borrowing Technique Used in The Novel "A Study in Scarlet" by Arthur Conan Doyle

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Abstract

Literary translation plays a crucial role not only as a linguistic bridge but also as a medium for transferring culture, aesthetic values, and complex emotional expressions. Unlike technical or legal translation, literary translation demands greater cultural and linguistic sensitivity, especially when dealing with culture-specific terms. One translation technique frequently employed in this context is borrowing, which helps preserve cultural authenticity in the target language. In Arthur Conan Doyle's classic detective novel A Study in Scarlet, borrowing is particularly significant because the novel introduces cultural, social, and historical elements of 19th-century England, reflected in its distinctive vocabulary and cultural references. The objective of this research is to identify the borrowing technique used in the novel "A Study in Scarlet", translated into "*Penelusuran Benang Merah*". This study employed a descriptive qualitative method to describe the borrowing techniques found in the text. The analysis is based on Molina and Albir's (2002) framework for translation techniques and Newmark's (1988) classification of foreign cultural terms into five domains. The findings reveal 70 borrowing instances, comprising 49 pure borrowings and 21 naturalized borrowings, distributed across material culture, social culture, gestures and habits, organizations, and abstract concepts. These results highlight how borrowing functions as a translation strategy that simultaneously preserves cultural authenticity and ensures the readability of the target text.

Keywords: Borrowing Technique; Foreign Cultural Terms; Novel.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

Literary translation is important in translation because it not only serves as a language bridge but also as a medium for conveying culture, aesthetic values, and complex emotional expressions (Sumartini & Yadnya, 2018). Unlike technical, legal, or audiovisual translations, which tend to prioritize terminological precision and functionality, literary translation requires a high degree of linguistic and cultural sensitivity. A literary translator must be able to preserve the language style, atmosphere, and narrative beauty of the original work so that readers can still feel the author's message and nuances in the target language (Warminingsih & Syamsurrijal, 2025). Another unique feature of literary translation is the creative freedom translators often have to make complex interpretative choices, including the use of various translation techniques to overcome challenges in cultural,

idiomatic, and narrative structures. One technique often used in this context is borrowing, which involves directly transferring words or expressions from the source language into the target language without translating them. Studying borrowing techniques is important because it shows the extent to which cultural elements, social identities, or terms specific to the source language are retained in the translation process (Sumartini & Yadnya, 2018). In Arthur Conan Doyle's classic detective novel A Study in Scarlet, the application of this technique reflects the translator's strategic decision to preserve the text's authenticity and the cultural characteristics of 19th-century England. As the literary work that first introduced the legendary character Sherlock Holmes, this novel not only narrates a criminal case but also depicts the social conditions, cultural background, and distinctive vocabulary of its time.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the translation techniques used in the translation of the novel A Study in Scarlet to reveal how these strategies preserve the cultural aspects and originality of literary works, with a focus on translation techniques and foreign cultural words. The presence of terms such as "consulting detective" and "Beeton's Christmas annual," as well as the names of locations in London, gives it a strong cultural color, making it ideal for analysis of cultural translation. According to Peter Newmark 1988, these foreign cultural terms can be categorized into five main domains: (1) Ecology (include local flora, fauna, climate, and geography), (2) Material Culture (includes food, clothing, shelter, means of transport), (3) social culture (relating to social activities, work, and recreation), (4) Organization, customs, and ideas (includes political institutions, laws, religions, and abstract concepts), (5) Gesture and Habits (includes culture specific expressions, customs, and manners) (Neshovska & Kitanovska Kimovska, 2018).

According Newmark (1988) "*Transference (imprudent, loan word, transcription) is the process of transferring an SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure. It is the same as Catford's transference and includes transliteration, which relates to the conversion of different alphabets. The word then becomes a 'loan word'.*" This technique is usually used for terms that carry 'local color', such as place names, nicknames of literary works, and terms of typical flora and fauna (Ramesh Prasad Adhikary, 2020). Previous research on other novels shows that translators often use borrowing to maintain cultural identity in literary texts, especially for terms that are difficult to transfer meaning without losing cultural context. However, the application of this theory in the context of A Study in Scarlet, especially in Newmark's five domains, has not been extensively reviewed. This study aims to identify the presence of foreign cultural words in a study of scarlet in Newmark's five domains, and analyze how the borrowing technique is applied in the translation of the text.

In addition to maintaining the integrity of the source culture, the borrowing technique also serves as a semiotic bridge, conveying symbolic meaning from one culture to another without obscuring the original context. In the semiotic framework, every foreign cultural word carries not only lexical meaning, but also the social, ideological, and historical values attached to the sign (Marais, 2020). Therefore, the translator's decision to maintain the original form of a cultural word through borrowing is not just a linguistic act, but also an ideological and cultural act. By retaining certain words in their original form, the translator invites the reader to recognize 'otherness' or cultural alienation, thereby enriching cross-cultural understanding. This aligns with Venuti's notion of a translation strategy that retains foreign elements in the text to highlight cultural differences. In the context of A Study in Scarlet, this practice allows Indonesian readers to still capture the cultural identity of 19th-century England through terms such as 'Scotland Yard', 'Mormon', or 'Baker Street', which carry historical and symbolic meaning.

Furthermore, using Newmark's framework of five cultural domains, readers and researchers can systematically identify the types of cultural terms translators retain. This classification provides a solid conceptual structure in analyzing the form, meaning, and function of cultural words in translated literary texts (Long & He, 2021). Thus, this study not only contributes to literary translation theory, but also to cross-cultural studies and applied semiotics (Widyastuti et al., 2023). Given that few studies specifically examine borrowing techniques within Newmark's five cultural domains in the novel A Study in Scarlet, this study is important. The results of this study are expected to provide practical insights for translators, academics, and students in translating foreign literary works rich in cultural content. In addition, this study can serve as a reference for developing more adaptive cultural translation

strategies while maintaining the authenticity of the source text.

Several previous studies have informed this research, including Topan's "loan and calque found in translation of English into Indonesian" (Topan & Permatasari, 2024). This study found 22 loanwords and 33 calques, with the dominant strategy being calque rather than borrowing. The main focus of this study was on calque rather than borrowing. In addition, there is also research conducted by Anantasya entitled "An error analysis on borrowing in the Indonesian translation among the second semester students at the English education program", this study discusses the borrowing technique that is limited to second-semester students and only analyzes two types of borrowing without linking them with depth to the five cultural domain contexts. It also uses the theories of Molina and Albir (Hartati et al., 2023). Moreover, the research conducted by Chojimah, also titled "Proses Penyerapan Kata-Kata Bahasa Inggris terkait Covid-19 ke dalam Bahasa Indonesia," discusses the pattern of English loans related to Covid-19 and their borrowing processes, and classifies borrowing using Haugen's theory. Spelling adjustment and letter omission are the borrowing methods; loan translation is the only borrowing process for loanshift (Chojimah & Widodo, 2021). Another previous study discusses a title entitled "pure borrowing technique in Indonesian translation of novel entitled Woman by Louisa May Alcott." This study discusses the pure borrowing technique in the translation of Little Women, including frequency calculations and word-class categories. The method used in this study, descriptive qualitative analysis, includes word classes such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, and interjections (Ulfah, 2022). The study that discusses borrowing technique was also conducted by Ulfah, with the title "The Analysis of Pure Borrowing Technique in Indonesian Translation of 'Does My Head Look Big in This' Novel. This study focuses on the pure borrowing technique. The method used in this study was qualitative; the findings are quite dominant, with consideration given to reliability and acceptance among local readers (Ulfah, 2019).

Previous studies have examined borrowing techniques in various translation contexts, both in literary and non-literary texts. For example, Topan and Permatasari (2024) study focused more on calquing than borrowing, whereas Hartati et al. (2023) research discussed only two types of borrowing in the context of learning and did not relate them to the cultural domain. The research by Chojimah and Widodo (2021) discusses the process of absorbing foreign terms related to COVID-19 using Haugen's theory, with a focus on spelling adjustments and term translation. The research by Ulfah (2022) and Ulfah (2019) discusses pure borrowing techniques in translated novels, focusing on word classification and usage trends, but does not examine their connection to cultural elements in depth.

Although borrowing techniques have been widely studied, most previous research has been limited to the classification of forms (pure or naturalized), frequency of use, and types of borrowed words, without analyzing them based on the five cultural domains proposed by Newmark, namely: ecology, material culture, social organization, customs, and abstract concepts (Widyastuti et al., 2023). Furthermore, no previous research has specifically examined the use of borrowing techniques in the novel A Study in Scarlet, which is a literary work set in the rich cultural context of 19th-century England. Therefore, this study fills this gap by analyzing how borrowing techniques are used to preserve culturally charged words in the translation of the novel, in accordance with Newmark's five cultural domains.

Additionally, the theoretical approach used remains largely singular, and few studies have attempted to combine Molina and Hurtado Albir (2004) theories with cultural theories like Newmark's or semiotics approaches. Therefore, further research is needed to comprehensively examine borrowing techniques in classical literary texts, taking into account cultural aspects, semantic domains, and broader theoretical integration. By using Newmark's five cultural domains approach, this study aims not only to identify and categorize the foreign cultural words retained in their original form, but also to understand the reasons behind the choice of the strategy and its impact on the acceptability and integrity of meaning in the translated text (Majaputri, 2023). Therefore, this study is expected to make a significant joint contribution to the development of literary translation theory and practice, particularly in the context of culturally sensitive and representative translation of the source culture.

This study fills the gap by applying Newmark's (1988) five cultural domains to a classic English novel,

analyzing not only the types of borrowing used but also their cultural, semiotic, and ideological implications. Thus, it offers a more holistic model of culturally sensitive literary translation.

2.   RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative method to explore strategies within a literary text. As defined by Bogdan in Julian et al. (2022) qualitative research involves the collection of descriptive data through written or spoken words and observable behaviour. This method is particularly suited to translation research that seeks to understand cultural and semantic nuances from the translator's perspective. This research aims to gain a general understanding of social reality from the participants' perspective. Qualitative research methods above can be conducted, which will explain the data descriptively, holistically, and comprehensively regarding the social phenomenon to be seen as one unified whole and comprehensive (Luthfiandana et al., 2024).

The primary data source is the novel A Study in Scarlet by Arthur Conan Doyle (originally published in 1887), along with its Indonesian translation *Penelusuran Benang Merah* by Tanuwidjaja (2001). Data collection techniques included skimming, intensive reading, and note-taking, as described by Agoes (2016). Skimming was used to identify sections rich in cultural terminology, while detailed reading enabled the identification of source language items subject to borrowing. Notes were taken on relevant lexical items, their translations, and contextual usage to facilitate later analysis.

The analytical framework combines several key models in translation studies. Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958/2008) translation procedures provide the foundation for identifying borrowing strategies, while Molina and Albir's (2002) model supports the classification of techniques. Newmark's (1988) theory on foreign cultural words is employed to categorize borrowed terms into five cultural domains: ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations and ideas, and gestures/habits. This triangulated framework ensures a comprehensive and multidimensional analysis of borrowing in literary translation.

Data were analyzed using the descriptive qualitative approach, following Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model of data analysis. This model involves three key components: (1) data condensation, where irrelevant or repetitive data are reduced; (2) data display, which involves organizing information visually or categorically for interpretation; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification, where the researcher identifies patterns, themes, and meanings. Figure 1 illustrates the recursive and interconnected nature of these processes (adapted from Mustari and Rahman, 2017).
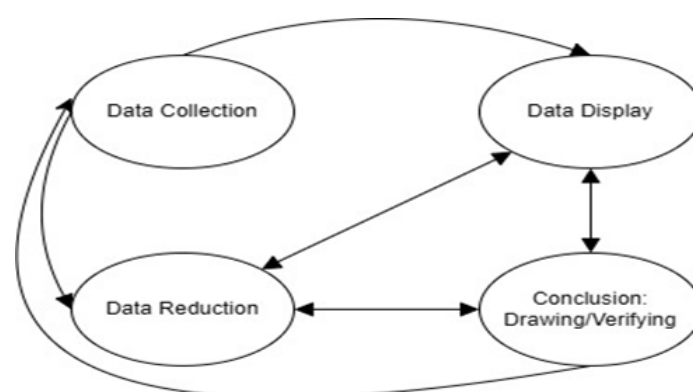

Figure 1. Data Analysis Component: Interactive Model (Adopten from Mustari Mustari and Rahman, 2017)

3.   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1.   Finding

A total of 70 instances of borrowing techniques were identified based on Molina and Albir's (2002) model, comprising 49 instances of pure borrowing and 21 of naturalized borrowing. These borrowings were further

classified according to Newmark's (1988) five cultural domains: material culture, social culture, gestures and habits, organizations, and abstract concepts.

A.   Pure Borrowing

In this case, the words are borrowed directly from the source language into the target language. This is called the direct translation method, which apparently cannot be translated into the target language (Ulya et al., 2024). However, the concept is always available in the target language too. When a concept is not known, but the readers are already familiar with the target language.
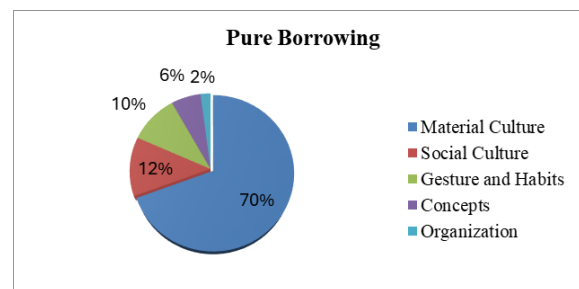

Figure 2. Quantitative Distribution of Pure Borrowing Across Cultural Categories

Based on Figure 2, it can be concluded that among 49 instances of pure borrowing, 34 items (70%) belong to the material culture, followed by social culture, six items (12%), gesture and habits, five items (10%), concepts, three items (6%), and organization one item (2%). (Statistics could be better presented (e.g., as percentages).

B.   Naturalized Borrowing

Naturalized borrowing is borrowing words by adjusting the phonetics and morphology of the target language. The naturalized borrowing technique put forward by Hoed in Utami (2019) opinion which calls it a naturalization procedure. This technique takes the sound of words that match the source language so that the evaporation or sound system is suitable. Based on Figure 3, among the 21 naturalized borrowings, the majority are categorized under concepts (11 items, 52%), social culture (6 items, 29%), and material culture (4 items, 19%).
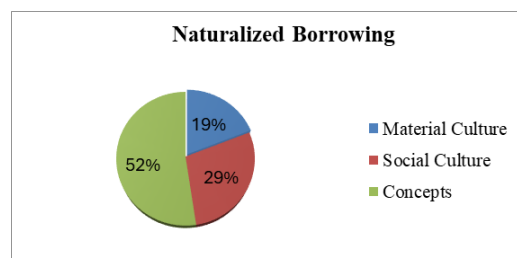

Figure 3. Statistical Representation of Naturalized Borrowing in Cultural Categories

3.2.   Discussion

Based on the analysis, it appears that elements of material culture dominate the borrowing data: 34 of the 49 items of pure borrowing are classified as material culture, accounting for 70% of all cultural terms analyzed. There are several theoretical and empirical reasons for this result. First, the narrative characters in Doyle's works use objects, clothing, toponyms, and everyday items as elements that determine the characters' setting and identity (e.g., Baker Street, Bombay, a revolver). These objects serve not only as decorative elements but also as powerful narrative and symbolic markers, which is why they appear more frequently and attract the attention of researchers. Second, from Newmark's perspective, many material elements function as icons or indexical signs that resemble or have a direct causal relationship with their referents, making them easier for translators to recognize, catalogue, and

borrow. Concrete elements tend to be more 'visible' and stable across cultures than abstract elements (e.g., values, norms), so their frequency in the corpus is greater. Material culture often carries distinctive local color and shapes historical and cultural identity (Victoria era); therefore, the translator chose to retain it to preserve the authentic nuances of the source text, resulting in the highest frequency of recording material elements.

The tendency to retain material cultural elements through pure borrowing and naturalized borrowing shows the translator's priority for two things: maintaining cultural authenticity and ensuring the TL reader's readability through explanation or naturalization when necessary. The majority of material terms are retained directly (pure borrowing) or modified in spelling (naturalized borrowing); the translator prioritizes preserving cultural meaning while providing access to understanding for Indonesian readers.

These findings are consistent with previous research. Topan's study shows that material cultural elements are often preserved through borrowing and calque, especially in terms that do not yet have standard equivalents in the target language. The same pattern is seen in the data from this study, where place names, types of clothing, and weapons are retained in their original form or translated literally. Ulfah found amplification and description to be strategies for bridging the cultural gap between the source text and the target reader. This pattern also appears in the translations of a deerstalker hat or a service revolver in this study. Badriyah emphasizes the tendency of classical literary translators to preserve the foreignness of the source text, consistent with the practice of the translator of A Study in Scarlet, who retained distinctive English terms with minimal explanation. This similarity reinforces the notion that the preservation of material culture, combined with minimal explanation techniques, is a common strategy in classical literary translation.

Compared with Venuti's framework of foreignization and domestication, the findings indicate a predominant inclination towards foreignization. Numerous terms representing material culture are preserved in their original form, such as Brixton Road and Baker Street, without adaptation to the target culture. This approach enables Indonesian readers to retain the genuine atmosphere and inherent "foreignness" of the source text. Nonetheless, in specific instances, the translator adopts selective domestication —for example, modifying the idiom "drunk as a lord" into "*mabuk berat seperti preman pasar*" — to ensure the meaning resonates more naturally with the target audience. Interpreted through Newmark's lens, this reflects a faithful translation strategy, in which the translator seeks to preserve the original work's contextual meaning and stylistic character while making targeted adjustments to safeguard communicative clarity. This hybrid approach—termed strategic foreignization with functional domestication—maintains the integrity of material culture while employing supportive techniques to ensure both fidelity of meaning and readability. Consequently, the translator functions not only as a linguistic conduit but also as a cultural intermediary, intentionally balancing allegiance to the source text with its accessibility to target readers.

These findings reinforce and extend the results of previous studies. Similar to Topan and Permatasari (2024), who identified the dominance of material culture terms preserved through borrowing and calquing, this research also reveals that material culture accounts for the largest proportion of borrowed terms. However, unlike Hartati et al. (2023), who had a limited scope that only examined two borrowing types in a student context, this study integrates Molina and Albir's classification with Newmark's five cultural domains, thereby offering a broader cultural perspective. In addition, while Ulfah (2019) and Ulfah (2022) emphasized pure borrowing without linking it to cultural classifications, the present study highlights not only the types of borrowing (pure and naturalized) but also their distribution across cultural categories, thereby filling the conceptual gap in earlier works. Consequently, this research both supports the tendency identified in prior studies that borrowing serves as a key strategy in preserving cultural authenticity and differentiates itself by providing a semiotically informed, domain-based analysis of how these techniques function in the translation of A Study in Scarlet.

4.   CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, several conclusions can be drawn. The lexical elements in the target language predominantly consist of borrowed terms, many of which have been integrated, while others remain unfamiliar to

its speakers. The translation process revealed both deliberate and inadvertent modifications. Findings show that the most frequently applied borrowing strategy in *A Study in Scarlet* is *pure borrowing*, with only a limited number of instances involving *naturalized borrowing*. Nonetheless, the study identified certain inconsistencies in how borrowed terms were rendered into Indonesian. In some cases, these borrowings did not reflect the source language's cultural context. In others, they did not adhere to the *Pedoman Umum Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia* (previously known as *Ejaan Yang Disempurnakan*). This suggests that translators should consistently consult the official Indonesian orthographic standards when implementing borrowing strategies. The results further indicate that not all newly introduced terms can be effectively expressed in the target language. As such, translators are encouraged to first seek appropriate equivalents in the target language before resorting to borrowing or absorption methods. According to Newmark's framework, most of the borrowed terms fall within the categories of *Material Culture* and *Concepts*, with a significant portion referring to place names, and only a small number relating to *Social Culture*, *Gestures and Habits*, *Activities*, or *Organizations*. This research is subject to certain limitations, particularly its focus on a single novel and one translation. Future studies could broaden the scope by comparing multiple Indonesian editions, extending the analysis to other Victorian-era texts, or employing a combination of reader-response and corpus-based methodologies to assess how borrowing strategies influence acceptability and the transmission of cultural elements.

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