Subtitling Historical Drama TV Series: Constraints and Considerations

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ABSTRACT

Although there are a large number of books and articles on subtitling concentrating on different aspects of the endeavour, less attention seems to be devoted to the subtitling constraints and the possible strategies to be used in film and television series genres. For example, the subtitling of historical drama TV series, which have become very popular and reach a wide audience across the world, is a rarely studied endeavour. The following article is an effort to present a framework for the subtitlers of historical drama in consideration of the constraints of subtitling, as well as the features of the genre itself. Following an introduction about historical distance in translation, the linguistic, cultural and discoursal elements used in the production of the genre, the constraints of subtitling are exemplified with a comparative analysis of a historical drama and its subtitles into English. Particular attention is devoted to the translation strategies used in rendering registers and temporal and geographical varieties of language and, the strategies used to convey military, imperial, religious culture and social stratification. In conclusion, the study hopes to suggest points of practical use for subtitlers, concerning the subtitling of, what is explained in the study as, pseudo historical distance in historical drama and formulating a subtitling metatext

1. Introduction

Audiovisual translation in general and subtitling as a prominent type of audiovisual translation is diligently studied within the scope of translation studies. Today, a majority of books and articles concentrate on the many different aspects and uses of subtitling. For example, some authors prefer to discuss audiovisual translation and subtitling from a lager outlook with books discussing the new points of view on audiovisual translation and media accessibility (i.e., Jankowska & Szarkowska, 2016; Bruti & Perego, 2015; Baños Piñero & Díaz Cintas, 2015), there are also works about new technologies for audiovisual translation (i.e., Sánchez-Gijón & Torres-Hostench, 2015; Romero-Fresco,

2014), books on taking stock of the audiovisual markets around the world (i.e., Diaz-Cintas & Neves, 2015). There are other examples concentrating on the act of translation and the specific difficulties encountered in subtitling. For example, authors who discuss the difficulty of translating different genres like humour (i.e., De Rosa et al, 2014), translation scholars discussing linguistic variation (i.e., Ellender, 2015), the sociocultural impact of subtitling (i.e., Mezei, 2015), subtitling practices in a specific country (i.e., Massidda, 2015), subtitling strategies used for a certain type of audiovisual product (i.e., Sohrabi, 2015), or works outlining strategies that can be used in subtitling (i.e., Kalemba, 2014). Much less attention is devoted to the translation problems inherent in a certain genre of audiovisual product and the translation strategies that can be employed by the translators.

Today, some genres of films and television series such as sit-coms, hospital series, series on law and order and historical drama are frequently produced and viewed by audiences all over the world, thus translated into many languages. From a translator's perspective, it is possible to study the generic features of these series and to study the options available in overcoming the problematic features in the translations of such series. This study aims to initially outline the features that compose a historical drama series, and go on to exemplify the difficulties in translating these series, as well as providing possible translation strategies for the translation of historical drama series and films.

Historical drama otherwise referred to as historical period or costume drama, or period pieces are audiovisual products in which elaborate costumes, sets and properties are featured in order to capture the ambience of a particular period in the past. The term is used in the context of drama for the stage as well as film, television productions, and it can apply to genres like romance, adventure and merged versions of these.

The narrative of historical drama may be explained as, scripted stylized dialogues containing historical and rhetorical features to achieve historical distancing to place the story in a certain time frame.

In reference to historical distance, J. D. Hollander et al (2011, p. 4) state that, if past and present have to be seen as stages in a grand-scale process of development, then past and present must somehow be different. In terms of producing this difference, (i.e. the historical distance), in the contemporary now, generally historical drama bears the marks of its historical period through the use of certain style and lexicon.

J. D. Hollander et al (2011, p. 5), refer to two typical attitudes held with regard to historical distance, the first being the minimizers approach, which sees the past and the present as separated by a gap that ought to be bridged in order to have historical understanding, and the maximizers approach, which argues that clear distinction between past and present do not exist, as the present is a result of the past, it is hard to say where one stops and the other begins. Thus, historical drama produced in the present can be said to using both approaches, as, if the gap referred to by minimizers is not present then there is no historical flavour, but the continuum implied by the maximizers also has to be present for it to have a meaning for the present day viewers. Historical drama contains historico-geographical references that are used in a way that allows them to be

easily perceived by the viewer's due to well-crafted dialogue.

Historical distance is not merely shorthand for temporal distance, but it rather indicates a variety of strategies employed to achieve proximity and separation. In this, the strategies used by the screenwriters may be considered to be markers to be used for achieving the same in the translations.

J. Holmes' (1972) assumption is that the antiquity of a text is apparent on three levels: the linguistic, the literary and poetic, and the socio-cultural. In the case of contemporized versions of retelling of history in the historical drama genre, the presence of the visual and in subtitling even the audial[1], is essentially what characterizes the historical nature of such productions. In this sense contemporary renditions of historical drama actually have a pseudo historical distance.

Muhteşem Yüzyıl: Aşk-I Derun (The Magnificent Century) is a historical drama written by Meral Okay and following her demise by Yılmaz Şahin, directed by Yağmur and Durul Taylan and produced by TIMS Productions. The series ran from 2011 through 2014, airing 139 episodes in Turkey[2]. The fictional series, set in the 16th century in the Ottoman Empire tells the story of the longest reigning Ottoman Sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent and his wife Hürrem who rose from being a slave to a power wielding Sultana.

The series is an international success sold to over 56 countries reaching over 200 million viewers[3]. It has been both subtitled (for example, in Russia and Greece) and dubbed (for example, in Macedonia, USA and Iran), the choice of AVT mode changing according to viewer profiles and channel policies.

The series is not a documentary on Turkish history, nor is it a text, for example, by an Ottoman author to be translated into a foreign language, which would be an example of real historical distance. It is an example of concocted historical distance (based in actual history to a certain extent) in the telling of a love story filled with action and intrigue.

In this case, the historical distance is a backdrop for flavouring and presenting something new for the audience. This is similar to the case of the movie *Shakespeare in Love* (without the literary references) or Disney movies like *Aladdin* (without the caricaturization and Americanisms), where there is foreignness and exoticism side by side in dressing up a production. The tendency to concoct Western style mediated representations of otherness was investigated by E. Said (1995, p. 3) where he used the term orientalism to refer to all forms of representation of distant cultures created by Western civilization. Disney movies like *Aladdin* for example which portray cultural otherness reveal a well-devised mixture of references to exotic worlds and modern

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[1] Whereas the target audience may not understand the dialogues, the audial track also contains music which in the case of historical drama very often contains cannonized music with instruments and sound which contemporary audiences may identify as belonging to a time past. Classical examples may be given as the use of the pipe organ or the

harpsichord in portraying the music of a past period in English or American drama.

[2] For details see: http://en.tims.tv/serie/magnificent-century

[3]   http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/contents/articles/opinion/2013/08/magnificent-century-turkey.html#

thought and present a balance between novelty and familiarity (Di Giovanni, 2003, p. 211).

The screen writer, Okay, has used this basic strategy in scripting the series. Just as the translators of the "past" tend to be more open and straightforward than the originals and their text can be viewed as illustrations, Okay, in translating the past into the present in her script has chosen to flavour her essentially contemporary Turkish narrative with references of the past instead of linguistically and sometimes even realistically situating it in the past.

Subtitling such culturally and historically flavoured series for another culture and language implies that we are interpreting otherness through the images and words used by the narrators' culture- which is contemporary Turkish culture. The contemporary Turkish culture differs on many scales from the Ottoman culture in that the language is different (Ottoman Turkish vs. contemporary Turkish), the socio-political setting is different (an Empire vs. a democracy), the cultural realities are different (a Muslim Empire vs. a secular state), the time/era is different (the 16th century vs. the 21st century) and so on.

Essentially the problems involved with dealing with this type of a historical distance are not so different than translating across languages, as in each case there is a distance be it temporal, spatial or textual. But, according to P. Fawcett (1998, p. 120) a writer in his source language can call up complexes of language very economically and it follows logically that the initial economic scripting of an Ottoman era through the voice of a Turkish writer (who is essentially a descendent of this era) is simpler. It is the endeavour that is to be undertaken to call up references to Ottoman culture which is problematic for the subtitlers, that is of interest for the translation scholar. The translator has limited options as he is working with a prototext which he can manipulate only in so far as the visual and the audial permits it in forming a metatext and has to consider many strategies and deal with multiple constraints including the constraints of subtitling itself.

2. Subtitling Historical Drama: General Constraints Involved

In subtitling, an essentially ancillary and extraneous element added to the finished product, limitations of space and time, rendering speech with writing, the presence of image and the source dialogue, the fact that the narrative must include propositional content of utterances and formal features of the dialogue as well (Diaz Cintas, 2009, p. 49) are some challenges, there is also the vulnerability (Diaz Cintas, 2009, p. 57) such as the scrutiny of the audience who may have knowledge of the source language.

Basically the act of subtitling involves eliminating what is not relevant and reformulating what is in a concise form (Diaz Cintas, 2009, pp. 145-146). H. Gottlieb (1998, p. 247) stresses that "…slight condensation will enhance rather than impair the effectiveness of the intended message." This condensation has to be done with minimal loss of content in two lines, and though quantitative reduction does not always imply rhetoric simplification, the lexical choices must be made appropriately. But, what cannot be immediately and economically expressed in English subtitles is the specificity of the features and the familiarity that allows the associated narrative to remain unexpressed in the reflection of the Ottoman other in the Turkish version

On the other hand, foreign viewers who recognize a subtitled version as a translation realise that it comes from a cultural and historical setting different from their own, presenting them with what could be referred to as contextual mismatches. In some cases these mismatches are filled in by the viewers. For example, F. Chaume's (2004 as quoted in Diaz Cintas, 2009) semiotic cohesion entails the filling of gaps by viewers with information from images when not given in subtitles. During the reading, interpretation and mental recreation of a subtitle questions may arise which will probably be answered based on previous linguistic and cultural knowledge, this according to R. M. Olher (2004, p. 74) is the use of "internal aid strategies". Viewers may also overlook contextual mismatches and use contextual skipping and apply the context to their own context. For example, the sultan becomes the king of the past in their cultures.

The images also serve to support this, as anchoring occurs when words and images convey more or less the same information and thus subtitling makes the most of the narrative functions of images. In this sense the bi-text of subtitled versions enter into a unique communication with the viewers. L. Venuti (1998, p. 67) states that "translation wields enormous power in constructing representations of foreign cultures", in this vein, AV products wield power as in their social impact and visibility as a mode of intercultural exchange they affect cultural representations.

Linguistic difference is one of the major obstacles in this communication; however, language and culture being deeply intertwined and whole texts being culturally embedded and based on a community of references predictably shared by most members of the source, there are other moments of resistance in the subtitling process.

In these instances of resistance, subtitling is never innocent, there is always some rewriting of the source, even when there is no ideology involved. The decisions made by the translator govern the realisation of the AV product and the way in which it is perceived. But, in the case of a pseudo historical drama, subtitled and subject to other constraints, how plausible is it to expect anything beyond a metatext of subtitles to be used by the viewers to understand the original?

3. Working with Culture, Discourse, and Dialogue in Subtitling to Achieve a Balance between Preservation of the Original and Transfer of the Message

According to Y. Gambier (2003, p. 179) an AV product has to be different enough to be foreign, but similar enough to be able to retain the viewers' attention. In this respect, culture poses one of the most important hurdles for the subtitler.

L. Lorenzo (2003, p. 272), in defining cultural aspects of AV products refers to "all those elements that make one society different from another." In the case of culture specific references, translation, being a discursive practice, influences the way the source culture is perceived in the target.

Culture specific references are the verbal and the nonverbal, both visual and auditory signs, which constitute a problem in intercultural transfer because they refer to sociocultural realities of the source culture of the AV product. V. Ivır's (1987, p. 42) differentiation of culture-in-focus and culture-as-background are important because as outlined in the case of pseudo historical distance in drama the writer has used an extinct culture as background. This is not to say it can be delegated to the realm

of unimportance, but the strategies to deal with it need to be devised accordingly.

It could be argued that, due to the wide spread presence of for example historical drama disseminated from Britain (i.e., films about Queen Elizabeth or the Elizabethan Era) and the USA (i.e., films about the American Civil War), the subtitler for those products would have the advantage of studying previous examples from colleagues, or there is less of a referential vacuum due to dissemination of AV products originally from English and American sources. In this case, there is no previously acclaimed or widely distributed example to draw from, as the peripheral Turkish television culture has not produced widely disseminated and translated historical drama.

A. Pym (2000, p. 2), states that, "to look at translation is immediately to be engaged in issues of how cultures interrelate." Though of course on a wider plane it would be arguable that Turkish culture has interacted and interrelated with other cultures including the English speaking one, in this case there is no previous example of cultures actually interrelating through translation in the genre and medium in question.

Of course, it could also be argued that, a cultural feature is a universal notion and that the subtitler draws from the repertoire of strategies made use of in previous examples. B. Nedergaar-Larsen (1993), N. Ramiere (2004), are a few of the scholars who have worked on classifying cultural references in subtitling, Rabadan (1991, p. 164 as quoted in Diaz Cintas, 2009) proposes the term "referential vacuum" for those items which have no equivalent or are unknown in the target culture, and others such as J. Diaz Cintaz (2003 as quoted in Dias Cintas, 2009) have developed a classification of strategies for dealing with these. But, it can also be argued that due to the lack of grounding for the audience as well (i.e., they have probably not watched a historical drama set in the Ottoman era either), this is not as simplistic.

Some examples as regards palace culture, religious culture of the Ottomans and the scripting of these in conveying historical distance in the original may serve to clarify this issue.

In terms of the scripting of audiovisual productions the interaction between words and images used to convey meaning is formulated purposefully. It is here that for example the proxemics (i.e., only his kin kiss the Sultan's hand, others kiss the skirts of his robe) kinesics heritage (i.e., tongue clicking to imply the negative) of different communities come into play.

Another example can be provided from the palace culture conveyed in the original. Since there is a dialectal interrelationship between language and social structure, in that the variables of linguistic usage are productions and reflexes of factors such as power relations, occupational roles, social stratifications, the old Turkish and Ottoman language abound in terms used to refer to professions or social stratification. In some cases the translation of the use of '*vezir, paşa, kalfa, kaftan, sultan*,' are pretty much straightforward as one can assume (whether correctly or not is another issue, as the best of intentions does not guarantee that the result will meet the intended purposes in translation) that these have well known equivalents in English like 'vizier, pasha, sultan, caftan etc.'. But, what of others less widely known such as: '*hekim kadın*' (the sole female doctor in the Palace who serves the Sultanas in the harem and the only doctor allowed to touch them), or *kapıkulu* (a group of imperial infantry who are

employed by the state, recruited from among non-Muslim families at a young age and trained in one of the military battalions or imperial schools), or *Cellat Kara Ali* (the head of the squad of executioners under the command of the Sultan in the imperial palace). It becomes troublesome for the subtitler to find concise versions of these social statuses.

Also to be considered is that, the context of culture is a wide scope which subsumes context of situation within it, thus any utterance is an expression of a specific situation and also a wider, social, historical, ideological context. In this context, how does the subtitler relay the presence of religious culture as a backdrop, without giving rise to misconceptions like the series refers exclusively to the dominance of a Muslim culture? In Ottoman times Muslim culture and the use of *inşallah* (if god is willing), *ben senden razıyım Rabbim de razı olsun* (I am thankful for you, may you also be looked favourably upon in the eyes of God)*, maaşallah* (may God protect you from evil doings)*, Rabbim bir daha göstermesin* (may God never allow this to happen again) were used as daily expressions like (in the respective order as presented above) 'hopefully, hopefully all will go well, I hope nothing happens to you'. Translating these with the reflection of the religious culture poses an exoticism that is not intended in the original.

It is important to differentiate between foreignization and exoticism when choosing the correct strategy in what to translate. Foreignization and exoticism have come to be used interchangeably in some contexts, but as Kwiecinski (2001, p. 15) states though the terms are used rather loosely, they refer to different phenomena. For example, it may be argued that the use of religious culture in the English subtitled

versions would not be foreignizing the text for the generally Christian or non-Muslim English speakers, but would be exoticisizing the text to the extent that it would be harder for the audience to associate with it. On the other hand it may also be argued that in the subtitled versions the audience is going to hear some familiar undubbed vocabulary, for example, *Allah* is known to refer to God in the Muslim culture, so to delete the religious culture may also lead to suspicions about the quality of the subtitling.

The English subtitling of international series over the Internet, which is the version studied, also entails the problem of not having a direct cultural audience to address. The series may be viewed by a native English speaker, an Arab speaking English wishing to watch episodes prior to the time they are aired in his country, or a Macedonian who will understand many of the cultural references, or a Greek who will be familiar will most of the culinary terms, or a Chilean who has no inkling of how Ottomans lived, or a Hispanic American who is made aware of the existence of an Ottoman Empire in the 16th century by the series. In short, there is no narrowing down of audience expectations or scope of audience knowledge. In this context the subtitler needs to carefully devise translation strategies to deal with the dialogues. Though the other subtitled versions aimed at specific audiences such as Macedonians watching prime time soap operas or Greeks watching Turkish historical drama may present a more homogenous profile, this still does not help the translator solve the problem of the lack of overlap between the cultures involved, though there may be some commonalities between cultures the translators can draw

from with groups who have shared a common history.

Since linguistic choices in dialogue are never random in AV production, AV dialogue has a prefabricated orality in that these inform viewers as well as mimicking the features of everyday conversation (Chaume 2004, p. 168 as quoted in Dias Cintas, 2009). The ways the characters speak gives away their personalities and backgrounds, the stylistic variants used by characters carry connotative meaning over and above the denotative functions. Some AV productions are replete with stylistic variants to the extent that they become an integral part of the story, which is the case with historical drama, where, for example, in the series studied contemporary Turkish and Ottoman styles are mixed.

M. Bakthin (1986, pp. 61-62) refers to secondary complex speech genres such as novels, drama (in our context also including AV products) arising in more complex and comparatively highly developed and organized cultural communication that is artistic, socio-political and so forth; but during the process of their formation they absorb and digest and reflect various primary simple genres that have taken form in the unmediated speech communion. This is the balance – the artistic use of the Ottoman culture and the use of contemporary Turkish- that Okay used in scripting this historical drama in contemporary Turkish.

H. Reid (1996, pp. 106-107) states that, it may be preferable not to adapt the subtitles to that of the style presented as this would slow down comprehension. In the case of historical drama, the audience through the setting, props, costumes etc. will understand that people spoke a different variant of the source language at the time.

The study of speech to written mode transition has been covered by A. Remael (2001) and A. Assis Rosa (2001) and others who establish that in subtitling which is never a complete and detailed rendering, also some of the typical features of spoken language will disappear; grammar and lexis tend to be simplified and interactional features and intonation only maintained to a certain extent, in whatever subgenre the AV production belongs to. Due to the unchanging visual, the main foreign elements of the original essentially remain the same, and it follows that characters must speak as would be envisioned by the viewers (i.e., the sultan must speak in cultured, authoritative, imperial tones.)

Spoken language of an AV (the audial track) is the main source that needs to be subtitled, but there are other semiotic systems that make up an AV product. D. Delabastita (1989, p. 199) refers to visual and acoustic presentation each entailing verbal and non-verbal signs. For example, in the series studied historical distance is also present in the visual images of Arabic script use in writing by the characters.

The subtitler, realistically, turns to what can be done with these discourses and the presentation of these in dialogues in searching for markers that will facilitate the translation. The process becomes one of identifying what these discoursal markers are, how they have been reflected in the dialogue (and the formulation of the dialogue as a whole) and devising strategies for transfer within the constraints of subtitling this particular genre.

A. Pym (1992, p. 228) states that "what translation theory wants to know about discourses is the relative degree of difficulty and success involved in their extension and the degree in which they may undergo transformation through translation."

Discourse choices may be viewed as packaging the communication so as to be more effective (Dooley 2008, p. 4). These choices made in the original packaging may be met with different ways to package the message for the same effect or the same communicative function, but they have to be met to a certain degree for the historical drama genre to remain at least a semblance of historical drama in translation. M. Morini (2008, p. 33) states that the initial decisions by the translator are of a pragmatic nature and it is important to analyse the choices they have in each translating situation.

At this juncture, there is an added bonus of subtitling, (and for example not dubbing), in that paralinguistic features such as intonation, stress patterns in spoken discourse are heard during viewing of subtitled versions and these can sometimes have universal effects (i.e., the whispering of someone to relay a confidence, shouting to show outrage, the way a person's voice changes in talking to a superior etc.). But, other features can cause problems. In the case of historical drama these can be divided into several categories: The first category can be referred to as register markers and then of course there are temporal and geographical varieties of language.

3.1. Subtitling Register Markers and Temporal / Geographical Language Varieties

Under register markers, the first type would be those used to denote a characters social position. P. Trudgill (1999) refers to lexis being almost exclusively the markers of register which also indicates a characters social reality. Examples given previously for palace social culture are difficulties within this context.

The second would be varieties of language used for special purposes. There is geographical variety, for example the lead character *Hürrem*, the wife of the sultan, speaks with a foreign accent marking her as a foreigner in the environment she is enslaved in. As with most of the women in the harem she starts out her life in the Ottoman capital as a slave brought to the Ottoman imperial harem. There is also the temporal variety, for example the frequent use of Farsi and Arabic as is common to Ottoman Turkish of the time, which colours the text as cross temporal, but the use is limited not incapacitating the understanding of the contemporary Turkish viewers. An example may be provided as follows: '*yola revan olalım*' vs. '*yola cikalım*' (both meaning 'let's get going') the use of '*revan olmak*' an older expression not currently used which is understood from the context as the characters use it when going somewhere, so it is straightforward in the Turkish version, but it adds historical and temporal flavour. And lastly there are social varieties such as the Sultan's educated code switching between Farsi when he wants to recite poetry which accentuates his cultural wealth.

In consideration of the historical distance scripted in the original, the lack of previous examples from which to draw from, the wideness of the viewership, the cultural features of the original, all these must then be further evaluated carefully by the subtitler.

3.2. Using Explicitation to Translate Cultural Features

In looking at some of strategies employed by the subtitler in nine random episodes[4] and classifying these according to J. Diaz Cintas' (2009, pp. 202-207)

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[4] Season 1, Episodes 1, 6, 7, 10,11 Season 2, Episodes 2, 40, 41, 44.

categorization of strategies for translation of culture and discourse marking terms would yield the following tableaux:

In analysing the subtitlers choices the preferred strategy seems to be explicitation which basically implies that the subtitler is trying to make a feature more understandable or apparent through the use of hyponymy, generalizations or neutralizations. There are differences in the actual type of explicitation involved:

In terms of military culture, in reference to 'the Imperial tent of the Sultan at the centre of the encampment of war' the Ottoman term '*Ordugah Otağı*'(Season 1, Episode 1, 5:42) of the original is met with 'military camp tent', neutralizing the Ottoman military culture and providing the main features of there being a camp and a tent in it.

In terms of Ottoman discourse, the social stratification of the addresser and the addressee as implied with the use of 'he humbly requests that he be admitted into the presence of the Sultan'-'*huzura kabülünü arz eder*' (Season 1, Episode 1, 22:13) and the answer 'welcome him in' – 'b*uyursun*' respectively as, 'he asks for admittance' and 'let him in' are explicitations in the fact that the tone of humbleness of the original in the first case and the politically correct kindness in the second case are replaced with a simple request and an authoritative reply.

In terms of the Ottoman palace culture, the translation of the term implying 'a woman who has given the Sultan a child and risen to the status of Sultana herself'-'*Haseki*' (Season 1, Episode 1, 34:32) as 'the Sultan's favourite concubine' is a explication in the sense that it retains the feature of the woman being a member of the Sultan's harem, but deletes features about her status in the palace.

In terms of religious culture, the translation of 'Allah, do not separate me from my soul and those who are my flesh and blood- '*Rabbim beni kendi kanımdan, canımdan ayrı düşürme*'(Season1, Episode 10, 39:20) as 'do not spill my blood and protect my soul' is an explicitation in the sense that it retains the prayer, but neutralizes the reference to the Muslim culture.

In terms of social culture, the translation of 'the subjects of the Sultan'-'*kul*'(Season 1, Episode 1, 12:06) with 'servant', which may imply anything from an individual paid for duties performed to subservience, explicates the original in the sense deleting the historicizing concept of an Empire of subjects of the Sultan.

This strategy of neutralizing the cultural and discoursal elements with culturally unmarked, or discourse wise simplistic alternatives does not detract from the overall sense of the message conveyed and it is a common feature in subtitling, but on the other hand this decomposes the historical distance of the original into a neutralized tone.

3.3. Using Transpositioning to Translate Cultural Features

A second strategy diligently employed by the subtitler is transpositioning, which is basically the replacement of a source cultural feature with a target culture feature. In this some examples are as follows:

In reference to military culture, the translation of 'the head of the Sultan's private professional armed guards who protect him in battle'- '*Silahtar Kethüdası*' (Season 1, episode 1, 2:30) as 'Chamberlain of Armours' is a substitution for the concept through the use of the European concept of a Chamberlain in imperial palaces.

In reference to social culture the translation of 'non-Muslim children, 1 from

every 40 household, between ages 8-16 who have been assimilated with the Sultan's subjects as either technocrats for the state or foot soldiers for the army'- '*devşirme*'(Season 1, Episode 1, 29:13) as 'recruits' is transpositioning of the whole social system of the Ottomans with army recruits system of legions of the West.

In reference to discourse of the imperial house, the translation of 'a member of the house of the Sultan is passing, please allow for passage'- '*destur*' (Season 2, Episode 44, 17:34) as 'attention' is a replacement of the said discourse with the military discourse of the West as in troops ready for inspection standing at attention.

In reference to religious culture the translation of 'muharrem ul haram, the month of the Muslim calendar coinciding with September'- '*muharrem*' (Season 1, Episode 1, 5:41) as 'September' is the transpositioning of the Muslim calendar with the Gregorian calendar.

In reference to palace culture the translation of 'the head of the caretakers of the Sultan's fields, gardens and crops'- '*bostancı başı*' (Season 1, Episode 1, 1:23:20) as 'chief gardener' is the transpositioning of Ottoman culture with European palace culture.

In using transpositioning the subtitler draws on the repertoire of references to cultures known to the target audience, this is a common strategy in subtitling and though this does not detract from the overall sense of the message conveyed, in the case of the example studied, it decomposes the historical distance of the original into a neutralized tone.

3.4. Using Calque to Translate Cultural Features

A third strategy employed by the subtitler is calque, which is basically the equivalent of literal translation. As with most examples of literal translation the results sound 'misplaced' in English, the examples being the translation of discourse in '*Hünkarımız Sultan Süleyman Han Hazretleri*' (Season 1, Episode 1, 4:30), as 'our majesty' and '*hünkarım*' (Season 1, Episode 1, 19:55) as 'my majesty', versus the more widely used forms in English 'your majesty' or 'his majesty'.

3.5. Using Loan Words to Translate Cultural Features

A fourth strategy employed by the subtitler is the use of loan words which have made it into the English vocabulary such as the translation of 'the mother of the Sultan'- '*Valide Sultan*' (social culture, Season 1, Episode 1, 34:24) as 'Sultana', deleting the fact that she is the mother of the Sultan and also leading to confusion as she is not his wife as Sultana would imply. Other examples are '*paşa*'-'pasha' (military culture, Season 1, Episode 1, 5:41), '*kalfa*'- 'calfa' (palace culture, Season 1, Episode 1, 23:45) and so on.

3.6. Omitting Cultural Features in Subtitling

A fifth strategy employed by the subtitler is the omission of such markers of historical distance and Ottoman culture such as deletion of '*Rum*'(S1/E1: social culture, Greek of Ottoman nationality), *mesabirin* (S1/E1: religious culture, may Allah grant me patience), '*zatı şahaneleriniz*' (S1/E1: palace culture- 'your greatness') and so on.

4. Conclusion

In summary of all the choices made by the subtitler several features stand out: Initially the subtitles have deleted either through omission or through the use of various other strategies references to the Ottoman culture which are the primary markers that the original uses to situate the AV product as a *historical* drama.

Secondly, the subtitler has used strategies that will strip the subtitled text of any feature that impairs understanding in making it shorter, culturally neutral or moving towards the European culture of old, thus eliminating the discourse and cultural markers branding it *a historical drama set in the Ottoman period*.

In view of the findings of the comparative analysis a question that requires answering is: In view of the constraints of subtitling itself and the features of the historical drama genre, and in light of the translation strategies embraced by the subtitler, how does translation classify this subtitled version?

If evaluated in the strictest terms as a translation retaining the historical drama flavour of the original, it would rate very poorly as one. In the case of historical drama the script is written by the screenwriter with the express purpose of providing a pseudo historical distance with old rhetoric, lexicon, cultural and discoursal features. On the other hand, the constraints of subtitling coupled with the realities like, cultural vacuums in Ottoman-English translation, the lack of shared background knowledge between the source and the target audience, the problems of stylized and manipulated text filled with discourse and culture markers in order to present historical distance and flavour have left the subtitler with little room to manoeuvre in.

In these cases of primal subtitled versions (with no previous examples of the genre in the source language translated) it may be wise to evaluate the subtitled versions as metatext in the sense that J. Holmes (1972) refers to a metapoem. F. Farahzad (2009, p. 125) refers to the use of insight from the theory of intertexuality in order to explain the relationship between the source text and the target text which is referred to as the prototext and the metatext in that order, and argues that the two texts stand in an intertextual relationship to one another because the metatext repeats the prototext in terms of content without being limited to it.

J. Holmes' model (see Holmes 1972, p. 103) of the metapoetic process can be interpreted and used for subtitling purposes if adapted: a shift from one linguistic system to another, a shift from the sociocultural system of the original to the sociocultural system of the metatext; a shift from the audiovisual text system of the original within which the original series has a place to the a written system in which it must find expression. There are intersystem incompatibilities that must be resolved or must at least give the viewers the impression that it has been resolved. Metatextual translation may refer to in this context a process of transferring a spoken text into a written text and also into a culture, thus the metatext is basically an overall image a text creates of itself in a given culture. This is determined not only by the subtitled text itself, but what is said (or in this case viewed) in that culture about the text.

In short, in summary of the analysis and considerations referred to in the study, the following points become of value in formulating strategies in subtitling historical drama: Initial decision by the subtitler have to be decisions to do with genre. The question at this juncture is, should historical drama subtitle text read as such? In the case of this being possible in the language and culture pairs involved the decision would be apparent, but since this would rarely be the case, the subtitler must be aware that the subtitles read as a metatext.

Also it is important to understand if the historical distance is actually central to the narrative. Of course it may be argued that the way in which a story is told is the actual richness of the story as otherwise all love stories would read the same. On the other hand historical drama series hinges on the use of ambience to relay a story thus making it attractive for audiences. This is presented in the visual with costumes, sets, props etc. So whatever strategy one employs in the subtitles the ambience of the pseudo historical distance will be present in an AV product.

Secondly, there is the pseudo historical distance created by the script writer. The subtitler then decides how to translate the markers of historical distance as manipulated by the scriptwriter. In this case the primary difficulty becomes one of transferring cultural features as exemplified in the study.

A third concern is register. Discourse markers as exemplified in the study are probably the most important historical flavouring touches the scriptwriter uses and these are of concern for the subtitler.

Finally there is relevance. This is basically answering the question how the historically distanced, culturally embedded, and manipulated and scripted text is to be relevant in the target. The issues of relevance of dealing with pseudo historical distance in translation are: how the series chooses to tell its viewers what it wants to tell them, the ratio between explicit and implicit information conveyed (i.e., how much of the now extinct Ottoman palace culture is given as information and what is implied), the signalling of relevant information versus irrelevant information (i.e., not focusing on, but supplying, the inevitable presence of the Muslim culture as the Ottomans were a Muslim empire), and

generally the intensity with which the information is given (i.e., the historical facts in the story serve to form the context in which a love story is played out, the historic information is relevant for contextualizing the events that happen). In short, how does the text convey information, how does in stratify information, how much and which type of information is presented to achieve a pseudo historical distance.

Once these have been decided then related choices follow on the linguistic plane and the options have been mapped out by translation scholars.

According to E. Branigan (1992, p. 34) in AV products there are two systems of space, time and causal interaction: one in front of our eyes and another that we conceptualize in our heads. In the case of subtitling historical drama, in most cases, the subtitles form the metatext that help the foreign viewers in the conceptualization and the rest is basically left to their imaginations and knowledge. The subtitlers awareness of this is primal in devising the translation strategies to be employed.

Studies such as the one conducted have two beneficial uses. Initially, these types of studies with specific strategies and explanations help translators who are asked to translate in this genre as they will be looking for examples of what colleagues before them were able to do and the strategies that they employed. Usually when a translator is asked to translate a series or a film in a genre that is not familiar, professionals tend to turn to examples provided by other translators to see the possibilities and understand the limitations presented by a product of the genre.

Also such studies are extremely beneficial for the translator trainers in training students for subtitling. Such studies serve as examples that may be used in class

and studied by the students to provide specific strategies that may be used, to analyse the source audiovisual product (i.e. film or series) in terms of discourse and language, and become acquainted with the difficulties of translating the genre.

The issue of subtitling different series and films genres deserves more attention by translation scholars are such audiovisual texts usually display similarities and mapping out translation strategies is not only beneficial for colleagues, but also for students of subtitling courses who may draw from previous examples in their first attempts at translating a new genre.

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