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READERS OF RETRANSLATIONS ON ONLINE PLATFORMS

*Müge IŞIKLAR KOÇAK**

ABSTRACT

A considerable number of studies have been conducted on retranslations, and many focus on explaining the reasons for the production of retranslation in its own context, while others consist of detailed case studies focusing on the strategies or norms used in retranslations and their possible effects on political and cultural contexts. However, readers, readers' expectations and their tentative position have only been partially analyzed in translation research, and this analysis has not been directly connected with research on retranslation. This study focuses on readers, and aims to reveal their active role in creating consciousness in the reading public about retranslations in Turkey. Unlike many previous studies, in this study, data on readers' reactions will be collected from online sites rather than newspapers or magazines. This study will further demonstrate that readers openly express their opinions about first translations and retranslations on forums, blogs, publishing house web-sites, and magazines. Due to recent technological advances, the Internet provides readers a channel for complaints and suggestions, and thus the opportunity to be involved in the discussions on re/translations. Finally, this paper suggests that the blogs, forums, and publishing house web-sites can be used as both primary and extra-textual sources by translation researchers.

STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

A considerable number of studies have been conducted on retranslations, and many focus on explaining the reasons for the production of retranslation in its own context, while others consist of detailed case studies focusing on the strategies or norms used in retranslations and their possible effects on political and cultural contexts. However, readers, readers' expectations and their tentative position have only been partially analyzed in translation research, and

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this analysis has not been directly connected with research on retranslation. This study focuses on readers, and aims to reveal their active role in creating consciousness in the reading public about retranslations in Turkey. Unlike many previous studies, in this study, data on readers' reactions will be collected from online sites rather than newspapers or magazines. This study will further demonstrate that readers openly express their opinions about first translations and retranslations on forums, blogs, publishing house web-sites, and magazines. Finally, this paper suggests that the blogs, forums, and publishing house web-sites can be used as both primary and extra-textual sources by translation researchers.

Introduction

The present article focuses on the role of readers in the production and reception of retranslations in Turkey in the period between 2011 and 2015. This research reveals that a study of readers' use of websites can highlight the importance of these sites as democratic platforms for the open expression of opinions about translations and retranslations. Moreover, this article sets out to demonstrate that readers have become visible and participant agents on websites, with an active interest in the process of retranslation.

Since Paul Bensimon's and Antoine Berman's articles in the special issue of *Palimpsestes* in 1990, scholars have frequently discussed the concept of retranslation.¹ The so called "retranslation hypothesis" proposed in the 1990s by Berman suggests that first translations tend to opt for higher readability, while retranslations are more source-oriented (Koskinen & Paloposki, 2003, p.21; Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2009, p.234). Another hypothesis is that translations become dated over time, which gives rise to retranslations (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2009, p.234). Several studies tested and challenged these two hypotheses, using various texts from different parts of the world (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2009, pp.233-234).² Many other scholarly studies include detailed case studies on the strategies or norms used in retranslations and/or their possible effects on political and cultural contexts.³ Many recent studies on the reasons for retranslation have revealed that the motives mainly lie in changing the social and cultural dynamics of the target context. Surveying research on retranslation, Kaisa Koskinen and Outi Paloposki state that "there are multiple causes for retranslating, revising, reprinting and other kinds of recycling texts, and any case study is therefore likely to reveal a web of multiple causation" (2010, p.296). Scholarly studies on retranslation have additionally shown that the field of retranslation is in expansion, and the notion of retranslation is increasingly viewed from a broader perspective. Yet, my survey of studies has disclosed that readership of retranslations has been neglected in previous research. Readers' expectations and their perception have only been partially analyzed in

¹ Bensimon, P. 1990. Présentation. *Palimpsestes* 4, ix-xiii; Berman, Antoine. 1990. La retraduction comme espace de traduction. *Palimpsestes*, No.4, 1-9.

² Some examples are: Koskinen & Paloposki 2003; Susam-Sarajeva 2003, 2006; Brownlie 2006; Dean 2010; Sancaktaroğlu Bozkurt 2014; Arı & Tosun 2015; Birkan-Baydan 2015, Taş 2015.

³ For instance; Du Nour 1995; Kujamaki 2001; Balcı 2005; Karadağ 2008; Ekmekçi 2008; Ece 2010; Dinçel 2013; Akbulut 2014; Yalçındağ 2014.

translation research in general and not at all in research on retranslation.⁴ In this study, it is proposed that a study on readers could be an effective alternative approach to understanding the reasons behind retranslating.

Methodology

Unlike previous studies, in this study, data on reader reactions are taken not from newspapers or magazines, but from online sites. Thanks to recent technological advances, blogs, forums, web sites of publishing houses, and online bookshops have become open sites for readers to share their experiences and opinions, and therefore can be used as both primary and “extra-textual sources” (Toury, 1995, p.65) by the researchers of re/translation. Different from the letters in newspapers or magazines, which reflect rather institutionalized views due to the selection process, data from online sources reveal more straight-out and less censored opinions, not subjected to any selection process by an editor or an institution.

In this research, data on readers’ opinions were collected from four blogs, on which dedicated readers discuss their experiences, and favourite books, authors and translators. The selected nine sources were as follows: four forums, chosen as discussion forums on genre-specific websites, three online magazines, and two online bookshops. These web sites were selected according to the frequency with which the terms “çeviri, yeniden çeviri, çevirmen, tercüme, tercüman” [translation, retranslation, translator] appeared on their sites. The blogs and forums specifically on literary texts (such as *cinairoman.com* or *iyikitap.net*) produced more results than the others, where I carefully analyzed the dialogues, essays and comments, selecting those involving more detailed discussions on retranslation. Finally, forty varied texts from the selected sites between 2011 and 2015 were chosen; some were written by bloggers in the form of essays, others were published as articles on online magazines, and others were in the form of dialogues between forum members.

Findings

Paloposki and Koskinen address three main topics when dealing with retranslations as an object of study: “the extent and proportion of retranslation, the motives for and reception of retranslations (publishers, critics) and what happens to a text when it is either retranslated or revised (textual analysis)” (2010, p.29). In a similar vein, the online sources surveyed in this study demonstrate that readers show a high level of interest in the last two topics. Such comments provide information on the reception of retranslated texts and help us understand readers’ perspective of retranslated texts. Moreover, readers’ comments are especially valuable in understanding the perceptions of both retranslations and also revised editions, and the fuzzy area in between.

The main aim of readers, involved in the forums and blogs examined was to understand the reasons for producing retranslations.

⁴ See for instance; Pym 1998, 2009; Tahir-Gürçağlar 2005; Condinho Bravo 2008; Erkul Yağcı 2011; Duraner, Tunali, Işıklar Koçak, 2017.

The results of my survey showed that according to the data, retranslations are produced for three main reasons: a) previous translations are inaccurate and full of mistakes, b) first translations become dated over time, and c) retranslations are used by publishers as a marketing strategy.

As a second issue, in a remarkable number of forum and blog discussions, readers focus on the selection process. Among the most frequent questions are: which edition, which translator, which publishing house to select. Responses are usually given by those who are already familiar with these works, or by very experienced readers who seem to have a considerable knowledge on translators and publishing houses. Examples have shown that some readers select a retranslation according to its translator and the editor. For other readers, however, the publisher is also an important criterion. Additionally, the directness of re/translation and the fullness of re/translation are other criteria taken into account. In the forums, translating from the original language is usually considered an essential selection criterion; fullness of retranslation, on the other hand, is a more controversial and widely discussed topic, seen in the frequent complaints about the deficiency of older translations.

Moreover, some readers find older translations better, and make comparison among its retranslations. The proper use of Turkish, the overall style and attractive titles are seen by most readers as indicators of successful translation, and they recommend buying or at least reading older, superior versions instead of more recent ones. More surprisingly, some readers recommend neither first nor later translations since, in their opinion, all are doomed to failure. They prefer the originals, and recommend these to others.

The last issue concerns readers' awareness of the blurred borders between retranslations and revised versions. Readers' comments have demonstrated that they are sometimes confused about the possible differences between different versions. It seems that while some readers are aware of the possible differences between different versions of the same translation, that is, the second edition can be a revised version, others fail to notice any difference between several editions.

Thus, the survey of these sites disclosed that many readers make deliberate, non-random choices. Many even spend time and energy comparing old and new translations. Moreover, they stay in touch on web-sites and share their opinions and expectations regarding translations. Readers exchange advice about retranslations, complain about unsatisfactory ones, and show appreciation for retranslators and publishers of particular novels. All the examples I surveyed in this study are clear indicators of readers' active participation in each other's selection process, through their negative and positive comments. Thus, these online platforms have become open reference sites for questions about the quality of re/translations, differences between retranslations, the reasons for their production, and the best approach to selecting satisfactory retranslations. Readers are not afraid to name the publishers whose translated books they find unsatisfactory.

Conclusion

The survey of reader comments in the forums and blogs has demonstrated that retranslation has been a quite widely discussed subject among Turkish readers. They question the reasons for retranslating, attempting to understand how to choose among retranslated texts, they criticize retranslated texts, and they demand better retranslations. Complementary to research by Tahir-Gürçağlar (2005) and Erkul Yağcı (2011), indicating that readers are visible, active and participant actors who desire to be involved in the planning activities of journals and magazines, the current research has shown that readers on online websites openly challenge publishers' decision to retranslate a novel, and they make critical comments about retranslated texts. Additionally, it can be suggested that the users of these sites seem to have higher awareness about translations, since they compare first and later translations, problematize the differences between different retranslations, and are aware of criteria for selection of retranslations, such as the identity of the retranslator, editor and/or the publisher.

Another finding of the present research is the complexity of consumption patterns among the readers. Some prefer the older versions, but others denigrate these earlier ones, and prefer new retranslations. Furthermore, the deficiency in earlier translations and the ageing factor seem to be two important motives for purchasing retranslations.

This study on the readers in the forums and blogs brings a new perspective to the fuzzy division, or in Paloposki and Koskinen's (2010) words, the "fine line", between retranslation and revision. It appears that some readers are rather confused about the divisions between retranslation, revised version, and reprint, and the definitions of the terms do not seem to be clear in their minds; however, others seem to be much more aware.

Discussions in the forums and blogs also shed light on the interaction between the readers. It seems that they not only affect each other's opinions, but also the buying processes. This is particularly evident among the readers of fantastic literature, who talk about the possibility of creating pressure on the publishers to release the remaining books in the series. The web-sites represent a convenient and rapid means for readers to exchange ideas. Finally, I suggest that, compared to magazines and newspapers, forums and blogs provide readers a more open and democratic platform, since the comments here are not subjected to any selection procedure by an editor or an institution, but are controlled by readers themselves.

The results of this study suggest a number of possibilities for future research. One might be to carry out a long-term and regular investigation on particular web-sites to observe patterns and changes in reader perceptions. Another interesting research area might be to investigate differences and similarities in readers' attitudes across different genres, such as popular literature and canonized literature.

Keywords: retranslation, readers, reception, online sites, extra-textual sources

İNTERNET ORTAMINDA YENİDEN ÇEVİRİ VE OKURLARI

ÖZET

Yeniden çeviriler üzerine birçok çalışma yapılmış ve bu çalışmaların birçoğu yeniden çevirilerin üretilmesinin nedenlerini ve kültürel ve politik bağlamlarla ilişkili etkilerini ortaya çıkarmaya çalışmıştır. Bu çalışmaların bir kısmında ise yeniden çevirilen metinlerde kullanılan çevirmen stratejileri ve normlar üzerine odaklanılarak karşılaştırmalı metin incelemesi yapılmış ve yeniden çevirilerin birbirlerinden farkları sorgulanmıştır. Ancak çeviri ile ilgili akademik araştırmalarda yeniden çeviriler konusunda okur beklentileri ve okurların rolleri üzerine okur odaklı çalışmalar yapılmamıştır. Aslında genel olarak çeviribilim alanında okur odaklı akademik çalışmalar oldukça kısıtlıdır. Bu çalışmada odak olarak okurlar ele alınacak ve okurların yeniden çeviriler konusunda Türk kültür dizgesinde okur kitlesi üzerinde farkındalık yaratan aktif bir rol üstlendikleri gösterilmeye çalışılacaktır. Şimdiye kadar yapılan çoğu çalışmadan farklı olarak bu araştırmada okur tepkileri ve beklentileriyle ilgili veriler basılı gazete ve dergilerden değil çevrimiçi sitelerden toplanacaktır. Özellikle internetin okurlara görüş, şikayet ve önerilerini ifade etmek ve paylaşmak için sağladığı olanaklar okurların giderek daha da etkin bir şekilde çeviriler konusunda tartışmalara katılmasını sağlamıştır. Bu çalışma okurların internet sitelerinde özgürce görüş bildirmeleri sayesinde yeniden çevirilerin alımlanması ve üretilme nedenleriyle ilgili daha önce olmadığı kadar çeşitli ve birinci ağızdan bilgi edinilebileceğini gösterecektir. Çalışmanın bir diğer amacı da okurların yeniden çeviri sürecine müdahil olmak isteyecek kadar katılımcı bir rol oynadığını ortaya çıkarmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: yeniden çeviri, okur, alımlama, çevrimiçi siteler, metin-dışı kaynaklar

Introduction

The present article focuses on the role of readers in the production and reception of retranslations in Turkey in the period between 2011 and 2015. This research reveals that a study of readers' use of websites can highlight the importance of these sites as democratic platforms for the open expression of opinions about translations and retranslations. Moreover, this article sets out to demonstrate that readers have become visible and participant agents on websites, with an active interest in the process of retranslation.

Since Paul Bensimon's and Antoine Berman's articles in the special issue of *Palimpsestes* in 1990, scholars have frequently discussed the concept of retranslation.⁵ The so called "retranslation hypothesis" proposed in the 1990s by Berman suggests that first translations tend to opt for higher readability, while retranslations are more source-oriented (Koskinen & Paloposki, 2003, p.21; Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2009, p.234). Another hypothesis is that translations become dated over time, which gives rise to retranslations (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2009, p.234). Several studies tested and challenged these two hypotheses, using various texts from different parts of the world (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2009, pp.233-

⁵ Bensimon, P. 1990. Présentation. *Palimpsestes* 4, ix-xiii; Berman, Antoine. 1990. La retraduction comme espace de traduction. *Palimpsestes*, No.4, 1-9.

234).⁶ Many other scholarly studies include detailed case studies on the strategies or norms used in retranslations and/or their possible effects on political and cultural contexts.⁷ The recent studies on the reasons for retranslation have revealed that the motives mainly lie in changing the social and cultural dynamics of the target context. Surveying research on retranslation, Kaisa Koskinen and Outi Paloposki state that “there are multiple causes for retranslating, revising, reprinting and other kinds of recycling texts, and any case study is therefore likely to reveal a web of multiple causation” (2010, p.296).

It should be noted that the number of scholarly studies on retranslation has grown considerably in the last decade. For instance, a chapter on the subject by Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar is included in the second edition of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* in 2009, and Koskinen and Paloposki’s chapter entitled “Retranslation” was added to the *Handbook of Translation Studies* in 2010. Sharon Deane-Cox wrote *Retranslation: Translation, Literature and Reinterpretation* in 2014, and the journal *Target* published a special issue on “Voice in Retranslation” in 2015, edited by Cecilia Alvstad and Alexandra Assis Rosa. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary project, launched at Boğaziçi University (2011-2016), led to the compilation of a comprehensive bibliography of retranslations published in the Ottoman and modern Turkish societies to provide researchers with quantitative data and trends about retranslated works and their translators. Two conferences, *Retranslation in Context I* and *II*, were organized at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul in December 2013 and in November 2015 respectively.⁸ A third conference *Retranslation in Context III*, as a following of the first two, was held at Ghent University, Belgium, in February 2017.

Scholarly studies on retranslation have shown that the field of retranslation is in expansion, and the notion of retranslation is increasingly viewed from a broader perspective. Yet, my survey of studies has disclosed that readership of retranslations has been neglected in previous research. Readers’ expectations and their perception have only been partially analyzed in translation research in general and not at all in research on retranslation.⁹ Nevertheless, some of these studies reveal important findings regarding the active role of readers of translations in cultural planning in Turkey. One example is Tahir Gürçağlar’s (2005) research on Turkish readers, in which she employs reception theories to analyze readers’ letters published between 1950 and 1960 in the magazine *Varlık*, in order to identify readers’ expectations about translated texts. In the chapter entitled “Translation and Reader: Readers’ Letters, Reception Studies and Translation Studies”, Tahir Gürçağlar states that criticisms and reviews of translations reflect readers’ opinions only to a limited extent, since “these articles were written by researchers, scholars, critiques or writers and they were filtered before being published in newspapers and journals and therefore form an institutionalized view” (2005, p.166). She further indicates that these expert opinions hardly reflect the views of ordinary readers, and thus she highlights the need for alternative materials and sources (ibid.). In her research, using data from reader letters in the literary and cultural magazine *Varlık*, Tahir Gürçağlar rightly states that, in her opinion, it is impossible to claim that reader letters reflect representative views of readers, since they have been especially selected in the publishing process. However, she finds evidence that rather than being silent, passive and invisible, as often thought, readers are in fact

⁶ Some examples are: Koskinen & Paloposki 2003; Susam-Sarajeva 2003, 2006; Brownlie 2006; Dean 2010; Sancaktaroğlu Bozkurt 2014; Arı & Tosun 2015; Birkan-Baydan 2015; Taş 2015.

⁷ For instance; Du Nour 1995; Kujamaki 2001; Balcı 2005; Karadağ 2008; Ekmekçi 2008; Ece 2010; Dinçel 2013; Akbulut 2014; Yalçındağ 2014.

⁸ This research was initiated as part of the project launched at Boğaziçi University, and its preliminary results were presented in “Retranslation in Context I” conference in 2013. For more information about these two conferences, see <http://www.retranslation-conference.boun.edu.tr/index.html>

⁹ See for instance; Pym 1998, 2009; Tahir-Gürçağlar 2005; Condinho Bravo 2008; Erkul Yağcı 2011; Dikmen Duraner, Tunali & Işıklar Koçak, forthcoming.

visible and active in contributing to the magazine's planning activities in the 1950s (2005, pp.186-188). However, while she notes that readers ask about the reasons for retranslating a text or how to select the best translation of a book, she does not develop the topic further, apart from the suggestion that reader letters seem to be a potential source for the analysis of retranslations from the readers' perspective (2005, p.185).

Another example is Selin Erkul Yağcı's¹⁰ doctoral research (2011), which focuses on the role of readers in the formation of a new readership in Turkey. Having compiled a list of translated, retranslated and reprinted novels published between 1840 and 1940, Erkul Yağcı states that a relatively low percentage (7%) of the total production was reprinted, in which she counted the number of retranslations as 53 novels (2011, p.109). She concludes that

This low overall rate of reprinting may be indicative of two interrelated (assumptive) characteristics of the novel titles published in the period under study. The first one is the transience that characterized the majority of titles since these were not reprinted. The second assumption stems from the first, and denotes that reprinted titles were the more popular and sought after titles. The varying marketing strategies of the booksellers and publishers may also be the reason behind these reprints. (Erkul Yağcı, 2011, p.109)

Another important finding in Erkul Yağcı's thesis is the establishment of a link between retranslation and popularity, through determining the most frequently retranslated titles. Moreover, in the chapter entitled "Readers and Their Reading Habits (1840-1940)", Erkul Yağcı surveys memoirs, interviews, autobiographies, biographies and reader letters in order to obtain data about reading habits of the public. As for the reader letters, she analyzes the eleven letters written by bookseller Arakel and Hüseyin Hüsnü Efendi, an Ottoman military officer in Yemen (2011, pp.181-197). Additionally, she surveys letters published in many newspapers and magazines together with biographical narratives to understand the characteristics of popular reading material between 1840 and 1940. She reveals that readers offered recommendations for improving reading habits, requested the publication of new indigenous and translated titles, or sought for advice for their reading lists, and thus, she suggests that "the readers were active agents who were eager to participate in different phases of reading activity. They openly commented on the works, they sought advice in planning their own or their families' future reading lists" (2011, p.196).

The rationale for the present article partly stems from the evidence conveyed through these two studies, providing insights into reader's attitudes, involvement and participation in selecting the titles to be translated and retranslated, and also reader views on translation quality, and translation strategies in the period from the second half of the 19th century until the second half of the 20th century in Turkey. The data used in these two studies consists mainly of readers' letters, autobiographical and visual material published in journals and books. In the light of the findings, it appears that reader letters in the magazines and newspapers provide evidence of readers' willingness to express their views on translations. In the absence of library records and marginalia, due to the inherent characteristics of the period under study, these letters and autobiographical accounts are of primary importance in providing evidence on readers' tastes and reading habits. Their active involvement in the process (of selection and consumption of translated and/or indigenous works) is also reflected through their views, experiences and perceptions presented in these letters; we hear their voices when they ask for new translated novels, seek advice on selecting translated texts, and openly criticize the quality of translations.

¹⁰ I would like to thank Selin Erkul Yağcı for her valuable comments and suggestions on the final version of this paper.

Sources and methodology

So far, it has been proposed that a study on readers could be an effective alternative approach to understanding the reasons behind retranslating. Unlike previous studies, in this study, data on reader reactions are taken not from newspapers or magazines, but from online sites. Thanks to recent technological advances, the Internet provides readers a convenient channel for suggestions and complaints, and allows them to participate in discussions on re/translations. Blogs, forums, web sites of publishing houses, and online bookshops have become open sites for readers to share their experiences and opinions, and therefore can be used as both primary and “extra-textual sources” (Toury, 1995, p.65) by the researchers of re/translation. Different from the letters in newspapers or magazines, which reflect rather institutionalized views due to the selection process, data from online sources reveal more straight-out and less censored opinions, not subjected to any selection process by an editor or an institution.

In this study, piecemeal data were collected from online sources in order to understand the active involvement of readers in the retranslation process, and their reception of retranslated or revised editions. Data on readers’ opinions were collected from four blogs, on which dedicated readers discuss their experiences, and favourite books, authors and translators¹¹. The selected nine sources were as follows: four forums, chosen as discussion forums on genre-specific websites¹², three online magazines¹³, and two online bookshops¹⁴. These web sites were selected according to the frequency with which the terms “çeviri, yeniden çeviri, çevirmen, tercüme, tercüman” [translation, retranslation, translator] appeared on their sites. The blogs and forums specifically on literary texts (such as cinairoman.com or iyikitap.net) produced more results than the others, where I carefully analyzed the dialogues, essays and comments, selecting those involving more detailed discussions on retranslation. Finally, forty varied texts from the selected sites between 2011 and 2015 were chosen; some were written by bloggers in the form of essays, others were published as articles on online magazines, and others were in the form of dialogues between forum members.

The analysis of these sources has revealed that users mostly used pseudonyms. These hidden identities bring about both positive and negative results. On the one hand, pseudonyms ensure the objectivity of readers’ opinions, but, on the other, it brings a risk of manipulation, as it is possible that publishers or editors might infiltrate these forums and manipulate the discussions to their advantage.

Questioning retranslation from readers’ perspective

Paloposki and Koskinen address three main topics when dealing with retranslations as an object of study: “the extent and proportion of retranslation, the motives for and reception of retranslations (publishers, critics) and what happens to a text when it is either retranslated or revised (textual analysis)” (2010, p.29). In a similar vein, the online sources surveyed in this study

¹¹ <http://hakikivladimir.blogspot.com/>

<http://endiseliperi.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.iyikitap.net/>

<http://bibliofk.blogspot.com.tr/>

¹² <http://www.kayiprihtim.org/>

<http://www.divxplanet.com> (after 2014 Altyazi.org) * (The site stopped its activity February 6, 2017)

<https://forum.shiftdelete.net/>

<http://www.cinairoman.com>

¹³ <http://www.sabitfikir.com/>

<http://kitap.radikal.com.tr/>

<http://www.milliyetsanat.com/>

¹⁴ <http://yordamkitap.com/>

<http://www.pandora.com.tr/>

demonstrate that readers show a high level of interest in the last two topics. Such comments provide information on the reception of retranslated texts and help us understand readers' perspective of retranslated texts. Moreover, readers' comments are especially valuable in understanding the perceptions of both retranslations and also revised editions, and the fuzzy area in between.

In this paper, three interrelated aspects of readers' comments on websites will be critically examined. First, comments addressing the reasons behind retranslating will be examined. Secondly, preferences for retranslated titles and the dynamics underlying the selection retranslated texts will be identified. Finally, the reception of the fuzzy area between retranslated and revised editions will be examined to determine whether readers are aware of any differences between them.

The main aim of readers involved in the forums and blogs examined was to understand the reasons for producing retranslations. The results of my survey showed that according to the data, retranslations are produced for three main reasons: a) previous translations are inaccurate and full of mistakes, b) first translations become dated over time, and c) retranslations are used by publishers as a marketing strategy. For example, in one of the blogs called "Vladimir's Trouble" [Vladimir'in Derdi], the writer expresses a view on the translation of James Gracey's bibliographical work on the Italian director *Dario Argento* (2010) published by Kalkedon publishing house in 2011. In the blog, s/he states:

We welcome the news about the new book, which was introduced into our language by Kalkedon publishing house at the beginning of 2011: *Dario Argento –Korku ve Gerilim Filmlerine İtalyan Dokunuşu* I bought the book as soon as I saw it on the market. I started reading it when I came home. Yet, what a disappointment! [...] the translation is full of mistakes, it is almost impossible to see even one meaningful sentence. [...] Speaking for myself, Kalkedon publishing house should take the translations off the market and order a retranslation. A very good book, but a terrible translation, an unbelievably bad one. Even if you like Dario Argento, please stay away from this translation. (<http://hakikivladimir.blogspot.com/>)¹⁵

Here, the blog writer clearly urges followers not to buy this particular translation, and adds that a retranslation is needed due to the unsatisfactory first translation. Another blog writer, "Concerned Fairy" [Endişeli Peri], reports not being able to understand the Turkish translation of Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (1924). When a friend said that translation was deficient, the blogger stopped reading¹⁶ and announced her decision to wait for a retranslation in the following words:

There was a precious book which I had been thinking of reading for some time. It is Thomas Mann's *Büyülü Dağ* [Der Zauberberg]. I started the first volume and I read many pages, but although I should have enjoyed the process of reading, I somehow could not concentrate. I told this to Bora [my friend], he said 'it's because the translation is deficient'. And I stopped reading; I am waiting for a retranslation. (<http://endiseliperi.blogspot.com/>)

The above examples show that blog writers as readers of translation describe their own reading experience and express opinions about the translated texts, and they give their verdict on translations they consider "bad" or "good". Furthermore, they call on publishers to take action and commission a new translation when they are dissatisfied.

¹⁵ All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

¹⁶ Thomas Mann's *Zauberberg* was first translated into Turkish in 1998 (by Gürsel Aytac, published by Can publishing house) and then retranslated in 2002 (by Iris Kantemir and was reprinted 5 times)

Other criteria behind the motives for retranslating are the aging of the first translation, and publishers' use of retranslations as a marketing strategy. In a forum on fantastic literature (Kayıp Rıhtım [The Lost Dock]), several readers are involved in a debate. One (Edoras)¹⁷ starts a conversation about the new retranslation of J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy novel *Hobbit* (1937) produced by Gamze Sarı, and published by İthaki (2007). Here is the dialogue in the forum:

Edoras¹⁸: A new translation of *Hobbit* is on the market. It is translated by Gamze Sarı and published by İthaki.

Belgarion: Why is it retranslated?

Amras Ringeril: Because the first translation was made in 1996, it might be outdated.

Cuthalion: This can not be the reason. Old translations could be more reliable, I think the first translation from Altınkırkbeş publishing house is of higher quality. In my opinion, İthaki's main concern is money. I can not think of any other reason for a retranslation in this case.

Amras Ringeril: No, what I mean is, İthaki was established to publish mainly translations from fantastic literature. And that's why, they in a way get satisfaction by releasing retranslations from Tolkien, the father of fantastic literature.

Cuthalion: Again the aim is money. Even if they do not make money from these books, they succeed in publicizing themselves through retranslations. There appear words such as "İthaki published the translation of *Hobbit*", in the news. Yet, I am still thinking of buying the Altınkırkbeş edition.

Arcian: I heard that İthaki took the copyright of *The Lord of the Rings* series from Metis publishing house. I support İthaki. Additionally, I need to say this: for example Dostoyevski is one of the great authors and it was translated into Turkish by three translators, first by Mazlum Beyhan, then by Nihal Yalaza Taluy and then Ergin Altay. They are all successful translations. Now, how could we ask why Sosyal publishing house preferred Mazlum Beyhan to translate the book or Varlık publishing house preferred Nihal Yalaza Taluy as the translator. When the classics and canonized authors are in question, each publishing company has the ambition to add that particular translation to their corpus. (<http://www.kayiprihtim.org/>)

Here it appears that some readers consider it likely that the publishers' only ambition is to add a particular translation to their corpus, especially when great authors are concerned. Yet, others criticize what they see as publishers' profit-driven decision to retranslate, and they are aware that retranslations are a tool for publishers to keep the public interest alive. Paloposki and Koskinen, in their research on retranslations in the Finnish context, suggest that "there is also a potential positive charisma attached to retranslations and their marketing potential; translation reviews [...] indicate that retranslations attract much greater publicity than reprints and new translations" (2010, pp. 34-35). To further support their argument, I suggest that although publishers are successful in gaining publicity through retranslations, some readers may consciously choose to avoid the new versions, since they find the previous translation sufficient, and understand that introducing a retranslation is

¹⁷ Nickname is in parenthesis.

¹⁸ These pseudonyms are usually taken from fictional characters or places in various fantastic novels. Ex: Beleg Cuthalion is the name of a major character in J. R.R. Tolkien.

a profit-oriented strategy, and thus try to raise the reading public's awareness of this issue on blogs and forums.

As a second issue, in a remarkable number of forum and blog discussions, readers focus on the selection process. Among the most frequent questions are: which edition, which translator, which publishing house to select. Responses are usually given by those who are already familiar with these works, or by very experienced readers who seem to have a considerable knowledge on translators and publishing houses.

In the example below, we see that readers directly ask which version of specific titles to buy among many available options.

Taurus: Which publisher do you recommend for Alexandre Dumas' *Three Musketeers*? İsmail Yergüz's translation published by Oğlak publications, which is 817 pages, or Volkan Yalçıntoklu's translation published by İş Bankası, which is 755 pages?

Tabula rasa: Both translators and publishers are well known and the number of pages is close to each other.

Kitapkurdu: İsmail Yergüz is a successful translator and he translated many classical works including those of Flaubert and Hugo from French.

Rizon: Although İş Bankası is a well-known and successful publisher, I think that the translator of Oğlak publishing house overrides the other one. (<http://forum.divxplanet.com/>)¹⁹

In another example, in response to a question about selection, readers present a set of criteria that encompasses the translator and publisher, and the directness and fullness of translation. These selection criteria are reiterated in many general discussions in other web-sites as well. For instance Ceylan Usanmaz, the blog writer in *Çoğul Kütüphane* [Plural Library], sets forth:

When you enter a bookshop, you come across with a great number of translations of world classics. Although we tend to decide which one to buy according to their prices, I think the criterion that matters the most is the translator. For example, Ergin Altay is the retranslator of Maksim Gorki's *My Childhood*, which has been recently published by Can publishing house. Ergin Altay is an experienced translator who translated many novels from Russian literature and the editor is Sabri Gürses who also is a well known name in the Turkish literary field. I think that when world classics are in question, the name of the translator, editor and even the reviser becomes important. (<http://www.iyikitap.net/post.php?id=1079>)

In the above example, the reader selects a retranslation according to its translator and the editor. For other readers, however, the publisher is also an important criterion. While answering the question "What criteria should we follow while buying a translated title", the reader (Ufkabakan) asserts that publishers are of greater importance than the translator (<http://forum.divxplanet.com/>). The directness of re/translation and the fullness of re/translation are other criteria taken into account. In the forums, translating from the original language is usually considered an essential selection criterion; fullness of retranslation, on the other hand, is a more controversial and widely discussed topic, seen in the frequent complaints about the deficiency of older translations. Here is an example of the discussions on the fullness of translation between readers:

¹⁹ The forum divxplanet changed its name to altyazi.org in 2014, and then an announcement was made on the website February 6, 2017 that it had stopped its activity. For more information on this site see Bayar 2012.

BlueHeat: I have a version of Victor Hugo's *The Miserables* from Timaş Yayınları which I bought years ago. It's only 518 pages. The retranslation of the same book by Oğlak Yayıncılık is 2071 pages. The original is much more lengthy by the way.

Pirpir: Timaş publishes simplified versions. This is why the best parts of the books are lost out there.

Wid: The translated books published by Antik Yayınları are much shorter than the ones published by other publishers. This naturally affects the prices. I recommend you compare before buying any book published by Antik Yayınları with those of the other publishers.

Dancer in the Dark: I compare the page numbers of the original and the translation. If the page number is close to the original, I prefer to buy translations from publishers that have a good reputation with their previously published translations. (<http://forum.divxplanet.com/>)

Some readers find older translations better, and make comparison among retranslations. In one of the forums, a reader states that "I have an old version of *Hollow*. But my dear Biblio²⁰ told me that the older versions are deficient, and I ordered a new version. At first glance there is no considerable difference between the old and new translations. I still prefer to read the old one" (<http://bibliofk.blogspot.com.tr/>).

Although there seems to be a concerted call for retranslations or revised translations, many other readers seem to favour first or early translations. The proper use of Turkish, the overall style and attractive titles are seen by most readers as indicators of successful translation, and they recommend buying or at least reading older, superior versions instead of more recent ones. One reader [Pirpir], for instance, states that "As far as the classics are concerned, I would buy these old translations dated before the 1970s even though the newer edition is much cheaper. Because, I think nowadays the quality of translation is really bad" (<http://forum.divxplanet.com/>). Another reader [Rhineceros] clearly states that he prefers to buy translations published before 1960 (ibid.). In the same dialogue, another reader [Ooppss] explains why some people prefer older translations, pointing out that:

The reasons why old translations are sought after is the fact that they were translated by writer-translators who had a perfect command in Turkish. Old translators tried their best not to sound like translations. This is why these translations read as fluently as they were written in Turkish. But in contemporary translations, the originality of the work is preserved as far as possible according to the standards of the translation industry in the world. This results in problems especially in fluency. (<http://forum.divxplanet.com/>)

More surprisingly, some readers recommend neither first nor later translations since, in their opinion, all are doomed to failure. They prefer the originals, and recommend these to others. In the online magazine *Sabit Fikir*, Gül Korkmaz, accordingly believes that science fiction and fantasy books are regarded as being in the less literary "best seller" category, and she claims that, as a result, "the publishers who decide for the fate of books, seem to underestimate these genres and they do not care for the literary value of these books" (<http://www.sabitfikir.com/>). She expresses her opinion that generally, science fiction translations are either "deficient" or "tolerable", and mainly "careless, sloppy and are full of grammatical mistakes" (ibid.). She therefore recommends the readers to read the English original instead.

²⁰ Nickname of another reader in the same forum.

It appears from the above dialogues that many readers make deliberate, non-random choices. Many even spend time and energy comparing old and new translations. Moreover, they stay in touch on web-sites and share their opinions and expectations regarding translations. Readers exchange advice about retranslations, complain about unsatisfactory ones, and show appreciation for retranslators and publishers of particular novels. All these examples are clear indicators of readers' active participation in each other's selection process, through their negative and positive comments.

The last issue concerns readers' awareness of the blurred borders between retranslations and revised versions. Readers' comments have demonstrated that they are sometimes confused about the possible differences between different versions. In a forum, one reader [Sadist] asks for opinions on the 2003 and 2007 versions of Stephen King's novel *Misery* (1987)²¹ regarding any differences between the two editions. Answers are as follows:

Metin: I have a question in mind. In D&R [bookshop] I saw that Stephen King's *Sadist* has two editions, 2003 and 2007. Is there any difference between the two editions? Which one should I buy?

Kurşunkalem: What kind of differences do you expect to find?

Metin: I mean, in the editions or translations...

Kurşunkalem: The books are reprinted by the publishers holding the copyright when they are out of print. The publisher may change the cover in each edition, but does not change the content. If the copyright passes into another publisher, then sometimes the new publisher releases a retranslation. Let's think that this holds true in this situation. The translation does not affect the main story. In the end, one translator says 'red handkerchief' while the other prefers 'rosy handkerchief'. It is impossible to know which translators' style is better. I wonder if anyone reads each retranslation of a particular book. As I told you, it seems unreasonable to seek a difference between different editions of the same book. (<http://forum.shiftdelete.net/>)

In another example, a blog writer [Biblio], commenting on J.D Salinger's famous work *Catcher in the Rye* (1951), clearly points out the differences between two Turkish retranslations, and gives reasons for preferring one of them:

Some books are so often mentioned, you feel to have missed something if you haven't read them. *Çavdar Tarlasında Çocuklar*[Catcher in the Rye], or its other version *Gönülçelen* has been such a book for me. Before I bought it, these two titles always confused me. The meaning of the title *Çavdar Tarlasında Çocuklar* is explained in a very charming way in the story, but although the title of the second translation, *Gönülçelen*, sounds very good, I think it has no connection with the book. (<http://bibliofk.blogspot.com.tr/>)

It seems that while some readers are aware of the possible differences between different versions of the same translation, that is, the second edition can be a revised version, others fail to notice any difference between several editions. Additionally, some consider that only individual stylistic choices determine the differences between retranslations.

All the examples above indicate that some Turkish readers are actively engaged in criticizing or praising translators, editors and publishers on blogs, forums and other web-sites. These online platforms have become open reference sites for questions about the quality of re/translations, differences between retranslations, the reasons for their production, and the best approach to selecting

²¹ This retranslation was made by Gönül Suveren and published by Altın Kitaplar publishing house. The first translation was published in 1988, and it was reprinted many times after that (to my knowledge 5 reprints) again by G. Suveren.

satisfactory retranslations. Readers are not afraid to name the publishers whose translated books they find unsatisfactory. One reader on the online magazine *Sabit Fikir* approves of this type of disclosure in these words: “I strongly applaud. Poor examples of translations and publishing need to be revealed here. Bad translations are not readers’ destiny” (www.sabitfikir.com).

The strong voice in the above quotation can be observed in many other conversations in forums. For example, in a discussion on fantastic literature, readers have many complaints, such as the design of book covers, incomplete series, and the inefficient functioning of the publishing market; one reader even calls on others to take action against a publisher, in the following dialogue:

Dusau: Since we accept this situation and read what they offer us, they maintain a promotion-oriented strategy. In fact, book covers are as important as advertisements. These books do not sell well because of the publishers’ incompetence. They don’t launch all the books in the series, for instance; there are two more books in the *The Belgariad* series²², but they have not published the translations yet. But if the publishers had introduced all the books in the series and presented them in the form of a set, I would have bought them. [...] I have not asked questions to any publisher such as: whether there will be a new edition, and if not, then why. But if there had been 100 or 150 readers like me calling and asking such questions, it would have put a pressure on publishers.

Quad: You know, if I were a publisher, I would follow these forums.
(<http://www.fantastikedebiyat.com/>)

Here, one can see the reader’s clear desire to be included in the decision process of publishing translations and retranslations.

Conclusion

The survey of reader comments in the forums and blogs has demonstrated that retranslation has been a quite widely discussed subject among Turkish readers. They question the reasons for retranslating, attempting to understand how to choose among retranslated texts, they criticize retranslated texts, and they demand better retranslations. Complementary to research by Tahir-Gürçağlar (2005) and Erkul Yağcı (2011), indicating that readers are visible, active and participant actors who desire to be involved in the planning activities of journals and magazines, the current research has shown that readers on online websites openly challenge publishers’ decision to retranslate a novel, and they make critical comments about retranslated texts. Additionally, it can be suggested that the users of these sites seem to have higher awareness about translations, since they compare first and later translations, problematize the differences between different retranslations, and are aware of criteria for selection of retranslations, such as the identity of the retranslator, editor and/or the publisher.

Another finding of the present research is the complexity of consumption patterns among the readers. Some prefer the older versions, but others denigrate these earlier ones, and prefer new retranslations. Furthermore, the deficiency in earlier translations and the ageing factor seem to be two important motives for purchasing retranslations.

This study on the readers in the forums and blogs brings a new perspective to the fuzzy division, or in Paloposki and Koskinen’s (2010) words, the “fine line”, between retranslation and revision. It appears that some readers are rather confused about the divisions between retranslation, revised version, and reprint, and the definitions of the terms do not seem to be clear in their minds; however, others seem to be much more aware.

²² A five-book fantasy epic written by David Eddings.

Discussions in the forums and blogs also shed light on the interaction between the readers. It seems that they not only affect each other's opinions, but also the buying processes. This is particularly evident among the readers of fantastic literature, who talk about the possibility of creating pressure on the publishers to release the remaining books in the series. The web-sites represent a convenient and rapid means for readers to exchange ideas. Finally, I suggest that, compared to magazines and newspapers, forums and blogs provide readers a more open and democratic platform, since the comments here are not subjected to any selection procedure by an editor or an institution, but are controlled by readers themselves.

The results of this study suggest a number of possibilities for future research. One might be to carry out a long-term and regular investigation on particular web-sites to observe patterns and changes in reader perceptions. Another interesting research area might be to investigate differences and similarities in readers' attitudes across different genres, such as popular literature and canonized literature.

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