

88. The serial novel as an object of research in translation history: Methodological implications for historiography of translation¹

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Abstract

Despite their incontestable worldwide influence on culture and literature in the 19th and 20th centuries, serial novels are underrepresented in translation history research. This paper calls attention to serial novels as a fertile source of historical knowledge regarding translation, reception, and circulation drawing from a comprehensive study of translated and indigenous serial novels in three Turkish daily newspapers, namely *Cumhuriyet*, *Akşam*, and *Vakit*, published between 1928 and 1960. Based on this premise, the aim of the paper is twofold. The first is to display some common characteristics of serial novels, such as plasticity, anonymity, topicality, and ephemerality, along with the substantial impact these characteristics made on the way translations were performed in history. The second is to problematize the neglect of serial novels in translation historiography and suggest their inclusion in translation history research. The paper argues that serial novels and, when available, other serial publications are crucial primary sources for many sub-fields of historical research related to translation to the extent that their exclusion inevitably leads to gaps and, in some cases, even misrepresentations of historical reality. In order to abstain from such historiographical drawbacks, researchers of translation history, especially those focusing on retranslation, reception, and circulation of literary works, need to pay due heed to the practice of serialization.

Keywords: Serial novels, translation history, periodicals, translation historiography, Turkish daily newspapers

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Çeviri tarihinde bir arařtırma nesnesi olarak tefrika roman: Çeviri tarihyazımına yönelik yöntemsel çıkarımlar

Öz

Tefrika romanlar, 19. ve 20. yüzyıllarda kültür ve edebiyat üzerindeki tartışılmaz etkilerine rağmen, çeviri tarihi arařtırmalarında yeterince temsil edilmemektedir. Bu makale, 1928-1960 yılları arasında yayımlanmış *Cumhuriyet*, *Akşam* ve *Vakit* gazetelerindeki tercüme ve telif tefrika romanlar üzerine yapılmış kapsamlı bir çalışmadan yola çıkarak çeviri, alımlama ve dolaşım konularına dair verimli bir tarihsel bilgi kaynağı olarak tefrika romanlara dikkat çekmektedir. Makalenin bu öncüle dayanarak iki temel amacı bulunmaktadır. Birincisi, tefrika romanların esneklik, anonimlik, aktüellik ve geçicilik gibi bazı ortak özelliklerini ve bu özelliklerin tarihte çevirilerin yapılış biçimi üzerindeki önemli etkilerini ortaya koymaktır. İkincisi ise çeviri tarihyazımında tefrika romanların göz ardı edilmesini sorunsallaştırmak ve bu romanların çeviri tarihi arařtırmalarına dâhil edilmesini önermektir. Bu makale, tefrika romanların ve, mevcut olması durumunda, diğer tefrika yayınların çeviri ile ilgili tarih arařtırmalarının birçok alt alanı için kritik öneme sahip birincil kaynaklar olduğunu, bunların göz ardı edilmesinin kaçınılmaz olarak boşluklara ve hatta bazı durumlarda tarihsel gerçekliğin yanlış temsiline yol açtığını savunmaktadır. Tarihyazımı ile ilgili bu tür sakıncalardan kaçınmak için, çeviri tarihi arařtırmacılarının, özellikle de edebî eserlerin yeniden çevirisi, alımlanması ve dolaşımına odaklananların, tefrika pratiklerini arařtırmalarına dâhil etmeleri önerilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Tefrika romanlar, çeviri tarihi, süreli yayımlar, çeviri tarihyazımı, Türkçe günlük gazeteler

Introduction: Serial novels as a research object in translation studies

Despite the fact that periodicals have been widely utilized as a source in general historical research, translation history principally depends upon writings in book form, relatively overlooking the data in periodicals as stated by translation studies scholars. Luc van Doorslaer (2010), for instance, argues that since periodical texts are underrepresented in translation history research, the image of an author might be distorted if book publications are not complemented with publications in periodicals (p. 27). Karin Littau (2011) proclaims that in translation studies, “little attention [...] has been paid to the role that *media forms* have played in the history and constitution of translation” (p. 261) (italics in the original). These media forms, according to Littau, including scribal, oral, print, and screen media, are constitutive of the translation practice and reception rather than being merely a conserving tool. For this reason, translation history should take heed of the material carriers of translations, i.e., media in research, because “the medium in which a message is sent is at least as important as its contents” (Littau, 2016, p. 87). In other words, medial forms influence the way texts are written, read, and translated. In a similar vein, Ceyda Özmen (2016) names the periodicals as a “marginal print genre” (p. 3) because, in translation history, the publications in book form are prioritized. Furthermore, Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar, in her several talks⁵ from 2009 and onwards pointed out the potential of periodical publications for historical translation research. She claimed that periodical publications “offer valuable clues about the

⁵ See “Translation and Daily Fiction for the Nation: Towards a Poetics of Popular Literature in 20th Century Turkey” (talk given at EUME Berliner Seminar in 2009) and “The Periodical Press as a Translation Studies Lab” (talk given at Montréal University in 2014). Furthermore, in three of her published articles, she displayed how analysis of periodical publications can reveal the relationship between translation and the development of critical thought (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2002) and how to examine the role and position of translation in a magazine (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2014a; 2019).

different disguises translations have and their different manifestations” (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2014b, para. 2). Similarly, as stated by Fabio Guidali (2020), “historiography on translations in book form is notably rich [...], but still scarce as regards to translations in periodicals, which were proportionally even more abundant” (p. 20) in history. Despite some recent research by scholars starting to bridge this gap⁶, our research has revealed that periodicals remain marginal in the grand scheme of translation history.

Serial novels, unlike today, were an integral part of both the periodicals and literature around the world roughly from the 19th century to the mid-20th century. They were taken for granted by newspaper or magazine readers, frequently being the very reason why someone follows a particular periodical over a period of time. In terms of literature, serialization was an almost compulsory means of publicizing a new work for the first time and receiving feedback from the readers before publication in book form. As Ahu Selin Erkul Yağcı (2011) states in her doctoral dissertation on the production, marketing, and consumption of novels in book form in Turkish history between 1840 and 1940, the periodicals “were inextricably linked to the production of novels” (p. 236). Whether translated or indigenous, many novels were introduced to the readership for the first time as serials before being published as a book in many cultures, including Britain, the United States of America, France, Spain, Japan, and Turkey.⁷ As Patricia Okker and Nancy West (2011) state, serial fiction is an international phenomenon with conspicuous similarities across various countries (p. 73). Therefore, it can be claimed that its characteristics and methodological implications might also be similar for diverse cultures. It would not be wrong then to state that despite being a long-standing research object in the humanities, especially in media history and literary history, serial novels and the practice of serialization are relatively new and largely undiscovered fields of inquiry for translation studies scholars, aside from a few introductory works.

Our research has revealed that among many forms of overt and covert, metaphorical and literal forms of translations and translation-related items in the Turkish daily newspapers, the most remarkable and consistent one is serialized novels, which consist of a strikingly high number of translated texts until the 1960s. Nevertheless, due to the sporadic use of periodicals compared to sources published in book form, as stated by several scholars earlier (Lambert, 2006; van Doorslaer, 2010; 2011; Özmen, 2016; 2019), research shedding light on the translated serial novels can be counted on the fingers of one hand. To our knowledge, the earliest scholar who problematized the phenomenon of translation in serialized novels is Elisa Martí-López (2002). In her monograph examining the Spanish *misterios*, serial city mystery novels written under the influence of Eugène Sue’s renowned *Les Mystères de Paris*, she demonstrates that “translation, imitation and original writing were diffuse practices in the 1840s and the 1850s” with “boundaries blurred by a practice of loose translation and original writing that constituted itself as a free reworking and reformulation of foreign (particularly French) materials” (Martí-López, 2002, p. 135). Martí-López’s research displays how serialized fiction with indigenous elements was created through translational activities of imitation and appropriation. Olga Borovaya (2003) is another scholar who problematizes translation within the framework of serial novels. In her paper on serialized Ladino novels published in the late 19th century, Borovaya (2003), similar to Martí-López, states that most of these serial novels “were directly dependent on foreign sources” (p.30) and produced as free adaptations. For these reasons, she analyses these novels as “rewritings” and their producers as “rewriters” (Lefevre,

⁶ For example, see the special issue of *Translation and Interpreting Studies* entitled “Translation and/in Periodical Publications” edited by Maria Constanza Guzmán in 2019. Also see Fólca, Roig-Sanz and Carstia, 2020.

⁷ There are numerous scholarly works on different aspects of the history of serialized fiction in these cultures. For Britain, see Hayward, 1997; Law, 2000; Brake, 2001; Delafield, 2015. For the USA, see Lund, 1993; Okker, 2003; 2012; Bauer, 2019. For France, see Queffélec-Dumasy, 1989; 1999; O’Neil-Henry, 2017; Birch, 2018. For Japan, see Law and Morita, 2003. For Spain, see Martí-López, 2002. For the Ottoman Empire and early Republican Turkey, see Serdar and Tutumlu Serdar, 2014; 2019; Üyepazarcı, 2016; 2017a; 2017b; 2019.

1992). However, Borovaya’s research interprets some features of serialized fiction, such as anonymity, loose translations, and dependence on foreign sources, as characteristics of the Ladino novel as a “genre” by itself rather than general characteristics of the serial novels in various cultures. In other words, the features that seem to be distinctive features of translated serial novels, in general, are regarded as distinguishing features of Ladino novels by Borovaya. Nevertheless, the research by Martí-López and Borovaya is seminal in scrutinizing the characteristics of translated serial novels.

More recently, Luc van Doorslaer (2010) problematizes the role of cultural and ideological motives behind the (de-)selection of translated serial stories to be published in Flemish newspapers between 1844 and 1899. His research indicates how translated fiction in newspapers can yield results relevant to the ideological orientation of publications. Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar (2014a) explores the position and role of translation in *Doğan Kardeş* [Brother Doğan] (1945-1993), a children’s magazine, including the serial fiction in the magazine. She suggests that “a cooperation between periodical studies and translation studies can open up a fruitful ground for exploring textual and social aspects of translation as it manifests itself in the periodical” (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2014a, p. 17). In a similar vein to van Doorslaer and Tahir-Gürçağlar, in drawing attention to serialized fiction in periodicals for translation studies scholars, two introductory papers by Bo Li (2019) and Ceyda Özmen (2018) through Chinese serial novels and serialized Turkish film novels, respectively, address the relevance of serial novels to translation history utilizing case studies. While Li (2019, p. 314) displays that newspaper renditions of serial novels can omit descriptive details in the source text of a fictive work, Özmen (2018, p. 289) examines the prominent role translators play in creating serial movie novels from promotional material provided by Hollywood film studios. In their conclusions, both Li and Özmen point out that studying serial novels can enrich the existing knowledge about various translation practices and forgotten agents. Furthermore, Özmen (2016, pp. 354, 298), in her doctoral dissertation, states that serialized novels have been mostly neglected in translation studies and highlights the significant omissions and stylistic changes in target texts of the serialized film novels published in *Yıldız* [The Star] (1938-1954), a Turkish film fan magazine. Sema Üstün Külünk (2019), in her doctoral dissertation, examines how the journal *Hilal* [The Crescent] (1958-1980) played a role in the construction of an Islamist repertoire through translation in Turkey, incorporating non-literary serials published in the journal into her research. Therefore, it is plausible to claim that there has been increasing attention toward serial (non-)fiction and periodicals among translation studies scholars in recent years. Nevertheless, all the research mentioned here focuses on only one periodical at a time. Serial novels, as a common item in many periodicals, methodologically enable larger-scale research facilitating comparison and examination of some common characteristics. However, on the one hand, no comprehensive survey of serialized novels has been conducted by translation scholars in contrast to the extensive body of research produced by literary historians worldwide. On the other hand, research by most literary historians is far from problematizing the translated serials; most of them scrutinize indigenous serial novels written by famous authors. Even if obscure author-translators are included in the research, their translations are either excluded or left as less important resources in the background. For instance, in a grand research project entitled “History of Serial Novels in Turkish Literature (1831-1928)”⁸ by a research group coordinated by Ali Serdar and Reyhan Tutumlu (2022), both the translated and indigenous serial novels were cataloged. However, the research group only digitalized the first installment of the translated serial novels, while all installments of the indigenous novels were digitalized. Similarly, the research group’s

⁸ In this project conducted by researchers from Özyeğın University, a total of 302 periodicals were scanned, and a total of 1383 serialized novels published between 1862 and 1928 were found. These figures prove that a robust and prosperous tradition of serialization existed in Turkish history (Serdar and Tutumlu Serdar, 2014: 3). For databases and detailed information about the project, see <https://tefrikaroman.ozyegin.edu.tr/en> (Last access: 25.01.2023).

publications based on the project are on indigenous novels, even though most (58%) of the serials cataloged were translations. In a similar vein to the research project that catalogs serialized novels until 1928, the first author of this article created a catalog of translated and indigenous serial novels published in *Cumhuriyet* [The Republic], *Akşam* [The Evening], and *Vakit* [The Time] between 1928 and 1960 utilizing the digital and paper copies of these newspapers.⁹ Based on our research findings, the rate of translations in daily newspapers did not change drastically in Turkey after 1928. In the three daily newspapers examined for this study, 54% of the serial novels were translated works between 1928 and 1960. Based on this information, this paper suggests that the practice of translation for the purposes of serialization and the translated serial novels require more attention from translation studies scholars in historical research. Otherwise, more than half of the practices related to the serialization of novels would be overlooked. In addition, our research has further disclosed that a considerable number of serial novels (about %33) were published as a book later on, but in most cases, this does not change the fact that they were written firstly as newspaper serials, taking the practice of serialization and target readership of the particular periodical they publish into consideration. For these reasons, we suggest that some prominent general characteristics of serial novels that will be elaborated below and their possible influences on translations can be helpful for future researchers undertaking translated serials and fill the gap between novels in serial and book forms.

Characteristics of (translated) serial novels

Anne O'Connor (2019) is one of the researchers that discuss the significance of the medium of translations, focusing on the periodical as a medium of communication and arguing that particular characteristics of the periodicals can lead to an expanded vision regarding the forms of translation and how they are dependent on the medial form that carries the translations. Complementary to O'Connor's suggestion, this paper argues that as a result of mediality, serialized novels, whether translated or indigenous, have some core differences in their production and reception compared to novels published in book form. In other words, because serialized novels were published in installments in periodicals such as newspapers and magazines in contrast to novels published at once in book format, they display some characteristics intrinsic to the media form in which they were published. Within this context, this paper first aims to display these characteristics as offered in previous historical research, namely plasticity, anonymity, ephemerality, and topicality, along with their influence on translations based on daily newspapers.

Daniel Couégnas (2006) states, “the serialized novel, a finely calibrated cultural product subject to the reactions of its readers, possesses great plasticity: if unsuccessful, it can be moved quickly along to its conclusion; if successful, it can be prolonged indefinitely” (p. 330). Therefore, texts that did not meet the readers' expectations in the author's or translator's mind were edited to omit parts to make the text more accessible and easier to follow. This practice was valid for both indigenous and translated serial novels. For example, popular Turkish serial novelist Cahit Uçuk (1909-2004) narrates in her memoirs that since one of her serial novels increased the sale figures of the newspaper *Tasvir* [The Depiction] (1945-1949), the owner of the newspaper asked her to add new chapters to the story (Uçuk, 2003, p. 93). A similar example for the translated serial novels can be provided from a memoir by poet Refik Durbaş (2012). Durbaş claims that in the newspaper entitled *Yeni İstanbul* [New İstanbul] (1949-1973), author and translator Murat Sertoğlu and his team wrote and translated many serialized novels; almost half of the newspaper was made of serials. However, Sertoğlu and his friends left their job in the newspaper

⁹ This catalog of translated and indigenous serialized novels between 1928 and 1960 in *Cumhuriyet*, *Akşam*, and *Vakit* will be published in the forthcoming doctoral dissertation by Devrim Ulaş Arslan.

with a few unfinished serial novels. Durbaş claims that together with another author of the newspaper, Erdoğan Tokmakçıoğlu, they continued to write the upcoming serials without notifying the readers of Sertoğlu's resignation. However, they had difficulty continuing the translated serial novel entitled *Anjelika*, which had been serialized for about 400 hundred days, when its translator left his job. Durbaş and Tokmakçıoğlu did not know the source text or source language and had to make up the events to finish this serial, but then they received many letters from readers complaining about the events in this particular translated serial (Durbaş, 2012). Thus, the plasticity arising from the mediality of the daily newspapers causes translational activities to be flexible in the sense that they can be moved quickly along to their conclusion, or they can be prolonged indefinitely depending on the conditions and reception of translated serialized novels. In addition, plasticity was not limited to the length of the novel, as Couégnas states, but it included flexibility in terms of the plot, characters, and structure. To give an example, the prominent Turkish humorist author Aziz Nesin, while criticizing one of his own serial novels, states that:

Gol Kralı [The Top Scorer] could not be a competent novel with the way I wrote it the first time because I wrote this novel daily as a newspaper serial. Some days I wrote only one installment of the serial, while some days, I wrote about three or five installments. For this reason, I did not decide on the events, composition, structure, and end of the novel beforehand. Only the main idea of the novel was clear to me. I could extend it as I wished; I could add new events or write an end whenever I wanted to. I could also remove some parts of it after its serialization was completed. And such a novel could not be a good or competent one. (Nesin, 2000, p. 201)¹⁰

[*Gol Kralı ilk yazdığım biçimiyle yetkin bir roman olamazdı. Çünkü bu romanı bir gazete tefrikası olarak günü gününe yazmıştım. Kimi gün bir, kimi üç beş tefrikalık birden yazıyordum. Bu yüzden romanın kişilerini, karakterlerini, hatta romanın olaylarını, kurgusunu, yapısını, sonunu önceden saptamamıştım. Salt, romanın düşüncesi, ana çizgisi benim için belliydi. Bu romanı istediğimce uzatabilir, ona durmadan olaylar ekleyebilir yada istediğim yerde kesip bitirebilirdim; roman bittikten sonra da kimi yerlerini çıkarabilirdim. Böyle bir roman da iyi, yetkin bir roman olamazdı.*] (Nesin, 2000, p. 201)

Based on Nesin's statements, it is clear that the serial mode of publishing enabled a pliable form of writing for authors. Complementary to Couégnas' statements, it can be suggested that plasticity makes marginal translation more prevalent for translators because when a translated novel becomes popular among the reading public, as in the above-mentioned case narrated by Refik Durbaş, the translator(s) might prolong the original text by adding events that do not exist in the source text.

Another significant difference between serialized novels and novels in book form was the increased level of anonymity in serials. Katherine Bode (2016) states that the digitization of newspapers brought thousands of serial novels without authors in Australian newspapers to light. According to her findings, 30% of serialized novels in nineteenth-century Australian newspapers were unattributed to any author or translator, while 9% were attributed to pseudonyms (Bode, 2016, pp. 294-295). Thus, in Bode's research, 39% of serial novels were not clearly attributed to any authors. Similarly, our research has shown that in translated serial novels published in the aforementioned three Turkish newspapers between 1928 and 1960, anonymity and pseudonymity were very prominent both in terms of authors and translators. The catalog of serial novels in three daily newspapers shows that in 149 (31%) of the 466 translated serial novels, no author name was stated, while in 86 (18%) of the translated serial novels, no translator name was stated. In contrast to the high anonymity in translated serial novels, in indigenous novels, only 7 (2%) out of 402 indigenous serial novels were unattributed to any author. However, it should be noted that these figures exclude pseudonymity which was a widespread practice for indigenous novels. It is impossible to state an exact number of novels written under a pseudonym because some pseudonyms are in the form of a proper name. Pseudonyms such as Server Bedi

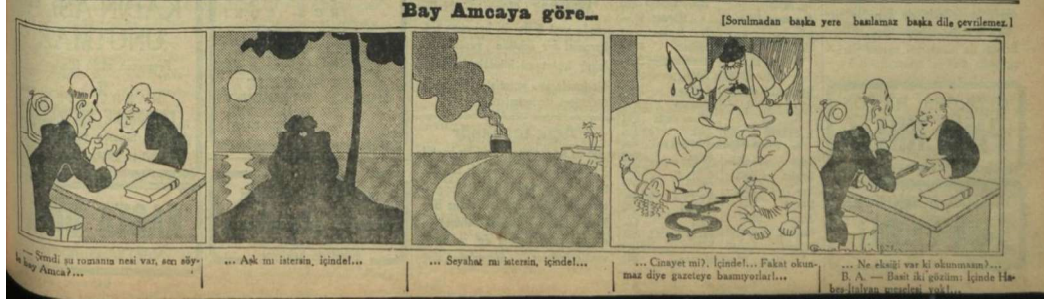
¹⁰ All translations are ours unless otherwise indicated. The source text follows translations in direct quotations.

(pseudonym of Peyami Safa), Çaprazcı (unknown pseudonym), Vir Gül (pseudonym of Vahdet Gültekin), or Ali Marmara (pseudonym of Vâlâ Nûreddin) are examples used by some authors and translators. Peyami Safa, one of the most prolific authors of Turkish history, explained the reason why he uses the pseudonym Server Bedi in some of his novels and other writings. He states that Server Bedi is “a sustenance name that I used for writings on which I worked on and thought about less, a public signature that liberate me from any kind of responsibility” [“Üstünde az düşündüğüm, az çalıştığım, mesuliyetten nefsim beraat kazandırmak için kullandığım bir maişet imzası”] (Ayvazoğlu 1998: 397). According to Dobrosława Świerczyńska (1983, as cited in Aleksiejuk, 2016, p. 443), the reasons for using pseudonyms in literature are threefold: a) civil and political (referring to the use of pseudonyms due to restricted civil or political freedom), b) social and conventional (referring to the use of pseudonyms due to gender roles in the society or literary conventions of a system), c) psychological (referring to the use of pseudonyms based on reputation, e.g., a new author hiding his identity because of a lack of confidence or a renowned author does not want to harm his reputation). Translated serial novels display a more frequent use of anonymity and pseudonymity in comparison to indigenous novels. It is plausible to think that translators adopted pseudonymity and anonymity for similar reasons, but there is no research on translators’ use of pseudonyms in the Turkish context. Serial novels provide a fertile field for such a query. It is our contention that for authors and translators, anonymity and, to an extent, pseudonymity create a shield of protection or space of liberty where they can, to some extent, avoid political, literary, or legal consequences of their texts. Hypothetically, this liberty opens the doors for more unrestrained and more marginal translation practices.

The third characteristic of the serial novels arising from the mediality of the daily newspaper was topicality. Topicality refers to a text's immediate relevance, interest, or importance concerning current events as represented in the media. As most periodicals are inherently topical, some serialized novels were also topical texts. In other words, serial novels had a close relationship with actual events. Especially some attention-grabbing news that was deemed important in the period had a considerable impact on the themes and topics of serial novels. As Richard Daniel Altick (1991) demonstrates in his research, many Victorian serial novelists benefited from utilizing the agenda of the day their novels were published. An example of topicality in serial novels from the history of Turkey would be wrestler serial novels [*pehlivan tefrikaları*]. These indigenous serial novels, probably unique to Turkey, started after 1948 when the Turkish wrestling team won four gold and two silver medals in the 1948 Summer Olympics and became the best country in wrestling (Üyepazarıcı, 2020). Following this national success, fictional wrestler serial novels became very popular among the newspaper readers. The translations were also under the influence of topicality regarding the selection of translated texts. For instance, in the late 1930s, before the Second World War, there was tension among European countries, and several wars were expected based on the course of events. Due to this tension, many articles on the possibility of war started to be published, and several translated war and espionage novels were published. For

example, a cartoon by Cemal Nadir Güler published in 1935, the date II. Italo-Ethiopian War started, mocks the feature of serials' topicality and their use as a tool for agenda-setting, as can be seen below.

Picture 1: Cartoonist Cemal Nadir Güler's work entitled "According to Mr. Uncle" on the topicality of serial novels



-Mr. Uncle, please tell me, what is wrong with this [serial] novel? There is love, adventure, homicide, and everything in it. But they do not publish it in the newspaper, saying no one would read it. So what is lacking in it to be not read?

- It is simple, my dear. There is no Ethiopian-Italian conflict in it! (Güler, 1935, p. 3)

[- Şimdi şu romanın nesi var, sen söyle Bay Amca?... Aşk mı istersin, içinde... Seyahat mi istersin, içinde... Cinayet mi? İçinde! Fakat okunmaz diye gazeteye basmıyorlar! Ne eksik var ki okunmasın?

- Basit iki gözüm: İçinde Habeş-İtalyan meselesi yok! (Güler, 1935, p. 3)

It appears that based on the topicality of periodicals and serial novels, the selection of the novels to be translated was under the influence of daily events that attracted public attention and became a popular topic of the time because foreign novels provided translators and newspaper owners with an abundant amount of texts to be translated on various subjects in contrast to the limited amount of indigenous novels that are available at a particular time period. Moreover, topicality in serial novels did not always take place in relationship with the breaking news, but sometimes, the newspapers created a sense of topicality by publishing daily news related to the type of the novel being serialized on the same page. To give an example, in *Akşam*, published on 11 October 1955, Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Adventure of the Sealed Room*, which was a Sherlock Holmes murder mystery, was being serialized on page four of the newspaper under the title *Kilitli Odanın Esrarı* [The Mystery of the Sealed Room] translated by Kasım Yargıcı. On the page the novel was being serialized, an article series entitled "At the court corridors [*Mahkeme Koridorlarında*]" narrated the so-called real-life events that took place at the courts. The focus of the article series was homicide events, and in that particular article, a murder suspect's interview was being published. At the same time, another translated serial entitled "Events that happened [*Olmuş Vakalar*]" with the subheading "The Murders Committed for Fun [*Eğlence için İşlenen Cinayetler*]" was being published on the same page. With all these elements, the page became a center of attraction for murder mystery readers. Such examples can be multiplied. In many cases, the periodicals made an intentional page composition apparently to create a sense of reality or relevance, as most of the serial novels aimed to be relevant to society in a way that readers could sympathize readily with the novel. As a result of this kind of topicality, overarching domestication in translations presumably was much more highly desirable by the newspaper owners and editors compared to novels published as a book.

The fourth characteristic of the serial novels arising from the mediality of the daily newspaper was ephemerality. Serial novels, just like the periodicals they were published in, were ephemeral in

production and consumption unless they were re-published in book form after the serialization.¹¹ As Jennifer Hayward (1997) justifiably expresses, “[u]nless we save each day's strip or videotape or buy one of the histories created and marketed as a solution to exactly this problem of serial ephemerality, there is no way to perform the kind of reality check we often run on novels, glancing back through the text to see what we have missed or forgotten” (p. 135). As a result of the ephemerality of serial novels, each part of the serial was available to readers for a short period of time. Therefore, although serials provide a reading experience extended over a period, the text's physical availability was much less in comparison to the book format. This means that it was, in many cases, burdensome for readers and critics to examine the work for a second time or make comparisons with other texts. For researchers, ephemerality is also an obstacle that leads to less research on serial novels and periodicals.¹² As an example, Esra Gül Özcan (2017), in her comprehensive research on Agatha Christie translations into Turkish, identifies a total of 403 Agatha Christie translations, retranslations, and reprints in Turkish. However, this research is based only on translations in book form and does not include numerous serialized Agatha Christie translations published in the newspapers. Besides, many critics and other intellectuals regarded serial literature as inferior to literature published in book format. This view led to recurring anonymity and the common use of pseudonyms in serial novels, especially in translated serial novels. For many authors and translators, serial novels were a source of considerable income; however, they did not want their names to become less prestigious in the eyes of readers and writers. It could also be suggested that due to the ephemerality of the periodicals, the borders between the original, imitation, adaptation, and even plagiarism in serial novels were much more diffuse in comparison to novels published as a book. The fact that the authors and the translators knew that the text they produced would be available for a short period of time to the readers and the critics unless it was published as a book later on probably led to more diffuse borders between various practices. As a case in point from Turkish newspapers, discussions regarding adaptation [*adaptasyon*], a term commonly used in the 1930s and 1940s to refer to appropriating a foreign novel via domestication and presenting it to the readers as if it was an indigenous novel, can be given. Many intellectuals criticized such activities for being deceptive and harmful to “genuine” Turkish literature. Again, a cartoon by Cemal Nadir Güler provided below reflects the view of some critics on such marginal translational activities.

¹¹ Furthermore, even if a serial novel is published as a print book following its serialization, it is almost always possible for the author, translator, or editor to amend the serialized version of the text.

¹² For the history of Turkish literature, it could be suggested that even some novels published as print books are either overlooked or marginalized in research, let alone the serial novels which were never published as a book. Recent research by Erol Üyepazarcı (2019) under the title *Unutulanlar Hiç Bilinmeyenler ve Bilinmek İstemeyenler* [Those who are Forgotten, Never Known and not Wanted to be Known] and Taner Ay (2021; 2023) under the title *Edebiyatımızda Unutulanlar ve Kaybedenler* [The Forgiven and The Losers in Our Literature] demonstrates these gaps in the field of literary studies.

Picture 2: Cemal Nadir Güler's cartoon on adaptation



Train Attendant: This young man asks, “When will the Europe train arrive?”

Chief: Do you wait for someone important, sir?

Adaptor: Yes, very important indeed: I await the European publications. (Güler, 1942)

[*Muavin: Delikanlı “Avrupa treni hangi gün gelecek?” diye soruyor!..*

Şef: Mühim birini mi bekliyorsunuz bayım?..

Adaptasyoncu: Evet, pek mühim: Avrupa neşriyatını bekliyorum!..] (Güler, 1942)

As seen in the image, a pair of scissors is in the pocket of the “adaptor” as he will clip out bits and pieces from the European publications and domesticate them to create an “indigenous-seeming” adapted work. Nadir’s criticism against the practice of adaptation, voiced by many intellectuals such as Yaşar Nabi Nayır and Refik Halid Karay in the 1930s and the 1940s, is partly a result of the westernization movement. As Saliha Paker (2011; 2014; 2015) displays, the practice of indigenous writing [*te’lif*] in the Turkish literary tradition does not necessarily refer to originality as in the modern understanding of the term.¹³ It meant writing a book through the reconciliation of ideas and included various practices of appropriation and transfer (Paker, 2011, p. 469; Paker, 2014, pp. 55-56). Following westernization attempts in many fields, including literature since the 19th century, the practice of indigenous writing started to experience a semantic change facing the European conception of the term and began to be understood by some as referring to complete originality and authenticity. Of course, the traditional understanding of the indigenous writing practice, which included appropriation via translation, did not abruptly come to a halt and continued to exist powerfully in the newspaper serials. Whereas the practice of indigenous writing [*te’lif*] meant writing a book via reconciliation of ideas as mentioned above, serial novelists (including the authors, translators, adaptors, and others), who were not actually “writing a book” probably did not see any harm in appropriating foreign works through adaptation. For this reason, it is plausible to assert that serial novels provide researchers with a fertile field to problematize and examine the epistemological understanding of translation and the original in the past.

Consequently, it could be suggested from the above examples that serial novels were significantly influenced by the daily newspapers’ materiality and mediality between 1928 and 1960 in Turkey.

¹³ The modern understanding of originality in literature is also a relatively new concept in Western culture. As Jack Lynch (2006) states, “an admiration for originality, and with it a respect for others’ intellectual property rights” (p. 54) is a phenomenon rooted in the 18th century.

Furthermore, characteristics of the serial novels arising from the mediality of daily newspapers, such as plasticity, anonymity, topicality, and ephemerality, intersect with the translation practices, contributing to the prevalence of marginal translation practices in translated serial novels. Data from the project conducted by Reyhan Tutumlu and Ali Serdar (2019), combined with our research, suggests a continuity of practices both in terms of serialization and translation of novels in the transition from the late-Ottoman period to the early Republican period. While not entirely inclusive of all serial novels, the characteristics mentioned above indicate the serial novel's specific distinction from novels published as a book. Thus, to cultivate a non-reductionist approach to the history of translation and literature, serial novels, which were one of the most influential and popular mass reading practices, require to be included in the research because not all novels were published as a book after being serialized.

Concluding remarks: Methodological implications for translation historiography

As displayed in the previous sections, despite being overlooked in translation history, serial novels held a principal position in cultural and literary history starting from the 1860s. Translated and indigenous serial novels had some distinctive qualities, such as plasticity, anonymity, ephemerality, and topicality, arising from being published in installments inside periodicals compared to the novels published in book form. Apart from their distinct characteristics as an object of study, researching serial works differs from published works methodologically. Books are the first to be noticed in traditional library research. Therefore, the first and foremost methodological implication for translation historiography is to discern that a translated book as an object of research could be preceded by a serial mode of publishing, which means that it was initially written as a serial but later published as a book. In such a case, many new elements would be introduced to the research, which would only be possible to realize if the serialized precedent is located. For instance, bibliographical data about the work, such as publication date and paratextual features, change directly upon such a finding. In addition, the serial novel's relationship with other elements within the periodical and textual changes in two different modes of publishing provide the researcher with more information regarding the research object, and a deeper understanding of the contextual features would be possible.

Some novels, especially in the Ottoman period and partly in the early Republican period, were serialized not as a part of a periodical but as separate installments [*forma, cüz*] to be bound later on by the readers after the installments were completed (Erkul Yağcı, 2011, pp. 100-102). Therefore, it is not always easy to discern works published in installments and works published at once as a bound volume, but it is a fact that literature relied heavily on serialization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Turkey. It could be suggested for the Turkish context that if a novel was published as a book before the 1960s, it is quite possible that it had been first serialized in the last one or two years in a periodical. Sometimes, the timespan between serialization and book publication might grow longer. Therefore, translation and literary history researchers should check whether a serialized version of the text they are interested in exists. Of course, it would not be plausible to scan periodicals manually for the title researcher is looking for. Besides, the novel's title might differ in serial and book forms. At this point, the importance of digital resources comes to the fore. With the advent of digitalization and digital humanities, in-text search in many Turkish periodicals is possible via a few websites.¹⁴ As a foresight, digital translation history

¹⁴ National Library of Turkey, Digital Library System: <https://dijital-kutuphane.mkutup.gov.tr/>
Wikilala Ottoman Turkish Search Engine: <https://www.wikilala.com/>
Muteferriqa: Ottoman Turkish Discovery Portal: <https://mutferriga.com/>
Özyeğin University History of Serial Novels in Turkish Literature Database: <https://eresearch.ozyegin.edu.tr/xmlui/handle/10679/888>

(Wakabayashi, 2019) as a methodology and pertinent tools will surely expand and evolve in the forthcoming years, and such resources and databases will be more inclusive and accessible.

Apart from finding the serialized version of a novel in book form, in-text search in the periodicals makes it available to find unknown or forgotten texts written by translators or critics in agency research. As mentioned above, periodicals were inherently ephemeral; thus, they are home to many forgotten texts if they were not published in book form in the following years. As a further example, regarding the translations of Daniel Defoe's renowned *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and its circulation in a time period in Turkish history, one can examine the catalogs of libraries and indeed can find the translations published in book format (cf. Karadağ, 2008). However, as the list of translated serial novels between 1862 and 1928 by Özyeğin University displays, various novels related to the protagonist Robinson Crusoe were published as serials but not as books under the titles such as *Fransız Robinsonları veya İki Kazazede Çocuk* [The French Robinsons or Two Child Survivors] (1906), *Robinson'un Hafidleri* [Robinson's Grandchildren] (1906), *Yeni Bir Robinson* [A New Robinson] (1907), *Hava Robinsonları* [Robinsons of Air] (1914). These novels, which are probably not direct or complete translations of the original work by Daniel Defoe, would still be worthy of attention and might be relevant for research on Turkish translations of Robinson Crusoe as they were obviously using the name of the protagonist in the research object. As another example, if a researcher decides to problematize the Turkish translations of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955), it would be possible to find the first translation of the work was published in 1959 as a book (cf. Denissova, 2020). However, on the very first day of the same year, Nabokov's *Lolita* started to be serialized in the newspaper *Akşam* without mentioning the name of the author and translator. The serialization of *Lolita* precedes its book publication. Furthermore, in the anonymous foreword in the newspaper, the novel was presented to the readers as a memoir of Humbert Humbert, the protagonist of the work, as a real person. In a mysterious tone, the anonymous author of the foreword states that those curious to learn what Humbert Humbert's crime was should see the newspaper collections pertaining to the month of October in 1952. This translation was published as a book in the same year without the foreword. In such a case, focusing only on the book format and overlooking the serial would lead to a reductionist perspective. The actual first translation, in this case, was the serial version, not the book. There could be textual changes in the serial and book versions of the novel, and the paratextual features of the novel in the newspaper are substantially different from the novel published as a book.

It can be asserted from the above examples that databases and catalogs of serial novels are of crucial importance for many research areas in translation history, that is, retranslation, reception, and circulation. As retranslation research concentrates on different translations of a source text and periodicals are one of the sources that these translations could have been published in the past, historical research on retranslation is closely related to the periodicals and serializations within. Similarly, reception-based research in translation history also can draw from the history of serialization as serials were reader-oriented plastic texts (Couégnas, 2006) that can indicate how an author was received in the past based on the number of works published under his/her name. It should be stated here that the serialization of a novel and readers' response during the serialization might have played a role in the decision-making process for publishers to publish a novel in book form or not. Finally, in terms of circulation, research that overlooks serialization activities can miss out on important data regarding the entrance of an idea into the target culture because publications in book form might not be the only mode of publishing that introduced the object of research into that culture.

We think that future historical research on translated or indigenous serial novels needs to take into account these characteristics of serial novels. While translated serial novels and periodicals as research objects provide researchers with fertile ground to examine and problematize historical translation practices, it should be noted that the serial novel was such a prevalent activity that pretty much any research that problematizes literary translation in the past should conceive that the text(s) being focused on could have been originally written as serials. If this is the case, the researcher's perspective regarding the text changes both spatially and temporally. Another research avenue that merits attention may be to trace the differences between the serialized and book versions of the text.

For all these reasons, this paper argues that serial novels are crucial primary sources for many sub-fields of historical research related to translation to the extent that their exclusion inevitably leads to gaps and, in some cases, even misrepresentations of historical reality. The characteristics of plasticity, anonymity, topicality, and ephemerality discussed in this paper provide researchers with a ground to examine and problematize the concept of materiality in literary translations published in periodicals in addition to displaying how they can influence the practice of translation in serial novels.

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