

## DUBBING AND SUBTITLING THE NETFLIX ADAPTATION OF *WATERSHIP DOWN* INTO TURKISH: THE CASE OF LAPINE AS A CONSTRUCTED THIRD LANGUAGE

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### Abstract

*This study investigates how Lapine utterances in the Netflix adaptation of Watership Down (Murro, 2018a) are rendered in the Turkish dubbing (Murro, 2018b) and subtitle (Murro, 2018c) translations. Focusing on the treatment of Lapine as a constructed third language, the analysis draws on the typological frameworks of third language translation strategies (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011; Iberg, 2018). By identifying translation patterns such as deletion, repetition, and substitution in both target texts, the study explores how translators navigate the tension between preserving the fictional linguistic otherness and ensuring comprehensibility for the Turkish audience. The findings demonstrate a predominance of third language repetition in both modalities, particularly in the subtitle translation, suggesting a strong translational orientation towards faithfulness and a heightened translatorial awareness towards the third language's symbolic function within the narrative structure. However, the analysis also reveals instances of omission, as well as orthographic, semantic, or morphological errors, which lead to occasional breakdowns in maintaining the narrative's coherence and conveying the evolutionary and mythological messages embedded in the source text through Lapine elements. The study concludes that while both translations largely fulfil their intended purpose of preserving the source text's alienating atmosphere while balancing fidelity and comprehensibility, the constructed nature of the Lapine language introduces interpretive ambiguities that necessitate paratextual support and specialised expertise.*

**Keywords:** *multilingualism, audiovisual translation, third language, constructed language, Lapine language*

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## NETFLIX *WATERSHIP DOWN* UYARLAMASININ TÜRKÇE SESLENDİRME VE ALTYAZI ÇEVİRİLERİ: YAPAY BİR ÜÇÜNCÜ DİL OLARAK LAPINE ÖRNEĞİ

### Özet

*Bu çalışmada Netflix'in Watership Down uyarlamasındaki (Murro, 2018a) Lapine söylemlerinin Türkçe seslendirme (Murro, 2018b) ve altyazı (Murro, 2018c) çevirilerinde nasıl aktarıldığı incelenmektedir. Lapine'in yapay bir üçüncü dil olarak ele alınmasına odaklanan incelemede üçüncü dil çeviri stratejilerine yönelik tipolojik çerçevelerden (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011; Iberg, 2018) yararlanılmaktadır. Her iki erek metinde silme, yineleme ve yerine koyma gibi çeviri örüntülerinin belirlendiği çalışmada çevirmenlerin kurgu temelli dilsel ötekiliği korumakla Türk izleyici kitlesi için anlaşılabilirliği sağlama arasındaki gerilime nasıl yön verdikleri araştırılmaktadır. Çalışmanın bulguları; özellikle altyazı çevirisinde belirgin olmak üzere, her iki çeviri yönteminde de üçüncü dil yinelemesinin baskın olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu durum, anlatı yapısı içerisinde sadakate yönelik güçlü bir çeviri eğilimi ve üçüncü dilin simgesel işlevine yönelik yüksek bir çevirmen bilincini ortaya koymaktadır. Bununla birlikte incelemede anlatının tutarlılığını koruma ve kaynak metinde Lapine öğeleri aracılığıyla yerleştirilen evrimsel ve mitolojik iletileri aktarmada zaman zaman aksaklıklara neden olan yazım, anlam veya biçimbilgisel yanlışların yanı sıra atlama örnekleri de göze çarpmaktadır. Çalışmada her iki çevirinin de kaynak metnin yabancılaştırıcı atmosferini korurken sadakat ile anlaşılabilirlik arasında denge kurma yönündeki amaçlarıyla uyumlu olduğu, ancak Lapine dilinin yapay doğasının metin dışı destek ve özel uzmanlık gerektiren yorumsal belirsizliklere neden olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** çokdillilik, görsel-işitsel çeviri, üçüncü dil, yapay dil, Lapine dili

### 1. Introduction

*Multilingualism* covers the co-existence and interaction of two or more languages within a given societal, textual, or individual setting (Grutman, 2019, p. 182). Audiovisual (AV) texts, by nature, tend to exhibit multilingual features. In such media, multilingualism often manifests itself through the deliberate use of non-dominant languages. In this respect, as pointed out by Meylaerts (2006, p. 5), translation cannot be reduced to a shallow practice in which the language (L1) of a monolingual source text (ST) is entirely transposed into the language (L2) of a monolingual target text (TT) for the reception and consumption of a monolingual target audience. Rather, it can be a more complex process in which multiple linguistic systems are involved. Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011, p. 114) use the term *third language* (L3) to describe the complex nature of multilingual films, encompassing the presence of one or more additional languages in the ST (L3<sup>ST</sup>) and its/their counterpart(s) in the TT (L3<sup>TT</sup>). While L3s may be natural languages, whether living or dead and whether standard or dialectal, constructed languages can also occupy this position (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011, p. 115).

Among other competing terms, such as *planned language*, *artificial language*, and *created language*, *constructed language* (conlang) is a widely accepted term within contemporary academic circles to refer to a linguistic system intentionally created by an individual, institution, or community (Peterson, 2015). Such languages are typically designed to serve specific purposes: to facilitate international communication (*auxiliary language* or *auxlang*), to enrich fictional narratives (*artistic language* or *artlang*), and to achieve testable goals (*engineered language* or *engelang*) (Rhiemeier, 2012). Derived from the French *lapin(e)* ‘rabbit’ (Rogers, 2011, p. 215), Lapine language exemplifies one of the fictional artlangs created by Richard Adams for the anthropomorphic rabbit characters of his adventure novel *Watership Down* (Adams, 1972).

Constructed on ‘wuffy’ and ‘fluffy’ sounds that rabbits might produce if they were capable of human-like speech (Adams, 2014, p. 16), Lapine consists primarily of simple or compound lexemes that ‘denote complex meanings and describe concepts particular to the lifeworld of the rabbit (Leatherland, 2020, p. 112),’ such as *flay* ‘food (Adams, 2014, p. 445),’ *silf* ‘outside (Adams, 2014, p. 446),’ and *thlay* ‘fur (Adams, 2014, p. 446).’ In addition to its limited lexicon, Lapine lacks a fully developed morphosyntactic mechanism, with only a few notable affixal exceptions, such as *-(V> Ø)il* ‘plural,’ *-roo* ‘diminutive,’ and *-rah* ‘augmentative’ markers (Adams, 2014, p. 16). Owing to this underdeveloped structure, it is also classified as a *naming language*:

[...] is a special type of minimal utilitarian conlang, usually an artlang for works of fiction, created primarily to account for a relatively small number of words and phrases, especially proper names and common nouns (as with Lapine). Despite the lack of explicit grammar, naming languages may still have an underlying set of implicit phonotactic and/or morphological rules governing what makes a well-formed word, though they may be somewhat more haphazard and fluid than in a fully specified conlang. (Sanders, 2020, p. 25)

*Watership Down* was first published in 1972 by Rex Collings (Adams, 1972), followed by a second edition in 1973 by Puffin Books (Adams, 1973), and a third in 1974 by Penguin Books (Adams, 1974). In 1978, the novel was adapted into an animated film directed by Martin Rosen (Rosen, 1978). A second adaptation, this time a children’s television series, was produced and aired in Canada and the United Kingdom between 1999 and 2001 (Sullivan, 1999–2001). Most recently, under the direction of Noam Murro, a new AV adaptation was produced as an animated miniseries through the collaboration of BBC and Netflix in 2018 (Murro, 2018a).

Consolidating its strong position in youth literature with ‘the accolade of the Carnegie Medal (Pawling, 1984, p. 213–4),’ *Watership Down* (Adams, 1972) has been translated into many languages,

including French (Adams, 1976), Russian (Adams, 1996), and others<sup>1</sup>. The Turkish translation was carried out by Deniz Dülgeroğlu Altıparmak<sup>2</sup> and first published in 2008 by Arkabahçe Publishing (Adams, 2008). This translation was later republished in 2022 by Epsilon Publishing (Adams, 2022). The Netflix adaptation (Murro, 2018a) appears to have played a significant role in the republication process of the Turkish translation, marking a shift from a lower-tier publishing house to a higher-tier one.<sup>3</sup>

Operating in more than 190 countries, Netflix (n.d., retrieved June 3, 2025) offers a wide range of entertaining content, including television series, films, and games, across various genres to their 300 million paid subscribers. Along with original productions, the platform also provides subtitled and dubbed versions in different languages. Released on Netflix on December 23, 2018, as a four-episode miniseries, with each episode running approximately fifty minutes, *Watership Down* (Murro, 2018a) serves as the ST for this study. As for the TTs, the first one (TT1) is the Turkish dubbed version (Murro, 2018b) while the second one (TT2) is the subtitled version (Murro, 2018c). At the end of each episode, Sinto Sinop<sup>4</sup> is credited as the subtitle translator and Mustafa Çetin<sup>5</sup> as the dubbing translator.

The miniseries (Murro, 2018a) presents a complex narrative of displacement, survival, and resistance through the lives of anthropomorphic rabbits. Following a prophetic vision by Fiver, a group of bucks leaves their warren before its destruction by human intervention and undertakes an adventurous journey to their new home at Watership Down. Along the way, they confront existential threats such as environmental challenges, predation, and captivity. After settling at Watership Down, they must find ways to ensure the survival of their community. Their search leads them to *Efrafa*, an authoritarian warren ruled by General Woundwort. Forming a strategic alliance with Kehaar, a wounded seagull, the group launches a daring rescue operation to free the imprisoned does. Eventually, a final confrontation with Woundwort's forces results in a dramatic battle. The epic story concludes with the rabbits' survival, the mysterious disappearance of Woundwort, and the flourishing of the new warren.

The problematic nature of L3 presence in AV media has attracted a growing scholarly interest in its translation within the current literature. The dubbed and subtitled renderings of L3 elements unfamiliar to the target audience, whether from natural languages (Zabalbeascoa & Corrius, 2014; Bosch

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<sup>1</sup> The number of languages into which the novel has been translated so far exceeds the scope of this study; therefore, translations have been limited to two examples.

<sup>2</sup> In both translations (Adams, 2008; Adams, 2022), the translator is visible only in the inner covers ('Çeviren [Translator]: [...] (Adams, 2008);' 'Çeviri [Translation]: [...] (Adams, 2022)') and footnotes signed with a parenthetical 'ç.n. (i.e., *çevirmen(in) notu* [translator's note]).

<sup>3</sup> According to their official website, Epsilon (n.d.) positions themselves among the top five publishers in Türkiye.

<sup>4</sup> 'Alt yazı çeviri [Subtitle translation]: [...] (Murro, 2018b),' a freelance AV translator with almost twenty-five years of experience (Sinop, n.d.).

<sup>5</sup> 'Diyalog Çevirmeni [Dialogue Translator]: [...] (Murro, 2018c).' Some of his other dubbing translation projects are as follows: *Klaus* (Pablos, 2019), *The Last Days of American Crime* (Megaton, 2020), and *Stowaway* (Penna, 2021).

Fábregas, 2023; Corrius, Espasa & Santamaria, 2023) or constructed languages (Iberg, 2018; Golchinnezhad & Amirian, 2022; Isnaini, 2024), have been explored through the perspectives of multilingualism and multiculturalism.

To illustrate the literature research on natural L3s, Zabalbeascoa and Corrius (2014) examine the Spanish dubbing (*Dos Hombres y un Destino*) of the American film *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (Hill, 1969). In this case, Spanish functions as the L3<sup>ST</sup>, which coincides with the dominant L2 in the translation process. They identify two predominant strategies in the translated text: adaptation and transfer unchanged. In the former, L3<sup>ST</sup> elements in broken Spanish are replaced with French words or Spanish words spoken with a French accent. In the latter, L3<sup>ST</sup> elements in Bolivian Spanish are preserved as they remain sufficiently distinct from the standard variety to be perceived as foreign by the target audience. Bosch Fábregas (2023), on the other hand, compares the American and Spanish DVD versions of the animated sitcom *Family Guy* to analyse how L3 elements are treated in Latin American (LA) and Peninsular Spanish (PS) dubbing and subtitling. The researcher finds that the PS version preserves the multilingual nature of the original work by compensating through the creative inclusion of additional L3 elements, whereas the LA version tends to omit or culturally adapt L3 utterances, often at the expense of linguistic and cultural nuance. Corrius, Espasa, and Santamaria (2023) continue the focus on modality preference of dubbing and subtitling to analyse how L3 elements, namely Hindi and Punjabi, are rendered in the Spanish translation (*La Boda del Monzón*) of *Monsoon Wedding* (Nair, 2001). Their findings reveal that the Spanish dubbed and subtitled versions retain only a few Indian cultural and linguistic markers, such as loanwords related to food, greetings, and wedding customs, indicating that L3 does not play as central role as it does in the ST, whereas the sense of otherness is instead conveyed through visuality and musicality.

While the literature studies discussed above focus on natural languages as L3s, constructed languages also contribute to multilingualism in AV media, creating complexity in genre, narrative, and characters. For instance, Iberg (2018) questions whether the German subtitles for Dothraki, Valyrian, and Old Ghiscari/Meereenese Valyrian as L3s in seasons 1–3 of *Game of Thrones (GoT)* (Benioff & Weiss, 2011–2019) fulfil the same functions as in the ST. The researcher highlights that the TT is constrained by the lack of visual differentiation between languages, raising questions about audience reception and potential marketability on digital platforms. As for Golchinnezhad and Amirian (2022), they base their corpus on six conlangs (Na'vi [*Avatar*, Cameron, 2019], Sindarin, Quenya, Khuzdul, Ancient Dwarvish, and Black Speech [*The Hobbit*, Jackson, 2012]) and examine how L3 utterances in these conlangs are represented in five Persian dubbed variants. They conclude that repeating L3<sup>ST</sup> → L3<sup>TT</sup> is the predominant strategy and TTs have either retained the original actor's voice or replaced it with the dubbing actor's voice. The researchers also note that even though the second method does not violate the textual consistency, it may pose an economic burden for dubbing studios, making the first

method more widely adopted in the industry. Similar to Iberg (2018), Isnaini (2024) analyses L3 presence in *GoT* (Benioff & Weiss, 2011–2019), but with limitations such as focusing solely on Dothraki as the single L3, Season 6 as the data source, and Bahasa Indonesia as the TT language. The researcher's findings reveal that substituting L3<sup>ST</sup> is the dominant strategy, largely driven by the efforts to maintain narrative clarity and character identity in the subtitles.

Beyond the literature discussion of constructed languages in AV media, the Netflix adaptation of *Watership Down* (Murro, 2018a) has also been analysed from scholarly perspectives of folkloric studies (Johnson, 2021) and children's horror (Lester, 2024). Johnson (2021) observes the place of folklore in the AV adaptations of *Watership Down* (Adams, 1972) in a comparative manner. Regarding the Netflix adaptation (Murro, 2018a), the researcher concludes that even though the miniseries includes mythological narratives, they are frequently interrupted, partially heard, or visually overshadowed, thereby diminishing their narrative centrality. Lester (2024), on the other hand, investigates the representation of violence in children's literature. Comparing the miniseries (Murro, 2018a) with the film adaptation (Rosen, 1978), the researcher observes that BBC & Netflix have created a 'less "harrowingly violent"' portrayal than the earlier film.

As for the Lapine language, it has been examined as a zoosemiotic<sup>6</sup> (Leatherland, 2020) and narrative agent (Pager-McClymont, 2024). From Leatherland's perspective (2020), the communicational means of the anthropomorphic rabbits are handled through Lapine language. Drawing on zoosemiotics, the researcher reveals how Lapine not only anthropomorphises the rabbits but also challenges the boundaries of human language in representing non-human cognition. From a different viewpoint, Pager-McClymont (2024) analyses the structural, idiomatic, and conceptual construct of the language, and demonstrates how Lapine is employed to embed the rabbits' worldview and bridge the narrative gap between their naturalistic behaviour and anthropomorphised consciousness.

Despite these contributions to the existing literature, no academic research to date has been found that addresses how a naming language like Lapine is treated in Turkish AV translations as a constructed third language. To fill this gap, the present study focuses on the Netflix adaptation of *Watership Down* (Murro, 2018a) and investigates the translation strategies (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011; Iberg, 2018) applied to Lapine in the Turkish dubbed (Murro, 2018b) and subtitled (Murro, 2018c) versions, with particular attention to how foreign elements are preserved, adapted, or lost in the translation processes. In this context, this study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the frequency and distribution of L3 Lapine instances in the English ST (Murro, 2018a) and in the Turkish dubbed (Murro, 2018b) and subtitled TTs (Murro, 2018c)?

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<sup>6</sup> *Zoosemiotics* is defined as 'the study of systems of communication within and between species' in the paper (Sebeok, 1963, as cited in Leatherland, 2020).

2. What L3 translation operations (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011; Iberg, 2018) have been applied to render L3 Lapine instances in the Turkish dubbed (Murro, 2018b) and subtitled TTs (Murro, 2018c)?
3. What are the problems observed in the translation outcomes of L3 Lapine instances in the Turkish dubbed (Murro, 2018b) and subtitled TTs (Murro, 2018c)?

## 2. Method

This study uses qualitative content analysis as its research method to examine how the L3 Lapine utterances in the Netflix adaptation of *Watership Down* (Murro, 2018a) have been rendered in the Turkish dubbing (Murro, 2018b) and subtitling (Murro, 2018c). In order to analyse the rendering processes, the L3 Lapine utterances in the ST were first identified and listed in an Excel file, with the information for each episode organised on a separate sheet. These utterances were then compared with their equivalents in the TT1 and TT2, and the findings were recorded in the subsequent columns. The numerical data related to this phase of the study are presented in Figure 2.

This study also adopts the Corrius and Zabalbeascoa's (2011) L3 model as its theoretical framework to categorise and explain the translation operations applied to the L3 Lapine instances in the TT1 and TT2. While the original model was directly applied to the dubbed version, Iberg's (2018) adaptation of the same model was used for the subtitled version. As for the numerical data related to this phase of the study, they are presented in Figures 3 and 4. In addition to the translation operations, errors such as misspellings, misinterpretations, and incorrect morphological analyses observed in the translation outputs were also identified and noted down in the same Excel file.

Figure 1. Example of Data Storage in the Excel File

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	<b>ST (51)</b>	<b>TT1 (43)</b>	<b>Op I</b>	<b>Op II</b>	<b>TT2 (43)</b>	<b>Op I</b>	<b>Op II</b>
2	elil	elil	6		düşman	7	
3	elil	Ø	5		elil	6#	
4	Efrafa	Efrafa	6		Efrafa	6	
5	Frith	Frith	6		Frith	6	
6	Efrafa	Efrafa	6		Efrafa	6	
7	elil	elil	6		elil	6#	
8	elil	elil	6		elil	6#	
9	Hazel-rah	Hazel-rah	6		Hazel-rah	6	

From among all L3 Lapine findings that constitute the population of the study, a total of 14 examples, each addressing a specific operation or problem, were selected through purposeful sampling

and presented under the heading ‘Findings.’ Each example was chosen for its representative value in illustrating the specific strategies and issues in the obtained data. Based on the collected data, the findings of the study were then further interpreted through the evaluative lenses of Corrius and Zabalbeascoa’s (2011) model and Iberg’s (2018) adaptation under the heading ‘Discussion.’

### 3. Theoretical Framework

This section covers the theoretical methodologies used while conducting this study under the relevant subheadings: L3 translation operations (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011), and Iberg’s adaptation (2018).

#### 3.1. L3 Translation Operations

Beyond the conventional binary categories of the main language in a ST (L1) and that of a TT (L2) in translation studies, Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011) propose the concept of a *third language* (L3) in their study. They define the related concept as any additional language(s) present in either the ST or TT. In their terminology, they further distinguish between L3<sup>ST</sup> and L3<sup>TT</sup>, referring to the existence of any third language(s) in the original and translated texts, respectively. The researchers suggest that translators should take into account all the variables involved in a text’s narrative, as L3 elements might cause problems during translational processes (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011, p. 114).

Comparing their stance with Grutman’s (1998) criterion for a textual formation to be considered multilingual as an example, namely the ‘presence of at least a single foreign word,’ Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011, p. 116) argue that it is up to translators to determine what qualifies as a true foreign element and whether to retain it in a translated text and researchers to explore the driving forces behind the translators’ decision to keep or leave such foreign elements. The retention of L3 elements may reflect a translatorial tendency to preserve authenticity and alienating effect, whereas their omission may signify a translatorial intention to prioritise comprehensibility and accessibility for the target audience.

The concept of L3 is not limited to natural languages. Along with linguistic variations, such as dialects, sociolects, and anti-languages, it can also cover invented and pseudo-languages (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011, p. 115–8). These non-natural L3s are often found in science-fiction, fantasy, and animated productions, where they serve various narrative and stylistic functions, such as world-building, character development, and thematic reinforcement. As an epitome of artlangs in conlang taxonomy (see Rhiemeier, 2012), Lapine language serves an excellent example of L3, since in *Watership Down* (Murro, 2018a), it is used to construct a distinct narrative, evoke a mythological background, and fulfil a communicative function among the animation’s characters.

After identifying the nature and function of the L3 instances in a ST (L3<sup>ST</sup>), Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011, p. 116) outline five translation operations to classify how these instances have been

rendered in the TT ( $L3^{TT}$ ). Building on these classifications (see Table 1), the present study examines which translation operations have been preferred while rendering the L3 Lapine utterances in the Turkish dubbing (Murro, 2018b) and subtitling (Murro, 2018c) of the English ST *Watership Down* (Murro, 2018a).

**Table 1. Operations for  $L3^{ST}$  Segments**

	<b>Operation</b>	<b><math>L3^{TT}</math> segment</b>	<b><math>L3^{TT}</math> status</b>	<b>Possible result/effect</b>
5	Delete $L3^{ST}$	$\emptyset$	Lost	Standardisation
6	Repeat $\rightarrow L3^{TT}$ (when $L3^{ST} \neq L2$ )	$L3^{TT} = L3^{ST}$	Kept	Function or connotation may change.
7	Substitute $L3^{ST} \rightarrow L2$ (when $L3^{ST} \neq L2$ )	$\emptyset$	Lost	L3 invisibility, or L3 quality conveyed through some L2 strategies (e.g., talked about).
8	Repeat $L3^{ST}$ (when $L3^{ST} = L2$ )	$(L3^{TT} = L2)$		
9	Substitute $L3^{ST}$ (when $L3^{ST} \neq L2$ or $L3^{ST} = L2$ )	$L3^{TT} \neq \left\{ \begin{array}{l} L3^{ST} \\ L2 \end{array} \right\}$  $L3^{TT} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} = \\ \neq \end{array} \right\} L1$	Kept	Function or connotation may be equivalent or analogous.

(adapted from Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011, p. 126)

### 3.2. Iberg's Adaptation

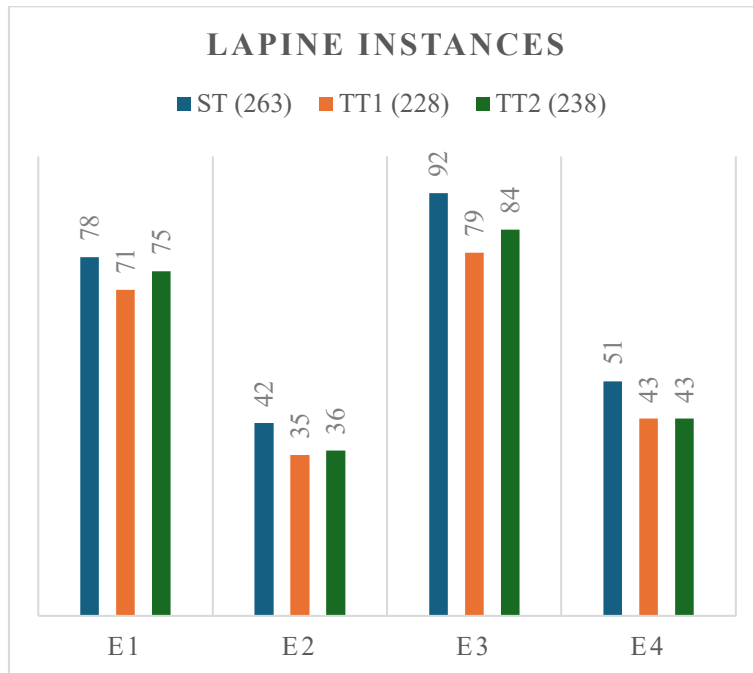
Iberg (2018, p. 118) adapts Corrius and Zabalbeascoa's (2011) L3 model for subtitled productions, claiming that the original model primarily applies to dubbed works, in which translated segments substitute the original ones at the desired level. In contrast, subtitled productions involve a shift in channels from spoken to written, a process known as *diasemiotic* translation (Gottlieb, 2005, as cited in Iberg, 2018, p. 118). Rather than replacing the ST language(s), subtitles add 'another layer of languages,' coexisting with the original audio (Iberg, 2018, p. 118). As for her contribution to the current

model, Iberg (2018, p. 118–9) introduces a distinction between the regular and marked subtitles, the latter employing strategies such as colour coding, alternative fonts, or explicit language labels to emphasise the L3 status in the ST. In line with Iberg’s adaptation, marked subtitles in this study were identified separately using a hash sign (X#) along with the corresponding operation number (e.g., 6#, 7#, 8#, or 9#).

#### 4. Findings

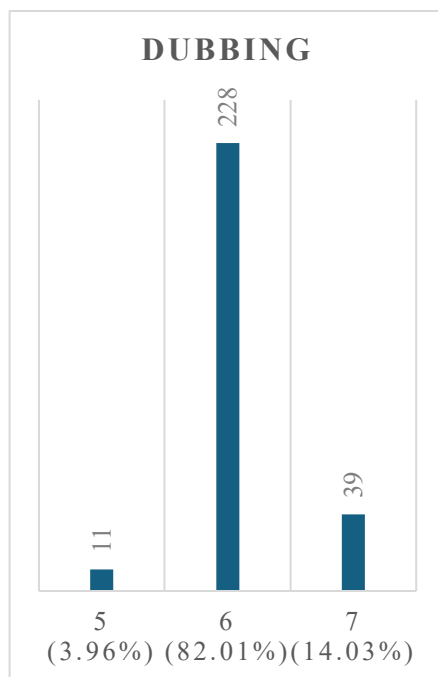
Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of Lapine elements across the four episodes (E1–E4) on the Netflix adaptation of *Watership Down*, comparing their frequency of occurrence in the original audio (ST) with their representations in the dubbed (TT1) and subtitled (TT2) versions. The English ST contains a total of 263 utterances in the Lapine language, while the Turkish dubbed and subtitled TTs include 228 and 238 instances, respectively. This indicates a substantial retention of the L3 vocabulary; however, a complete representation is not achieved across the two modalities, spoken (dubbing) and written (subtitling). The driving force behind the quantitative reduction in the representative power of the L3 Lapine, particularly more prominent in dubbing than in subtitling, may stem from a translatorial impulse to minimise the degree of linguistic otherness in the translated texts and make it less foreign to the target audience.

Figure 2. The Frequency and Distribution of L3 Lapine Instances

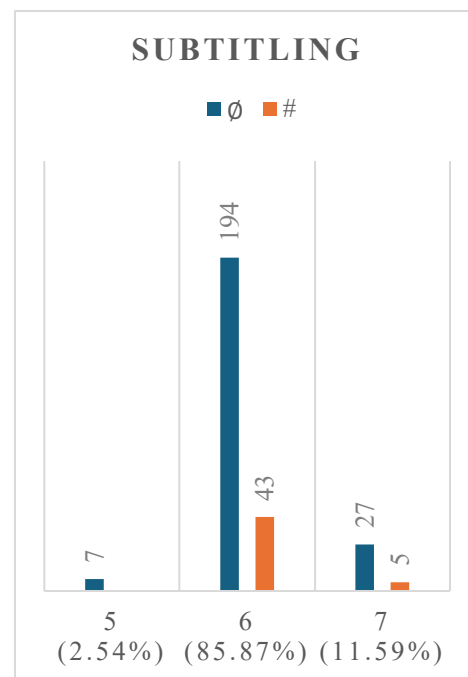


The order of the episodes that contain the most-to-least L3 Lapine instances does not differ between the analysed texts, following the sequence of E3, E1, E4, and E2. Among the four episodes, E3 ranks first and E2 last in terms of the number of L3 elements. This quantitative consistency across the three versions suggests that the frequency of Lapine occurrences is closely tied to the narrative nature of each episode, rather than being influenced by the modality of translation. The reason why E3 has the highest number among the others is the frequent use of character names in the Lapine language, specifically ‘Thlayli’ (21) and ‘Hyzenthlay’ (18).

**Figure 3. L3 Translation Operations in Dubbing**



**Figure 4. L3 Translation Operations in Subtitling**



For both translations in dubbing and subtitling, Operation 6 (repeat  $L3^{ST} \rightarrow L3^{TT}$ , when  $L3^{ST} \neq L2$ ) has been identified as the dominant strategy used to render L3 Lapine utterances. This high rate of repetition is the sign of a strong degree of fidelity to the ST. The relationship between L1/L3 and L2/L3 remains consistent, with L3 fulfilling the function of alienation in the TTs (see Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011, p. 125). For instance, ‘Owsla,’ as a community name in Example 1, and ‘Efrafa,’ as a location name in Example 2, both of which are unique concepts specific to the lives of rabbit characters, have been left untouched in the translated texts.

### Example 1

**L3:** Owsla ‘the strongest rabbits in a warren (Adams, 2014, p. 446)’

**L1:** Sow thistle is reserved for members of the Owsla, don’t you know that?

**L2 (Dub.):** Boğa dikenini sadece Owsla üyelerine aittir, yoksa unuttunuz mu?

(Watership Down, E1 ‘*The Journey*,’ 06:15)

### Example 2

**L3:** Efrafa ‘the name of the warren founded by General Woundwort (Adams, 2014, p. 445)’

**L1:** My esteemed guests, welcome to Efrafa.

**L2 (Sub.):** Saygıdeğer konuklarım, Efrafa’ya hoş geldiniz.

(Watership Down, E2 ‘*The Raid*,’ 24:44)

In the subtitling setting, beyond the regular lexical repetition, italicisation and non-italicisation have been employed as marking strategies to make the presence of foreign elements visually distinct for the target audience (see Iberg, 2018, p. 188–9). For the former strategy, L3 Lapine instances have been italicised when embedded within non-italicised lines (e.g., xxx *elil* xxx); and for the latter strategy, they have been presented in regular font when the surrounding text is italicised (e.g., xxx homba xxx). This orthographic contrast functions as a visual clue that highlights the change from L2 to L3. In Example 3, ‘hrududu,’ as an alien lexeme for the target audience, appears in italics within the subtitle line.

### Example 3

**L3:** hrududu ‘any motor vehicle (Adams, 2014, p. 446)’

**L1:** I understand a few things, but I am not sure how a hrududu is going to help us.

**L2 (Sub.):** Birkaç şeyi anladım ama hrududu ne işe yarayacak anlamadım.

(Watership Down, E3 ‘*The Escape*,’ 35:12)

In three unique instances (Frith [2], Thlayli [1]), the dubbed version features Lapine utterances that do not have any direct corresponding L3 referents in the ST. This quantitatively minor but qualitatively meaningful outcome suggests that the translator has not refrained from incorporating L3 elements when they are considered supportive of the narrative plot. For instance, in Example 4, to convey the character's weariness, the expression 'slugs in a burrow' from the ST has been dubbed as 'Frith aşkına [for Frith's sake]' in the TT1. Rather than opting for a direct translation like 'yuvadaki sümüklü böcekler' or a culturally neutral adaptation like 'Tanrı aşkına [for God's sake],' the translator has deliberately invoked a Lapine lexeme to maintain the internal dynamics of the fictional narrative.

#### Example 4

**L3:** Frith 'the sun, personified as a god by rabbits (Adams, 2014, p. 445)'

**L1:** Slugs in a burrow. Stop! You are both helping me dig the warren!

**L2 (Dub.):** Frith aşkına! Yeter artık! Kazmama ikiniz de yardım edeceksiniz [...]

(Watership Down, E2 'The Raid,' 19:48)

Rather than eliminating the message conveyed by the foreign elements in the ST, Operation 7 (substitute  $L3^{ST} \rightarrow L2$ , when  $L3^{ST} \neq L2$ ) has been preferred as the second most frequently used strategy in the TTs. As expected from this operation, even though the message is retained, 'L3<sup>TT</sup> status is [...] lost and becomes invisible (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011, p. 125).' As two examples of this operation, the lexeme 'hraka' has been dubbed as 'dışkı [faeces]' in Example 5, and the lexeme 'pfeffa' has been subtitled as 'kedi [cat]' in Example 6.

#### Example 5

**L3:** hraka 'droppings (Adams, 2014, p. 446)'

**L1:** The bird, sir, we found hraka, and we think it's here.

**L2 (Dub.):** Kuş, efendim, dışkısını gördük, hâlâ burada olabilir.

(Watership Down, E4 'The Siege,' 20:28)

#### Example 6

**L3:** pfeffa ‘a cat (Adams, 2014, p. 446)’

**L1:** You embleer pfeffa.

**L2 (Sub.):** Seni kokmuş kedi.

(Watership Down, E2 ‘*The Raid*,’ 42:32)

Additionally, in only five cases, have L2 particles been italicised when they have appeared as bound morphemes attached to an L3 lexeme, forming hybrid constructions that combine a foreign lexical root with a native grammatical morpheme. For instance, the lexeme ‘yonil’ in the ST has been rendered as ‘*yonalar*’ in the subtitled TT, combining the Lapine lexical item ‘yona’ with the Turkish plural suffix ‘-lar<sup>7</sup>,’ as illustrated in Example 7. Such hybrid examples in the research sample have been assigned two labels during the analysis phase (i.e., ‘*yonalar*’ → 6# and 7#).

#### Example 7

**L3:** yonil ‘(plural of *yona*) hedgehogs (Adams, 2014, p. 447)’

**L1:** Yonil hunt at night.

**L2 (Sub.):** *Yonalar* gece avlanır.

(Watership Down, E1 ‘*The Journey*,’ 19:21)

Lastly, Operation 5 (delete L3<sup>ST</sup>) has been employed eleven times in dubbing and seven times in subtitling. The L3 elements that remain aural in the ST but are deleted in the TTs (see Iberg, 2018, p. 188) include character names and swearing expressions. Some character names have been considered redundant to repeat during interlocutions and have therefore not been included in the translated texts. Furthermore, since the swearing expressions with ‘Frith’ or ‘Inlé’ have functioned as discourse markers that make the speaker’s utterance more emphatic and convincing, they have been treated as dispensable fillers that can be easily omitted in translation, such as ‘by Frith’ and ‘to Inlé.’

Even though some expressions have been significant for the target audience’s understanding of the events depicted on the scene, they have nevertheless been ignored in the translated texts. In Example 8, the ST explicitly uses the lexeme ‘elil’ to refer to rabbits’ enemies, who are said to bring them the

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<sup>7</sup> Capital letters represent allomorphic variations due to vowel harmony.

*white blindness*<sup>8</sup>. However, the omission of the related lexeme in the dubbed translation diminishes the fear-inducing atmosphere in the narrative. This reduction may impair the audience's comprehension of the rabbits' worldview and the perceived severity of the uttered threat in the current situation.

### Example 8

**L3:** elil 'enemies of rabbits (Adams, 2014, p. 445)'

**L1:** Those of you not loyal to me invite outsiders to steal our does... men to kill us, and elil to bring us the white blindness.

**L2 (Dub.):** Bana sadık olmayanlar, yabancıları dişilerimizi çalmaya davet ediyor demektir. Onların amaçları, bizi öldürmek ve ø beyaz körlüğü yuvamıza taşımak.

(Watership Down, E4 'The Siege,' 08:13)

In Example 9, on the other hand, the source 'go tharn' has been used to describe how rabbits become motionless when they are exposed to light. The target subtitles include the cause/condition (i.e., 'Işığını size tutarlarsa da... [And if they shine their light on you, ...]) and the second effect/final outcome (i.e., '... sizi ezerler. [... they crush you.]), but lack the first effect/immediate reaction, which has been conveyed through the evolutionarily significant L3 element 'tharn' in the ST. This element reflects a species-specific fear response, which lies at the centre of the narrator's portrayal of rabbit behaviours:

[...] Since entering the wood they had been in severe anxiety. Several were almost tharn—that is, in that state of staring, glazed paralysis that comes over terrified or exhausted rabbits, so that they sit and watch their enemies—weasels or humans—approach to take their lives.  
[...] (Adams, 2014, p. 39)

Whether intentional or unintentional, the omission weakens both the cohesion of the cause-and-effect chain and the audience's perception on the characters' vulnerability in the translated text.

### Example 9

**L3:** tharn 'hypnotised with fear (Adams, 2014, p. 446)'

**L1:** And if they shine on you, you go tharn... and then they crush you.

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<sup>8</sup> In the narrative, the *white blindness* is fatal, rabbit-borne viral disease whose main symptoms are eye infection and blindness. It is equivalent to *myxomatosis* in the real world (Fandom, n.d.).

**L2 (Sub.):** Işığımı size tutarlarsa da Ø sizi ezerler.

(Watership Down, E1 ‘*The Journey*, 19:29)

Due to its invented nature, Lapine terminology represents an unknown world not only for the viewers but also for the translators. The challenge of translating these foreign elements becomes evident in orthographic errors, such as ‘Thearah’ instead of ‘Thearah’ in Example 10, and ‘Firth’ instead of ‘Frith’ in Example 11.

### Example 10

**L3:** Thearah ‘(< threar ‘rowan tree’ + rah ‘lord’) the Chief Rabbit’s name (Adams, 2014, p. 26)’

**L1:** You have to get everyone leave tonight, Threarah, please.

**L2 (Sub.):** Bu gece herkesi buradan götürmelisin. Lütfen Thearah.

(Watership Down, E1 ‘*The Journey*,’ 08:43)

### Example 11

**L3:** Frith ‘see *Example 4*’

**L1:** Frith has decided that it is Bigwig’s turn.

**L2 (Sub.):** Firth, Bigwig’in sırasının geldiğine karar verdi.

(Watership Down, E1 ‘*The Journey*,’ 41:19)

Although such misspellings do not significantly hinder overall comprehension of the intended message, certain semantic errors have resulted in conceptual deviations within the translated texts. Example 12 illustrates a translation outcome in which the L3 lexeme *silflay*, which typically denotes the act of going out to feed oneself (Adams, 2014, p. 446), has been misinterpreted as a proper noun referring to a person in the subtitled version: ‘Daha sonra Silflay ve benimle gelmek ister misin? [Would you like to come with Silflay and me later?].’ By contrast, the dubbed version has employed Operation 7 and rendered the relevant expression more literally as ‘... onların tadına birlikte bakmak... [... try them together...].’

As for Example 13, the ST ‘Frith-down’ has been rendered as ‘Frith Tepesi [Frith Hill]’ in the subtitled TT. Here, while the translators have preserved the foreign lexeme, the compound is mistakenly

interpreted as a toponym. However, the ST ‘Frith-down’ does not refer to a physical location; rather, it metaphorically signifies the concept of ‘sunset.’ Thus, the subtitled translation exhibits a semantic error by recontextualising a temporal expression as a geographical one. In this instance as well, the dubbed version again has adopted Operation 7 and translated the related expression more literally as ‘gün batımında [at the sunset].’

### Example 12

**L3:** Silflay ‘to go above ground to feed (Adams, 2014, p. 446)’

**L1:** I wonder if you wanted to go with me and silflay for a little while later on.

**L2 (Dub.):** Ne dersin, sonra benimle gelip onların tadına birlikte bakmak ister miydin?

**L2 (Sub.):** Daha sonra Silflay ve benimle gelmek ister misin?

(Watership Down, E2 ‘*The Raid*,’ 06:48)

### Example 13

**L3:** Frith ‘see *Example 4*’

**L1:** Kehaar, tomorrow night at Frith-down, [...]

**L2 (Dub.):** Kehaar, yarın akşam gün batımında [...]

**L2 (Sub.):** Kehaar, yarın gece Frith Tepesi’nde [...]

(Watership Down, E3 ‘*The Escape*,’ 12:46)

Not only orthographically and semantically, but also morphosyntactically, L3 elements pose a complex challenge to resolve in the process of translation. In Example 14, instead of directly copying the L3 utterance ‘hrududil,’ which can be structurally analysed as *hrududu* ‘motor vehicle (Adams, 2014, p. 446)’ and *-(V>Ø)il* ‘plurality (Adams, 2014, p. 16),’ the translator of the dubbed version appears to have inferred the plural meaning from the ST structure (‘the hrududil have...,’ not ‘the hrududil has...’) and thus felt the need to add an L2 plural suffix: ‘hrududiller (< Tr. ‘-lAr’).’ However, this addition has resulted in a case of morphological redundancy, as the Lapine lexeme has already contained an L3 plural suffix. This behaviour suggests a misrecognition of the internal structure of the foreign

element and exemplifies how morphosyntactic unfamiliarity with L3 structural mechanism can lead to *overtranslation* (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 16).

#### Example 14

**L3:** hrududil ‘(plural of *hrududu*) see Example 3’

**L1:** In the dark, the hrududil have big lights [...]

**L2 (Dub.):** Karanlıkta hrududillerin büyük ışıkları olur [...]

**L2 (Sub.):** Hrududuların karanlıkta kocaman ışıkları olur [...]

(Watership Down, E3 ‘*The Escape*,’ 19:24)

#### 5. Discussion

The analytical evaluation of the Lapine instances in the English ST (Murro, 2018a) and their translational representations in the Turkish dubbed (Murro, 2018b) and subtitled (Murro, 2018c) versions demonstrated that translatorial behaviours were primarily shaped by the narrative functions and symbolic significance of the Lapine language. The near-identical distribution of Lapine elements across corresponding episodes in both TTs (see Figure 2) indicates that L3 visibility closely followed the internal storyline of the original narrative. This translational tendency suggests that the translators of TT1 (i.e., Mustafa Çetin) and TT2 (i.e., Sinto Sinop) were aware of the alienation impact that the Lapine elements imposed on the ST (Murro, 2018a) and continued this deliberate treatment of the Lapine language as an indispensable device for anthropomorphic world-building in the TT environments, representing human-like rabbits and reflecting their socio-cultural worldviews, as previously discussed by Leatherland (2020) and Pager-McClymont (2024).

In addition to a simple preservation of Lapine elements through the predominant translational tendency of Operation 6, such as the community name *Owsla* in TT1 (see Example 1) and the warren name *Efracfa* in TT2 (see Example 2), the translators also exercised the freedom to visually highlight or entirely recreate the ST forms, albeit in quantitatively limited but qualitatively significant instances. The TT2 translator, for example, employed typographical manipulation strategies, enabled by the *diasemiotic* (Gottlieb, 2005) features of subtitling modality (as cited in Iberg, 2018, p. 118). By italicising the Lapine *hrududu* in the subtitling environment (see Example 3), he implemented a deliberate marking strategy and further signalled the alienation function of the L3 element for the target audience. The TT1 translator, on the other hand, did not hesitate to introduce L3 elements to evoke comparable atmospheres in the dubbing environment, even though there was no corresponding L3 in

the original context. The L3-favouring transition from the ST ‘slugs in a burrow’ to the TT1 ‘Frith aşkına’ exemplifies this translation strategy (see Example 4). In both cases, by *foreigni[s]ing*<sup>9</sup> the TT environments with L3<sup>TT</sup> utterances (for *foreigni[s]ation*, see Venuti, 1995), whether through complete preservation (see Examples 1 and 2), typographical marking (see Example 3), or creative insertion (see Example 4), the translatorial preference was to maintain the L3<sup>TT</sup> status as ‘kept’ (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011).

In thirty-nine cases (14.03%) for the TT1 (Murro, 2018b) and thirty-two cases (11.59%) for the TT2 (Murro, 2018c), the translators neutralised the distinctive nature of L3<sup>ST</sup> elements through Operation 7. By *domesticating*<sup>10</sup> these foreign elements in accordance with the TL’s cultural values (for *domestication*, see Venuti 1995), L3<sup>ST</sup>-to-L2 transitions, such as ST ‘hraka’ > TT1 ‘dışkı’ (see Example 5), ST ‘pfeffa’ > TT2 ‘kedi’ (see Example 6), and ST ‘yonil’ > TT1 ‘yonalar’ (see Example 7), can be interpreted as resultative instances of ‘standardi[s]ation with compensation’ (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011, p. 126). This indicates that, although the translators prioritised the preservative approach towards L3<sup>ST</sup> utterances in the TT environments, they were also willing to deviate from the SL offerings and employ TL equivalents instead whenever potential comprehension problems were anticipated for the target audience.

Even though the translators knew that L3<sup>ST</sup> represented a linguistic system distinct from the L1, the constructed nature of the Lapine language turned it into a kind of Pandora’s box for them, unleashing unexpected interpretive challenges and semantic ambiguities. Consequently, since STs alone may fail to reveal the denotative, or sometimes connotative, meanings of the L3<sup>ST</sup> elements, translators are often required to engage in paratextual research related to the constructed language(s) that occur in a ST in order to accurately comprehend, interpret, and convey their intended meanings and narrative functions in the TT. These challenges led to several mistranslations, resulting in a partial loss of narrative consistency and cultural specificity in both TT1 (Murro, 2018b) and TT2 (Murro, 2018c). For instance, Lapine’s symbolic attributions were obscured in ST ‘elil’ > TT1 ‘∅’ (see Example 8) and ST ‘tharn’ > TT1 ‘∅’ (see Example 9), misrepresented in ST ‘Threarah’ > TT2 ‘Thearah’ (see Example 10) and ST ‘Frith’ > TT2 ‘Firth’ (see Example 11), while character utterances were semantically misunderstood in ST ‘silflay (action)’ > TT2 ‘Silflay (person)’ (see Example 12) and ST ‘Frith-down’ > TT2 ‘Firth Tepesi’ (see Example 13), and morphologically *overtranslated* (for *overtranslation*, see Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995) in ST ‘hrududil’ > TT1 ‘hrududiller’ (see Example 14).

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<sup>9</sup> Venuti (1995, p. 20) defines *foreigni[s]ation* as ‘an ethnodeviant pressure on [the TL’s cultural values] to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign [ST].’

<sup>10</sup> *Domestication*, in contrast, is defined as the ‘ethnocentric reduction of foreign text to [the TL’s] cultural values (Venuti, 1995, p. 20).’

Evaluating the findings obtained in this study in comparison with the earlier literature research, the fact that the L3<sup>ST</sup> system is a constructed language has compelled the translators neither to seek for an alternative linguistic system for the L3<sup>TT</sup> position when L3<sup>ST</sup> and L2 coincide, like the case of the Spanish language in Zabalbeascoa and Corrius (2014), nor to resort to systematic omission or neutralisation, as observed in Bosch Fábregas (2023) and Corrius, Espasa, and Santamaria (2023). Furthermore, the fact that the Lapine language occupying the L3<sup>ST</sup> position is not a full-fledged linguistic system but rather a naming language has also encouraged the translators to predominantly preserve the L3<sup>ST</sup> utterances, even when they are completely alien to the target audience. This is because these utterances do not hamper the overall comprehension but instead impose another layer of narrative depth to the TTs, thus making substitution with L2 equivalents mostly context dependent. However, it is not possible to keep the L3<sup>ST</sup> elements unchanged when an entire scene is built around a constructed language, as demonstrated in Iberg (2018) and Isnaini (2024), which analyse different translations of GoT (Benioff & Weiss, 2011–2019).

## 6. Conclusion

*Multilingualism* has begun to find a place in AV media as a realistic reflection of the today's world, in which the number of multilingual individuals has increased due to the striking effects of globalisation. Defined as 'any other language(s) found in the [source and target] text[s]' by Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011, p. 114–5), a *third language* (L3) can be either natural or constructed. As an example of artistic languages (for *conlang taxonomy*, see Rhiemeier, 2012), Richard Adams devised the Lapine language for the anthropomorphic rabbit characters in his fantasy novel *Watership Down* (Adams, 1972). With its limited lexicon and grammar that consist of proper names, common nouns, and morphosyntactic markers, Lapine is also classified as a *naming language* (see Sanders, 2020, p. 25).

*Watership Down* (Adams, 1972) has been adapted into various AV formats (Rosen, 1978; Sullivan, 1999–2001), including an animated miniseries (Murro, 2018a), which serves as the ST for this study. This miniseries follows the adventurous story of anthropomorphic rabbits that encounter displacement, survival, and resistance. Previous research has explored how natural (Zabalbeascoa & Corrius, 2014; Bosch Fábregas, 2023; Corrius, Espasa & Santamaria, 2023) or constructed (Iberg, 2018; Golchinnezhad & Amirian; 2022; Isnaini, 2024) L3s are rendered in AV translation, *Watership Down* (Murro, 2018a) reflects folkloric elements (Johnson, 2021) and children's horror (Lester, 2024), and Lapine functions as a zoosemiotic (Leatherland, 2020) and narrative agent (Pager-McClymont, 2024). However, there remains a literature gap about how naming languages like Lapine are rendered into Turkish in AV translations. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the frequency and distribution (see Figure 2), translation strategies (see Figures 3 and 4), and challenging problems of Lapine utterances in the Turkish dubbed (Murro, 2018b) and subtitled (Murro, 2018c) translations of the English ST

*Watership Down* (Murro, 2018a), employing L3 translation operations (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011) and Iberg's (2018) adaptation as its theoretical framework.

The performed analyses reveal that while the TTs demonstrate high degree of fidelity to the ST through frequent repetition of L3 elements, both modalities also exhibit selective omissions, substitutions, and occasional errors. These translation strategies reflect a tension between preserving the fictional otherness of the Lapine language and ensuring the overall comprehensibility for the target audience. TT2 tends to preserve more L3 instances quantitatively than TT1. Nevertheless, the partial loss or transformation of fundamental L3 terminology, particularly through omissions and orthographic, semantic, or morphological errors, can reduce the narrative's coherence and obscure critical messages embedded in the ST. This tension of prevailing faithfulness and occasional adaptation reflects the translators' decisions guided by their intended purpose of maintaining the Lapine's distinctiveness as a constructed L3 while making it more accessible and more meaningful to the target audience.

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### Appendix 1: Symbols and Abbreviations

+	free morpheme	L3 <sup>ST</sup>	third language in source text
-	bound morpheme	L3 <sup>TT</sup>	third language in target text
≠	not equal to	LA	Latin American
>	left-to-right developmental change	n.d.	no date
<	right-to-left developmental change	PS	Peninsular Spanish
∅	zero translation/phoneme	ST	source text
(...)	optional element	Tr.	Turkish
cf.	compare	TT	target text
L1	source language	TT1	dubbed target text
L2	target language	TT2	subtitled target text
L3	third language	V	vowel