


# Media Convergence, AVT and Translation Criticism in the Digital Era

Sare R. Öztürk

/0000-0001-8166-755X

PhD Student, Boğaziçi University, Translation and Interpreting Studies,  
Istanbul, Turkey

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.46679/978819484830101>

## 1. Introduction

With the increased integration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century of the internet and digital technologies into our daily interactions and ways of engagement with life, new audience profiles emerged for mass media consumerism. Viewers are becoming more involved in the process of media dissemination with a hands-on attitude that creates a plethora of possibilities for the “afterlife”- as Walter Benjamin might have called it- of media products.<sup>1</sup>Research on contemporary reception trends refers in this vein to such concepts as *media convergence*, *participatory culture* and *civic engagement*.

Participation on the part of the audience, which can be traced back to fandom activities that had been emerging in the media consumption trends of the late 1980s and early 1990s, has increased to become a feature of today’s digital culture (Jenkins, 2006; Orrego-Carmona, 2018). The ability to determine, to some degree, the afterlife of a media product has endowed the audience with a certain power (albeit a relative one) that signalled “uneasy convergences of the market and non-market modes of cultural production” (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 75). The appropriation of mass media products using amateur skills and the incorporation therefore of “folk culture practices” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 246) into the experience of media

---

<sup>1</sup>Please refer to Benjamin, 2000.

consumerism indicated a bottom-up, grassroots involvement with what previously had been accessible only to the central authorities and the corporate production machinery. Beyond fandom activity, such participation has the potential to empower media users in the realm of civic engagement and political activism through “exercis[ing] the civic imagination” (Jenkins & Shresthova, 2016, p. 258) towards, hopefully, more democratic futures.

In this chapter, I will discuss audio-visual translation (AVT) within the framework of digital culture and civic engagement and how it can be used as bottom-up new media resistance to top-down mass media production strategies. Regarding such engagement as a form of translation criticism, I will offer a case study through which I observe how Arab consumers of translated (dubbed) Turkish TV drama, particularly the *Kurtlar Vadisi* [valley of wolves] series, react to strategies of dubbing and censorship that are politically motivated and express their criticism via new media outlets using creative methods that involve translation. I will explain my theoretical framework and methodology in the second part, before moving in the third part to the discussion of my case study. I will conclude with some remarks on audience participation and the role of digital culture in facilitating new expressions of translation criticism.

## **2. Theoretical framework and methodology**

### **2.1 Digital culture and principal component analysis**

Mark Deuze (2006) offers, from the perspective of media studies, an understanding of digital culture through which to investigate certain kinds of online interaction with news and information that are carried out in the digitalized setting of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He defines digital culture as a portal or a system in which the converging of human and machine labour in a computerized, networked setting both effects and is shaped by our evolving perception of information processing. Both a “value system” and a “set of expectations” (p. 63), digital culture finds

**This is a limited preview of the chapter.**

To read the full-text chapter, get access by purchasing this chapter or consider buying the complete book. If your library has subscription to EBSCOhost, the chapter including other chapters of the book can be accessed through your library.

This chapter is a part of the book, '*Contemporary Translation Studies*'  
ISBN (paperback): 978-81-948483-0-1; ISBN (ebook): 978-81-948483-8-7

Book DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.46679/9788194848301>

case study through which I observed how Arab consumers of the dubbed Turkish series *Kurtlar Vadisi* reacted to certain strategies of censorship that were politically motivated and expressed their criticism via new media outlets using creative methods that involved translation. I discussed such involvement as an enactment of the processes of participation, remediation and bricolage. The versions I analyzed were limited to the importations of the series that were carried out through Gulf agency in the Arab Middle East. This does not mean that the importations which were brought to the west-African part of the Arab world (Tunisia and Algeria) were immune to manipulation. I strongly urge researchers to study the particularities of Sunni-Shia interaction on the political and cultural realm in that area in line with the AVT analysis that is offered in the present discussion. The studying of the Iraqi version is equally crucial for a better understanding of 1) how political power is distributed across the Arab League, 2) the changing positions of minority-majority within the Middle Eastern geography, and 3) how all this is reflected through and in translation. Finally, I believe digital audience participation to be a promising field of study around the subject of translation criticism in our digital times of media conversion.

## References

- Abdo, G. (2013). *The new sectarianism: The Arab uprisings and the rebirth of the Shi'a-Sunni divide*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings.
- Alankuş, S. & Yanardağoğlu, E. (2016). Vacillation in Turkey's popular global TV exports: toward a more complex understanding of distribution. *International Journal of Communication*, 10, 3615-3631.
- Al-Rasheed, M. (2015). The Wahhabis and the Ottoman caliphate: The memory of historical antagonism. In M. Al-Rasheed, C. Kersten & M. Shterin (Eds.), *Demystifying the caliphate: Historical memory*

- and contemporary contexts (pp. 117-134). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Arslan, F. (2006). *KurtlarVadisi Fenomeni*. Lulu. E-book.
- Benjamin, W. (2000). The task of the translator. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (pp. 15-25). London, UK: Routledge.
- Buccinati, A. (2010). Turkish soap operas in the Arab world: social liberation or cultural alienation?. *Arab Media & Society*. Retrieved from <https://www.arabmediasociety.com/turkish-soap-operas-in-the-arab-world-social-liberation-or-cultural-alienation/>.
- Burgess, J. & Green, J. (2009). *YouTube: Online video and participatory culture*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Deuze, M. (2006). Participation, remediation, bricolage: Considering principal components of a digital culture. *The Information Society*, 22, 63–75.
- Disney Channel Added in the Middle East. (1996, December 2). *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/02/business/disney-channel-added-in-the-middle-east.html>.
- Encrypted Reality. (2011). About [YouTube Channel]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/user/EncryptedReality4/about>.
- Encrypted Reality. (2012, April 2). *Tahrīf al-dablajafīmusalsalWādī al-Dhiʿāb al-juzʿ al-khāmis* [video file]. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVdMmI3QMgw&fbclid=IwAR0S6tghpv11aVDz-hYR7QN1njbkjh\\_GwnmLZjPOPgLeCJ6LiBt3QOWIgOY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVdMmI3QMgw&fbclid=IwAR0S6tghpv11aVDz-hYR7QN1njbkjh_GwnmLZjPOPgLeCJ6LiBt3QOWIgOY).
- Farḥāt, ʿA. (2017). Qanāt al-ShurūqwatīmāWādī al-Dhiʿāb. Al-Omah. Retrieved from <https://al-omah.com/3021-2/>.
- Pérez-González, L. (2012). Amateur subtitling as immaterial labour in digital media culture: An emerging paradigm of civic engagement. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 19(2), 157-175.

- Gamal, M. Y. (2007). Audiovisual translation in the Arab world: A changing scene. *Translation Watch Quarterly*, 3(2), 78-95.
- Gamal, M. Y. (2008, May). Egypt's audiovisual scene. *Arab Media & Society*. Retrieved from *Academia*, [https://www.academia.edu/7450964/Egypt's\\_audiovisual\\_translation\\_scene](https://www.academia.edu/7450964/Egypt's_audiovisual_translation_scene).
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Jenkins, H. & Shresthova, S. (2016). "It's called giving a shit!": What counts as "politics"? In H. Jenkins, S. Shresthova, L. Gamber-Thompson, N. Kligler-Vilenchik & A. M. Zimmerman (Eds.), *By any media necessary: The new youth activism* (pp. 253-289). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Kamāl al-Zaydī. (2012a, April 17). *Al-maḡta' al-mahdhūfmin al-juz' al-khāmis'alāqanāt Abu Dhabi* [video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJ8GOjUYsRE>.
- Kamāl al-Zaydī. (2012b, April 17). *Qanāt Abu Dhabi tuḡhārib al-Imām'Alī'aleyh al-salām* [video file]. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_VjzqdpR6bY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VjzqdpR6bY).
- KurtlarVadisiPusu. (2018). *Ansiklodedi*. Retrieved from <https://www.ansiklodedi.com/cwiki/wiki/Kurtlar-Vadisi-Pusu>.
- KurtlarVadisiPusu. (2014, July 27). *Kurtlar Vadisi Pusu 104. bölüm* [video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWeHei5IUkg>.
- Majidi, M. (Director). (2015). *Muhammad: The messenger of God* [film]. Noor-e-Taban Film Company Production, Infinite Production Company GmbH.
- Maluf, R. (2003, December 19). Dubbing into Arabic: A Trojan horse at the gates?. *Labanese American University*. Retrieved from <https://inhouse.lau.edu.lb/bima/papers/Dubbing.pdf>.
- Muharremayı Aşura Günü'nün Müslümanlar, Alevilerve Şiileriçinönemi. (2014, October 30). *Star*. Retrieved from

- <https://www.star.com.tr/guncel/muharrem-ayi-asura-gununun-muslumanlar-aleviler-ve-siiler-icin-onemi-haber-959268/>.
- Nasr, V. (2006). *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company Inc.
- Onat, H. (1997). Şiiliğindoğuşumesesi (Birincihicrâsır). *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 36, 79-117.
- Orrego-Carmona, D. (2018). New audiences, international distribution, and translation. In E. Di Giovanni & Y. Gambier (Eds.), *Reception Studies and Audiovisual Translation* (pp. 321-342). Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Qarqābu, S. (2009-2010). *Āliyyāt al-dablaġafī al-‘ālam al-‘Arabī: Dirāsatahlīliyya li fīlm‘Umar al-Mukhtār* [translation mechanisms in the Arab world: an analytic study of the movie *Lion of the Desert*] (unpublished MA thesis). University of Oran, Oran, Algeria.
- Robinson, K. (2020, January 22). What is Hezbollah?. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-hezbollah>.
- Salamandra, C. (2010). *Dramatizing Damascus: The cultural politics of Arab television production in the satellite era*. Personal collection of C. Salamandra, Copenhagen University, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Shannūf, Kh. (2017, September 26). ‘Āshūrā’: Baynafaraġ al-Sunna waġuzn al-Shi‘a. Al Jazeera. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.net/blogs/blogs/2017/9/26/عاشوراء-بين-فرح-السنة-وحزن-الشيعة>.
- Sheikh Saleh Kamel, Chairman of the Board, ART. (1998, May 1). *Arab Media & Society*. Retrieved from <https://www.arabmediasociety.com/sheikh-saleh-kamel-chairman-of-the-board-art/>.
- Wādī al-Dhi‘āb (Musalsal). (2020). Marefa. Retrieved from [https://www.marefa.org/مسلل\\_الذئاب\\_وادي\\_الذئاب](https://www.marefa.org/مسلل_الذئاب_وادي_الذئاب).

- Withnall, A. (2016, January 5). The Middle East divide between Sunni and Shia explained in one map. *Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/the-middle-east-divide-between-sunni-and-shia-explained-in-one-map-a6797796.html>.
- Yahiaoui, R. (2016). Ideological constraints in dubbing *The Simpsons* into Arabic. *Other Modernities*, 2, 182-200.



