

TRANSLATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S LEGACY "MACBETH" ON THE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH**Aydan APAYDIN¹****ABSTRACT**

Although drama translation offers a rich platform for discussion and analysis, it is astonishing to see that it is the most neglected area in translation studies. Susan Bassnett, one of the most prominent theorists for drama translation, suggests five types of strategies for the drama translator. This comparative study focuses on Susan Bassnett's first and the final strategies to find out the differences between two translations of Shakespeare's Macbeth. Among five types of drama translation strategies, co-operative translation is the most accomplished one in terms of stage performance, while with regard to fidelity, literary translation stands at the opposite pole from it. The scholar, translator and critic Orhan Burian's translation of Macbeth in 1946 is a typical example of literary translation; on the other hand, the well-known director and actor Haluk Bilginer's translation of Macbeth in 2010 is considered to be a successful co-operative translation. Burian's conservative style produced a faithful yet stilted translation. The dialogues were too long and implausible for the stage performance. On the contrary, Bilginer worked with the director and even with the actors at times in order to achieve the rhythm of speech, simplicity of pronunciation and easy graspability. Bilginer made alterations such as omitting some acts and scenes thereby keeping the audience's attention focused on the play. His usage of easy-flowing daily spoken tongue and common Turkish idioms and slang expressions where appropriate also functioned to bring the text closer to the audience and to create playable and speakable dialogues which performers could utter without difficulty.

Keywords: Drama translation, Susan Bassnett, Co-operative translation, Literary translation, Macbeth.

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ÖLÜMÜNÜN 400. YILINDA SHAKESPEARE'İN MİRASI “MACBETH”İN TÜRKÇE ÇEVİRİSİ

ÖZ

Tiyatro oyunu çevirisi üzerine araştırma ve inceleme yapmak için çok zengin bir platform bulunmasına rağmen, ilginçtir ki çeviri çalışmaları konusunda en çok ihmal edilmiş olan alan dramadır. Tiyatro oyunu çevirisi konusunda önde gelen teorisyenlerden Susan Bassnett, drama çevirmeni için beş farklı strateji önermektedir. Bu çalışma Shakespear'in Macbeth adlı oyununun iki farklı çevirisini karşılaştırmak için Susan Bassnett'in birinci ve sonuncu stratejilerine odaklanmaktadır. Sahne performansı söz konusu olduğunda bu beş stratejiden en başarılısı Ortak Çeviri Yöntemi olmuştur. Ancak kaynak dile ve metne sadakat söz konusu olduğunda Edebi Çeviri Yöntemi en doğru olanıdır. Çevirmen, eleştirmen ve akademisyen olan Orhan Burian'ın 1946 yılında yaptığı Macbeth çevirisi tipik bir Edebi Çeviridir ve tiyatro metni bir yazın yapıtı olarak ele alınmıştır. Diğer taraftan ünlü yönetmen ve oyuncu Haluk Bilginer'in 2010 yılında çevirdiği Macbeth başarılı bir Ortak Çeviri örneğidir. Burian'ın tutucu tarzı, kaynak metne ve dile tam anlamıyla sadık ancak erek dilde doğallıktan yoksun bir çeviri ortaya çıkarmıştır. Diğer yanda Bilginer, yönetmen ve zaman zaman oyuncularla beraber çalışmış ve konuşma ritmini tutturmak, kolay telaffuz sağlamak için ekip çalışması yapmıştır. Seyircinin oyuna ilgisini toplamak ve konsantrasyonu sağlamak için Bilginer bazı sahneleri ve perdeleri çevirmemiş ve oyundan çıkarmıştır. Akıcı ve günlük konuşma dilini kullanması, yaygın Türkçe deyimlere yer vermesi ve argo terimler kullanması oyuncular açısından da oynanabilir ve söylenebilir bir dil yaratmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tiyatro Çevirisi, Susan Bassnett, Ortak çeviri, Edebi çeviri, Macbeth.

Introduction

Translating drama has particular challenges to the translators because the translated text will not only be read by a reader in solitude but will be part of a performance of actors who will articulate the words in front of an audience. Therefore, the translator has to take into consideration points pertinent to acting and stage performance, an issue that is not a concern in other textual translations. This study will involve two Turkish translations of *Macbeth* as a literary text and as a performance text. Therefore, presenting a historical overview on the distinction between the dramatic literary text and dramatic performance text will certainly clarify conflicting perspectives on the topic.

Drama, an ancient Greek word meaning act, was used by Aristotle in his famous book *Poetics* to describe poetic compositions

acted in front of audience in a theatron (Abrams, 1985: 48). As a literary form, drama is designed for performance on the stage. Although there are plays such as Milton's *Samson Agonistes* (1671), Byron's *Manfred* (1817), Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) Hardy's *The Dynasts* (1940-08), William Wordsworth's *Borderers* (1796), and John Keat's *Otho the Great* (1820), which are intended only for the reading public's enjoyment, much of drama works are written for the double purposes of reading and performance. Therefore, they often involve an internal form of translation from words to stage performance.

The controversy over the priority of the text on the page or the text on the stage has continued for a long time among scholars. Pirandello regards performance as a form of attack on the writer's intentions and says that "play text belongs primarily to the writer"(qtd. in Bassnett, 1991:104). He asserts that performance interrupts the relationship between the writer, the text and the reader. Tadeusz Kowzan is milder in his approach to the issue and states that "written texts can function outside the theatrical system and the theatrical system can function without written texts" (1985: 1-2). According to Harley Granville Baker, however, the full meaning of the text of a play is realized only in performance (Gunilla, 1988: 71-74). Similarly, Makon believes that a playwright's ultimate aim of writing a play is to see it performed and asserts "A play that cannot be staged is like an imaginary world, a scheme lying in a drawer. It will be read and reread but not lived. It will never be a moment of shared life"(qtd in Che, 2011). Totzeva also describes the play as a text written for possible theatrical performance and adds "in a dramatic text the semiotic relation is already to some extent present as a concept through given theatrical codes and norms, although the performance does not need to follow it"(1999: 81). Brater also supports the necessity of performance and asserts that "much of the material in drama often makes more sense when spoken and heard than when simply read and silently digested" (1994: 15). In order to sum up the discussions we can conclude that the nature of the dramatic text is twofold: it is simultaneously a literary text and a performance text.

A similar duality exists in translation studies because specific characteristics of drama distinguish this genre from other literary genres and therefore its translation. As the drama translator is expected to create performable and speakable dialogues, s/he works under a lot more constraints than the translator of fiction. While

working on a performance text, drama translator is unable to provide an explanation for a word or a phrase as the play is meant to be spoken in front of the audience. For instance, Newmark underlines this obstacle as follows : “The drama translator cannot gloss, explain puns or ambiguities or cultural references, nor transcribe words for the sake of local color: his text is dramatic, with emphasis on verbs, rather than descriptive and explanatory” (1988: 172).

Although drama translation offers such a rich platform for discussion and analysis, as the above arguments testify to, it is the most neglected area in translation studies. A detailed research into drama translation history reveals that there are few theories dealing with translating for the theatre. The most prominent among them is Susan Bassnett, a scholar of comparative literature and a translation theorist. This comparative study focuses on Susan Bassnett’s first and the final strategies to find out the differences between two translations of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*.

I. Drama Translation Strategies

Susan Bassnett suggests five types of strategies for drama translation. The first one is “Treating the theatre text as a literary work” (1985: 90). The translator treats the text as if it was a literary work and does not pay attention to patterns of intonation or other paralinguistic features. In this type of translation the translator adopts the principle of fidelity to the original. This kind of translation is especially prevalent where complete works of a playwright are undertaken and the aim is publication rather than stage production.

The second strategy is using the source language cultural context as frame text. It is the most common type of translation in the English speaking world. It involves “the utilization of target language’s stereotypical images of the source language culture to provide comic frame”(90). However, the translator should be cautious while applying this strategy as there are risks involved. Susan Bassnett gives an example from an Italian play- *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*- by Dario Fo and says that when it was performed in English “it had become a farce about the absurdities of Italians and their forces of authority, rather than being a savage satire on the corruption of the police and systems of power” (90).

The third strategy is translating performability. Drama translators are widely required to take into account the performance dimension of the text in the translation process. The claim from the translators of theatre texts is clear in fact: “ create fluent speech rhythms and so produce a text that target language actors can speak

without too much difficulty"(90). Bassnett lists the features of performability as: "substituting regional accents in the source language with regional accents in the target language, trying to create equivalent registers in the target language and omitting passages that are deemed to be too closely bound to the source language cultural and linguistic context".

The fourth strategy is creating source language verse drama in alternative forms. Bassnett gives an example from the blank-verse English translation of Racine's *Alexandrines* and comments: "that does not transfer happily to English" and adds "attempts to create translated verse drama result in texts that are obscure"(90).

The final strategy is co-operative translation. According to Bassnett, this strategy produces the best results because there is a collaboration of at least two people: either a source language and a target language native speaker or someone with knowledge of the source language who works together with the director and /or actors.

This comparative study focuses on the translations of the same source text made in the former strategy first, and the latter strategy the second in a 54 years span and tries to find out the differences between two translations of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* because among five types of drama translation strategies, co-operative translation is the most accomplished one in terms of stage performance while with regard to fidelity the literary translation stands at the opposite pole from it. The scholar, translator and critic Orhan Burian's translation of *Macbeth* in 1946 is a typical example of literary translation. On the other hand, the well-known director and actor Haluk Bilginer's translation of *Macbeth* in 2010 is considered to be a successful co-operative translation.

II. Literary Translation of *Macbeth*

Orhan Burian (1914-1953) was a prolific and respected man of letters with his essays, critical writings, reviews and translations. He translated *Macbeth* during the government sponsored translation movement of major classics of Western civilization in Turkey between the years 1940 and 1966 (Gürçağlar, 2008: 68). In order to create literary inspiration and a spirit of humanism, the translation activity was conducted by the Turkish Ministry of National Education then. It organized and manipulated the guidelines for the translation process. Like many other intellectuals and academics, Orhan Burian was appointed from Ankara University. As The Official Translation Bureau demanded full translations and fidelity to the source text was

the main criterion, translations of Western classics were literary translations. In order to preserve the spirit of renowned works of literature, omissions, additions, and changes were not allowed. The translators were asked to recreate the form and style of the works in Turkish faithfully and use simple and unelaborated Turkish. Orhan Burian enthusiastically devoted himself to the project and conformed to the guidelines. He translated *Macbeth* as a literary text to be read on the page in 1946.²

Shakespeare's twofold fame and excellence, a playwright who wrote theatrical texts for the stage and a literary dramatist who produced reading texts, has always created endless debates around the world. According to Goethe, Shakespeare belongs to the history of poetry and "it is a mistake to suppose that his whole merits lie in his importance in the history of drama" (Fenton, 2011). Another authority, Jean-Michel Deprats from French Shakespearean Society said in 1982 "translators and theatre people seemed to agree upon the fact that most Shakespearean translations became quite problematic when staged, although, when published they were faithful, literary and readable" (Tatu, 2011:198). They strongly upheld the idea that translating for printing and translating for acting were two different issues. According to Susan Bassnett (1991:106) the history of Shakespeare translation until recent times lies within the history of verse translation not of theater translation. However, this does not mean that many of those translations have not been performed. As Shakespeare's plays are perceived as "absolutes" (Bassnett, 1985: 87) and performance is expected to be faithful to the written text, even the English language director finds it hard to be "freed from the tyranny of the written Shakespearean text which becomes a straight-jacket preventing mobility." A controversial change occurred in the 19th century and the power of the written playtext gradually shifted towards another figure, as "The key figure," who began to "emerge in this new concept of theatre[,] the director" (Bassnett, 1991:105).

² Translations that give priority to the written text do not automatically make them totally unfit for performance. For example, Orhan Burian's translations are still frequently used in stage performances, but this is often done with alterations on the texts, especially in the sentences and phrases that present difficulties in articulation due to length. Such a performance took place in Ankara State Theatre in 2013-2014.

III. Stage Translation of Macbeth

According to Patrice Pavis, theater translation is a "hermeneutic act" (1989:25) and in our century it is best done by the director. Interpretation of the director is required not only for the original drama texts but also for their translations. Therefore, the theatre director often changes the script of plays, even classics, to suit the production. The director's task is to integrate the written text with the other sign systems that constitute the theatrical event. Bassnett has also pointed out the importance of the director's reading which "may involve a process of decision making and constraints and possibilities offered by the text" (1998:107). She explains that the director "visualizes spatial and physical dimensions, decides the uses of paralinguistic signs such as tone, inflexion, pitch and register". In order to express a concept in the source language text, the director selects from a wide range of gestures, intonations, words, and expressions in the target language. Turkish director and actor Haluk Bilginer's Turkish translation of *Macbeth* fits best Susan Bassnett's fifth strategy listed above. Bilginer began to live in England in 1977 and acted in the performances of *Macbeth* many times in the British Theater. Then he came back to Turkey in 1993 and set up a Drama Studio called Play Workshop (Oyun Atölyesi) in İstanbul.

Haluk Bilginer translated *Macbeth* into Turkish in 2010 for the eleventh theater season of Oyun Atölyesi. In an interview made by the electronic periodical *Avaz Avaz* in 2009, Bilginer explains that the translator should do his best to write fresh and plausible dialogues in order to make the play performable or speakable in conformity with the norms of target culture. Otherwise, the actor can not identify with his role. Oyun Atölyesi had used Orhan Burian's and Bülent Bozkurt's translations in the past; however, they had to retranslate *Macbeth* for the stage because translations for stage aged fast and each new performance required a new translation. As Bassnett underlines, the average life span of a translated theatre text is "25 years at the most" (1985: 88). Because of this, there is a need for retranslation or updating of theatre texts. Bassnett points out: "the patterns of speech are in a continuous process of change. The dialogue of plays from the 1950s can seem as archaic as that of plays from the 1890's today" (1985: 88). To sum up, in the world of theatre, translations may become more easily obsolete or outdated.

According to Bilginer, a play has to have an emotion and it is the director's responsibility to realize this. Here emotion means the

participation of the audience. In order to deliver emotion and to obtain success, the director should omit some parts and cut some dialogues. He adds: "Shakespeare's shortest play *Macbeth* takes more than two hours but you can not keep the audience that long" (Bilginer: 3). Thus, Bilginer regarded staging of *Macbeth* as an artistic activity and translated accordingly. Before we compare Orhan Burian's and Haluk Bilginer's translations and see how Bilginer achieved a performable drama translation, some brief information is in order about the play.

Macbeth is supposed to have been written in 1606 for performance before James I, king of England, and his royal guest king Christian IV of Denmark. As James I was the patron of Shakespeare's acting company, the play reflects the playwright's close relationship with the king. It tells the story of a brave Scottish General Macbeth who receives a prophecy from the witches that one day he will become the king of Scotland. In 1623, after Shakespeare's death, his fellow actors Heminge and Condell compiled his thirty six plays in the First Folio and introduced them to Elizabethan readers (Shakespeare, 1967: 38). *Macbeth* has 5 acts and with 2.100 lines it is shorter than any other Shakespearean tragedy.

IV. A Comparison of Turkish Translations of *Macbeth*

The first difference between Burian's and Bilginer's translations is the number of acts and scenes. As a faithful translator, Burian's text contains 5 acts and 27 scenes just like Shakespeare's. However, there are 2 acts and 17 scenes in Bilginer's with cuts and omissions. Bilginer's first act contains 10 scenes and the second act contains 7 scenes. He strongly upholds the need for such cuts in order to achieve performability and speakability to obtain emotion and sustain audience interest in the play.

Another difference is Bilginer's use of popular idioms in Turkish. In order to make the dialogues easily speakable and understandable he used various idioms four of which are given as an example below.

In act 1, scene 1 of the Source Text:

King: What bloody man is that? He can report, as seemeth by his plight, of the revolt. The newest state. (p.53)

Orhan Burian's literary translation into Turkish:

Duncan(Kral) : Kan içindeki bu adam kim? Ayaklanmayla ilgili en yeni haberleri verecek gibi gözüküyor.(p16)

Haluk Bilginer's translation for the stage performance:

Duncan: Kan revan içinde kalmış bu adam kim? Haline bakılırsa isyanla ilgili son haberler onda.(p.1)

Burian's and Bilginer's translations are equally successful in evoking Shakespearean imagery. 'Kan revan içinde kalmak' is a popular and widely used Turkish idiom. This powerful idiomatic usage in Turkish better captures Shakespeare's powerful and emotional intensity in *Macbeth*. Therefore, Bilginer not only emphasizes the feeling better but also makes the sentence easily speakable. Lacking such power and intensity, Burian's translation is not also easily speakable for the actor.

Other similar idiomatic translations are as follows:

In act 1, scene 7 of the Source Text:

Macbeth: I'm settled, and bend up. Each corporal agent to this terrible feat. Away, and mock the time with fairest show: false face must hide what the false heart doth know. (p.71)

Orhan Burian's literary translation into Turkish:

Macbeth: Kararımı verdim. Bedenimde ne kadar güç varsa, hepsini bu işe koşacağım. Hadi gidelim, en tatlı bir yüz takınarak zamanla alay edelim. Yalancı gönlün bildiğini, yalancı yüzle gizlemek gerek. (p.34)

Haluk Bilginer's translation for the stage performance:

Macbeth: Tamam kararımı verdim. Tüm benliğimle hazırım bu korkunç işe. Hadi gidelim, gülüyüzle göz boyayalım, sahte bir yüz gizlesin kalbin sahteliğini. (p.12)

Orhan Burian's translation is certainly more poetic and innovative; however, it is too long and hard to speak for the actor. Bilginer uses a popular Turkish idiom 'göz boyamak,' which, with its familiarity, also makes Macbeth's aim clearer to the audience. Such idioms are not only speakable but also resonate with notions familiar with the Turkish audience in front of whom the performance will take place.

In act 2, scene 2 of the Source Text:

Macbeth: I stood and heard them. (p.75)

Orhan Burian's literary translation into Turkish:

Macbeth: Durup onları dinledim.(p.40)

Haluk Bilginer's translation for the stage performance:

Macbeth: Kalakaldım olduğum yerde, kulak kesildim.(p.14)

Using Turkish idiom 'Kulak kesilmek' perfectly suits daily spoken tongue. The alliteration made with the "k" and "l" repetitions also give the line a poetic, a more dramatic aspect.

In act 4, scene 3 of the source text:

Malcolm: It is myself I mean; in whom I know. All the particulars of vice so grafted. That, when they shall be opened, black Macbeth will seem as pure as snow and the poor state. Esteem him as a lamb, being compared with my confineless harms.(p.116)

Orhan Burian's literary translation into Turkish:

Malcolm: Kendimden söz ediyorum. Bende öyle kötülükler yer etmiştir ki bir kez ortaya çıktılar mı yanlarında kara Macbeth, kar gibi beyaz kalır. Zavallı halkım, benim sonsuz kötülüklerimle karşılaştırdınca onu kuzu gibi bulur. (p.88)

Haluk Bilginer's translation for the stage performance:

Malcolm: Kendimi. Öyle kötülüklerle işlendim ki, o kapkara Macbeth süttten çıkmış ak kaşık kalır yanımda. (p.29)

Burian's translation is faithful to the source text; however, it is too long and unspeakable for the stage. Here, Bilginer uses a Turkish idiom 'Süttten çıkmış ak kaşık' and shortens the statement.

According to drama scholar Özdemir Nutku, Shakespeare's tragedies include slang and jargon elements (1978: 80). Similarly, Haluk Bilginer also calls Shakespeare a "shameless playwright" due to his use of slang and tries to be faithful to his style (Bilginer, 2009:3). The following examples stick to the original style in Bilginer's translations.

In act 1, scene 2 of the source text:

Captain: ... and fortune on his damned quarrel smiling showed like a rebel's whore. (p.54)

Orhan Burian's literary translation into Turkish:

Subay: ...Talih de asinin kahpesiymiş gibi davranıp, onun ilençlenesi kavgasına güler yüz gösteriyordu. (p.16)

Haluk Bilginer's translation for the stage performance:

Çavuş: ... Ve talih sanki bu asinin orospusuymuş gibi gülüyordu yüzüne.(p.1)

Another slang usage is as follows:

In act 1, scene 2 of the source text:

Macbeth: The devil damn thee black, thou, cream-faced loon! Where got'st thou that goose look? (p.128)

Orhan Burian's literary translation into Turkish:

Macbeth: Şeytan seni karaya boyasın, kireç suratlı herif! O kaz bakışını nereden edindin? (p.102)

Haluk Bilginer's translation for the stage performance:

Macbeth: Ne oldu hortlak mı gördün, yere batasınca? Ne bakıyosun mel mel öküz gibi? (p.32)

Here Bilginer used domestication strategy to make the sentence conform to Turkish culture. In Turkish we never say "Kaz gibi bakmak" but we use "Öküz gibi bakmak" instead.

According to Bilginer, theatrical speech should clearly show the character's social position (2009:3). The notion of 'social position' can be easily detected from the dialogues below:

In act 2, scene 3 of the source text:

Porter: Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key(p.78).

Orhan Burian's literary translation into Turkish:

Kapıcı: Amma da vuruluyor ha! İnsan cehennem kapıcısı olsa kapı açıp kapamaktan bir hal olacak (p.43).

Haluk Bilginer's translation for the stage performance:

Kapıcı: Ahanda böyle çalınır kapı. İnsan cehennemin kapıcısıysa imanı gevver anahtar çevirmekten(p.15).

Bilginer translated the porter's distinctive style perfectly by choosing the suitable words like 'ahanda' according to the character's social position and followed by an idiomatic expression 'imanı gevremek'.

Similarly, the dialogues of the nobles were transferred in accordance with their social status in Bilginer's text:

In act 3, scene 4 of the source text:

Macbeth: How sayst thou, that Macduff denies his person at our great bidding? (p.100)

Orhan Burian's literary translation into Turkish:

Macbeth: Büyük çağrımıza gelmekten Macduff'ın kaçınmasına ne dersin?(p.70)

Haluk Bilginer's translation for the stage performance:

Macbeth: Macduff neden davetimize icabet etmedi dersin? (p.25)

As a literary translator, Burian remained faithful to the source text and produced an excellent translation for the readers. In order to achieve performability and speakability of the dialogues, Bilginer tried to keep Shakespeare's style in his stage translation and to create easy-flowing language.

Conclusion

In the history of translation studies, drama translation is among the most debated issues due to the dual nature of the text belonging both to the world of theatre and literature at the same time. Various drama translations obviously reveal that theatrical language has to consider many aspects that other forms of literary

language may neglect. For performers need to use combinations of speech, gesture, song, music and dance in order to realize paralinguistic and kinesic features in the play. This study, therefore, tries to point out the contrasts between Orhan Burian's and Haluk Bilginer's translations of Shakespeare's dark tragedy, *Macbeth* in Turkish. Among five types of drama translation strategies of Susan Bassnett, Orhan Burian's translation method, which treats the theatrical text as a literary work, fits better with her first strategy. His conservative style, which reflects the standards of The Translation Bureau of the 40s in Turkey, produced a faithful yet stilted translation. Although one has to keep in mind that the two translators live(d) in different periods and did their translations under differing social and cultural circumstances and environments, Burian's dialogues today seem too long and implausible for the stage performance. On the contrary, Haluk Bilginer's translation, which reflects Susan Bassnett's last strategy is a co-operative translation. Throughout the translation process, Bilginer worked with the director and even with the actors at times in order to achieve the rhythm of speech, simplicity of pronunciation and easy graspability. This obviously was not an opportunity that Burian was able to take advantage of. Bilginer made alterations to the original text such as omitting some acts and scenes, using common Turkish idioms and slang expressions where appropriate, thereby keeping the audience's attention focused on the play (Bilginer, 2009). His usage of easy-flowing daily spoken tongue and common Turkish idioms also functioned to bring the text closer to the audience and to create playable and speakable dialogues which performers would be able to utter without difficulty.

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