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Mapping Turkish Translations of Naval Battle Narratives in the Early Republican Period of Türkiye through Peritexts

Türkiye’de Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Yayımlanan Deniz Savaşı Anlatılarının Türkçe Çevirilerinin Çevre Metinler Aracılığıyla İzinin Sürülmesi



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Abstract

This article scrutinizes the Turkish translations of naval battle narratives concerning the First World War, published by *Naval Printing* (*Deniz Matbaası*) between 1929 and 1938, from a target-oriented approach. During the early Republican period, *Naval Printing* underwent restructuring and published Turkish versions of naval battle narratives written by prominent Western authors of the era. These translations were accompanied by numerous peritexts created by Turkish translators. By analyzing these peritexts, the study aims to offer a periodical overview of the translation activities conducted by *Naval Printing*. The study, which includes eight translated works in its corpus, identifies key findings related to translation practices in the early Republican period: the necessity of importing texts via translation to address gaps in the field, various translation decisions shaped by translators’ ideologies and the translators’ focus on highlighting the biases of Western foreign authors. In light of these findings, the study argues that *Naval Printing’s* translation policy was aligned with the cultural and political objectives of the young Republic’s nation-building efforts. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the critical role of peritexts in translation studies, shedding light on their function in uncovering the complex interplay of cultural, political, and ideological dimensions that inform translation practices.

Öz

Bu makale, *Deniz Matbaası* tarafından 1929 ile 1938 yılları arasında yayımlanan Birinci Dünya Savaşı’na ilişkin deniz savaşı anlatılarının Türkçe çevirilerini erek odaklı bir yaklaşımla incelemektedir. Erken Cumhuriyet döneminde yeniden yapılanan *Deniz Matbaası*, dönemin önemli Batılı yazarları tarafından kaleme alınan deniz savaşı anlatılarının Türkçe çevirilerini yayımlamıştır. Bu çeviriler, Türk çevirmenler tarafından oluşturulan çok sayıda çevre metin ile desteklenmiştir. Çalışma, söz konusu çevre metinleri inceleyerek, *Deniz Matbaası’nın* yürüttüğü çeviri faaliyetlerine dair dönemselsel bir bakış sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bütüncesinde sekiz çeviri eser yer alan bu çalışma, erken Cumhuriyet dönemi çeviri pratiklerine ilişkin şu bulguları ortaya koymaktadır: alandaki boşlukları doldurmak amacıyla çeviri yoluyla metin ithalinin gerekliliği, çevirmenlerin ideolojileriyle şekillenen çeşitli çeviri kararları ve çevirmenlerin Batılı yabancı yazarların taraflıklarını vurgulama çabaları. Bu bulgular ışığında, çalışma, *Deniz Matbaası’nın* çeviri politikasının genç Cumhuriyet’in ulus inşa sürecindeki kültürel ve siyasi hedefleriyle uyumlu olduğunu savunmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, çalışma, çevre metinlerin çeviribilimdeki önemli rolünü vurgulamakta ve çeviri pratiklerini şekillendiren kültürel, siyasi ve ideolojik boyutlar arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi ortaya çıkarma işlevlerine ışık tutmaktadır.

Keywords

Naval battle narratives · *Naval Printing* · peritexts · the early Republican period · translation policy


Anahtar Kelimeler

Çeviri politikası · *Deniz Matbaası* · deniz savaşı anlatıları · erken Cumhuriyet dönemi · çevre metinler



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Introduction

“War was the first subject of literature; at times, war has been its only subject”

— Ashe & Patterson, 2014, p. xi

Translating war narratives, integral to the history and literature of every nation, not only facilitates cross-cultural understanding and mutual learning but also offers insights into the prevailing ideologies of specific historical periods. This inevitably leads to the question of how authors and translators, as products of their time, culture, ideology, and social context, shape narratives through their own ideological frameworks. To explore this question from a translation studies perspective, this study focuses on the peritexts accompanying target texts. Specifically, it examines Western authors' accounts of their experiences in naval battles during World War I and their translations into Turkish published by *Naval Printing (Deniz Matbaası)*. The study seeks to understand the selection process for Turkish translators and investigates whether the translations produced by *Naval Printing* reflect the cultural and political climate of the time. More precisely, it aims to determine whether these translations were influenced by the *Zeitgeist* of Türkiye's early Republican period and, if so, how such influences are manifested in the translated texts. By addressing these questions, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the translation practices of *Naval Printing* during the early Republican period.

Naval Printing, which was the only printing house of the Turkish Naval Forces, was restructured by the Turkish Naval Forces after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. When the language reform was put into effect, and the Arabic script was changed into the Latin alphabet by the end of 1928, *Naval Printing* also increased its publication activities in harmony with the modernization and westernization agenda of the young Republican regime. It published not only the works related to prominent naval soldiers of Turkish history and instructions with the Turkish alphabet but also the Turkish translations of the Western authors' works related to naval battles taking place in the First World War. This study uses eight translations published by *Naval Printing* between 1929 and 1938 as its corpus. These translations were chosen because they contain peritexts that explicitly address translation-related issues, such as the policies governing the selection of works and translators, the norms followed by translators, and the decisions made during the translation process. The study applies Gérard Genette's (1997) concept of "peritexts" in its theoretical framework to conduct a descriptive analysis. It examines the selection of texts, the types of texts chosen, and the human agents involved in the translation process. It also explores the role and position of these translations within the Turkish literary and cultural system, drawing on Gideon Toury's (1995) concept of "translation policy" and Itamar Even-Zohar's (1978) "polysystem theory."

This study begins by examining the historical and political context of the period between 1929 and 1938 to offer insights into Türkiye's early Republican era. The background will then be followed by a discussion of *Naval Printing's* role as the publisher of naval battle texts and an exploration of its range of publication activities during this period. Next, the theoretical framework will be outlined, followed by a peritextual analysis of the target texts. Finally, the study will conclude by discussing the findings in relation to the research questions.

The Historical and Political Context of 1929-1938

The reformist agenda of the young Republic placed significant emphasis on the ideas of westernization, secularization, and modernization of the nation's institutions. These ideas were crucial for building a modern Turkish nation that could take its place among European civilizations. To achieve this, efforts aimed

at cultural, economic, and political revival were deemed necessary. The Ottoman Empire had undertaken similar Western-inspired reforms in the 18th and 19th centuries to strengthen trade and diplomatic relations with European countries, thereby enhancing the country's military power. Even educational exchanges between countries such as going to Europe for education or studying in foreign educational institutions within the territories of the Ottoman Empire were not uncommon. By the 19th century, there were Ottoman subjects who could speak some Western languages, were educated in the West, and were in favor of the adoption of the Western style of thought and culture in the Ottoman Empire (Tahir Gürçağlar, 2008). Despite having a transformative effect, the efforts towards modernization during these periods, particularly with the promulgation of the Tanzimat¹, ultimately failed due to their inherent instability and limited reach among the broader population. In other words, these efforts can be viewed as small and irregular winds of change that were unable to advance further.

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the proclamation of the Republic, regular and planned steps were taken by the new government of the nation-state to enable the country to turn its face towards the West and also to secularize the country, which would cut the ties with the Islamic culture and the Ottoman past. In this context, during the first years of the Republic which was based on a single-party government system (1923-1946), a conscious planning program was advertently carried out by the young Republic. This program included several reforms such as the establishment of a unitary education system (1924), the adoption of Western timing and the Western calendar (1925), the adoption of the international numeric system (1928), the Turkification of the Friday sermon (1928), the alphabet reform (1928), and the Turkification of the call to prayer (1932). These reforms had a crucial role in changing both the public and private spheres and creating a new, modern, and Western appearance for Turkish society. Tahir Gürçağlar (2008) argues that “perhaps the most influential of all reforms was the alphabet reform, which re-shaped the cultural configuration of the newly founded Republic” (p. 51). The alphabet reform is commonly seen as the “language reform”; yet, it involved both a change from Arabic letters to Latin letters and a transformation of the language itself (Berk Albachten, 2015, p. 166). The motive behind this reform was the idea that language became a significant instrument in the making of nations because it affected all aspects of human life, including culture, literature, politics, education, and religion.

By the initiative of Atatürk, the developments not only in language but also in history continued to create a new identity and a sense of nationhood which was based on being “Turkish” in the 1930s. Therefore, first the Turkish Historical Society (“*Türk Tarih Kurumu*”) in 1931, and later the Turkish Linguistic Society (“*Türk Dil Kurumu*”) in the following year were established. Through their publications, these institutions promoted the reinforcement of a common language and shared history for the newly established country, with a strong emphasis on Turkish identity.

It is of paramount importance to note that the translation of the works from Western literature into Turkish was a significant tool in creating the Western orientation of Turkish society in this political and cultural environment of the newly founded nation-state. Although there were some translation activities with the initiatives of some publishing houses and the Ministry of Education in the early Republican period, especially after the language and alphabet reform, it was the establishment of the Translation Bureau (1940-1967) as a result of the efforts of the then Minister of Education, Hasan-Âli Yücel, that created a systematic translation movement. Such a state involvement in the cultural and literary field enabled an increase in the number of translations of Western literature from various languages, which indicated the crucial role and function of institutional translation in the westernization and nation-building process. When the historical and political climate of the early Republican period is considered from this perspective,

¹ It was a reorganization period in which a series of reforms was promulgated in the Ottoman Empire between 1839 and 1876.

we might conclude that “a cultural planning policy in language, publishing, and translation” was actively operated in the early Republican period of Türkiye (Tahir Gürçağlar, 2015, p. 129).

Naval Printing and Texts on Naval Battles

Minorities such as Jews, Greeks, and Armenians who migrated to or lived within the territories of the Ottoman Empire introduced the printing press to Ottoman society at different times throughout the centuries (Davulcu & Kıpçak, 2016, pp. 252-253). The slow development of the printing press was influenced by several key factors, including the low literacy rate among the Ottoman subjects, a lack of interest in printing, and the failure of printed materials to appeal to the public (Sakal, 1999, as cited in Davulcu & Kıpçak, 2016, pp. 254-255). However, the increasing power of Western countries in the 18th and 19th centuries created a demand for development in various fields, which in turn influenced the direction of printing activities.

In the second half of the 19th century, the first *Naval Printing (Matbaa-i Bahriyi)* was established in 1881 and printing activities were carried out on a small scale (Candan, 2006, p. 9). Despite occasional interruptions, it continued its activities during World War I and in the first years of the Republic. “Since the Turkish Naval Forces tried to keep up with the modernization movement and develop itself with the encouragement of Atatürk, the printing house applied a new structure in line with the needs of the Navy²” (Candan, 2006, p. 11). Within this restructuring, modern printing machines were purchased to increase the function of printing activities in the country. Therefore, in the period covering 20 years after the Turkish alphabet and language reforms, *Naval Printing* was restructured to function as the only printing house of the newly established navy. The publishing activities of *Naval Printing* included the publication of technical texts, laws, specifications, regulations, lecture notes, and history books. Among the history books, there were both translations and works written by the personnel of the navy.³ According to Candan (2006), “the Naval Forces were at the forefront of efforts to get rid of Türkiye’s old culture and create a new culture towards modernity” (p. 12). Considering this point of view, the printing house set out to play a crucial role in the development of the cultural sphere of Türkiye with its publication activities.⁴

The narratives dealt with naval battle memories or the naval history of Türkiye and other countries. All source texts selected for translation were written by Western authors of various military ranks who participated in the naval battles of World War I as members of their respective countries’ naval forces. While these authors provided a broader account of naval history, they also sought to share their personal experiences and recollections. Their aim was not only to document their roles as witnesses to the naval conflicts but also to leave a historical record, inform future generations by explaining the strategies employed in the battles, and highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of these engagements to offer valuable lessons for the future. Thus, their autobiographical aspects also predominate.

Theoretical Framework

Paratexts play a pivotal role in both the presentation of source texts and translations to a culture and in shaping their reception. The concept of “paratext” was introduced by Genette (1997) to literature in the 1990s; yet, several seminal studies (e.g., Tahir Gürçağlar, 2002, 2011; Pellatt, 2013) enabled to bring it to the focus of translation research in the 2000s. Tahir Gürçağlar (2018) emphasizes the significance of paratexts in translation by stating that “the most concrete links that connect translated texts with their immediate

²All translations from Turkish into English are mine unless otherwise stated.

³A list of publications of *Naval Printing* between 1929-1938 is provided in the Master thesis written by Candan (2006).

⁴The translation activities of the printing house could also be considered as “institutional translation” (Koskinen, 2011) in this study. However, this was not possible due to the difficulty of establishing an organizational pattern including the institution’s structure, workflow or staffing because there was no access to in-depth information about the printing house, the translators, and the editors.

or larger socio-cultural contexts are their presentational features, in other words, their paratexts” (p. 288). The extensive and varied use of paratexts by translating agents has even led to them being referred to as paratranslators (Garrido, 2011).

Genette divides paratexts into two different categories: “peritexts” and “epitexts”. Accompanying the main body of the texts, peritexts include the titles, preface, foreword, epilogue, or afterword while the latter, functioning beyond the borders of the texts, consists of interviews, blurbs, letters, diaries, and articles. When such elements are involved in translation, they can offer useful clues for understanding the translation process and decisions.

Peritexts, which are the subject of this study, constitute an important part of the translation process and the reception of the translation. They demonstrate how the translation interacts with the target culture while providing significant clues about the translator’s choices, the presentation of the text to the new audience, and the cultural and ideological preferences underlying the translation process. Recent studies (e.g., Kansu-Yetkiner, 2014; Taş, 2015; Tarakcioğlu & Altuntaş Kiran, 2021; Podlevskikh Carlström, 2022; Liang, 2024; Sorvari, 2024; Wei & Li, 2024) in Translation Studies have also highlighted these aspects of peritexts. In addition, they can create a space that allows translating agents, such as translators or editors, to make their voices heard, assert their presence, and sometimes adopt interventionist approaches (Taş İlmek, 2020, p. 192).

This theoretical framework also capitalizes, in part, on translation policy within the preliminary norms of Toury (1995), and the polysystem theory developed by Even-Zohar in the 1970s. According to Toury, since translation pertains to the political, social, historical, economic, and cultural circumstances under which a text was created, translation norms are highly related to the socio-cultural environment. His concept of “translation policy” is included under the “preliminary norm” that concerns governing factors in selecting the texts (genre, author, etc.) to be translated and the human agents (translators, editors, publishing houses, etc.) in a certain time, culture, and language (Toury, 1995, p. 58). Such a view enables us to see the links between translations, agents, and political and historical circumstances. In a similar vein, Even-Zohar’s (1978) polysystemic framework does not consider translations as single texts but rather suggests that they operate as a multiple system within political, cultural, literary, and historical systems which are both independent and interrelated. Seen from this perspective, he emphasizes the role and function of translation in shaping cultures and literatures. He maintains that “the very principles of selecting the works to be translated are determined by the situation governing the (home) polysystem” (p. 47). A dynamic view of translation is elaborated by Even-Zohar (2002) by resorting to the idea of “culture planning” which is described as “a deliberate act of intervention, either by power holders or by ‘free agents,’ into an extant or a crystallizing repertoire” (p. 45).

Between 1929 and 1938, *Naval Printing* published 25 works translated into Turkish. Since the books are out of print and difficult to find on the market, the catalogue of Naval Specialized Library of the Istanbul Naval Museum and Candan’s (2006) work were used to identify the books. During that period, *Naval Printing* published three to four translations of foreign works each year, except for one in 1933 and one in 1935, in addition to approximately 75 works written by Turkish authors on naval literature. Eleven of these translations were made from English, ten from German, one from Greek, and three from French. The original language and the authors of the two works could not be identified, as such information was provided neither on the books’ covers nor inside the books. English and German were the primary source languages for the translations. Eight of these translations were selected as the corpus of this study due to their abundant peritexts. In other words, the availability of peritextual data was the decisive factor in forming the corpus, which includes the works by Herbert Wrigley Wilson (1926), Eberhard von Mantey (1927), Wolfgang Wegener (1929), Alfred Meurer (1925), Admiral von Tirpitz (1919), Erich Raeder (1922), Hermann Lorey (1928), and three

articles chosen from *The Journal of the British Royal Asiatic Society* and compiled by Kurtoğlu (1937). Three of the works in the study's corpus were translated from English, while the remaining five were translated from German.

Peritextual Analysis of Naval Printing's Translations

The peritexts of *Naval Printing's* translations reveals a wide range of topics on translation practices and processes. Peritexts offer crucial insights into translators' decisions, cultural adaptations, and socio-historical contexts, enriching our understanding of how texts are mediated and received across cultures. An analysis of these peritexts shows that all authors and translators were male. Turkish translators consistently included their military rank or the place of birth, along with their full names or initials, under the title of "translator" on the book covers. This practice suggests that the translators were either actively serving in various roles within the Turkish Naval Forces or had received military training. Similarly, the inclusion of the authors' military ranks such as "Admiral," "Fleet Admiral," or "Commander" beneath their names underscores their direct involvement in naval battles and highlights their role in documenting and sharing firsthand experiences of these events through their writings. This emphasis on military affiliation appears to place the authors on an equal footing with the translators, as both were military officers who sought to educate both the public and naval personnel. However, while the Western authors primarily recount their own naval experiences, the Turkish translators assume the role of mediating these experiences by rendering them into Turkish.

Furthermore, the translators undertook the task of translating the works because they were proficient in the foreign language of the source texts, believed the books held significant value or had received guidance on the translation process. In their "peritexts," they provide various justifications for their translation and offer detailed accounts of the process, ranging in length from one page to eight pages. Some translators discuss the importance of the work and the author within the context of naval literature, the reasons behind their decision to translate the books, and the necessity of translating them into Turkish. Others focus on the author's perspective or stance and the translation choices they made. Although the translators do not adhere to a single style when discussing their translation processes, the topics they address can be categorized under specific themes, which help map the translation activities of *Naval Printing*.

Lack of Knowledge Related to Naval History

Tahir Rifat Müfit translated Eberhard von Mantey's book *Unsere Marine im Weltkrieg 1914-1918* (1927) into Turkish in 1931. Although the original book was written in German, the source language was not mentioned in the translation. The Turkish translation bears the title of *Deniz Harpleri Atlası* [*The Map of Naval Battles*] and, under the author's name, his military rank is indicated as "Commodore" ("Liva Amiral"). In his one-page preface titled "Prologue", Müfit explains that he chose the book because he hoped that the Commander's work, which examines significant naval battles from his perspective, would help enhance the Turkish public's knowledge of naval history. As he underlines in his own words:

(...) Our library is unfortunately quite poor in terms of works related to naval warfare. Apart from those naval battles that are foreign to us and irrelevant to our own history, we have limited or no knowledge about many of the naval battles that directly concern us and had been fought by our own blood. We often find ourselves compelled to learn the principles of the naval battles we fought from the works of foreign authors. Even if we have achieved the scientific proficiency required by the age, we can never escape being an unaware force, lacking a foundation in history and the past. (Müfit, 1931, p. iii)

Müfit also highlights the lack of knowledge and, in particular, the scarcity of works related to the naval literature written by Turkish or Western authors in the Turkish library. He sees translation as an opportunity to fill this gap. Aware of the fact that his country tries to closely follow scientific and technological developments achieved by the West, he believes that translation is instrumental in learning from the past to progress further in a period of modernization.

Another prominent example is the work of the German author Alfred Meurer's book *Seekriegsgeschichte in Umrissen. Seemacht und Seekriege vornehmlich vom 16. Jahrhundert ab* (1925). It was translated into Turkish in 1932 by Behçet Cemal under the title of *Muhtasar Deniz Harbi Tarihi [Abridged Naval Battles History]*. As indicated by the Turkish title, the target text was an abridged version of the original work, which outlines naval battles and focuses on naval power and warfare from the 16th century onward. Cemal (1932) writes a two-page preface titled "First Word," in which he provides a summary of the current state of Turkish naval publications as follows:

Turkish readers who seek to study the history of naval warfare of foreign nations face significant challenges. Although numerous works have been written about World War I, a comprehensive history of naval warfare from ancient times has yet to find its place in our naval literature. [...] Furthermore, the subjects of naval policy and strategy, which occupy an even more crucial position, have not yet received the attention they deserve within our naval publications. [...] Therefore, I believe this work will serve to fill an important gap in our publications. (p. iii)

Cemal believes that his translation will contribute to naval literature, enabling Turkish readers to learn read and address their lack of knowledge regarding the battles of foreign nations. A similar emphasis can be found in the translator's preface of the Turkish translation of Erich Raeder's work *Der Kreuzerkrieg in den ausländischen Gewässern* (1922). This translation was published under the title of *Yabancı Denizlerde Kruvazör Harbi [Cruiser Warfare on Foreign Seas]* in 1936. Just as the translator's military rank "the Commander of Quartermaster" is provided, the author's military rank, "Commodore" is also indicated on the first page of the book. In his two-page preface titled "Prologue," Hikmet (1936) states:

Alongside the Great War, which has been translated into our language, there exists another naval conflict, the commercial war, which ran parallel to it and was no less significant in its impact. However, its place in our professional library remains vacant. There is no doubt that the young Turkish naval officers, guided by Atatürk's principles, will soon fill this gap. (p. xi)

As can be seen from this statement, Hikmet emphasizes the need for naval publications for professional development. He also directly refers to Atatürk's nation-building efforts as he regards translation as a contribution to these efforts. Hikmet is also the author of the textbook titled *Deniz Levazım Tabiyesine ait Notlar [Notes on Naval Supply Operations]*, which was used in the Naval Supply Officers Course (Deniz Levazım Ümera Kursu) and Naval Supply School (Deniz Levazım Mektebi) in 1931. Therefore, it can be argued that his translation and writing activities align with the nation-building policy of the young Republic.

A further example can be drawn from the collection edited by Fevzi Kurtoğlu. The author, publication dates, and original language of this collection are not specified in the translated text, although some sources⁵ attribute its authorship to Mansel Longworth Dames. The target text clarifies that three articles concerning the Turkish seas were selected from those published in *The Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*

⁵See, https://openlibrary.org/works/OL4426636W/Türk_deniz_tarihinden_bir_safha_Yazanlar.

Publications. These articles were translated into Turkish in 1937 by T. Tunay, an English instructor at the Turkish Naval Military College, under the title *Türk Deniz Tarihinden Bir Safha* [A Phase from Turkish Naval History]. Tunay's (1937) remarks reveal that the lack of sources on naval history was a significant motivation for undertaking the translation:

Our adventures in the Indian seas have not yet been fully illuminated. This is because the Turkish and Arabic sources available to us are insufficient to shed light on this rather obscure chapter of our naval history. Therefore, it is evident that we must make use of the historical sources of the Portuguese, who played a significant role in these adventures, or, more precisely, in the events that led to them. (p. iii)

In summary, these peritexts directly highlight the role of these translations to ensure that the historical sources related to the naval battles, whether the Ottoman Empire took part or did not, reach Turkish readers, particularly those at the Turkish Naval Academy. As Venuti (2005) claims, "a translator or a publisher of translations may look abroad at a certain moment because of a conviction that the translating language and literature can benefit from foreign influences" (p. 803). In this respect, translation serves to fill the knowledge gap in naval history and to educate the soldiers of a young nation. This perspective can also be seen as an extension of the Republican regime's efforts to develop itself in all aspects, in other words, to attain a level of knowledge that can pace with the Western countries. This was part of the process of building a new nation in the early stages of the Republic, which implemented numerous steps towards westernization shortly after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

Translation Decisions

The translators of the works examined in this study articulate their perspectives on the source texts and the translation decisions they made in their prefaces. Their prefaces serve as a means of introducing the foreign text to Turkish culture. In these prefaces, topics such as the author's experiences in naval battles, the thematic focus of the work, its significance for naval history and literature, and the author's stylistic approach are particularly emphasized. For instance, Sait Talat, who is also the author of the books such as *En Eski Amerikan Haritası* [The Oldest American Map] (1932) and *Orta Zaman Denizciliği* [Medieval Navigation] (1934), provides an explanation to readers regarding the language he used in the translation. In his preface titled "The Thoughts of the Translator", Talat (1932) asks for the readers' forgiveness for any mistakes in translating such a challenging work and explains that the author employs an old-fashioned style with sentences rich in allusions (p. v). In this context, even brief, one-sentence explanations written by translators can offer illuminating insights into translation decisions.

The translators' explanations of their translation approaches vary. While some of them specify the source texts they translated or the additional sources they consulted during the translation process, others describe their strategies using expressions such as "translating as it is" ("olduğu gibi çevirmek"), "conveying the author's opinion" ("yazarın görüşünü iletmek") or "translation by extracting its essence" ("vakanın özünü çıkarıp çevirmek"). For instance, Müfit (1931) writes in his "Prologue" that "the author's opinion has been conveyed exactly" (p. iii) and Tunay (1937) states in his "Preface" that "I translated these three articles into our language as they are, with the feeling of adding something to their importance and our history" (p. iii). Additionally, some others explicitly mention that they preferred to translate "the essence of the text" rather than the entire work. For example, Telat (1931) clarifies in the "Preface" which volume of the source text he translated, why he changed the book's title or why he did not produce a complete translation:

This book is the second volume of the English work titled *Battleship in Action*. Since this volume specifically pertains to naval battles in the Great War, its title was changed in translation to *Naval Battles in the Great War*. In translating the book, the directives issued by the Presidency of the General Staff on September 11th and 12th, 1928, under the reference number 54300, were followed. The aim was to distill the essence of the events in the translation, ensuring that it did not become burdensome to the reader through a literal translation. (p. ii)

Looking at Telat's explanations, it is clear that he chose to translate the second volume of the book because it covers the naval battles of World War I. It may also interest Turkish readers as these battles took place in the Turkish waters. Additionally, although Telat mentions that he acted in accordance with a law of the Republic at that period, it is not clear which law he is referring to. Nevertheless, this statement explicitly reveals that the translator preferred to make translation decisions compatible with the political and cultural atmosphere of the period.

On the other hand, H. Sami aimed to expand the source text by critically engaging with it, incorporating his own insights at the end of each chapter, and integrating supplementary sources he consulted on the subject matter of the book. The German author and admiral Hermann Lorey's *Der Krieg zur See, 1914-1918: Der Krieg in den Türkischen Gewässern* (1928) was translated into Turkish in 1936 under the title *Türk Sularında Deniz Harekatları* [Naval Operations in Turkish Seas] by Sami, who was also a naval commander. Sami is also the author of a technical work titled *Gaz Duman ve İslim Tehlikelerine Karşı Müdafaa ve Vesaiti* [Defense and Measures Against Gas and Smoke Hazards], which was written in 1929 and published by *Naval Printing*. In his preface of the translation titled "My Thoughts on the Work," Sami explains that he made several additions during the translation process to better align the text with the history of Turkish naval battles, thereby increasing its relevance to Turkish readers. The following is an example of his translational decisions:

In translating this work into Turkish, I placed great emphasis on presenting the original text as it is. I also pointed out the areas that required clarification. Where necessary, I expanded on the events to the best of my knowledge. In this way, I aimed to bring the history of the Turkish Navy in the Great War closer to being a comprehensive military history. (Sami, 1936, p. xvii)

As can be understood here, although the translator asserts fidelity to the source text by "translating as it is," he also attempts to expand the author's narrative. Moreover, as he states in his last sentence, he aims to cover the naval battles in Turkish waters by producing such a target text because he wants it to be a war history of the Turkish Navy in World War I. Therefore, it is obvious that the translator acted as a "writer-translator" or "rewriter" by creating a target text that differs from the source text in various ways as a result of translating by expansion, additions, and criticism. This supports André Lefevere's (1992) concept of the translator as a "rewriter," who does not merely transfer meaning but reshapes the text to fit the expectations, ideologies, and literary norms of the target culture. Thus, the target text seeks to address a new readership while signaling a free translation followed in the translation process.

In brief, while some translators emphasize their fidelity to the source text by asserting that they translated the text as it is or conveyed the author's opinion exactly, others made various translation decisions such as summarizing the author's narrative, changing titles, incorporating their own thoughts, and making additions, omissions, or alterations to the source text. Considering these aspects, it is difficult to claim that translators in that period followed a specific or single translation strategy or perspective. Rather, their translation decisions were shaped by their knowledge of the content of the works, the Western author, naval battles and their personal views on what translation is or how it should be. As Köroğlu (2007) notes, "neither

our common world history nor our national histories include a fixed manner of describing war. Innate complexities inhibit such a comprehensive description, thus leading to various interpretations originating from the different narrators of each national culture” (p. xvi).

The Partiality of the Western Author

The Turkish translators frequently underlined the partiality of the Western authors in their peritexts. They remind readers that the author may be biased because he is a “foreigner” or a “Western author”. While emphasizing that the source text might be beneficial for increasing Turkish readers’ knowledge of naval history, they also stress that the accuracy of the source text and the Western author should always be open for discussion. For instance, Müfit (1931) writes that “although these opinions may contain partial opinions, they are undoubtedly valuable to examine” (p. iii). Believing that the author may not always be truthful, Müfit suggests that, due to the lack of sources on the period, the book could serve as an initial step for Turkish readers to learn and critically engage with historical facts. Similarly, Sami (1932) emphasizes the necessity of translation and, consequently, the importance of learning from the account of a foreigner. He argues that Turkish readers and the Turkish navy lacked information and documentation on the course of the war, as the Turkish navy received assistance from foreigners during naval battles and entrusted the command to a foreigner. He notes the following: “It is our abandonment of the organization, laws, orders, and command in the war to a foreigner that has made us dependent on foreign works to learn lessons from the past today⁶” (Sami, 1932, p. ii). Seemingly, these translators convey the impression that Western authors may be biased in their narrations of the events due to their foreign status.

This impression is further reinforced by some translators who openly criticize the authors for their ignorance about the Turks’ talents and achievements at sea, even making defensive statements. One prominent example is Cemal (1932), who criticizes the foreign author, emphasizing that Western or European authors can be biased:

Turkish readers who examine this work may, like myself, be disappointed that the author has not elevated the Turkish naval forces to the prominent position it deserves in a general history of naval warfare. For example, at one point in the book, the esteemed historian quotes the great Süleyman as saying, “If Allah has granted lands to the Muslims, He has also given religions to the infidels!” However, the admirals forget that during the reign of Sultan Süleyman, the Mediterranean was a Turkish lake.

But has any European historian, up to this point, ever discussed Turkish naval power and strength with the importance it truly deserves? (p. viii)

As seen from the explanation, the translator believes that the author fails to acknowledge the place of the Turks in naval history and the value the Turkish naval forces deserve, which leads the translator to express his dissatisfaction and resentment regarding the partiality of the Western author. As Tahir Gürçağlar (2018) points out, “there are various historical examples to how translators have used paratexts to express their personal views, not only on the text they have translated but also on the historical and social context they operate in” (p. 289). In line with this argument, the peritextual elements of this translation reveal both the translator’s personal views and the socio-cultural background of his time.

⁶Cp. “Harpteki teşkilatımız ve harpteki kanunlarımız ve harpte emir ve kumadayı bilfil bir yabancıya terkedişimizdir ki bizi bugün geçmişten ders almak hususunda yabancılardan eserine muhtaç kılmıştır” (Sami, 1932, p. ii).

In another translation, Sami (1936) condemns the author's attitude towards the Turks and questions the author's partiality by defending the Turks. In his thirteen-page preface, he includes his criticism of the content of the work and the author's views:

[...] Unfortunately, Admiral Lorey often resorted to biased rhetoric. Why did the admiral, who claimed that the Turks were not sailors, fail to appreciate the commendable seamanship of the crew of the *Yavuz* battleship (whose personnel were untrained under Captain Turgut Reis) when observing their actions?

The admiral stated, "The Turks knew nothing; we started with the alphabet, and within a month, we had elevated them to the capability of fighting." Why has he not applied the same principles of training and discipline to his own citizens?

[...] By attempting to portray the Turks in a ridiculous light, did he intend to bestow honor upon the Germans? While it is every nation's right to elevate its own people, Admiral Lorey's actions in this regard reflect poorly on German dignity. (pp. xv-xvi)

As manifested in the above statement, Sami addresses Turkish readers directly in various sections of his preface posing questions to highlight the foreign author's bias. He also emphasizes that the words used by Lorey are offensive and do not reflect historical facts. Furthermore, Sami reinforces this emphasis throughout the target text not only by writing a lengthy preface but also by adding supplementary texts titled "My Thoughts on the Chapter" after each chapter and also after appendices. In these supplementary texts, he first summarizes the issues discussed by the author in the chapter, then explains the points in which he agrees or disagrees with the author, and attempts to clarify the inaccurate or biased statements of the author from his own perspective. In addition, he provides explanatory evidence from the published works, journals, telegraphs, or archives to counter the author's negative claims, stating that the author "makes mistakes," "lies" or "exaggerates." To give some examples from Sami's (1936) statements, he writes at the end of chapter five that "what admiral Lorey wrote under the title of Chapter Five is, to put it simply, a lie, wrong, and exaggeration" (p. 65). He also comments on another topic in this chapter: "The coal issue is also among the nonsense issues the author touches on" (p. 69).

Nevertheless, there are parts where Sami confirms the author's statements or informs readers of their accuracy. He briefly summarizes his thoughts about a chapter as follows: "I completely agree with what Admiral Lorey said about the navy in the Trabzon front" (Sami, 1936, p. 480). Specifically, the appendices section of this translation is a prime example since for each appendix the translator allocates a special place to his comments on the accuracy of appendices. In the first appendix, titled "My Thoughts about the First Appendix", he begins by saying "In this appendix, some posts for German officers on Turkish warships are shown, which is not correct" (p. 745). He then proceeds to present the true nature of the events. He concludes his comments by explaining his purpose in writing these additional texts: "These appendices are wrong and need to be clarified for us" (p. 754). In the fifth and final appendix, Sami (1936) ends with a striking remark: "Unfortunately, Admiral Lorey made a significant mistake concluding this work with this appendix and finishing it with incorrect information" (p. 800). In this light, the above expressions indicate that the translator questioned numerous issues pertaining to the naval history presented by the Western author in his book, sought to challenge the author's inaccuracies, highlighted the author's partiality, and, as a result, composed additional texts to address these concerns.

The fact that Sami writes a long preface, additional texts for each of the thirty-two chapters and five appendices in various page numbers, ranging from two pages to forty pages, can be seen as a reflection of the translator's commitment to providing the historical truths to the Turkish reader and exposing the biased stance of the foreign author. The translator, not only acts as "a visible translator" but also as a "a

history writer” or rewriter (Hosseini Baghanam, 2019, p. 19). This suggests that the distinction between the author and the translator is blurred in most parts of the peritexts because the translator believes that it is his right or duty to reveal the truth likely due to his shared military background and experiences with the author. Thus, he provides information to readers either by writing or translating because, in the political and cultural atmosphere of a nation-building process, he believes such a learning process is necessary for the Turkish reader.

Translators’ emphasis on the partiality of the Western authors also seems linked to the political and cultural dynamics of the young nation. Having just emerged from the Great War, the nation was suffering, weakened, and exhausted in the face of powerful Western states. Nevertheless, it was striving to take careful steps toward rebuilding itself, guided by a modernist and Western-oriented agenda. Such peritexts reflect how translation decisions are culture-bound and contextual, shaped by historical, social and political norms, as well as by the perceptions of the source text’s author, period, and genre.

To sum up, *Naval Printing*, through its translation practices, supported the reformist policies of the government. This was primarily driven by the crucial need to address the knowledge gap in naval history among Turkish readers and, more specifically, to educate the navy. *Naval Printing* “imported” naval battle narratives from the West as the Turkish repertoire of such narratives had either not yet been formed or was still insufficient (Even-Zohar, 1990). Therefore, in line with the planning initiatives undertaken after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic, *Naval Printing* aimed to create a “repertoire” through the translation of texts. This might be expected from an official organ of the Republic; however, a singular and uniform view of translation could not be adopted. Peritextual analysis reveals that faithfulness to the source text was maintained by translating the author’s opinion or the essence of the work. Translation decisions mostly included abridging the text and making additions or omissions in the target text at different page ranges. This also indicates that during periods of certain social, cultural, economic, and political change, the roles of the author and translator, as well as the relationship between the original text and its translation, can become intertwined. Furthermore, the translators’ remarks on the partiality of the Western authors reflect a polarised view toward the West. In other words, while translation is used as a tool for narrowing the gap between Western countries and the young Republic, the peritexts frequently highlighted the potential for the Western authors to mislead, remanding Turkish readers to approach such texts critically.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the aim was to analyze a corpus of eight translations published by *Naval Printing*, including peritexts, to gain insights into the landscape of translations between 1929 and 1938 through a peritextual analysis. The translation policy, along with the role and function of these translations, were scrutinized by applying a target-oriented approach. The restructuring of *Naval Printing*, beginning immediately after the proclamation of the Republic, and its translation activities coincided with a tumultuous period in Türkiye. At this time, the country sought to heal the wounds of the Great War while simultaneously turning its focus toward the West, taking steps toward modernization and westernization. These steps were reflected through advancements in culture, literature, and education, as well as the military and naval sectors. In this reformist environment, works related to naval battles were translated into Turkish by translators who were also soldiers in the Turkish Naval Forces.

As revealed through the peritextual analysis of these translations, *Naval Printing* strategically employed translation as a tool to address the knowledge and educational gaps of Turkish readers, particularly those in the Turkish navy, regarding naval history during the early Republican period in Türkiye. In line with Toury’s (1995) prevailing assertion that “translations are facts of target culture” (p. 29), the translations produced by *Naval Printing* reflect the cultural and political contexts of their time, illustrating how both the printing

house and the translators aligned with the reformist ideals of the era through their translation policies. While the choice of texts for importation was determined by the subject matter (naval battles), the military rank, and the experience of the author, the selection of translators was closely related to their motivation to translate, their language proficiency, and, specifically, their status as naval soldiers in the Turkish Naval Forces. In this sense, *Naval Printing* operated as a closed and self-contained system, functioning as an official organ of the newly founded nation in its translation activities. However, it is evident from the peritexts added to the translations that *Naval Printing* made a concerted effort to contribute to the cultural planning of the young Republic by importing texts for translation and utilizing members of the navy.

Moreover, although translators generally aimed for fidelity to the source text or the author, their peritexts reveal that their translation decisions vary significantly based on their personal beliefs about how a translation should be, as well as their views on the importance of the book or the Western author within naval literature. These beliefs often resulted in changes, omissions, additions, or even abridgments of the target text, such as summarizing the source text. Additionally, the peritexts suggest that the Western author and the integrity of the work was frequently questioned by the translators, who explicitly asserted that the Western author's narrative was biased due to his status as a "foreigner." Some translators even provided evidence in their peritexts, thereby assuming a role akin to that of rewriter as they actively reinterpreted and reframed the original text.

Therefore, much like the transitional and formative nature of the era, marked by the recent establishment of the Republic and the ongoing process of building new social, cultural, and political structures (Tahir Gürçağlar, 2008), it is not possible to speak of a unified or consistent perspective on translation. This lack of a common approach led translators to make varied and often divergent translation decisions, reflecting the broader socio-cultural uncertainties of the time. As Venuti (2005) asserts, "changing interpretations of foreign cultures are motivated by historical developments in the receiving situation" (p. 803), and the peritexts confirm that translators' decisions were similarly influenced by the historical shifts in Türkiye during this period. The peritextual analysis conducted in this study demonstrates how translation practices are historically, politically, and socially contextualized. A close examination of peritexts from specific periods can, therefore offer valuable insights into the interplay between translation and history.

The findings highlight the crucial role of peritexts in translation studies, offering insights into the complex relationship between culture, politics, and translation practices. The peritextual analysis of *Naval Printing's* translations reveals that peritexts are not mere supplementary elements, but vital components that expose translators' ideological motivations, historical context, and cultural positioning. Far from being passive renditions of a source text, translations are shaped by the translators' beliefs, their understanding of the target audience, and the political climate of the time. As this study demonstrates, peritexts provide invaluable insights into the historical and socio-political forces that influence translation decisions, shedding light on how translation can act as a tool for cultural negotiation and ideological alignment. Therefore, the use of peritexts in translation studies not only enriches our understanding of individual translations but also offers a unique lens through which to explore broader historical and cultural narratives.



Future research could focus on analyzing the texts within this study's corpus and extend to other translations published by *Naval Printing* in the later years of the Republic, offering a deeper understanding of the evolution of translation practices during this period.



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