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Examining readers' perceptions of translations: The case of Stephen King's works in Turkish

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Abstract

Known as the master of horror with more than sixty novels, Stephen King's works have been translated into Turkish since 1970's and published mainly by *Altın Kitaplar* Publishing House. His works, frequently being among the best-sellers, have been retranslated into Turkish and reprinted countless with updated covers and labels such as "uncensored complete book" or "complete book" in the last years. Such instances mostly cause Turkish readers to question various publishing practices of the publisher from diverse perspectives and discuss particularly the concepts of "retranslation", "reprint", "revision", "censorship" and "cutting". This study aims to examine readers' reception and perceptions of above-referred concepts made itself evident lately regarding Turkish translations of King's works. In this sense, it benefits from online data such as readers' blogs and discussion forums in which they share a plethora of comments and make detailed discussions by tracing the links among King's translations. The study concludes that readers largely face with a confusion as a result of diverse publishing practices of the publisher such as "reducing" the books, publishing "un/complete" translations or labelling translations divergently. Moreover, it reveals that the decisions taken in the publishing processes are usually market-driven. The notion of market convenience provides an explanation for the translation or labeling practices such re/translation, re/print, censorship and cutting in readers' views and that being the case, readers try to urge publishers to take decisions particularly on the grounds of not reducing or censoring texts and high quality in translation practices.

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Keywords: Retranslation; reprint; revision; censorship; cutting; complete text; market convenience

1. Introduction

An American novelist and short story writer Stephen King is widely known as "The King of Horror" due to his works in the genre of horror fiction. He has written a number of horror, supernatural fiction, suspense, and fantasy novels and became one of the mostly acclaimed American writers of the late 20th century. Apart from publishing around sixty novels, he has written almost two hundred short stories, and several non-fiction books. Being a highly prolific writer, he has also published seven novels under

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the pen name Richard Bachman. His works have been translated into many languages and he won many awards (Licciardi, 2014).

Further to that, most of his works have been adapted into films, television series and comic books and he eventually became one of the top-selling authors in the USA.

His fourth novel *Carrie* was published in 1973 by *Doubleday* in the USA which might be regarded as the beginning of his career. Although he had written three unpublished novels and some published short stories in magazines, *Carrie* became a big step in his career's climbing because it won much recognition and even was made into a film. *Carrie* was translated into Turkish one year after the novel was published by *Altın Kitaplar* Publishing House. *Altın Kitaplar*, owning the copyright for almost all of King's books, has published around sixty horror novels and several short stories of King since 1970's and lately has begun to publish his comic book series as well. Only a small number of King's works (around 7 books) were published by other publishers including *Remzi*, *İnkilap* and *Sayfa6* Publishing Houses.

Thus, being a part of translated book market in Turkey for nearly half of a century, *Altın Kitaplar* is currently well known as King's publisher in Turkey. Not only it has published the first translations, but also reprinted King's works many times over the years because King's works have always been on the top of the best-seller lists. Çınar (2019) describes *Altın Kitaplar* as a well-established publishing house, coming from a custom that always managed to find best sellers. Also, the lists on webpages entitled *Stephen King Türkiye* (*Stephen King Turkey*) and *Stephen King Kitaplığı* (*The Library of Stephen King*) might be functional for examining in detail the amount of King's re/printed and re/translated works in Turkish. *Altın Kitaplar* has just started publishing retranslations of King's books besides reprints. At this point, a number of labels on the covers such as "uncensored text", or "complete text" drew attention of King's Turkish readers. Readers comment on these kinds of publishing practices by writing on blogs and discussion forums signaling that they are not voiceless. They argue and make explicit criticisms of the published King works and by this way, readers' views mostly manifest their reception and perceptions of King's works in Turkish. In this context, this study mainly centers on King's published works in Turkish by *Altın Kitaplar*. To that end, two of King's translated novels (*It* and *The Stand*) in Turkish were presented in an attempt to trace the links among the first target texts, reprints and retranslations. For the purposes of this study, a variety of online data was used to find answers for the following questions:

- What do readers think of the concepts such as "retranslation", "reprint", "revision", "censorship" or "cutting"?
- Why do readers discuss the concepts of "retranslation", "reprint", "revision", "censorship" or "cutting"?
- How do readers perceive the publishing practices concerning Stephen King's Turkish translations in general?

It is hoped that the findings of this study will serve to raise awareness about above-mentioned concepts and exemplify how these concepts may be confusing for readers and draw publishers' attention towards striving more for yielding improvement in translation practices and taking into account readers' views. The second section of the study elaborates on the concepts of "retranslation", "reprint" and "revision". It also provides readers' views related to translation practices of the publisher regarding King's works. The third section focuses on "censorship" and "cutting" and aims at finding answers for the question of whether King's works were censored or cut in the course of translation processes. It deals with two specific cases, namely Turkish translations of *It* and *The Stand*. Both these sections utilize online data to investigate how readers receive and perceive the publishing practices concerning Stephen King's works in Turkish. The last section presents discussion and conclusion.

2. “Retranslation”, “reprint” and “revision” as translation practices of publishers

“Retranslation” refers to “subsequent translations of a text or part of a text, carried out after the initial translation that introduced this text to the ‘same’ target language” (Susam-Sarajeva, 2003, p. 2). Reasons for retranslating are usually multifaceted (Berman, 1994; Susam-Sarajeva, 2003; Tahir Gürçağlar, 2009; Paloposki & Koskinen, 2004, 2010; Taş, 2018a) and vary to a great extent depending on the diversified dynamics of target systems and readership. Driving forces behind retranslations mostly range from aging, censorship, norms, religion, politics, competition, marketing strategies to ideology, just to name a few. Personal interests and economical or literary concerns together with market conditions may also play decisive roles for initiating a retranslation.

Berk Albachten and Tahir Gürçağlar (2019a) state that “The recent history of Turkey is marked by an abundance of retranslations” (p. 2). They address, “The motive behind the retranslation boom in 2000s in Turkey as mainly related to ideological, economic, marketing and copy-right related developments” (2019b, p. 225). Needless to say, growing demands of readers, the increase in the number of publishing houses in the market, the emergence of different publisher profiles in terms of publishing specific genres and translations from certain languages (such as Japanese, Chinese, Albanian, etc.) or writers and reader profiles that tend to be more active and participative of translation and publication processes, the increase in the number of screen adaptations of novels, varied printing practices in packaging may be counted among multiple factors that have contributed to the grow of the market in Turkey. The publishers have begun to publish more reprints, re-editions or revisions and retranslations along with new translations of neglected writers or genres in line with this sectoral expansion. Specifically, retranslations increased after 2000s (Birkan Baydan, 2008) and have been presented to the readers with discernible differences in the size, completeness and labelling. It is undoubtedly that retranslations are mostly consequences of commercially driven tendencies oriented towards changing profile and demands or expectations of the readers, but they may also be regarded as an indicative of the characteristics of increasing professionalism in the market.

When it comes to reprinting, it may be seen as the mostly preferred way by the publishers for supplying readers the books they demand. At this point, reprints frequently form an alternative for retranslations and an avenue of escape for the publishers from the cost and time that retranslations require. However, rather than seeing reprinting negatively just as a profit driven business, one can also refer reprinting as “positively as a desire to keep a stock of works available for the readers” (Paloposki & Koskinen, 2010, p. 34). Additionally, it is in the nature of reprints to have updated covers and different formats or textual organizations to attract readers’ attention, to conform with the screen adaptations, to benefit from the increased popularity of an internationally acclaimed writer within years and to reawaken various merits of the book or the popularity of the writer for different target readers, etc. All of the changes in the packaging of reprints as well as retranslations are highly related to marketing strategies and the agenda of publishers. Considered from this point of view, reprints inherit the idea of improvement or up-to-dateness from the phenomenon of retranslation because retranslations “are often based on a linear idea of progress” (Susam-Sarajeva, 2003, p. 3) or associated with being better than the previous translations from a variety of perspectives. Thus, reprints are also expected to include changes on different grounds. Nevertheless, making minor or major linguistic or stylistic changes may be seen as a practice of revising because revision processes may differ to a large extent from minor amendments towards major textual changes such as reworking of the whole text by making it completely a new translation. Then, the distinction between retranslating and revision does not appear to be clear cut. Paloposki and Koskinen (2010) maintain with questions:

The problem, of course, is this: how much change can there be in the revision process for the translation still to be the same, i.e. under the name of the previous translator, and where is the line to

be drawn to a new translation? And what about the different kinds of revising? Do “orthographic” corrections go under the process of revising, while “stylistic” corrections would merit the title of retranslation? (p. 44)

The quotation above clearly shows that the categorization of revisions and retranslations blurs with each question since different numberless publishing practices may be carried out in favor of novelty and improvement and in turn, “textual relations between different versions, whether they are called retranslations or revisions, seem to form a ‘rhizomatic’ network of influences, ideologies and value judgments” (Paloposki & Koskinen, 2010, p. 47).

2.1. “Retranslations”, “reprints” and “revisions” within the context of Stephen King’s Turkish translations

As a frequently observed phenomenon, reprinting or retranslating a popular writer’s works has always been a commercial gain for publishers. Particularly, when it comes to a writer, known as the “King of Horror”, who has never lost his popularity around the world, reprinting and retranslating his works naturally seem to be a safe and profitable area for publishers. *Altın Kitaplar*, being King’s publisher in Turkey, first published King’s novel *Carrie*. It was translated into Turkish by the translator Esat Ören in 1974 with the title *Göz*. This very first translation was reprinted many times over the years (such as in 1986, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2016) with different covers just as his other works have been. Some Turkish readers of King make explicit criticisms about the practice of reprinting and regard reprints as “unsuccessful” comparing to the previous prints as follows:

Reader 1: I am angry about wording in reprints, not translations. I guess *Altın Kitaplar* dismissed their editors. As I lost the book *Carrie*, I bought it again. When I started to read it, I felt sorry... They could not divide the words properly at the end of lines. Normally I do not care about misspellings but they stood out on the whole body of the text and disturbed me a lot.

Reader 2: (...) They offer new covers and prints yet there are unbelievable lettering and punctuation errors. Chapters are only divided with paragraphs and because they divided the paragraph wrongly, it is difficult to follow what is told as in the former versions of translations. (<https://forum.kayiprihtim.com/t/stephen-king-kitapligi/3962/39>)

What is clear from the reader statements is that readers actually expect a minimal editorial revision process in reprints in relation to orthography and spelling. They seem to appreciate the effort of the publisher to provide a stock of the works for readers, albeit they are confused with imprecise publishing matters finding reprints as insufficient. This reveals that the concepts of “reprinting” and “revising” are apt to be confusing categories for readers. Paloposki and Koskinen (2010) point out that “a minimalist revision might only entail few orthographic improvements” (p. 44). In this regard, King’s Turkish readers do not just call for reprints but also for small editorial amendments of the previous translations as they believe the publisher tends to conduct printing and editorial processes imprecisely despite showing some effort in general sense.

On the other hand, a number of King’s works have recently been retranslated. Choosing retranslating a text rather than reprinting is usually not a random decision but generally depends on a real motive or deliberate purpose. Paloposki and Koskinen (2010) claim that “there is also a potential positive charisma attached to retranslations and their marketing potential” (p. 35). When a retranslation emerges, regardless of the motives behind, it is generally perceived positively in terms of improvement or progress. It may be a better translation, a more famous translator’s work with a striking cover, a different format, an introduction of a literary or political figure which eventually lead to receive more publicity than re/prints. Especially different packaging styles are important for increasing publicity because according to Işıklar Koçak & Erkul Yağcı (2019), “(...) packaging seems to be a key element in

representing and advertising the retranslated text to the potential consumer” (p. 142). All of these clearly increase the visibility and commercial success of publishers to a great extent. In readers’ views retranslating means reading a better translation done by a different translator and also indicates the value that the publisher attributes to the writer. Two examples from reader comments assert this idea:

Reader 3: What is more important in retranslating is employing a good translator like Esat Ören. I wish they retranslated King’s books that were previously translated by Gönül Suveren and Mehmet Harmancı.

Reader 4: It is really good that *Altın Kitaplar* esteem very highly to King day by day. Especially retranslating the old prints of King’s books seems to be a signal for improvement. (<https://forum.kayiprihtim.com/t/stephen-king-kitapligi/3962/72>).

As is understood, for these readers, retranslations are very much needed and they may be seen as indicative of reworking of the text by another translator and of the effort of the publisher spent for improvement or for providing something with more quality. Nevertheless, some readers remark that retranslating means that the previous translations were troublesome. This is the reason that retranslations cause readers to question publication processes and create suspicions about King’s books they have already bought and read in Turkish. A reviewer’s comment below exemplifies this as:

Reader 5: *Altın Kitaplar* retranslates King’s books. This means that the publisher is already aware of the problems in the old translations. This is a torture for readers but also causes curiosity and an urge to reread the books. Think about all the books retranslated! When they are retranslated, it raises a question mark in readers’ minds. Readers want to read a good translation but cannot get rid of spending extra time and money. I think these retranslations leave readers in suspense. (<https://forum.kayiprihtim.com/t/stephen-king-kitapligi/3962/190>).

Pertaining to the reader’s comment, it seems that readers are torn between the advantages and disadvantages of retranslations. Though the publisher aims to offer retranslations with re-workings that do not include the problems of the previous translations, retranslations might create controversy for the readers. This also conforms with another study which includes the reasons mentioned by readers for producing retranslations: “(a) previous translations are inaccurate and full of mistakes, (b) first translations become dated over time, and (c) retranslations are used by publishers as a marketing strategy” (Işıklar Koçak, 2017, p. 422).

Considering readers’ views and discussions above regarding the concepts of “reprint”, “retranslation” and “revision”, it might be explicitly seen that readers are in a dilemma because while the publisher cares about providing stocks for its potential readers or customers and struggle for improvement by providing retranslations, it still does not pay much attention to printing processes. In essence, it is seen that reader statements pivot around the publisher’s inelaborate publishing practices which affect readers’ perception negatively. It also indicates that today’s readers are so much conscious that they are keenly involved in the quality of the works they will buy or have already bought as was also proven by other studies (Eker Roditakis, 2017; Işıklar Koçak & Erkul Yağcı, 2019; Taş İlmek, 2020).

3. “Censorship” and “cutting” in translation

Censorship has taken its place as a distinct research area in Translation Studies since 1990’s though it has been widely practiced in translation as well as in the other fields for years. It was described as “a form of manipulative rewriting of discourses by one agent or structure over another agent or structure, aiming at filtering the stream of information from one source to another culture” (Billiani, 2007, p. 3).

Reasons of censorship vary considerably, yet it usually occurs due to political, linguistic, cultural, religious, social, psychological, economical motives and mostly in relation to “obscenity” or “sex-based concerns” (Üstünsöz, 2015; Arslan, 2016).

Censorship is typically practiced in the form of “institutional censorship” or “self-censorship” (Taş, 2018b). The former may be a result of the practices of governmental institutions, a political party, a religious institution, a publishing house or a mass media. The latter may be regarded as a result of individual practices of an author, a publisher, an editor, a translator, a compiler, etc. Agnes Somló (2014) claims that literary self-censorship is exerted in political, religious and sexual categories. This type of censorship may be exerted intentionally or unintentionally depending on internal or external constraints the practitioner faces. For Somló (2014), external constraints are the issues that are “threatening the translator’s physical being, livelihood or freedom” while internal constraints stem from “[translator’s] preferences, education, social surroundings, in short, any considerations within” (p. 199). Whether it is “institutional censorship” or “self-censorship”, the practitioners are unremarkably subjected to pressures in different degrees which otherwise might lead to get them into trouble.

“Cutting” the text in the course of translation or publishing an incomplete text might easily be mistaken for “censorship”. While censorship is practiced as a consequence of in/deliberate purposes in terms of filtering some ideas or preventing the spread of certain undesirable notions under the guise of protecting the children or adults or often for the sake of governmental, religious or political circles, cutting is usually a decision taken by publishers due to marketing strategies concerning length, cost, size, readership, etc. Therefore, the practice of cutting does not intend to eliminate or suppress several ideas that the source text included, but appears to be mostly a market-driven decision for it aims at abridging the text for reaching a reasonable size and cost for its potential readers. Despite this seemingly innocent reasoning, cutting causes the text to lose its integrity, damages the storyline, ruins its universe of meaning, etc. In this regard, cutting leads to unenviable consequences by taking the rights of readers to read the whole text, comprehend the genre, the plot, the characters, the main features of the book, the writer’s purpose or even become acquainted with a foreign writer. Yet such adverse consequences do not retain publishers from choosing cutting as they are in need of survival and deriving profit by maintaining offering products convenient for the market conditions.

3.1. Stephen King’s books at the center of “censorship” and “cutting” discussions

The American writer’s two of the most famous novels, nominately *It* (1986) and *The Stand* (1978) have been discussed by Turkish readers within the context of “translation” and “censorship”. *It* was first published in 1986 by Viking Publishing House in the USA including 1138 pages. King won the British Fantasy Award and received nominations for *the Locus and World Fantasy Awards* with this novel in 1987. *It* was translated into Turkish and entitled *O* by the translator Gönül Suveren in 1986. It was published by *Altın Kitaplar* and included 467 pages. It was reprinted by its Turkish publisher many times within years but retranslated in 2012 by the translator Oya Alpar. The question is what motivated this retranslation after so many reprints? The difference in page numbers between the source text and target text might have necessitated a retranslation as the first target text in Turkish included 467 pages which hardly accounts for half of the source text. So, “Was the text cut or censored in the course of translation?”, “Who cut or censored it?”, “What or Why was exactly cut or censored?”, While such questions remain to be answered, the retranslation was reprinted in different years (in 2012, 2016 and 2018) with distinct covers signaling film and TV adaptations of the novel in 1986, 2012, 2016 and 2018. Only the reprinted retranslation in 2016 was labelled as *Complete Text (Tam Metin)* which distinctly points out that the previous translation was deficient in page numbers. However, when readers want to buy this novel from online book sellers such as Kitapyurdu, D&R, Pandora, Amazon, Kitapsan, Nadirkitap, etc, they come across a statement of *Uncensored Complete Text* near the title. Naturally,

readers are confused and raise many questions about the differences in labelling and total page numbers. In their view, the choice must be made regarding the issues of “censorship” or “cutting” for such printing matters constitute a confusion in their minds.

Moreover, readers argue whether cutting was done by the publishing house or the translator. According to their statements, readers believe that it was related to commercial concerns of the publishing house claiming that at the period of the first publications of King’s works, around 1970’s and 1980’s, *Altın Kitaplar* had fixed the size of translations around 400 and 500 pages. To exemplify:

Reader 6: Money. The years (80s) Stephen King was translated into Turkish there was neither social media nor internet. Even the TV had one channel. The people had not information about the quality of the book they bought. The publishers were writing the writer’s name in capitals, publishing them with more or less good or careless translations and with less cost (publishing a novel with 400 pages meant escaping from a tree times more cost of 1100 pages). Thus, they made novels marketable (<https://forum.kayiprihtim.com/t/stephen-king-kitapligi/3962/37>).

Readers’ comments point out their belief that the market and social circumstances were not much convenient for publishing a complete text and cutting the book was a highly preferred solution. The publishers were not willing to print the lengthy books for considering their potential profits. From this point of view, the cutting practice in translation might be seen as an act of “reducing to a publishable length”. The idea of cutting the book for making the right size and the right price stems from the economical motives of the publisher but does not arise from a censorship exerted due to political, ideological, religious grounds or what Jansen (2010) names as “market censorship” (p. 13). Although it may not be right, the practice of cutting or abridging does not seem to appear to intend to “filter or restrict the production and distribution of selected ideas, perspectives, genres or cultural forms within mainstream media of communication based upon their anticipated profits and/or support for corporate values and consumerism” (Jansen, 2010, p. 13). The practice of cutting rather than censoring, therefore, purports what the publisher of King in Turkish or publishers of that period deployed to ensure commercially viable products in the translated book market.

Various cutting practices of the publisher may also support that King’s Turkish publisher was concerned with supplying purchasable translations for readers. To illustrate, King’s *Different Seasons* (1982) was published by Viking Press as a collection of four novellas and included 572 pages. The four novellas were *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption*, *Apt Pupil*, *The Body* and *The Breathing Method*. The book was translated into Turkish by Gülten Suveren in 1983 and published by *Altın Kitaplar*. The book entitled as *Kuşku Mevsimi* included three novellas: *Yetenekli Öğrenci (Apt Pupil)*, *Esaretin Bedeli (Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption)* and *Solunum Metodu (The Breathing Method)*. The novella called *The Body* was missing in this translated book. This translation without one novella had 410 pages in total. In 1988, *The Body* was translated by Belkıs Çorakçı and published by *Altın Kitaplar* as a separate book with 400 pages and entitled as *Ceset* as if it was not a part of the original novella collection. *Kuşku Mevsimi* was reprinted by the publisher in 2019 and this time with an addition in the title as *Kuşku Mevsimi ve Esaretin Bedeli*. However, this reprint did not include all novellas and *The Body (Ceset)* was missing again. Strangely enough, the publisher appears to maintain its marketing strategy of cutting and publishing around 400-500 pages of books apart from the retranslations of more famous King’s books such as *O* and *Mahşer*.

King’s other book that may be mentioned in the context of “censorship” and “translation” discussions is *The Stand* (1978) published by *Doubleday* including 823 pages. It was published in the abridged form as the publisher in USA feared that readers would not buy the original book with 1152 pages due to its high cost. Thus, they asked the writer to abridge the original book and King agreed that by cutting almost 500 pages by himself. *The Stand* was translated into Turkish by the translator Gönül Suveren the same

year with the source text. It was published by *Altın Kitaplar* and entitled *Mahşer* with 427 pages. As in the translation of *O*, *Mahşer* had also half length of the original book. It might easily be inferred that the already abridged source text was cut once more in the course of Turkish translation. Then, the same questions need to be asked: “Was the text cut or censored in the course of translation?”, “Who censored or cut it?”, “What or Why was exactly censored or cut?”. Additionally, this very first translation was reprinted many times (such as in 1987, 1990, 1999, 2000). Thus, detailed textual and paratextual analysis of the source and its target texts might provide detailed information on the issue that whether censorship was exerted by cutting half of the book with the purpose of controlling or suppressing the spread of some ideas or not. However, as *Mahşer* seems to share the fate of *O*, the decision taken by the publisher for cutting most of the book due to commercial convenience seems to have high probability in this case.

Furthermore, King published its *Uncut and Complete Version (Kısaltılmamış ve Tam Metin Basım)* in 1990 with the material he kept from the cuttings he made. With this opportunity, he also corrected his mistakes, omitted some parts by revising and added popular culture references from the 80s and 90s. In essence, this became a revised and extended version of the original text. Apart from updating many things, he also wrote some of the parts which reminded an intralingual translation and rewriting process as Boy (2019) exemplified in her study how *The Picture of Dorian Gray (Dorian Gray'in Portresi)* was rewritten as a part of an intralingual translation process. The writer’s reworking of the text resulted in 1757 pages as hardcover. It was labelled as *The Complete and Uncut Edition (Tam ve Kısaltılmamış Basım)* and became the longest King book. When it comes to its Turkish translation, *Altın Kitaplar* took action in 2012 and published its retranslation. It was retranslated by the translator Canan Kim including 1216 pages and billed as *Uncensored Complete Text (Sansürsüz Tam Metin)*. King (2012) expresses in his preface that “the accounting department of the publishing house asked for the cutting in the original book in order to ensure its viability in the market” (p. 11). He also mentions that he did not put all 400 pages and made lots of “changes, omissions and additions” because much time has passed since the abridged version was published (King, 2012, p. 12). In this case, the question is “Why does *Altın Kitaplar* use the label as “Uncensored” even the writer does not describe it as a censorship practice?” and what is more, the book’s publisher in USA prefers the label of *Uncut Version*. It seems that printing a retranslation with a salient label is highly related to publicity or marketing decisions of the publisher. As Koskinen and Paloposki (2003) suggest “One reward for retranslation is favourable publicity for the publisher, and this, no doubt, is not bad for the business” (p. 34).

In this panorama, two different versions of the original and rewritten original novel might be found in Turkish as “recut version of the originally cut book” and “uncut and retranslated version of the rewritten source text” that were presented to Turkish readers as “the first translation” and “uncensored complete text” (retranslation). This case seemingly creates a confusion for King’s loyal and passionate Turkish readers.

As it can be clearly seen, the first target texts, reprints and retranslations of *It* and *The Stand* in Turkish seem to be highly controversial for Turkish readers in terms of not only reducing issues of the books but also labelling them “un/censored” or “un/cut”. As a matter of fact, both translation practices (*O* and *Mahşer*) specified above reflect the issues of cutting due to the decisions taken by *Altın Kitaplar* probably in the cause of marketability. Given that these concepts are used interchangeably, readers investigate the ways of grasping these practices as their discussion point out:

Reader 2: (...) All the books published by *Altın Kitaplar* before 2015 are censored. If the book was published after 2015 with a new print, then it might be uncensored though there are some censored books published in 2016.

Reader 7: I cannot say anything about the censorship but for example, *Sis* was an abridged story and then they published complete text but still it might be censored somehow.

Reader 8: There is not censorship, there are cut versions. These concepts are different.

Reader 2: They call *Mahşer* and *O* uncensored. We, as readers, perceive them as censored as if the government or an institution banned or censored them.

Reader 5: When they mention censorship, I cannot help thinking whether they adapt the books to the level of 0-6 aged children. (...)

Reader 9: According to the editors of *Altın Kitaplar*, the books published in the last five years were uncensored and complete texts. (<https://forum.kayiprihtim.com/t/stephen-king-kitapligi/3962/191>)

The above dialog unearths the dilemma experienced by the readers in term of concepts of “cutting” and “censorship”. Readers ponder and argue them being aware of the fact that the censorship exerted in translations in the past years by various publishers as Üstünsöz (2010) claims that “direct and indirect censorship practices ensued in the 1970s” (p. 72). Nonetheless, they are hesitant in naming this practice today as “censorship” possibly because it usually evokes too many different and severe practices in their memory, they may not have an exact definition for it or textual comparisons proving it. Among such controversies, one reader argues how he is affected by all these matters:

Reader 9: I have lost my interest for buying 20 of King’s books. It is no wonder that I had not bought them. It is hard to understand the works of *Altın Kitaplar*. Exerting censorship, printing half of the texts, there are some other half series of King’s books. They might publish extended versions of the books in the future all of which will cause lots of cost to us. What is more, if there is censorship in the books, what is the point of providing extended book or complete book? (...) (<https://forum.kayiprihtim.com/t/stephen-king-kitapligi/3962/347>).

In a nutshell, readers’ comments reveal that they are frustrated with such publishing practices which are primarily related to the marketing strategies and shaped partly by editorial processes. It also shows that labelling as a part of paratextual elements largely affect readers’ reception and perception and thus, requires utmost care. Readers in fan clubs, social media groups, special reading groups, etc are closely interested in the translations of the works they prefer to read. A prominent example emphasizing how readers become participative in these processes is that some Turkish readers of King’s works started a campaign by collecting signatures and demanded hardcover of King’s books’ translations in Turkish which worked out (<https://www.artfulliving.com.tr/gundem/stephen-king-okurlari-ciltli-kitap-icin-imza-topladi-i-735104>). As a matter of fact, all of these addresses the need for the publisher not only to improve their editorial and printing processes but also to avoid the arbitrary practices of censoring or cutting.

4. Conclusions

This study tried to shed light on the perceptions of readers regarding Turkish translations of Stephen King’s works. Most of his novels and short stories have been re/translated and re/printed by *Altın Kitaplar* since 1970’s as they might have been deemed commercially viable and low-risk investment for the publisher. The lists on webpages entitled *Stephen King Türkiye (Stephen King Turkey)* and *Stephen King Kitaplığı (The Library of Stephen King)* might reveal the amount of King’s re/printed and re/translated works in Turkish by *Altın Kitaplar*.

Dwelling on readers’ views, this study first investigated readers’ perceptions of “retranslation”, “reprint” and “revision”. It was seen that for many readers, the publisher’s translation practices are confusing. Though readers seem to appreciate the effort of the publisher for creating stock for readers by reprinting, readers usually find reprints unsuccessful because what they largely expect is a minimal revision and better printing and editorial processes. When it comes to retranslations, readers are mostly

in the view that retranslations are indicative of improvement, attributing more value to the writer or reaching higher quality but they also cause readers to question the previous translations and the motives behind retranslations. One frequently mentioned view is that the motive behind retranslations is that the previous translations were usually cut as a result of the market driven decisions which in turn, generate highly controversial topics among readers.

Another issue at the center of readers' discussions is censorship and cutting. What is clear from readers' statements is they think that the publisher usually cut the texts to arrange the right size and cost for the potential readers. Two specific cases, namely *It* and *The Stand*, appear to have been cut in the course of translation into Turkish resulting in readers' experience of confusion. Some readers believe that cutting was a decision for tailoring them in line with market convenience whereas some others infer that censorship was practiced in most of Turkish translations of King. Further to that, given the fact that both *It* and *The Stand* were retranslated with labels *Uncensored Complete Text* and *Complete Text*, more discussions arose from readers because originally *The Stand* was not censored but cut and later rewritten by the writer. Even though these retranslations with such labels actually aim at fulfilling expectations of readers in terms of reading more faithful translations to the original, they seem to complicate what was already confusing for readers and affect their perception of the publisher and King's Turkish translations in a negative way.

It is noteworthy to mention the present study's limits and focus of attention. First, detailed textual comparisons between the source texts and target texts were not done because the main objective of this study was to gain insights into readers' perceptions. Second, all Turkish translations of King's works were not examined within the scope of this study due to the high number of published works of King in Turkish. Two cases, *It* and *The Stand*, thought to be representative for this study as they have triggered the discussions of the concepts due to reprints and re/translations as well as their labels. Next, though some in-dept analysis could be carried out for the texts mentioned in the context of censorship and cutting, the reviews of readers and big differences in the size and total page numbers of the books in question were seen as a strong indication of cutting practice for the sake of marketing strategies and they remain to be investigated in different studies in detail.

The overall conclusion of this study is that the market convenience seems to provide a clearer explanation for the decisions taken by the publisher in terms of the practices such re/translation, re/print and especially censorship and cutting. However, such practices mostly cause readers to be irresolute between different concepts. Readers, particularly in fan clubs, social media or special reading groups, acquire detailed knowledge about the works of the writers they often read and follow closely their translations which mean that practices such as censorship or cutting in translation or other arbitrary practices do not escape readers' notice easily. Therefore, it is seen that today's readers frequently project publishers' decisions by urging them to take improvement into consideration on the grounds of not reducing or censoring the texts and thus, more quality in their translation practices.

5. Ethics Committee Approval

The author(s) confirm(s) that the study does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in their country (Date of Confirmation: December 11, 2020).

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Okurların çeviri algılarını incelemek: Stephen King’in eserlerinin Türkçedeki durumu

Öz

Altmıştan fazla romanıyla korku ustası olarak tanınırlık kazanmış olan Stephen King’in eserleri 1970’lerden beri Türkçeye çevrilmekte ve ağırlıklı olarak Altık Kitaplar Yayınevi tarafından basılmaktadır. Yazarın eserleri her zaman çok satanlar arasında yer almış olup bazı romanları son yıllarda Türkçeye yeniden çevrilmekte ve güncellenmiş kapaklarla ve “sansürsüz tam metin” ya da sadece “tam metin” gibi etiketlerle birçok kez yeniden basılmaktadır. Böyle örnekler Türk okurların yayınevinin çeşitli yayıncılık uygulamalarını farklı açılardan sorgulamalarına ve özellikle de “yeniden çeviri”, “yeniden basım”, “düzeltme”, “sansür” ve “kısaltma” gibi kavramları tartışmalarına yol açmaktadır. Bu çalışma son yıllarda Stephen King’in eserlerinin Türkçe çevirileri bağlamında ortaya çıkan söz konusu kavramların okurlar tarafından alınış ve algılanışını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, okurların King’in Türkçe çevirileri arasındaki ilişkileri irdeleyerek bol miktarda yorumlar yaptığı ve detaylı tartışmalarda bulunduğu okur blogları ve tartışma forumları gibi online verilerden yararlanılmaktadır. Çalışma eserleri kısaltmak, tam ya da eksik metin basmak veya çevirileri farklılaşan etiketlerle yayımlamak gibi çeşitli çeviri uygulamaları neticesinde okurların çoğunlukla bir “karmaşayla” karşı karşıya kaldıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Buna ek olarak, çalışma yayın süreçlerinde yayınevlerince alınan kararların genellikle piyasa odaklı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Okurların görüşlerine göre, piyasaya uygunluk düşüncesi yeniden çeviri/çeviri, yeniden basım/basım, sansür ve kısaltma gibi uygulamalar veya etiketlemeler için bir açıklama sunmaktadır ve bu nedenle, okurlar yayınevlerinin özellikle çevirileri kısaltmama ya da sansürlememe ve daha yüksek kalitede basım yapma yönünde kararlar almaları için teşvik etmeye çalışmaktadırlar.

Anahtar sözcükler: Yeniden çeviri; yeniden basım; düzeltme; sansür; kısaltma; tam metin; piyasaya uygunluk

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