

70-“Friday cannot be black!”: Euphemizing a religious taboo through translation

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Abstract

This paper is the first to describe Black Friday in Turkey as a taboo from the perspective of translation studies. It intends to analyze the euphemistic translation strategies employed by national and international companies that conduct business in Turkey and aims to find out whether their euphemisms potentially assist them in marketing their products. The corpus of the study consists of 15 euphemistic Turkish translations of ‘Black Friday’, which were retrieved from the websites of 27 national and international companies. The translations were analyzed in consideration of Warren’s (1992) classification of euphemism procedures. The analyses revealed that the companies predominantly adopted two strategies: overstatement and implication. 16 of 27 companies were observed to use overstatement and ten to employ implications concerning the describers (companies), the described (Friday), and the event (Black Friday). Only one company was found to have adopted the borrowing strategy. It was concluded from the analyses that euphemized translations of the ‘taboo’ phrase Black Friday proved beneficial in removing or replacing the socioculturally unacceptable components of the event and helped the featured national and international companies’ campaigns in Turkey be culturally and socially more acceptable as they increased their sales and profits just as the un-euphemized Black Friday did in the other parts of the world.

Keywords: Euphemism, translation, black friday, censorship, marketing

“Cuma kara olmaz!”: Bir dini tabunun çeviri yoluyla örtmecesi

Öz

Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de bir tabu olarak nitelendirilebilecek Kara Cuma’yı çeviribilimsel bir bakış açısı ile betimleyen ilk arařtırmadır. Çalışma, Türkiye’de iş yapan ulusal ve uluslararası şirketler tarafından uygulanan örtmeceli çeviri stratejilerini ve söz konusu tüzel oluşumların örtmecelerinin ürünlerini pazarlamada ne kadar faydalı olabileceğini bulmayı amaçlamaktadır. Arařtırmanın bütüncesi, Kara Cuma ifadesinin 27 ulusal ve uluslararası şirketin internet sayfalarından alınan 15 örtmeceli Türkçe çevirisinden oluşmaktadır. Çeviriler, Warren’ın (1992) örtmece stratejileri göz önünde bulundurularak çözümlenmiştir. Çözümlemeler, ele alınan şirketlerin abartma ve sezdirim olmak üzere iki stratejiyi önceliklelerini göstermiştir. 27 şirketin 16’sının abartma ve onunun ise betimleyen (şirketler), betimlenen (Cuma) ve olguya (Kara Cuma) ilişkin sezdirimleri kullandığı gözlemlenmiştir. Sadece bir şirketin ödünçleme stratejisini tercih ettiği bulunmuştur. Çözümlemeler aynı zamanda bir tabu olarak görülen Kara Cuma’nın örtmeceli çevirilerinin söz konusu etkinliğin sosyokültürel olarak kabul edilemez olan yönlerinin ortadan kaldırmasında veya değiştirilmesinde

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faydalı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Buna ek olarak, sorgulamalardan Kara Cuma'nın Türkiye'de kullanılan örtmeceli çevirilerinin yurtdışındaki örtmecelessiz halinin yarattığı etkiye benzer şekilde araştırmaya dahil edilen ulusal ve uluslararası şirketlerin satış ve karlarını arttırdığı anlaşılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Örtmece, çeviri, kara cuma, sansür, pazarlama

1. Introduction

In translations, texts transform to varying degrees for a plethora of reasons. A translator with an underdeveloped translation competence may produce unacceptable textual segments in the target language, which may typically suggest an unintentional transformation. Yet even a competent translator may be the cause of change by making deliberate decisions. This paper features such an intentional procedure, i.e., euphemism in the context of the translation of a religious taboo, which is the phrase "Black Friday".

To put the tackled taboo into context, the paper firstly attempts to describe Friday as a sacred day and to highlight Turkish people's discomfort with Black Friday. Secondly, it presents a theoretical discussion on the interplay between taboos and euphemism in translation by offering a glance at how Black Friday is perceived in the Muslim world and how partial censorship in the Arab world has proved fruitful in euphemizing the event. Then, a classification of the euphemism strategies is provided as an introduction to the analysis. The paper foregrounds two procedures as the most frequently applied strategies in the corpus – i.e., overstatement and implication. Finally, through recourse to previous research, a conclusive discussion is featured as to whether the adopted euphemism strategies made the translations more acceptable by Turkish people.

2. Friday as A Holy Day and Uproar over Black Friday in Turkey

Members of some monotheistic religions are required to observe their respective holy days. Because the importance attached to these days varies for sociocultural and historical reasons, different days are considered to be holy by their believers. Broadly speaking, while Christian denominations observe Sunday as a significant day for intramural prayers (Gunn, 2004), Jewish Sabbath "involves rich home-based rituals and synagogue services", lasting "from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday" (Procario-Foley, 2004: 205). It is Friday for Muslims, which is represented as "the holiest day on which the sun rises"². On the significance of Friday as an observed day, the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, reads, "O you who have believed, when [the adhan] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu'ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew" (al-Jumu'ah, 1997: 569). The ayahs (verses) explicitly show that Friday is the most sacred day of the week for Muslims, on which they are bidden to pray and to remember Allah. This is the reason why Muslims in Turkey fiercely reacted against the introduction of Black Friday as a shopping spree.

In the Friday khutbah³ delivered by the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs on December 01, 2017, Black Friday is condemned as follows:

Dear Brothers,

The phrase 'Black Friday', which we have recently come to hear frequently, has disturbed all of us as believers. In our belief, all days are Allah's. The morning of every day is waking up to a bright future.

² <https://www.diyinet.gov.tr/tr-TR/Kisi/Baskan/11075/cuma-hutbesi-gunesin-dogdugu-en-hayirli-gun-cuma#>

³ Roughly preaching or sermon delivered in the Friday prayer.

Such disrespectful expressions and approaches that target the symbol of a belief and ignore [the sensitivities of] its members have no place in our tradition. The abuse of a religion’s sacred aspects for an unchecked frenzy of unlimited consumption is unacceptable.

This official body of the Republic of Turkey reports that among its missions is “to carry out work on Islamic belief, worship and ethics [and] enlighten society on religion and administer places of worship”⁴. Factoring in the significance of its judgments on religious issues, it can be readily asserted that its evaluations are revered by Turkish Muslims.

Not only this state department but also citizens expressed their discomfort with Black Friday. “Friday cannot be black but legendary or splendid”⁵, says a vexed commenter on a technology portal. Even though this dissidence was not concurred on by some, it was a common concern of many (Yenişafak. 2017, November 26), including the then senior presidential advisor. On November 24, 2017, he tweeted, “What is this Black Friday? Why Friday? Friday is enlightenment, abundance, peace, the best day the sun shines on. What manipulation is this, organised on this special day?” (Euronews. 2017, November 28). Some people were very unpleasant with Friday being called black, and some questioned “Why Friday but not Sunday?”⁶ and some launched “Black Sunday”⁷ deals to retaliate against this blasphemous⁸ action. A commenter on a news portal claims that it is nothing but an anti-Islamic campaign to make people forget all about the Friday prayer by cajoling them into a shopping frenzy, and another suggests “Holy Friday Deals” to replace Black Friday⁹. In the paper on Turkish people’s reaction to Black Friday as a consumption ritual, Şahin & Yünaçtı (2018) report that their participants consider the phrase Black Friday unacceptable for religious, cultural, ideological, and psychological reasons. A similar result has been noted by Akcan, Gençyürek-Erdoğan, & Karaçok (2020), 46% of whose participants have reported negative sentiments about Black Friday. Similarly, Duran-Tekeoğlu & Eser (2021) have shown that a majority of their participants exhibit a negative attitude toward Black Friday for psychological, religious, and cultural reasons.

It seems that the companies in Turkey must have realized Turkish people’s oversensitivity to the phrase Black Friday and the high probability that other adjectival collocations that potentially praise Friday would not meet with the same level of reaction, they came to produce their own nomenclature to refer to this specific event. Relatedly, this paper analyses the euphemized names that some companies operating in Turkey generated to offer their deals by evading the backlash of Turkish consumers.

3. Taboo and Euphemism in Translation

Turkey was not the only country to protest the concept of Black Friday; some countries in the Muslim world too rose against “America’s Black Friday”¹⁰ since vilifying Friday is a religious taboo. It is blatantly obvious that breaking this taboo infuriated Muslim believers. Pakistan was among them, where “countrywide violent protests by hardline Islamist clerics” took place (Naqvi. 2017, December 08). This is surely an obstacle for companies to sort out because considerable amounts of profit can be made during this purchasing rally (Smith & Raymen, 2017: 677).

⁴ <https://www.diyaset.gov.tr/en-US/Institutional/Detail/3>

⁵ <https://www.webtekno.com/zimbirtilar/kara-cuma-h3931.html>

⁶ <https://www.webtekno.com/zimbirtilar/kara-cuma-h3931.html>

⁷ <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/kara-cumaya-karsi-kara-pazar-399644.html>Sinoplu

⁸ Sandıkçıoğlu (2017).

⁹ <https://www.haberler.com/fotogaleri/iste-turkiye-deki-black-friday-indirimleri-yorumlari/>

¹⁰ Al-Kurdi (2020).

The solution was proposed by the customers themselves, as is the case in Turkey. Naqvi (2017, December 08) mentions "aggressive reactions" of "offended Muslims" in her news article. In an advertisement, the "online taxi giant Careem" is depicted to feature Black Friday, on which people comment on social media. Some clamor, "never call a Friday black", "stop this nonsense Black Friday", and "[Friday] cannot be black"; instead, they suggest several alternative adjectives, such as "bright", "blessed", "golden", and "white". As Naqvi reports, Careem succumbs to the alleged mass reaction to "change their promo code from Black Friday to Careem Weekend", which seems to appease the infuriated users after seeing that the company's higher-ups "take care of religious sentiments" and one appreciates the company's understanding and feels "proud of [his] culture and values". These examples prove that among the strategies to resolve or circumvent a culturally sensitive issue is 'euphemism', which can be defined as "using acceptable ways of speaking about something bad or taboo" (Nida, 2001: 79). As suggested by the users above, removing or replacing a blasphemous attribute to Friday seems to be a viable procedure to create sociocultural solutions with relatively higher acceptability. Then, it can be propounded that euphemism during translation may prove fruitful to produce more acceptable texts. "Cultural receptiveness to difference", "taboos about certain types of content", and "ideology" are among the causes of partial transfer. Depending on the translation situation, translators may choose to transfer "specific aspects of the source text but not others to the receptor context" (Tymoczko, 2010). What is ignored in the target text is very likely to "represent a moment of linguistic, sexual, political, religious, social or cultural subversion which the target culture refuses, for whatever reason, to accommodate" (Varney, 2007), which is obviously the adjective 'black' herein. Baker (2006) expresses that omitting blasphemous and taboo references in translation – be it thanks to institutional or self-censorship – can be considered a procedure to avoid being faulted for ignoring the predominant public view (Baker, 2006). This can well account for Careem's strategy to opt for a neutral text over the negatively loaded "Black Friday", i.e., to show that it aligns with the dominant public view.

Crespo-Fernández (2014: 6) defines euphemism as "the process whereby a distasteful concept is stripped of its most inappropriate or offensive overtones, providing thus a 'safe' way to deal with certain embarrassing topics without being politically incorrect or breaking a social convention". Previous accounts indicate that this strategy worked in the other parts of the Muslim world. Moore (2016, November 25) reports that "the American tradition of Black Friday" was introduced to the Arab countries by Souq, "the largest e-commerce site in the Arab world", in 2014 as "White Friday". As Moore elaborates, they turned Black Friday on its head to "resonate with the culture of the Middle East" to avoid "black" connoting a "sombre event" by using white which has "a more positive meaning" (Moore, 2016, November 25) and which is "the day of worship, gathering, friends and family in the Arab world" (Cherrayil, 2016, November 16). Ronaldo Mouchawar, the company's chief executive, discloses that they achieved "a massive success" in 2014, sold "about 600,000 units" in 2015, and hoped to exceed "over a million" in 2016, when Newsweek interviewed him. These figures evidence that euphemism and partial censorship serve the purpose – of appealing to the target culture, being accepted by them, and eventually being purchased by them. As Al-Qinai (2005) puts it, a translator may need to modify the target text to attend to the target culture's long-held sociolinguistic constraints because the target readers/users "may impose their own expectations on the translator"; therefore, euphemism comes into play as "a salient feature of such an influence" (2005: 523).

This textual rendering procedure incorporates neither total omission of the phrase nor verbatim usage, but the preservation of the holy Friday and the substitution of a culturally viable attribute for the culturally unacceptable "black". This action is regarded "as a form of strategic self-censorship", where some culture-specific components of a source text are not translated and translators may "suppress

facets of a source text to further their own programmatics in translating” due to “goal-driven decision-making procedures consciously chosen by the translator” (Tymoczko, 2010: 257). Then, this truncation of the source can be said to be a necessary but not an undesirable strategy, considering that the ultimate goal of partial (self-)censorship and euphemism is to be “more in tune with the linguistic and cultural contexts of the target language in order to maintain the pragmatic intention of the original” (Cintas, 2009: 17).

It can be inferred that euphemism as a partial censorship procedure can be employed to replace the components of a source text that target recipients feel uneasy with more acceptable features to preserve the pragmatic function of the source. Although this action may be imposed by the target culture, translators may also choose to self-censor certain parts of the original to observe their own agenda; or both could co-occur.

4. Method

4.1. Analysis

The present study adopted content analysis as the primary research procedure to harvest workable qualitative data concerning the euphemistic expressions substituted for Black Friday. Content analysis can be described as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorp, 2004: 18) and content analyses are most successful when they focus on facts that are constituted in language” and such linguistic phenomena can be broken into four classes (Krippendorp, 2004: 75-77) – i.e., attributions, social relationships, public behaviors, and institutional realities. As Krippendorp (2004: 75-77) elaborates, content analyses are successful “to the extent that texts are instrumental in disseminating and creating [social] attributions”, “when they focus on how language is used, relying on social grammars of recorded speech or written communication of which speakers or writers may not be fully aware”, “when they address phenomena that are of a public, social, or political nature or concern phenomena of individuals' participation in public, social, or political affairs”, and lastly “if they consider the more stable categories [written forms] in which the organization constitutes itself (Krippendorp, 2004: 75-77)”. Accordingly, content analysis was adopted as the analytical backbone procedure of the present study because the corpus lends itself to describing the euphemistic translations of Black Friday as to how social attributions, interactions, behaviors, and organizational parameters may individually or collectively govern translation process. As Ezzy (2002: 83-84) describes, content analysis begins with textual sampling from a population, defines the units of analysis and the categories to group the defined components, reviews each unit and places it into the relevant group, and counts and compares the occurrences through statistical or quantitative methods. “The final stage of content analysis is the interpretation of results” (Ezzy, 2002: 83-84).

4.2. Corpus

To observe the abovementioned processes of content analysis, the author determined 17 euphemistic Turkish translations of Black Friday by doing online research and reviewing the related literature, which tentatively comprises the population of the study. From this population, 15 euphemism cases were isolated to produce the sample, which was calculated to be representative of the population because a sample of 15 is capable of representing a population of up to 39 members at a 95% confidence level¹¹. Therefore, the corpus consists of 15 euphemistic Turkish translations of ‘Black Friday’, which were

¹¹ Calculated by Dr. Burcu MESTAV, Department of Statistics, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University.

retrieved from the websites of 27 national and international companies, conducting businesses in various markets, such as clothing, electronics, wholesaling, electronics/appliances, cosmetics, jewelry, and tourism. The sample was produced through relevance sampling (also known as purposeful sampling) (Krippendorp, 2004: 119). In this sampling procedure, a researcher "systematically lowers the number of units that need to be considered for an analysis". Therefore, it can be claimed that the sample itself tends to be the population of a study, "excluding the textual units that do not possess relevant information" (Krippendorp, 2004: 119). In the same vein, the sample of this paper includes only the digital materials available on the official websites of the respective companies. Another sampling prerequisite was the presence of "Cuma" as a lexical component and euphemistic attributes thereto, for the adjective "black" is what makes the marketing phrase taboo and the author intended to research what euphemizing attributes were used to replace "black". Although the previous research incorporates two other euphemistic translations, they were excluded from the study because they were not available on the companies' websites on the date of data collection, they were adopted much less frequently than the others, or they were used by very small businesses, which are expected to exert a relatively smaller impact on the market. These two euphemistic phrases are Bereketli Cuma [Bountiful/Fruitful Friday] (Kılıç, Budak, & Kılıç, 2020) and "Güzel Cuma [Beautiful Cuma]" (Şahin & Yünaçtı, 2018).

As the next step of content analysis, the euphemism strategies adopted by the companies were analyzed as categorized by Warren (1992) (Table 1). Each strategy was not described in this paper but accounted for when applicable to a euphemism phenomenon in the corpus.

Formal Innovation	(i) Word-formation devices	Compounding
		Derivation
	(ii) Phonemic modification	Blends
		Acronyms, etc.
EUPHEMISM	(ii) Phonemic modification	Onomatopoeia
		Back slang
	(iii) Loan words	Rhyming slang
		Phoneme replacement
(iv) Semantic Innovation	(iii) Loan words	Abbreviation
		Particularizations
	(iv) Semantic Innovation	Implications
		Metaphors
(iv) Semantic Innovation	Metonyms	
	Reversals	
(iv) Semantic Innovation	Understatements	
	Overstatements	

Table 1. Classification of euphemism strategies (Warren, 1992)

Warren (1992) basically categorizes euphemism into two classes: formal and semantic innovations. It is understandable from this grouping that euphemism procedures occur at these two levels. The analyses of the corpus revealed two prevailing types of semantic innovations – i.e., overstatement and implication – and only a single case of loan word in the euphemistic translations of Black Friday.

4.1. Overstatements

The analyses showed that the most frequently adopted strategy is overstatement. Warren (1992: 132) refers to overstatement (also as hyperbole) as the process whereby “the conventional meaning of a word fits our favoured contextual referent provided the degree to which some feature of meaning applies is attenuated”. 16 of 27 companies were observed to employ this strategy to “upgrade a desirable feature of the referent” (Crespo-Fernández, 2014). This profusion is an expected phenomenon (Warren, 1991: 153).

	Company	Business Type	Turkish Euphemism	English Translation
1	MediaMarkt	Electronics/appliances		
2	Karaca	Bone China		
3	Koçtaş	Home improvement	Şahane Cuma	Splendid Friday
4	D&R	Book store		
5	Boyner	Department store		
6	LCW	Clothing		
7	Metro	Cash-and-carry		
8	Teknstore	Electronics	Muhteşem Cuma	Magnificent Friday
9	Setur	Tourism		
10	Hepsiburada	E-commerce		
11	Idefix	Online bookstore		
12	Trendyol	E-commerce	Efsane Cuma	Fabulous Friday
13	Kahve Dünyası	Coffeehouse		
14	Migros	Superstore	Müthiş Cuma	Marvelous Friday
15	Çiçeksepeti	E-commerce	Büyük Cuma	Great Friday
16	Gittigidiyor	E-commerce	Süper Cuma	Super Friday

Table 2. Overstatements in euphemized translations of Black Friday

Warren (1992: 154) describes that overstatements “represent attempted prototypical extensions”. It is understandable from what the Turkish state officials and Turkish and foreign laypeople say that an exalted divine property, which is a prototypical quality of holy days, is attributed to Friday, which may expectedly be a simple day for the members of another religion or culture. Table 2 shows that 16 companies have recourse to adjectival overstatements to describe Friday’s religious greatness. These adjectives are “şahane”¹² (five companies), “muhteşem”¹³ (four companies), “efsane”¹⁴ (four companies), “müthiş”¹⁵ (one company), “büyük”¹⁶ (one company), and “süper”¹⁷ (one company). These modifiers are believed to have been used to accentuate Friday’s “greatness” as a favored referent while attenuating Black Friday’s negative attribute to Muslim communities’ sacred day to avoid an imminent blasphemy.

¹² “splendid” in Turkish.

¹³ “magnificent” in Turkish.

¹⁴ “fabulous” in Turkish.

¹⁵ “marvellous” in Turkish.

¹⁶ “great” in Turkish.

¹⁷ “super” in Turkish.

4.2. Implications

It was observed that implication is the second most frequently employed euphemism procedure. For Warren (1992: 131), implication is the strategy by which “the contextual and the conventional referent(s) are invariably or frequently concomitant, which causes a more or less probable antecedent-consequent relationship between them”. In this study, it was categorized into three groups: (a) implications about the describers/companies, (b) implications about the described/Friday, and (c) implications about the occasion/Black Friday.

4.2.1. Implications about the describers/companies

Table 3 indicates that four companies chose to adopt the implication strategy to substitute the referents suggestive of their brands’ characteristics for “black”. The Greek-origin morpheme “techno- [tekno-]” in Tekno Cuma refers to the business of the electronics company “Teknosa”, while “fast [hızlı]” in Hızlı Cuma is likely to be associated with the animal “puma” referring to the sportswear company “Puma”. The color “pink” in the phrase Pink Friday relatively connotes “femininity” and the lingerie company’s brand name “Penti” is stylized in pink. Lastly, the jewelry company Altınbaş uses “altın [golden]” to describe Friday. The respective legal bodies were observed to use branding attributes so as to generate the euphemistic “Techno Friday”, “Fast Friday”, “Pink Friday”¹⁸, and “Golden Friday”.

	Company	Business Type	Turkish Euphemism	English Translation
1	Teknosa	Electronics/Appliances	Tekno Cuma	Techno Friday
2	Puma	Sportswear	Hızlı Cuma	Fast Friday
3	Penti	Lingerie Store	Pink Friday	Pink Friday
4	Altınbaş	Jewelry	Altın Cuma	Golden Friday

Table 3. Company-associated implications in euphemized translations of Black Friday

These four examples suggest that the companies euphemized “Black Friday” by using mnemonic attributes indicative of their businesses or products. Thus, these euphemisms can be propounded to represent two sorts of achievements: (a) companies’ promoting themselves (b) by avoiding a religious taboo.

4.2.2. Implications about the described/Friday

The companies were also identified to have resorted to the implications concerning Friday. A Friday khutbah reads¹⁹,

Dear brothers,

Today is Friday. This is our weekly holiday. We live a great rejoice every Friday, a day of merriment and excitement beyond words, for Friday is an exceptional day instrumental in our weekly resurrection. Friday is the day when our souls, overwhelmed by the turmoil of life, find peace. It is a precious time when our hearts, exhausted from various difficulties, rest and find solace.

¹⁸ It should be noted that “Pink Cuma [Pink Friday]” also features the loan word strategy.

¹⁹ <https://www.diyinet.gov.tr/tr-TR/Kisi/Baskan/11075/cuma-hutbesi-gunesin-dogdugu-en-hayirli-gun-cuma#>

As evident from this excerpt, Friday is a “holiday” for Muslims, who yearn and wait for it to be reborn and to find solace. This is why five companies’ use of the words “blessed”, “[much-]awaited”, and “love” associated with Friday is predictable (Table 4).

	Company	Business Type	Turkish Euphemism	English Translation
1	Vestel	Electronics/Appliances	Hayırlı Cuma	Blessed Friday
2	Modasuma	Clothing		
3	Amazon	E-commerce	Beklenen Cuma	[Much-]Awaited Friday
4	Mizalle	Clothing		
5	Arçelik	Electronics/Appliances	Cuma Aşkına	For the Love of Friday

Table 4. Friday-associated implications in euphemized translations of Black Friday

4.2.3. Implications about the event/Black Friday

The analyses revealed the third case of implication – i.e., about Black Friday as a marketing occasion. As a shopping event, Black Friday is characterized by an excess of purchases, impulsive buying, fierce battles for merchandise, and limited time and supply (Smith & Raymen, 2017).

	Company	Business Type	Turkish Euphemism	English Translation
1	Flormar	Cosmetics	Şanslı Cuma	Lucky Friday
2	Watsons	Cosmetics	Çılgın Cuma	Crazy Friday

Table 5. Event-associated implications in euphemized translations of Black Friday

These characteristics of Black Friday may account for two companies’ recourse to “lucky” and “crazy” as euphemizing adjectives (Table 5): “lucky” because people are promised to purchase goods for reduced prices and “crazy” because it is a shopping bonanza and commodities are offered for allegedly unreasonably low prices.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study intended to describe the euphemistic translations of a taboo – namely Black Friday – and the strategies adopted to make this shopping occasion a culturally acceptable event in Turkey. The author used the online advertisements of 27 national and international companies and the classification of the euphemism strategies developed by Warren (1992).

The analyses showed that the companies in question exclusively used two euphemism strategies: overstatement and implication. It was speculated that overstatement could have been used to foreground Friday’s divine greatness as perceived by Turkish people, while implication was employed to evoke the respective company’s prominent brand properties, to accentuate Friday’s holiness and its significance for the Turkish Muslims, and to emphasize Black Friday’s certain features, such as low prices, purchasing frenzy, and a rare chance to grab.

Considering that euphemism is broadly “using acceptable ways of speaking about something bad or taboo” (Nida, 2001: 79), whether the euphemizing companies have succeeded in presenting Black Friday in an acceptable way remains to be answered. Previous research has attempted to address this inquiry.

Akgüç-Çetinkaya & Ceng (2018) have conducted a research study on consumer cynicism and Turkish people’s perception of Black Friday by analyzing 1841 tweets. They have concluded that 72% of the tweets contain negative sentiments about Black Friday, while the positive ones account for 6% (2018: 175). This finding is corroborated by Kılıç, Budak, & Kılıç (2020: 138), who have ranked the Black Friday hashtags through tweet statistics and sentiment analyses and found that the most positive sentiments are related to “Süper Cuma[Super Friday]”, whereas the most negative ones are concerned with “Kara Cuma[Black Friday]”. This shows that overstatement as a euphemism strategy has been deemed more acceptable by Turkish people, while the borrowed “Black Friday” has led to negative sentiments. Duran-Tekeoğlu & Eser (2021: 477) report in their study on Black Friday as a borrowed consumption ritual that the participants have exhibited purchasing behavior despite their negative views about Black Friday. Likewise, Akcan et al. (2020: 52) have found that their participants’ purchasing behaviors contradict their negative views on Black Friday. These two contradictory behaviors may suggest that either people are engrossed to purchase on Black Friday in defiance of their beliefs and negative sentiments about the day or they do not refrain from shopping because of the new nomenclature – namely euphemisms. Relying on the results of this paper, there are reasons to believe that the latter has a high probability.

Onbaşı (2020: 584) has investigated the visibility of the Black Friday advertisements of Hepsiburada and Trendyol, two e-commerce companies featured in the present study as well, by emphasizing their euphemized versions of Black Friday. She has discovered that the number of purchases in November 2019 increased by 45% and the amount of payment by credit card during Black Friday in 2019 rose by 36% in comparison with the previous year. The euphemized translations of Black Friday might have positively affected the sales and resulted in the increased purchasing rates. In the study on consumer cynicism on Black Friday, Akgüç-Çetinkaya & Ceng (2018: 178) report that some companies’ proactive strategies whereby they have changed the names of their promotions have translated to positive attitudes towards their deals.

All in all, it seems that euphemized translations of the taboo phrase Black Friday proved beneficial in removing or replacing the socioculturally unacceptable components of the event and helped the national and international companies in Turkey be culturally and socially more acceptable as the euphemisms increased their sales and profits just as the un-euphemized Black Friday did and does in the other parts of the world.

This paper analyzed the textual properties of the phenomenon in question – i.e., Black Friday as promoted in Turkey through euphemistic translation – since the author attempted to investigate the euphemistic translation strategies employed by national and international companies in Turkey to create more acceptable “Black Friday” advertisements and to find out whether their euphemisms potentially assist them in marketing their products because, as the disapproval of the state officials, religious bodies, and laypeople featured herein suggests, “Black Friday” as it is would not go unprotected in a so-called Muslim country. Future research may attend to other parameters, such as colors, design elements, and images used in the advertising campaigns, as features of localization and/or of a localized product. Another reason why the paper was built on the analyses of the textual components of the advertisements was that this study was conducted to investigate how a taboo phrase was euphemized through translation as a text creation process in an effort to create culturally acceptable target texts and to achieve marketing goals in Turkey. Future papers may choose to interview the marketing officials and/or localizing team members of the respective companies to reveal the rationale behind their euphemistic translation decisions during the production of their campaigns.

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