

Television Series Repertoire in Turkey (1968-2019): A Perspective from Translation Studies¹

Türkiye’de Televizyon Dizileri Repertuarı (1968-2019): Çeviribilim Açısından Bir Bakış

Research/Araştırma

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ABSTRACT

Concentrating on the history of Turkish television from translation studies perspective, the present research broadly aims at problematizing the varying position and role of translation within the “repertoire” (Even-Zohar, 1990) of Turkish television series between 1968 and 2019. Drawing on, on the one hand, the secondary sources provided by researchers on the history of Turkish television (Tamer, 1983; Mutlu 1991/2008; Serim, 2007; Cankaya, 1986; Yücel 2012/2014), and on the other, the primary sources involving the corpus of television remakes presented between 2000-2019 and semi-structured interviews with several television professionals, this research analyses three disparate yet interrelating periods of Turkish television. These periods constitute the era of public broadcaster TRT (1968-1990), the commercial broadcasting in the early 1990s, and lastly, the 2000s. Our main argument is that even though the amount of television series “imported” (Even-Zohar, 1990) from other cultures and their ways of broadcast have remarkably changed from one period to another, translated television series have occupied an indispensable position, having broad cultural significance, and have provided viewers with new “options” (Even-Zohar, 1990) throughout Turkish television history until today. More particularly, it suggests that the ways of transfer have been enriched

¹ This article is based on Mehmet Erguvan’s ongoing Ph.D. dissertation, conducted under the supervision of Dr. Müge Işıklar Koçak at Dokuz Eylül University.

through time, moving from dubbing to subtitling and to the current practice of remaking of foreign originals, a significant part of the repertoire of television series in Turkey.

Keywords: history of Turkish television, translated television series, remakes, repertoire, transfer, cross-cultural interference

ÖZET

Türk televizyon tarihine çeviribilim açısından odaklanan bu çalışma genel hatlarıyla 1968 ile 2019 yılları arasında Türk televizyon dizi “repertuar”ında (Even-Zohar 1990) çevirinin değişen konumu ve rolünü sorunsallaştırmayı amaçlar. Türk televizyon tarihine odaklanan araştırmacıların (Tamer, 1983; Mutlu, 1991/2008; Serim, 2007; Cankaya, 1986; Yücel, 2014) ikincil kaynaklarından ve 2000-2019 yılları arasında yayınlanan yeniden çevrim diziler bütüncesi ile televizyon sektöründen birkaç uzmanla yapılan röportajlardan oluşan birincil kaynaklardan yararlanan araştırmamız, Türk televizyonunun birbiriyle ilişkili üç farklı dönemini tahlil eder. Söz konusu üç dönem şunlardır: TRT’nin kamu yayıncılığı dönemi (1968-1990), 1990’lı yıllardaki ticari televizyon yayıncılığı ve son olarak 2000’li yıllar. Bu araştırmanın temel argümanı, farklı kültürlerden “ithal” edilen (Even-Zohar 1990) televizyon dizisi oranının ve bu dizilerin televizyonlarda yayınlanma şekillerinin farklı dönemlerde değişiklik göstermesine karşın, geçmişten bu yana Türk televizyon tarihinde çeviri televizyon dizilerin önemli bir kültürel işleve sahip elzem bir konumda bulunduğu ve mütemadiyen izleyilere yeni “seçenekler” (a.g.e.) sunmayı sürdürdüğüdür. Bilhassa, bu araştırma dublaj ve altyazı yöntemlerinin günümüzde yerini yabancı dizilerin yeniden çevrimlerine bırakmasıyla yabancı dizilerin Türk televizyonuna transfer edilme şekillerinin zaman içerisinde zenginleştiğini de ileri sürer.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Türk televizyon tarihi, çeviri televizyon dizileri, yeniden çevrimler, repertuar, kültürlerarası etki

1. Introduction

Historically speaking, Turkish television remained within the strictures of domestic state-owned terrestrial public station for over two decades between 1968, from the birth of Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), and 1990, when the first commercial television station was launched (Öztürkmen, 2018). The first generation of Turkish viewers in the 1970s, as Öztürkmen (2018) points out, grew up with TRT, which was pervaded by the dubbed versions of prime-time US television series, such as *Dallas* (1978-1991), *The Fugitive* (1963-1967) and *The White Shadow* (1978-1981), and old Hollywood movies (Öztürkmen, 2018). That is, imported US television series presented in their dubbed versions were a staple for the first years of broadcasting in Turkey, and it is these series which have considerably facilitated the making of the Turkish television repertoire. The use of the experience and televisual materials of the foreign cultures’ established television corporations was not exceptional, since much

research has revealed similar paths followed by other national television systems.² It is also evident that British network broadcasting (which commenced in 1936) and US television (which started to function in 1940) exported their products across the globe, including to Turkey (Moran, 2009).

During the 1970s, when Turkish television was still in the process of developing its range of televisual products, it filled its shortfall with program content from other national television networks, mainly from US. As it will be further revealed, translated (mostly dubbed) television series assumed a central position within the repertoire of Turkish television series in its inception period. Later, translated television series lost their primary position after the 1990s, during the period when public service broadcasting ceased to become the sole provider of television broadcasting, and commercial television systems began to dominate. However, our research has revealed that translated television series have not stopped producing translations into the Turkish television repertoire, but they have just adopted new ways of introducing options to the repertoire of Turkish television series in the 2000s. The interviews with television professionals involved directly and/or indirectly in the pre-production, production and presentation process of television remakes (consisting of screenwriters Makbule Kosif, Hatice Meryem and Yiğit Değer Bengi involved in the practice of remaking, an anonymous TV content producer with the pseudonym “ranini”, director Müge Uğurlar, and reporter Birsen Altuntaş³) apparently point to the advent of the new form of a television series provision in Turkey, that is, the phenomenon of intra-medial transcultural television remakes in the Turkish television industry.

This indispensable role of translation for the repertoire of Turkish television series has been largely neglected by scholars of translation, except for a few inspiring studies. The first is Ayşe Şirin Okyayuz’s article (2016), in which she highlights the importance of translation in the establishment of Turkish television during the 1970s and 1980s. In this article, she gives a brief overview about the advent of television series remakes,⁴ selecting five of them for a thematic analysis on the representation of

² For instance, Australian commercial television was engaged with adapting such programs as *People in Conflict* and *Divorce Court* for its own viewers between 1962 and 1964 (Moran, 2009). Since its inception, Lebanese television has benefited from French and US dramatic productions (Kraidy, 2005). In a similar vein, although already firmly established, German television broadcast a number of US and British series such as *77 Sunset Strip*, *Avengers*, *Dallas*, *Dynasty* and *Sopranos* (Mikos, 2015).

³ Most of these interviews undertaken within the scope of Erguvan’s doctoral research were semi-structured, qualitative, face-to-face and one-to-one encounters. Only a few interviewees (a TV content producer with the pseudonym “ranini”, and Birsen Altuntaş) preferred to respond the questions via e-mail, and therefore online interviews were conducted. See the full transcript of the interviews in Erguvan’s forthcoming doctoral dissertation.

⁴ *The O.C.* (2003-2007) and its Turkish remake *Medcezir* (2013-2015), *Revenge* (2011-2015) and its Turkish remake *İntikam* (2013-2014), *Grey’s Anatomy* (2005-) and its Turkish remake *Doktorlar* (2006-2011),

family values, societal values and sexuality. Another study by Okyayuz (2017a) examines the strategies used in the Turkish remake of *The Jeffersons* into *Tatlı Hayat*. Examining Mark O'Thomas's (2010) taxonomy of adaptive operations in terms of their source materials (e.g. television, book and etc.) and source cultures, Okyayuz suggests that, as intra-medial transcultural television series, remakes should be acknowledged as a form of translation, and problematized by translation scholars similarly to more conventional forms of audiovisual translation such as dubbing and subtitling (2017a). In her recent paper (2017b) she presents a survey on the history of audiovisual translation in Turkey, including a brief history of Turkish television. Her main proposition is that "the appropriation of AVT products depends on changes to national laws, social norms, stability vs. turmoil (increase in filters) in the country and population shifts" (2017b, p. 130). Another study in the area is Mehmet Erguvan's (2017) examination of Turkish television broadcasting history, focusing especially on the period between 1968 and 1985. Erguvan argues that during the years of TRT's public broadcasting, translated television series helped shape the culture repertoire in various fields of daily routines, clothing and the use of language in Turkey. His main area of concern is translated television series' effects on viewers' daily life attitudes and preferences. Additionally, he offers an analysis of the adaptations from novel into film and vice versa, delving into the close relation between the publishing and television broadcasting industries.

Complementary to the above studies, the present paper seeks to expand the work on the position and function of translation throughout Turkish television history to the present. This paper aims to show that translations have provided ways of developing and sustaining a repertoire of Turkish television series. They played a remarkably distinctive role, particularly in the shaping of the repertoire of TRT, through the broadcast of dubbed and (occasionally) subtitled foreign programs in the 1968-1990 period. Moreover, it is proposed that, even though the following decade of Turkish television from the early 1990s saw a somewhat reduced reliance on translated television series, the acquisition of television series formats and the production of their remakes became increasingly popular with the turn of the millennium, and since then outstanding numbers of remakes with foreign origins have been introduced to Turkish television as options, and they have considerably enriched this repertoire.

2. Presentation of Translated Television Series to the Turkish Television Repertoire

As previously emphasized, there was a state-monopoly in broadcasting in Turkey from 1968 until 1990. That is, the TRT period lasted for over two decades between 1968 and the early 1990s, when the first series of private television channels were introduced. Serim (2007) states that during its early years, TRT embraced the principle that its content should feature television programs focusing on educational and cultural matters, in tune with its public service ethos. Thus, as a public service television broadcaster, TRT initially seemed to view itself as a means of disseminating education and culture, unlike commercial broadcasting, which is more concerned with viewing share and share in advertisement market (Serim, 2007).

Yet in the following years, Turkey faced a range of political conflicts, and such a politicized atmosphere led politicians to take hold of TRT and pass control to their sympathizers (Cankaya, 2015). Besides this, as a result of the constitutional amendments in 1972, TRT began to be officially defined as a neutral, rather than an autonomous public economic entity (Serim, 2007). While its previous autonomous structure isolated TRT from political influences and related sanctions in the matters of the program production and management, its adoption of neutrality led to some radical transformations (Cankaya, 2015). For instance, though TRT staff in its very early years was against the inclusion of entertainment shows lacking cultural and educational content into the TRT's program content, TRT then adopted a different broadcasting policy under the new military government,⁵ in favour of television series, on the grounds that they attracted popular attention (Aksoy, 2002). During the period, when Musa Öğün, who introduced imported television series, was TRT director general between 1971-1973, the mission was to make Turkish viewers forget their daily problems (Serim, 2007). Cankaya (1986) indicates that translation of US television series by means of dubbing became notably popular on TRT at this time:

It was 1973 when there was a rise in the dependency on US televisual products. As it was due to the fact that American movies and television series turned into the objects for trading across the world, it could also be seen as preferences of the officials working at our television. In Turkey, there was neither any scientific

⁵ On March 12, 1971, Turkish Armed Forces forced the Süleyman Demirel (the prime minister) government to resign by delivering an ultimatum to the president. In such a climate in which television was viewed as a significant source of power, it was impossible for it to be unaffected by such period of political unrest. Perhaps the most significant effect of this process on Turkish television was its transition from autonomy into neutrality enacted on the TRT Law numbered 359 (Cankaya, 2015). As a result of this change, TRT's autonomy, which at least somewhat isolated it from various interventions, was abolished and its first team that used to try to run a democratic broadcasting system was weakened (see Aziz, 1999; Aksoy, 2002; İlaşlan, 2014).

research about it, nor public opinion surveys [...]. The masses in Turkey were forced to either like the programs offered for them, or not like them [...]”⁶ (p. 30).

As revealed by the television viewing survey by *Milliyet* newspaper in 1975, which sought to predict the numbers of viewers, dubbed television series were at the top of the list (Öngören, 1975). Another survey by *Hürriyet* newspaper in 1976 demonstrated that *McMillan & Wife*, *Little House on the Prairie* and *Police Woman*, all imported from the US, constituted the three most popular television series aired on TRT (*TRT Dünden Bugüne*, 1990). As Serim (2007) underlines, though the imported television series were generally harshly criticized by the TRT General Advisory Board in 1979 as being against Turkish social norms in terms of the lifestyles presented, such US television series as *Dallas* and *The Love Boat* still drew much attention in that television season. One of the opponents, Anıl Çeçen, the representative of The People’s Houses (Halkevleri), was critical of the amount of translated television series on TRT, emphasizing that “if Turkish television was not able to produce even 50% of its own content, it would not be possible to call it Turkish” (Cankaya, 1986, p. 55). Çeçen describes Turkish television as a slave to series imported from other national television systems, and notes that the purchased television series became its defining feature (p. 55).

As manifested in Özden Cankaya’s (1986) list of all television programs broadcasted on TRT between the years of 1968-1985,⁷ the percentage of the US-origin programs was almost three-quarters of the whole foreign program repertoire. More significantly, as revealed by Volkan Yücel’s research (which is the first complete survey of the number of television series aired on Turkish networks until 2009), on TRT, imported television series overwhelmingly outnumbered locally-produced series between the years of 1968 and 1990.⁸ The number of the translations was 426, almost double the number of domestic productions (Yücel, 2014, pp. 233-4). Figure 1 is prepared from Yücel’s data:

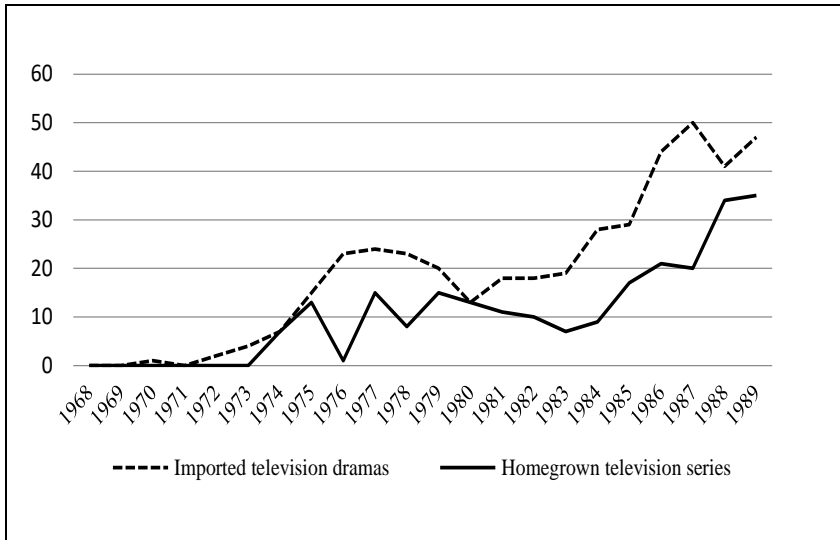
⁶ All translations are ours, unless otherwise stated.

⁷ In *Türk Televizyonunun Program Yapısı (1968-1985)*, Cankaya, who worked at TRT as a program producer and supervisor, listed all TV programs that were on air on TRT between the years of 1968-1985. Cankaya conducted meticulous work and tried to complete her list by means of a wide range of primary sources including TRT’s annual activity and financial budget reports, TV program magazines of TRT as well as the archives of newspapers including *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet*. Citing the lack of archival work and the scarcity of documents about TV programs, Cankaya shows awareness of the lacking data.

⁸ Yücel prepared the list of all locally produced and imported TV series with their original titles, years of broadcasting and their TV networks. In my online contact with Yücel, he noted the fact that his research was conducted as a project supported by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey. As Yücel pointed out, his list was completed by means of a wide range of resources including several daily newspapers (*Milliyet*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*), his contacts with several production companies, TV networks as well as his survey of some online forums on TV series.

Figure 1

The Comparison of the Number of Imported and Homegrown TV Series in the TRT Era



Note. Prepared by the writers by means of the data obtained from Yücel’s 2014 research. Explicit permission has been obtained from the author of the dataset for this present research.

Taking Itamar Even-Zohar’s polysystem approach into consideration, it is possible to argue that imported television series were introduced to Turkish viewers as options in TRT’s initial years of broadcasting, when its own repertoire was yet to be established (Even-Zohar, 1990; revised version of Even-Zohar 1978). Television content provided by TRT in this period was largely supplied from other national television systems, including but not limited to, the US, the UK⁹ and France¹⁰. The case of TRT supports Even-Zohar’s hypothesis that, young systems’ repertoires may be restricted, making them more receptive to other available systems, including cultures, literatures and television industries (Even-Zohar, 1990). Erguvan’s previous study (2017) has shown that, in such circumstances, when TRT was in need, translation seems to have been one of the means of filling the deficiency in its then emerging and developing repertoire. Thus, it seems that the most evident reason for importing, in the case of Turkish television between 1968 and 1990, was to fill its broadcast hours with purchased foreign programs. It can also be asserted that a willingness to consume

⁹ BBC dramas adapted from classical novels like *Anna Karenina* were broadcast on TRT during the 1970s (Öztürkmen, 2018).

¹⁰ *Allô Police* and *Arsène Lupin* were among these French productions (Öztürkmen, 2018).

those imported programs was “somehow aroused among the members of the targeted group” (Even-Zohar, 2003, p. 428); that is, the first generation of Turkish viewers.

As Erguvan (2017) points out, translated television series, which were to some extent domesticated by dubbing, predominated Turkish viewers’ daily life. During the period of a sole Turkish national broadcaster, a broad range of daily behaviours, and some practical instructions for conducting one’s life were transmitted through television images, which were both easily accessible and popular. The imported television series were extremely popular in the TRT era, and even permeated into children’s play through nursery rhymes (Erguvan, 2017). Popular characters such as Columbo (in an American detective mystery *Columbo*) and Laura (in *Little House on the Prairie*) also presented new “life images” (Even-Zohar, 2010, p. 185) through their clothes and styles (Erguvan, 2017). Moreover, a new kind of adaptation, *–translated TV series novel-* was introduced to Turkish literature in this period (Erguvan, 2017). *Dallas*, *The Bewitched* and *Mission: Impossible* are among the novelized works with the same title as the television series, translated from their novelized source texts.¹¹

The introduction of translated series by TRT has set the scene for different images, and the depiction of alternative, different, or new models of life; therefore, the present research views the repertoire of translated television series “as a major industry capable of providing tools for both understanding and operating in actual life” (Even-Zohar, 2010, p. 199). That is, these imported series operated as a contributor of “potential models of life” and provided a wide range of “life images” (p. 199) in the absence of local products. Thus, it appears that translations play, on the whole, a formative role in establishing a television repertoire in this period, presenting new options in the form of dubbed versions, along with the potential model of life images they offer for Turkish viewers.

3. Local Television Series in Rise in the 1990s

The second phase of Turkish television is identified by the emergence and the rapid proliferation of commercial broadcast networks. The first Turkish commercial television network, Star TV (Magic Box) was launched in 1990 (Şekerci, 1996). Many researchers highlight that the introduction of neoliberal politics in the 1980s resulted in privatization and progression of the market forces, and it paved the way for private channel proliferation in the 1990s (see Çakır & Gülnar, 2007; Gencel Bek, 2010; Kongar, 2013). Socio-economical policies substantially influenced by the enforcement of parliamentary democracy in 1983 and the Turgut Özal era further promoted the consumer and client-focused direction of the media industry (see Tanrıöver, 2012). In that era, Turkish government seemingly distanced itself from media market, and the media began to concentrate intensely on the customer, i.e. the consumer of media

¹¹ For more information about these series, see Erguvan, 2017.

products. This structural change also made obvious the primacy of commercial interests in broadcasting. As of the 1990s, the strategies of television program schedule and the production of television series were increasingly associated with viewers' tastes and preferences (which have been measured since 1989¹²), and the involvement of advertising agencies and their clients (Ökten, 2012; Tanrıöver, 2012).

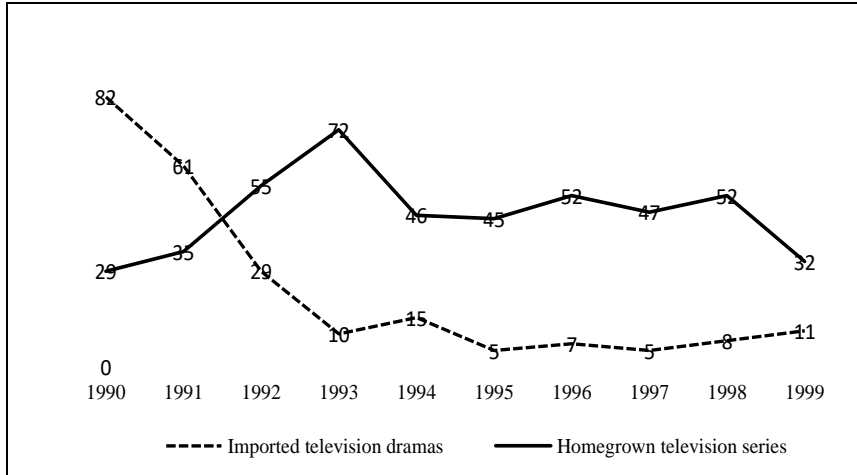
What is pivotal regarding this restructured broadcasting era is the gradual decrease in the conspicuous role of translation in the development of the Turkish television series repertoire. Since the 1992-1993 television season, Turkish networks began to broadcast a growing number of locally-produced television series, alongside the imported ones (Çelenk, 2005). During the initial years of commercial broadcasting, dubbed television series such as *Yalan Rüzgârı* (*The Young and the Restless*), *Marimar* and *Fırtınalı Günler* (*Days of Our Lives*) retained their place in daytime broadcasting, yet attracted remarkably fewer viewers compared to their prime-time counterparts. In the late 1990s, their first broadcasts and reruns appeared either during daytime or late at night (Çelenk, 2005). A comparison of local and imported television series on both the state-sponsored TRT and private networks in commercial television's first decade (1990-1999) demonstrates the dramatic decrease in the number of imported television series, indicative of their loss of central position. As Yücel's (2014) findings indicate, the rate of locally-produced and translated television series is completely reversed in that era. In the previous phase of Turkish television, there were twice as many imported series as the domestic ones. In this new phase, the number of imports fell to 233, about half the record high point of 465 (Yücel, 2014). The Figure 2 shows the distribution of translated and domestic television series in the 1990s.

As a result of this perceptible decrease in the amount of imported television series, and the increase of homegrown programming, Turkish television emerged as a transformed industry, in which the imported products no longer occupied a central position, and thereby lost considerable influence on the making of Turkish television series repertoire.

¹² For detailed information about the first measurement of TV viewers in Turkey, see *Radyo ve Televizyon Yayınclığı Sektör Raporu* (RTÜK Strateji Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı, 2014).

Figure 2

The Comparison of the Number of Imported and Homegrown TV Dramas in the First Decade of the 1990s



Note. Prepared by the writers by means of the data obtained from Yücel's 2014 research. Explicit permission has been obtained from the author of the dataset for this present research.

Nevertheless, for many years, imported television series, particularly US dubbed series, have had a strong effect on Turkish viewers' local television tastes and modes of watching (Öztürkmen, 2018). Öztürkmen (2018) suggests that these imports also stimulated the demand for local television series production in Turkey. In this light, though imported television series lost their central position within the repertoire, particularly as of the mid-1990s, it appears that their three-decades presence has led this television genre to become an integral part of the Turkish television system. Even-Zohar views this state of "integrated importation in a home repertoire [as] transfer" (Even-Zohar, 2003, p. 428). The success of this transfer leads us to conclude that, from the mid-1990s onwards, "it is not only the goods themselves which become domesticated, but rather the need for those goods" (p. 428). Obviously, imported television series have managed to fully integrate their semiotic model into the Turkish television repertoire, and it created a strong need to produce television series, resulting in the consolidation of the series genre in the Turkish television repertoire.

In the 1990s, the viewers' interests and taste became paramount. This era saw the end of the phase of TRT's public service monopoly, in which the selection of programs was largely decided by TRT as an institutional agent, authorized by, and part of the state. Since then, programs have been dictated by Turkish viewers' preference for stories that more closely align with public sentiments and interests; and the viewers liked to be entertained by characters "who look the same [...], behave the

same [...] and have the same beliefs (and worldview) as themselves” (Moran, 2009, p. 42). As such, it appears that private television channels of that era gradually abandoned foreign productions, despite the greater costs involved in domestic productions.

In the light of the above analysis, the translations seem to have lost their significance in shaping the repertoire, their dominant role increasingly taken over by domestic productions, especially from the mid-1990s onwards. This development, on the one hand, shows the increasing power of the local industry, creating its own scripts and production formats. Yet, on the other hand, it is possible to argue that the earlier translations played a role in the flourishing of local products (the dubbed and subtitled television series) by providing examples to be followed by the agents involved in the production process.

4. Television Remakes of Foreign Origins¹³ as New Options in the 2000s

The third phase of Turkish television, the early 2000s, harbours an abundant supply of home-grown television series, which almost completely dominated prime-time slots of mainstream television networks (Devran, Göksun & İhtiyar, 2018). The rate of domestic television series production (904 locally-produced series) in the first decade (2000-2009) of the 2000s is four times the entire production of the local television series over the two decades of the TRT era (Yücel, 2014). Especially as of the mid-2000s,¹⁴ locally-produced Turkish television series have attracted worldwide interest, and the number exported to other countries amounted to 200 between 2011 and 2016 (Şentürk, 2018). The precursor of this interest in domestic series was the export of the crime series *Deli Yürek (Crazy Heart)* to Kazakhstan followed by *Kurtlar Vadisi (Valley of Wolves)*, also to Kazakhstan, and *Gümüş (Nour)*, which appeared on Dubai-based media group, MBC (Öztürk & Atik, 2016; Göksun, 2018). These developments transformed Turkish television from an importer into an exporter of content (Devran, Orujova & Saltık, 2018), and since then, Turkish production companies have

¹³ Remaking is a ubiquitous and perennial practice in various media and art forms, taking different forms according to the shift of medium (intra/intermedial remakes), language (intra/interlingual remakes) and source material (film-to-film remake, film-to-television series remake, film-to-ballet remake). That is, it predates and goes beyond television remakes, which are the focus of this part of our study. For instance, many film remakes have been produced since the beginning of film-making (Heinze & Krämer, 2015). Prior to film remakes, there were also unacknowledged transnational remakes of dramas in the 17th and 18th century (Heinze & Krämer, 2015).

¹⁴ The export value of local TV series attracted the attention of the Turkish government almost a decade ago. In 2010, the Council of Exporters suggested the producers of Turkish TV series join the high-ranking diplomatic visits in which many trade and industry representatives accompanied the prime minister on overseas visits to promote Turkish exports (Kara, 2010). Furthermore, it was seen that, in the 2011-2013 Social Development Plan, the government paid selective attention to the TV series industry and decided to provide financial assistance to the series that particularly appreciate family values (See *Vatan* newspaper: <http://www.gazetevatan.com/-aile-mesaji--verecek-335223-medya/>).

significantly increased their presence in global markets. As Öztürkmen (2018) pointed out, “[t]he enthusiasm first began in the Middle East, moving west later towards the Balkans and the eastern European countries” (p. 8) and its expansion continued to the Latin American market, and more recently, to Asian territories (p. 8). As Okyayuz (2017b) asserts, the remarkable expansion in the export of local television series represents a major transformation in the Turkish television industry in the beginning of the 21st century.

Even though domestic Turkish television series were able to dominate Turkish television, it turns out that, imported television series have sustained their broadcasting, and continue to draw Turkish viewers’ attention, though to a far lesser extent than in earlier periods. Furthermore, many Turkish mainstream networks ostensibly ceased to broadcast “finished” programs (subtitled and dubbed forms) in the 2000s. In fact, for the last two decades, there has been little in the way of finished made-for television programs (subtitled and/or dubbed ones) on mainstream networks, but they continue on encrypted networks or on those open access channels which are partially or completely involved in thematic broadcasting. Another group of television channels broadcasting finished television series in Turkey are digital satellite television platforms such as Digiturk and D-Smart. However, it should be underlined that those television providers do not attract large numbers; instead, shows like *Friends*, *Ally McBeal*, *24*, *Grey’s Anatomy*, *Dr. Who* and *Criminal Minds* appeal to very specific groups in Turkey (Tanrıöver, 2012). That is to say, they have a particular, presumably well-educated, viewer profile, as these finished products often have a complicated narrative structure and abundant foreign-culture references. Tanrıöver (2012) states that this group of people often include modern, young viewers in urban areas with Western lifestyles.

In this light, translations (subtitled and dubbed) have seemingly undertaken a peripheral position, having no significant influence on the repertoire of Turkish television series in the beginning of the 21st century (Even-Zohar, 1990). Yet, the 2000s has witnessed another form of a program provision, namely, the program format franchising phenomenon; i.e., remaking. Remaking has emerged and had a good run since then. Meanwhile, westerns classics and Turkish literary classics have been being used as a source of inspiration for the production of Turkish television series as well.¹⁵ According to the corpus of television series remakes of foreign origin we compiled for doctoral research, ninety one (acknowledged and unacknowledged) intra-medial transcultural television remakes have been aired on Turkish television channels

¹⁵ For example, Turkish drama *Asi* (2007-2009) is loosely based on Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Likewise, *Gönülçelen* (2010-2011) is inspired by Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*. There are also numerous Turkish television series based on Turkish literary classics since the early 2000s. Some of these include *Yaprak Dökümü* (2006-2010), *Aşk-ı Memnu* (2008-2010), *Hanımın Çitliği* (2009-2011) and *Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?* (2010-2012).

starting from the 2000s.¹⁶ Our research has shown that the number of remakes has remarkably increased as of 2013, reflecting the recent increase in South Korean drama remakes in Turkey. Almost 90% of all Turkish remakes are from the US and South Korean sources; the remaining source cultures include Japan, Australia, the UK, Italy, Denmark, Spain and Canada. According to our data, *Dadı* (*The Nanny*) and *Tatlı Hayat* (*The Jeffersons*), aired in 2001, pioneered the tradition of remaking television dramas in Turkish television history. The Turkish producer and director Fatih Aksoy emphasizes that *The Nanny's* Turkish remake, the first Turkish remake, stimulated the remaking tradition from US television dramas around the world (Özcan, 2019).

As our analysis has revealed, the repertoire of television series in Turkey was considerably established and consolidated with extensive and multiform products as a result of both imports and domestic products produced over a period of at least 30 years. Remakes, as the new form of translation, were often presented into the repertoire after advanced market testing in the source country.¹⁷ As pointed out previously, the formation of such a tendency has also been confirmed in the interviews carried out within the scope of this research. Even-Zohar suggests that “even when a culture is working with a large and multiform repertoire, a deadlock may occur by blockage of all alternative options”, and accessible repertoires may be the best solution in such cases (1997, p.22). We propose that this hypothesis on the growing need of cultures (generally with established repertoires) for increased options holds true for the case of the Turkish television in the 2000s, since it reached a point where it was unable to produce the range required to feed off itself (Şentürk, 2018). Thus, the introduction of Turkish remakes of foreign television series seems to have been a strategy to provide options in order to overcome limitations, come through this deadlock and generate new outputs.

It could be further suggested that the acquisition and production of television series from foreign sources in Turkey during the 2000s indicates that the last phase of intercultural exchange presented by Rakefet Sela-Sheffy (in press), where similar goods are produced in another territory by the target culture-producers in order to appeal to

¹⁶ This corpus was formed out of a range of resources including several secondary resources on the history of Turkish television and some primary and online sources, such as *onedio.com*, *filmdizihaber.com*, *listelist.com*, *ranini.tv* and *puhutv.com* as well as *ntv.com.tr* and *akşam.com.tr*.

¹⁷ One of the principal reasons for the practice of remaking is the assumption that high popularity in one market signals success in another (Lantzsch, Altmeppe and Will, 2009). That is, remakes are considered primarily as a form of risk reduction, which holds true for the case of Turkish TV industry as well (Şentürk, 2018). One of the interviewees in Amos Owen Thomas's (2009) research also consolidates this point by suggesting that producers and channels view remakes as products that had been market-tested and proven abroad. Another reason why a given TV series is customized in a way that seems local in origin is that, in Tunstall's (2008) words, “[m]ost people around the world prefer to be entertained by people who look the same, talk the same, joke the same, play the same, and have the same beliefs (and worldview) as themselves [...]” (p. xiv).

target viewers. Bearing in mind that cross-cultural interference occurs “in the environment of contacts, [...] where transfer has taken place” (Even-Zohar, 2001, p.52), Sela-Sheffy asserts three procedures of intercultural exchange, at the ultimate stage of which interference is likely to take place.¹⁸ Turkish remakes of foreign originals, initially acquired from their originating cultures, are then locally produced in Turkey, which might indicate “a clear case of interference” (Even-Zohar, 2001, p.53). In this respect, these can be defined as cultural goods with foreign-language sources, remade within the constraints of Turkish socio-cultural context, supported by a whole range of agents, such as the licensing manager, distributors, drama operations directors and producers. These agents have dominated the making and the sustainability of television series repertoire, and they are engaged with the acquisition and production of Turkish television remakes. Undoubtedly, the consideration of intra-medial transcultural television remakes as cultural goods does not necessarily overlook the economic dynamics and considerations that are at play in the selection and production of remakes in the Turkish television industry. As mentioned before, it is evident that economic imperatives constitute one of the primary motives behind the availability of transcultural television remakes in Turkey and abroad since the earlier success of their source television series enable television producers to minimize the uncertainty of success and secure profits. Given that the production of television series is extremely costly and their success/failure is most often conditioned by good ratings, viewing share and advertising revenue, it is reasonable to note that financial issues play indisputable role in remake productions and the agents who select, purchase and produce the intra-medial transcultural television remakes in Turkey are under the great influence of them in many aspects.

5. Conclusion

Drawing on the primary sources (the corpus of intra-medial transcultural television remakes in Turkey and the interviews with several Turkish television professionals) and secondary sources (the books on the history of Turkish television) which provide invaluable data about the television series broadcast on Turkish television through translation, the present research has shown that translation has played various roles in the establishment and development of the repertoire of television series in Turkey. Our research has unearthed the formative, generating and enriching roles of translation within the repertoire of television series, from the establishment of Turkish

¹⁸ The research of interference is broadly considered as resulting from the tension between centers (the dominant) and periphery (the dominated), which is believed to account for all sorts of intercultural changes and exchanges (Sela-Sheffy, 2017). Sela-Sheffy’s approach to the notion of interference underscores “the complex dynamics of transmission, reception and domestication that occur in the receiving local cultures, and the way they transform these domestic cultural settings” (pp. 350-1). Following Even-Zohar, Sela-Sheffy suggests that interference entails the naturalization of foreign goods through domestic reproduction to the extent they leave almost no marks of their foreign origins (pp. 350-1).

television in 1968 until the present. Translated television series, diversified in nature, have been presented to audiences in the forms of dubbing, subtitling and, finally remaking. The continuous existence of transfer and the continuation of these flourishing forms seem to underline the translation's enduring and indispensable role in the history of television series in Turkey.

The first period until the 1990s, namely the TRT era, witnessed the formative role of translation bringing the series into the repertoire as new choices for the first generation of Turkish viewers. Dubbing and subtitling were ways of rendering foreign products, mostly US imports. During the 1970s, as pointed out by Öztürkmen (2018), the primary formats of Turkish television included news, music shows, and movies, the latter largely Hollywood black and white cinema, and US prime-time dramas, such as *The Persuaders*, *Star Trek*, *Mission Impossible*, *Petrocelli* and *Bonanza*. Moreover, among those different kinds of shows, examples such as *Dallas*, *The Fugitive* and *McMillan and Wife* most particularly instigated the increasing demand of program content during the first era of Turkish television (Öztürkmen, 2018). The analysis of a decade-long establishment of commercial broadcasting in Turkey has unearthed a perceptible transformation in terms of the popularity and circulation of translations within the repertoire of television series.

It appears that, in the 1990s, in addition to imported television dramas, Turkish television stations became more interested in producing their own local series. The shift from TRT to commercial network broadcasting, as Öztürkmen also suggests, resulted in the establishment of "a more diversified repertoire from the 1990s onwards" (2018, p. 5). The production and development of local series was based on experience gained in the period between 1968 and 1990, with abundant dubbed and subtitled series. As a result, until approximately the turn of the century, local productions increased and even exceeded translations in number. The emergence of domestic productions pushed the translations into a peripheral position within the repertoire of television series, and, as from the 2000s, Turkey started to export these, particularly to the Middle East, Asia and Latin America (see Bhutto, 2019). It can be suggested that translations as imported goods resulted in a successful transfer, and thus producers evolved their own models, which continue to be exported to other countries. As a result, the Turkish television industry changed direction as of the 2000s, when the repertoire of locally-produced television dramas began to incorporate a wider range of options, and had a broader and more multiform repertoire. Thus, translation plays a generating role for the local production agents, such as scriptwriters and producers, leading to successful transfer of these goods.

The third period, the 2000s, inaugurated a new form of translation, remade television dramas, involving adaptations of foreign scripts for local circumstances. Our research has revealed that, Turkish remakes of foreign origins rapidly reached a notable amount and became a recognizable additional means of producing content in

Turkey, making a significant contribution to television series repertoire. This period has pioneered the emergence and rise of remakes, gradually diversifying source cultures from the US and S. Korea to Japan, Australia and others, while dubbed series continued to be broadcast on such channels as TRT and Kanal 7. In addition to these, subtitled and dubbed television series continue to air on pay television channels such as Dizimax Vice, Dizimax Drama, FoxCrime and Foxlife. That is, the 2000s show the persistence of a wealth of translations in the Turkish television repertoire. Thus, translation has become a tool of enrichment in this period, simultaneously harbouring many forms of translated series. Yet, the increasing number of domestic series produced via imitation, adaptation and adoption of foreign scripts and models inevitably reflects the high demand for these remade products, given the wide variety of options currently available on television.

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