

# Online practice of fan-based subtitles: The case of the Turkish translators.

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1. Introduction to the phenomenon

There has been a growing interest in Anglo-American cultural products amongst the youngsters of Turkey over the last decade. However, contrary to the growing demand for these products, the supply side has not seen this growth. There are only three TV channels in Turkey broadcasting English spoken shows, some of which are dubbed in Turkish. This while there are over 27 Turkish national TV channels, 16 regional channels, and 215 local channels (ucankus.com).

The solution for the Turkish youngsters was brought by websites who illegally provide a huge amount of English-spoken television shows, often referred to as video streaming. With that supply came a new demand; subtitles. Since most of the people in Turkey do not have sufficient knowledge of the English language in order to understand English-spoken TV shows and films subtitles were needed to make these products accessible. A professional translation of a TV show will cost money, however the shows are offered for free on the websites. There is a group of people who provide in this translation, and who do it mostly pro bono. Next to the websites who offer the TV shows and films with subtitles, there are also websites who only supply the translations. Making it possible for people to download, for example English spoken films, and then download the subtitles additionally. In the literature, as discussed below, these kind of translations are often referred to as fansubs, i.e. subtitles made by fans (O'Hagan, 2009a; Cenite et al. 2009).

But who are the people who provide these subtitles? How can they be best described? Do they form a community of translators or are they all freelancers? And why do they do it for free? The aim of this thesis is to explore the group of people who provide online translation services in Turkey, also labelled as fansubs. This thesis will be twofold in its analysis: first it explores the internal dynamics of the group of Turkish translators, secondly the societal role of this groups is analyzed. The first analysis focuses on whether there is a social and technical structure which binds the Turkish online translators, and if so how it works. The second analysis will focus on the function of Turkish translators as cultural

intermediaries between English-spoken shows and Turkish youngsters. The main research questions are: *Do the Turkish translators of fansubs function as an online community of practice?* And: *How do the Turkish translators of fansubs function as cultural intermediaries?* The first main assumption of this thesis is that the Turkish translators do not provide subtitles and translate as individuals but that they are organized and that there is cooperation between them. The second assumption is that the Turkish translators are cultural intermediaries and that this is an important incentive for their translation work.

## **1.2. History and background of video streaming and translations**

### **1.2.1. Video streaming**

Streaming refers to the method which makes it possible to view media, such as radio and TV, on a personal computer. There are several streaming technologies such as Adobe Flash, Apple Quick time and Microsoft Windows Media and Silverlight. These technologies use compression to shrink the size of audio and video files in order to be retrieved and played by viewers (Ozer, 2011). Since a couple of years streaming has become more and more popular amongst viewers, but also amongst companies and institutions. It has been used in commercial business, in the education system and for entertainment purposes. An example of the latter is that if you fail to watch your favourite TV show, you can watch it online at the website of the TV channel. There are also websites, which do not belong to a TV channel or a media production company who offer these TV shows and films. Due to copyrights, these websites need to get permission from the owners of the shows before they are allowed to make them available at their websites.

### **1.2.2. Copyright**

Though not all cultural products are necessarily protected in all states, there are important international conventions that have set out international copyrights. One of these is the Berne Convention for Literary and Artistic Works which made all medium product automatically internationally protected (wipo.org). An important institution who safeguards intellectual properties is the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). This organization “is

responsible for promoting the balanced evolution of IP legislation, standards and procedures among its Member States. This includes further development of international laws and treaties on patents; trademarks, industrial designs and geographical indications; and copyright and related rights” (wipo.org).

There are thus international treaties protecting intellectual and artistic properties, and installing copyrights over media products. It is illegal to stream shows and films without the consent of the owner of the products.

### 1.2.3. Participating in the production of media products

The development of file-sharing techniques brought about copying media products varying from music to films and TV shows to literature and so on, on peer-to-peer networks sites. With this development also came laws to criminalize this activity, demonizing the ones who were sharing these files. Campaigns to counteract file sharing fall short, according to Cenite et al. (2009), since robbing content industries of their work is not (if at all) the main goal of file-sharers. The study of Cenite et al. (2009), interviewing forty file-sharers, concludes that the file-sharers are not so much greedy thieves with no respect for intellectual property, but that they are entertainment enthusiasts who supply the demand that the commercial markets fail to meet. Another study on ‘scanslation’ of Japanese Manga also shows that it is the absence of translated Manga in the United States of America and Great-Britain which caused Manga fans to scan, translate and distribute these product on peer-to-peer network sites (Lee, 2009, p. 1011). Jenkins (2004) described these changing and intertwining relations in media production and consumption as media convergence, with regards to consumers participating in (re)productions. The incentive of sharing media-product is not so much intellectual property piracy, rather the enthusiasm and fandom of a particular type of product which the file-sharers want to share with their peers. Hence these activities can best be described among the lines of participatory culture in which fans edit and (re-)distribute the media products. The group of Turkish online translators can be categorized as the participatory consumers who edit and (re-)distribute TV shows and films.

In this case it is however contested whether their work, providing subtitles, is illegal. It can be stated that since streaming TV shows and films without consent is illegal and seen as

piracy, translating these shows and offering them to the public is consequently illegal too. Translations than are so-called derivative works of these shows or intellectual properties. On the other hand, often the text of the shows, i.e. the script, is on the internet free to download. Just by providing translation based written scripts no copyrights would be violated. Thus, depending on what is offered on a peer-to-peer file-sharing network it is debatable whether the translators are committing piracy or not. Nevertheless, website hosts and translators are still careful with revealing their identities and such since it is still a controversial activity.

### **1.3. Objects of analysis**

This thesis distinguishes two types of websites. The first type concerns websites which only offer the English-spoken TV shows and films with integrated subtitles. The second type concerns websites which do not offer the shows, but offer the subtitles and forums for the translators and other persons who are interested to discuss their work. The type one websites will be referred to as Video Streaming Websites (VSW). The type two website is referred to as Subtitle and Forum Websites (SFW). The SFWs is the main object of analysis in this thesis since that is where the translating activities take place. On these websites are forums on which translating skills and technology are discussed, furthermore they offer the subtitles which are integrated and offered on VSWs. Hence it is on these websites, the SFWs, where the assumed dynamics of the community is visible.

#### **1.3.1. Video streaming websites**

There are approximately twenty Turkish websites offering English-spoken TV shows and films. The number of these VSWs is still growing. The biggest ones, such as diziworld.com, diziport.com, yabancidiziizle.com and dizihd.com provide around one hundred or more shows originated from the United Kingdom and the United States of America. These websites make use of subtitles offered at the subtitle and forum websites. Often the subtitles in the shows have the ‘artist’ name of the translators either at the beginning or at the end of the show.

### 1.3.2. Subtitle and forum websites

On these websites the work of the translators is available, and their communication on the forums is visible. The forums function as a collective intelligent system: “a human–computer systems in which machines enable the collection and harvesting of large amounts of human-generated knowledge” (Gruber, 2008, p. 5). On these forums translators share their knowledge of language and computer techniques with their colleagues.

The SFW that are analyzed in this thesis are Türkcealtyazi.org and Divxplanet.com. These websites provide a meeting place for the translators in which they have access to a user guides of several software for translation, as well as online help from fellow translators. The subtitles which are uploaded at these websites are used on the video streaming websites. However, on their website Divxplanet distances itself from third-party users who use their subtitles to illegally stream shows. By distancing themselves SFWs want to avoid illegal activities. Thus, these websites provide subtitles but are not responsible for how one makes use of their products.

## **1.4. Academic context**

### 1.4.1. Theoretical framework and academic context

This research focuses on fan-based subtitles, i.e. fansubs, and is done from the perspective of Social Shaping of Technology (SST). This perspective is used since the social and the technological are tightly interwoven today, in online (technology) communities (social structures), and in fansubs. Theories concerning the social shaping and use of technology highlighted the influence people have on how technology develops. The authors William and Edge (1996) argued that:

Central to Social Shaping of Technology (SST) is the concept that there are `choices' (though not necessarily conscious choices) inherent in both the design of individual artefacts and systems, and in the direction or trajectory of innovation programs. If technology does not emerge from the unfolding of a predetermined logic or a single determinant, then innovation is a 'garden of forking paths'. Different routes are available, potentially leading to different

technological outcomes. Significantly, these choices could have differing implications for society and for particular social groups. (p. 866)

Thus technology is shaped by the demands and needs of social groups. As a critique on technological determinism SST focuses on social influences and social consequences of technology. More specific for this research is participatory culture and user created content. Technology provided the consumers the ability to take part, even if illegal, in the distribution of media products. Furthermore, it gave people the opportunity to take part in production, to be of added value to the production and even to produce these series

Regarding theories on online communities, with the rise of computer-mediated communication (CMC) through internet came a growing interest in online social groups. Jankowski (2006) gives an overview of the history and theory concerning the creation of communities with media. The word ‘community’ has been highly contested since there is no broadly accepted definition. The same goes for virtual communities of which Jankowski sums up several similar definitions with main factors as social ties which are not bound to a certain space of time and of which the members have similar interests and/or activities (2006, p. 62). A more detailed literature review of online communities is provided in the next chapter.

Last, this thesis analyses the function of cultural intermediaries that the translators are assumed to fulfil. Bourdieu (1979/1984) placed the new petite bourgeoisie as cultural intermediaries between the bourgeoisie and the working class in the economy of culture. The exact function of these cultural intermediaries has been interpreted in different ways, and these interpretation have been contested. This is also discussed in the next chapter.

#### 1.4.2. Scientific relevance

This thesis places itself in the research section of online communities, participatory culture, user created content, media piracy and cultural intermediaries. The added value concerns the objects of analysis, namely the group of Turkish online translators. Since video streaming has become increasingly popular in 2010 (mediacollege.com, 2011), there have not been analyses of the people who translate the shows which are streamed in several countries. There is thus a gap in the literature when it comes to the knowledge of these people. With this thesis the



researcher wants to contribute to the already existing academic literature and provide insight on Turkish people who translate TV shows and films which are streamed online.

#### 1.4.3. Societal relevance

In Turkey there is censorship with regards to TV shows and films that are aired on national and local TV. The financial and political barriers are overcome by websites streaming foreign TV shows and films, and the translators who make the products accessible by providing subtitles. Hence these translators, among others, play a critical role in distributing media products and thus indirectly a variety of political perspectives and ways of living.

#### 1.4.3. Scope and limitations

Since SFWs find themselves in a legal grey area, reluctance to participate is expected. An interview with one of the admins of the website Divxplanet was published in newspaper Hürriyet. In this interview he responded to the legal question as follows:

Ben film satmıyorum ki, altyazı veriyorum. Sokaktaki korsan DVD stisini bitiren şey, insanların internetten film indirip bu filmleri izlemek için sitemizden altyazı sağlamaları. Orijinal DVD'lerde bile sitenin üyeleri tarafından yapılmış çeviri kullanılıyor.

I do not sell films, I'm providing subtitles. Having the opportunity to make use of our subtitles, buying from street vendors who were selling illegal DVDs was also prevented. You can now buy the original DVD and use the subtitles of our website.

Regardless of this statement, there is a warning on Divxplanet when signing in. This is directly aimed at large media companies (Universal, Fox, Warner Bros), government officials and organisations against internet piracy, stating that they cannot enter the website nor acquire any information and they are urged to leave the website immediately. This statement is based on internet privacy agreement code 431.322.12. protecting personal pages. Furthermore the admins of the pages distance themselves from illegal activities.

### **1.5. Overview of this thesis**

This thesis is structured as follows: chapter two concerns the theoretical framework of this thesis and first provides an elaborate definition and discussion of what an online community is. Secondly it will focus the role of cultural intermediaries. After setting out the theoretical frameworks through which the Turkish online translators are analyzed the research methodology is discussed in chapter three. Secondly, in this chapter the research questions, sub-questions and hypotheses are discussed. Third, the research methods providing the data are outlined.

The empirical analysis is done in chapter four and five. Chapter four analyzes whether or not the Turkish online translators function as a community and if so how it functions as a community. Chapter five analyzes the data in the light of the theoretical framework concerning cultural intermediaries. In this chapter the external function of the group of online translators and their work is analyzed.

The last chapter provides a summary of the previous question which will lead to an answer to the research question. There will be concluding remarks and a discussion of further research.

## **Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework through which the group of Turkish online translators is analyzed. Since the aim is to find out whether the Turkish translators function as a community, the first section of this chapter gives an overview on theory concerning online communities and its main characteristics. It will then continue to discuss a specific type of online community, namely a community of practice. After defining this type of community the chapter continues with theory on the practice of translations by fans.

From the perspective of an online community of practice, with translating being the practice, theories regarding participatory culture and user created content are reviewed. Being a part of a participatory culture one also takes on a societal role, both in a community as arguably in a bigger social environment. Concerning the latter the concept of cultural intermediaries is discussed.

### **2.2. Defining online community**

#### 2.2.1. Online / virtual community

What exactly is an online community? To answer this question, it must first be known what a community is. In the dictionary it is defined as following: “a social, religious, occupational, or other group sharing common characteristics or interests and perceived or perceiving itself as distinct in some respect from the larger society within which it exist” (dictionary.com). An online community, which is also often referred to as a virtual community, is than a community which operates (in part) on the world wide web, as well as in real life or in stead of in real life.

Though there is no agreed upon definition of an online community, many understand what it is. Very broadly, “an online community is a group of people, who come together for a purpose online, and who are governed by norms and policies” (Peerce quoted in De Souza & Peerce, 2003, p. 580). The primary focus of a community is the commitment of the user to a specific set of interests, values and communication practices (Howard, 2010, p. 15). As opposed to offline communities:

Virtual communities are communities which are not tied to a particular place or time, but which still serve common interests in social, cultural and mental reality ranging from general to special interests or activities. They are created in computer networks and based on computer-mediated communication (CMC) and human-computer interaction (HCI). (Van Dijk, 1998, 40-41)

Main characteristics of online or virtual communities are:

- \* they consist of members;
- \* they have shared purposes and/or interests;
- \* there is some form of social organization or policies;
- \* computer-mediated communication, i.e. computer systems.

(Van Dijk, 1998; Preece, 2000; Jankowski, 2006).

### 2.2.2. Community of practice

Online communities have been further specified, one of those is the ‘community of practice’ which refers to ‘relations maintained by persons across time who are involved in a collective set of activities’ (Jankowski, 2006, p. 64). The focus is on the practices of the participants, i.e. the engagement of the participants in the same project (Baym, 2000, p. 21, 22). Wenger and Snyder (2000) described a community of practice as a group of people who are informally bound together by shared expertise, they share their expertise and knowledge in free-flowing, creative ways that foster new approaches to problems (p. 139, 140). Or as Howard (2010) has described; a community of practice is “primarily made up of practitioners in a field or profession who are passionate about the work that they do” (p. 4).

### 2.2.3. Community of practice of fansubs

Assuming that the group of Turkish translators are an online community, their practice is translating. Fan-based translating is not a new practice, however with new technology, specifically Web 2.0, digital translating by fans has become widespread (O’Hagan, 2009a, p. 94). In the literature this phenomenon has been referred to as *fansubs* (O’Hagan, 2009a; Cenite et al. 2009). Research has been done on fansubs in regards to translating software (Bey et al. 2006), translating games (O’Hagan, 2009a) and translating Japanese Anime (Hatcher, 2005).

According to Bey et al (2005) there are two types of what they call online volunteer translator communities:

1. mission-oriented translator communities, which are strongly coordinated groups of volunteers who are involved in translating clearly defined set of documents;
2. subject-oriented translator communities consisting of individual translators who translate online documents (for example news and reports) and make the translations available on personal or group webpages.

O'Hagan added a third type of translator community with regards to translations of popular culture genres (2009b). This third type of translator is the one who translates cultural goods because (s)he is a 'fan' of the product or genre. Hence the term fansubs.

In the next section the practice of translation by fans, i.e. fansubs, is put forth discussing user created content and participatory culture, and the role of cultural intermediary.

## **2.3. Practice of Fansubs**

### **2.3.1. Participatory culture**

Relations between media producers and consumers have changed and still are in the process changing. Henry Jenkins (2004) with his theory on media convergence states that:

Convergence is both a top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer-driven process. Media companies are learning how to accelerate the flow of media content across delivery channels to expand revenue opportunities, broaden markets and reinforce viewer commitments. Consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies to bring the flow of media more fully under their control and to interact with other users. They are fighting for the right to participate more fully in their culture, to control the flow of media in their lives and to talk back to mass market content (p.37).

The process of media convergence is also evident when it comes to translating content of cultural goods. New translating technology provided fans with the ability to translate products of their interest, being software programs, games, films, video, audio, cartoon and so on. Producers and web-designers made use of this opportunity by asking consumers to translate their products. The social network sites, amongst others, made use of their large pool of consumers to translate their product or website into different languages. This is called user-based crowdsourcing, using the collective intelligence to translate, update and/or develop new products. In this context the concept of user-generated content, or user-created content arose,

in which user could add, change and create content. Flew (2008, p. 35-36) describes user-created content as “the way in which users as both *remediators* [italics in original] and direct producers of new media content engage in new forms of large-scale participation in the digital spaces”. Tapscott and Williams (2006) described content creating fans as ‘prosumers’ whereby the technology enabled passive spectators to active prosumers who are both producer as consumer of cultural products. In addition to the concept of user-generated/created content O’Hagan uses the term ‘user-generated translation’ (UGT):

The user in UGT [...] is somebody who voluntarily acts as a “remediator” of linguistically inaccessible products and “direct producer” of translation on the basis of their knowledge of the given language as well as that of particular media content or genre, spurred by their substantial interest in the topic (O’Hagan, 2009a, p. 97).

Thus, user-generated content should be understood in the light of the constant interaction between the social and technology. The social use of internet technology shaped technical possibilities for crowdsourcing and user-generated/created content, leading to UGT which was developed due to the need for digital translations. This technology provided fans to translate products which they were enthusiastic about. The translations made those cultural products linguistically accessible for others. Thus, the translators are fulfilling a social role which was made possible by technology.

The next section discusses the social impact and role of online volunteer translators. The starting point is work of Pierre Bourdieu on cultural intermediaries, and the theoretical discussion and use of this concept.

## **2.4. Cultural intermediaries**

### **2.4.1. Introduction**

The second focus of this thesis is on the societal role of online volunteer translators who provide fansubs with regards to the concept of cultural intermediaries. Digital file-sharing and derivative works as translations have been analysed multiple time, while focussing on the legal aspects, but not on cultural aspects. Furthermore, research has been done on why people share files and what motivates people to consume illegal files and amateur translation. Cenite et al. (2005) conclude that people download and upload files not because they are ‘greedy

pirates', but because they want to provide or access products which were otherwise not available to them (for example old TV-series). People also use fansubs because often the official dubbing and subtitles are either non-existing or of low quality. Furthermore, they use online cultural products to explore new genres. Thus file-sharing and sharing derivative works such as subtitles goes beyond free downloading and fulfils a social and cultural function. This function is explored in this thesis concerning the Turkish online translators.

The next section provides a literature review of Bourdieu's concept cultural intermediaries. Though he never applied this concept in further research other scholars have made use of the term cultural intermediaries. Different perspectives on this concept are discussed, focusing on their relevance for this thesis. Last the work of Smith Maguire and Matthews (2010) is analysed who have set up a theoretical research framework for the analysis of cultural intermediaries.

#### 2.4.2. Bourdieu's concept of cultural intermediary

In his book *Distinction* (1979/1984) Bourdieu discussed the role of cultural intermediaries, a subgroup of the new petit bourgeoisie as those who,

[...] comes into its own in all the occupations involving presentation and representations (sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, fashion, decorations and so forth) and in all the institutions providing symbolic goods and services [...] and in cultural production and organization which have expanded considerably in recent years (p. 359).

The new petit bourgeoisie, also described as the knowledge class, originated from the upper class and therefore has knowledge of cultural products. However, they find themselves in between the upper class and the middle class. Bourdieu argues that this new petit bourgeoisie tends towards the lower boundaries of legitimate culture (such as jazz, cinema, rock and roll and so on), as a challenge to the legitimate culture (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 360). Legitimate culture then consists of 'pure' artistic products, while mass production is seen as commercial cultural goods. The critics of the new petit bourgeoisie were "most typically [...] the producers of cultural programs on TV and radio or the critics of "quality" newspapers and magazines and all the writer-journalists and journalist-writers" (Bourdieu, 1979/1984, p. 325).

Though Bourdieu himself did not continue his work on cultural intermediaries, other scholars did make use of this concept. Wright (2005) argued that the cultural intermediary is a pivotal

generator of meaning as the making of things is replaced with the making of meaning about things in late-modernity (p. 110). He analyzes cultural work in the book trade stating that the bookshop is not the location in which books are produced, nor the place where books are necessarily consumed. Rather is it certainly the place in which meaning about books and literature is produced (p. 113).

Negus (2002) uses the concept of cultural intermediaries to analyze occupations as corporate executives, business analysts and accountants as cultural intermediaries. He uses this concept since “it places an emphasis on those workers who come *in-between* [italics in original] creative artists and consumers (or, more generally, production and consumption)” (p. 503). In his article, Negus (2002) argues that cultural intermediaries form the link between production and consumers, where they construct the commercial and symbolic aspect of the product. “Cultural intermediaries shape both use values and exchange values, and seek to manage how these values are connected with people’s lives through the various techniques of persuasion and marketing and through the construction of markets (Negus, 2002, p. 504).”

There was critique on the work of Negus, arguing for example that accountants and such were *definitely* not cultural intermediaries (Wright, 2005, p. 109). Furthermore, Hesmondhalgh argues, contrary to Negus and others that “in Bourdieu’s sense of the term, it is the critics that act as cultural intermediaries [...]” (2006, p. 226). Being a cultural intermediary is therefore not about the added contribution of the intermediary, it is about mediating and criticizing.

Thus, Bourdieu’s cultural intermediaries were part of the new petit bourgeoisie who challenged and criticized legitimate culture, from an occupational position in the cultural industry. Though the focus was not on the tangible added value but arguably by discussing and reviewing cultural products the added value can be found in the meaning the cultural intermediaries gave the products. This brings us back to what Wright argued as the shift from making things to making meaning of things. Going back to Bourdieu the following quote also emphasizes the effect of meaning and specifically the choice and portrayal of choice of a product:

The manner which designates the infallible taste of the ‘taste maker’ and exposes the uncertain tastes of the processors of an ‘ill-gotten’ culture is so important, in all markets and especially in the market which decides the value of literary and artistic works, only



because choices always owe part of their value to the value of their chooser (Bourdieu, 1979/1984, p. 91).

The added value is thus not so much to the product itself as it is to the marketing of the product. Hence cultural intermediaries function both as a filter as promoter of certain products.

#### 2.4.3. The contemporary cultural intermediary

In the contemporary society in which technology has provided consumers access to a wide variety of cultural products, otherwise not accessible to them, it can be contested that the concept of cultural intermediaries is still sufficient today. Technology enabling file-sharing, digital distribution of cultural products and user-generated/created content has motivated consumers to be more active in consuming and reproducing cultural products. Thus, the author would have to agree with Negus (2002) who stated that “[c]ultural intermediaries reproduce rather than bridge the distance between production and consumption” (p. 509). Bringing us back to terms earlier used in this article such as prosumers and remediators. Combining the concept of cultural intermediaries of Bourdieu with the concept of UGT as remediators a new term is introduced for the societal role of for example translators: “cultural remediators”. The cultural remediator, than, adds both tangible value through contributing to production and distribution of the product, as added value by choosing and promoting a certain product.

#### 2.4.4. Analyzing cultural remediator

Smith Maguire and Matthews (2010) have researched the role of a cultural intermediary, based on the work of Bourdieu, in relation to the media. They have done this by analyzing cultural intermediaries in terms of where they are located (working in media); the means they use to accomplish their role (working with the media); and their role in promoting consumption (the work of mediation). Their research will be used as a framework through which function of the Turkish online translator as a cultural intermediaries/remediator is analyzed.

##### 2.4.4.1. Working in media

Cultural intermediaries are defined by Bourdieu as a new petit bourgeois fraction which are most typically the producers of cultural programmes on radio and TV, or the critics of

newspapers and magazines and all the writer-journalists and journalist-writers (Smith Maguire & Matthews, 2010, p. 406). Since Bourdieu did not apply his concept of cultural intermediary in research, we are depending of the interpretation of other scholars, such as Wright (2005) and Negus (2002), concerning the professions and occupation of cultural intermediaries in contemporary society. In the current body of academic literature on cultural intermediaries the foci are on professions located in different area's and functions in the media sector. The location of online volunteer translators in the media sector does not specifically fall in one of Bourdieu's categories, but is a part of more complex division of modern commercial media production. Research on translators of games, software, cartoons and films has not been executed thus far from the perspective of cultural intermediaries. Thus, this thesis will be of additional value to the already existing body of research on cultural intermediaries and on fansubs.

#### 2.4.4.2. Working with media

When Bourdieu highlights the control cultural intermediaries have over the mass media, the focus is on how these intermediaries accomplish their pedagogical work of shaping consumer tastes (Smith Maguire & Matthews, 2010, p. 407). Thus the role of the cultural intermediary is that of filtering culture, and only making certain cultural products available to the masses. In this way they value cultural goods and shape the taste of the consumers, but furthermore also steer particular ways of life (Smith Maguire & Matthews, p. 407).

In the introduction it was stated that the websites offering subtitles do not stream video's themselves. Hence, there is little choice by the translators of which popular American and British shows will be streamed. However, translators can choose the show they want to translate, since the textual scripts are free obtainable online. With regard to the function of filtering culture there are several intermediates present, namely those who choose to air a show or film in the first place, and those who stream the products online. Next come the translators, who function more as a remediator by making the streamed products linguistically accessible, and choosing and promoting the translated products. The process of choosing the shows that are translated is researched in this thesis (this is discussed in chapter five).

#### 2.4.4.3. Work of mediation

As argues above Bourdieu's concept of cultural intermediaries stresses the criticism and challenges of the new petit bourgeoisie with regards to the cultural industry. Smith Maguire and Matthews elaborate on this by stating that if the bourgeoisie are the vanguard taste

makers, the ones making the cultural products, then the new bourgeois are the ones responsible for selling those tastes (2010, p. 407). Thus the job of cultural intermediaries is not only criticizing cultural products and shaping consumer taste, another function of an intermediary is marketing and spreading the products. Regarding the analysis of this thesis, it is researched what the balance is between the functions of criticizing, shaping consumer taste and spreading the cultural products by the profession online translator.

Thus, cultural intermediaries mediate between production and consumption are defined by this role (Smith Maguire & Matthews, 2010, p. 408). According to Bourdieu there is a particular harmony between the person of a cultural intermediary and its occupation. This harmony causes that the cultural intermediary offers him/herself as the role model and ideal type of consumer. Thus, cultural intermediaries are both the cultural producer and their own ideal consumers (Smith Maguire & Matthews, 2010, p. 408). Following this statement it is asserted that the cultural products which are (re)mediated by the cultural intermediaries are those products that they as consumers wish to see. This assertion is tested in the case of the Turkish online translators.

## **2.5. Conclusion theoretical framework**

The above literature review discussed theories concerning communities, online communities, online communities of practice and online communities of practice of fansubs. It is asserted that the Turkish online translators function as a community of practice, in which the practice is digitally translating English-spoken TV shows and films into Turkish subtitles. This community exists due to the social shaping of file-sharing and user-generated/created content technology. This technology enabled a participatory culture consisting of consumers who could take part in media production. It also stimulated user-generated translation (UGT), turning the translators into intermediaries who made cultural products linguistically accessible for their peers. Furthermore, concerning the societal role of these translators, the concept of cultural remediator was suggested. This concept is based on Bourdieu's cultural intermediaries, however it was adjusted to contemporary society with its advanced technology.

The next chapter first discusses research questions derived from the above literature review. It will then discuss the methodology which is used to execute the research on the online community of practice of Turkish fansubs.

## **Chapter 3 Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research methods applied for this thesis. It will start by explaining the aim of the research of this thesis. Then, based on the theoretical framework and the aim of this thesis the main research questions are posed. Following those research questions the concepts and indicators are discussed. Finally the research methods on how to obtain the necessary data and how to analyze that data is explained.

### **3.2. Aim of the thesis**

As stated in the first chapter, the aim of this thesis is to investigate the group of Turkish online volunteer translators. With this thesis the researcher as Media and Journalism scholar, wants to find out how this Turkish translators function as a group or rather a community of practice, assuming that they are in fact a community. Furthermore, the researcher analyzed what their work means to the society, i.e. how they work affects the production and consumption process.

There has not been any study so far analyzing volunteer translators of TV shows and films from the perspective of online community of practice and in their role as cultural remediators. Thus, this research adds to the knowledge and studies first on fansubs and further on of both online communities and cultural intermediaries. In addition, the results of this research also contributes to literature on social shaping of technology, participatory culture and user-generated/created content.

### **3.3. Research questions**

As discussed in the first two chapters, this research is twofold in that it analyzes how the group of Turkish online volunteer translators are organized as a community of practice of fansubs and how they execute their role as cultural remediators. To perform this research it is thus assumed they in fact Turkish translators are an online community, and that they are cultural intermediaries/remediators. This research checks whether those assumption are valid based on the empirical data obtained.

There are two main research questions in this thesis, first concerning online communities: *Do the Turkish translators of fansubs function as an online community of practice?*

The previous chapter discussed the term online community of practice, stating that there are four necessary characteristics, namely people, purposes, policies and computer systems. Thus, there are four concepts defining an online community of practice, which are further operationalized as:

1. For the concept of people, the members are analyzed. A member is someone who is registered at a subtitle and forum website (SFW). Sub questions for analyzing this concept are:

- \* who are the members registered at these websites (see also online questionnaire)?
- \* how can one become a member?
- \* are there different types of membership?

2. Purpose of a community of practice is a shared interest in a certain practice, in this case translating. In this research it is fan-based translations of English spoken media products.

3. The concept of policies is further operationalized as registration processes and written and unwritten requirements for participation and work. Sub questions to analyze this concept are:

- \* How does the registration process work?
- \* Are there written and/or unwritten requirements to deliver translations?
- \* Are there written and/or unwritten requirements to participate on the forums?

4. Computer systems in this research refers to software necessary for translation. The technology of computers, internet and video streaming are taken as a given and no further research is done on those technologies. Furthermore, the use of other online channels is analyzed. The sub-questions to research this concept are the following:

- \* Is there software offered on the websites?
- \* Do the websites (admins and members) offer help for using the software?
- \* Which software programs are mentioned on the websites?
- \* Which online channels are used and how frequent?

The second research question regards the societal function of cultural mediator. Assuming that they do fulfill a function as cultural mediator: *How do the Turkish translators of fansubs function as cultural intermediaries/remediators?* The previous chapter on theoretical framework discussed the work of Smith Maguire and Matthews (2010), and how they analyze cultural intermediaries and their work. They focus on ‘working in media’, ‘working with

media' and 'work of mediation'. The sub-questions of the second main research questions are the following:

1. Working in media: Where are the Turkish translators located in the process starting with the creation and production of a product and ending at the consumption of the product?
2. Working with media: How do the translators remediate the cultural products (i.e. do they pick the shows they want to translate or not?; why do they translate for free? etc. See the questions posed in the survey below).
3. Work of mediation: In which ways do the Turkish translators mediate and promote the cultural products that they are working with?

### **3.4. Research methods**

There are two types of research methods used in this research, namely a web-based survey and an ethnography of two fansub-websites. Using different research methods results in gaining understanding and information on objects of analysis from different perspectives. The advantage is thus that both research methods are mutually illuminating (Bryman, 2008, p. 603). First, an ethnography of the two fansub-websites was executed, thereby gaining understanding of virtual place in which the community largely takes places. As a part of this ethnography there were open interviews with several translators. These translators were then requested to fill in the survey and to ask their fellow translators to also participate in the survey.

#### **3.4.1. Virtual ethnography**

Doing ethnographic research, the ethnographer "immerses himself in a group for an extended period of time, observing behavior, [reading] what is said in conversation both between others and with the fieldworker" (Bryman, 2006, p. 402). This method is chosen since it allows the researcher to take a closer look at the communities by being a member and therefore having access to the whole website. The researcher acts as an overt participant-observer while analyzing the two SFWs (Türkcealtiyazi.org and Divxplanet.com). Behavior of a group of people should also be analyzed in the context in which they find themselves. Thus, before analyzing behavior, the researcher will map out how the two websites are structured technologically. Meaning that the researcher describes the tools and options of the website. Describing the websites is of importance since it sheds a light on the virtual environment the translators are active in. Special focus will be on registration processes, translating software

and the forum. When both websites are mapped out, they will be easy to compare as to what options are offered on which site. Furthermore, it provides an understanding of the importance of certain topics and technology.

Ethnography studies behavior of a group, and thus analyzing the forums is important since it is there that the online behavior of the group is reflected through messages. Important is to find out who are posting messages (i.e. which type of translator or admin), who is responding, how many responses there are, in which amount of time one responds and so on. Furthermore, ethnographic observation is usually complemented with unstructured interviews. The researcher approached several translators for interviews, however due to the wish to remain anonymous not all translators wanted to participate. The following translators were interviewed (only their aliases are provided): SPAWN-TheUndead, Ibrahim Kesecegi Ismail, GreenerNatuilus, Zero Cool, Aranelevo, Paralax. None of these translators consented to spoken interviews, meaning no face-to-face interviews nor through Skype calls. Therefore, the interviews were done through Facebook messages, Skype instant message service and the Turkcealtyazi and Divxplanet message services. The researcher executed the interviews before and after the completion of the questionnaire. The interviewees were asked open questions and were invited to share information they thought of as relevant for this research. These interviewees also filled in the survey and were requested to ask their fellow translators to also participate in this survey.

#### 3.4.2. Online survey

To obtain empirical data necessary for this research a survey has been developed and sent out to the Turkish translators. The survey (see Appendix A) is published using surveygizmo.com, and a link is posted on the SFW website divxplanet.com and türkaltiyazi.org. Using snowball sampling, translators who are active on those two websites are invited to participate in the survey by a request on the forum and further by word of mouth of these and other translators. This sampling technique is used since it directly targets the object of research, fansub-translators. Though it is not a random sample, it would be impossible to get a random sample since there is no data of the population of Turkish fansubs-translators (Bryman, 2008, p. 184-185). Thereby also the percentage the sample represents of the population is unknown since there is no data available on the size of the population Turkish fansubs translators. The sample consisted of 105 recipients.

The questions posed in the survey are categorized in three groups: demographic, translating and community. The first category concerns questions such as age, gender and

education. The second category focuses on how often one translates, why one translates and what one translates. Participants are requested to put answers in order of importance, for example regarding what determines the priority of their work. The third category is aimed at shedding a light on community practices amongst the translators. The participants are asked if they participate on forums, and if they share an update of their work of social media platforms. Concerning the latter, checkboxes are used which can be transformed into dummy variables for the analysis.

### **3.5. Conclusion methodology**

The research methods used in this thesis is quantitative analysis using empirical data from a survey and qualitative analysis through a ethnography. The following chapter, chapter 4, is discussing the results of both analyses concerning the practices of the online community of Turkish translators. The fifth chapter analyzes the data from the perspective of cultural intermediaries.



# Chapter 4 Research results on the online community of the practice of fansubs

## 4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the empirical data retrieved from the survey and ethnography concerning the online community of Turkish translators. The research question that is answered in this chapter is: *Do the Turkish translators of fansubs function as an online community of practice?*

As discussed in the previous chapters online communities of practice have four characteristics, namely people, purposes, policies and computer technology. This chapter is structured around those four characteristics, discussed if and how the group of Turkish online translators function as an online community. The empirical data discussed in this chapter can be found in Appendix B.

Before discussing the four characteristics of an online community it is necessary to give an observation and description of the virtual space in which this assumed community operates. This observation is part of the ethnographical research, the results are presented below.

### 4.1.1. Description of Divxplanet.com

The screenshot displays the DivX Planet website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Anasayfa', 'Forum', 'Sinema', 'Pek Yakında', 'Filmler', 'Diziler', 'Altyazılar', 'Altyazı Arama', 'Afiş', 'ED2K Release', 'Araçlar', 'Dökümanlar', 'İletişim', and 'G-Arama'. Below this, there is a section for 'Dizi Özel', 'Devam Eden Diziler', 'Sonlanan Diziler', 'Dizi Takvim', 'Anime Özel', 'Animeler', 'Bugün Popüler', 'Akademi', 'Cannes', and 'Emmys'. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'TADIM TADINDA ŞARKILAR FIZY.COM'DA seni bekliyor!', 'Vizyonda Bu Hafta' (listing 'Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol', 'Labirent', 'Shark Night 3D', 'Nar', 'Ünye de Fatsa Arası'), 'Gelecek Hafta' (listing 'The Nutcracker in 3D', 'New Year's Eve'), 'Son Eklenen Türkçe DivX Altyazılar' (listing 'Majoe' and 'Appurushido XIII'), and 'Koroshi no rekulin'. On the right side, there is a user profile section for 'ÜVELİK' with statistics and a 'Reklam' section for 'Jack & Jones SUPER T-Shirts'. At the bottom, there is a search bar and a 'zalando' logo.

Main page Divxplanet: on the far right corner of the page is a profile menu for registered members. This menu consists of a progress report on the amount of uploaded subtitles by the member, a subtitle track list, an overview of most downloaded shows, the number of subtitles in progress, requests for translations, an overview of most requested shows, and the latest translations made by the members of Divxplanet. The search bar for finding subtitles is located on the top. On the left corner of the main page a link to the Twitter account of the website is presented. In the centre there is an info box on the most recent film subtitle uploaded, with posters of the film and information on the director, translator and frame per second details. While the focus on the main page is clearly on translation related activities it also give update on forum threads, film reviews, in theatre movies. On the top menu cultural products are classified as films, 'on air' TV series, TV series that ended and anime. If available Internet Movie Database (IMDb) ratings are also presented with any cultural product available on the website. The IMDb top 250 films are also listed in a box on the bottom left. The box on the bottom right offers subtitles RSS Feed that can be added on Google, My Yahoo, My MSN and Bloglines. The main page further offers two spots for adds, on the top horizontal column and a box in the mid right section.

Following a cultural product link on the main page leads a visitor to a page where there is information on the film or TV shows, i.e. the trailer, the year of production, IMDB rating and a link to the official page of the product. Furthermore, all the subtitles by various translators available for this specific product and the most downloaded subtitle and how often it was downloaded. Divxplanet ratings and comments of Divxplanet users on the cultural product are also presented on this page.

The forum of Divxplanet is organized under 13 headlines of which the most relevant are discussed. The first is Divx (technical information, discussions) (12.446 threads). Second headline concerns Cinema (all about cinema, actors, directors, film reviews, genre specific discussions, independent cinema) (5549 threads). Thirdly it concerns TV-Series. Next is the headline 'subtitles'. Subtitles in general (622 threads) are designed to deliver all the information one might need to start from scratch, linguistic issues, technical information with graphic explanation, tips and tricks. The steady threads are listed on the first page always to remain their visibility and keep the forum clean and free of repeating threads and topics. The section 'subtitles requests' has 783 threads. In this section users start threads to invite translators for the subtitles they want. The headline 'translators' holds 1129 threads. Under this headline translator can communicate, announce their next project, ADG (Altyazi

Düzenleme Grubu, Subtitle Arrangement Group) grades, objections to ADG grades, ADG explanations for removed translations. Furthermore there is the section ‘help for translators’ which again has steady threads for frequently asked questions, trouble shooting threads with graphic explanation and discussion on linguistic matters. The ‘subtitle projects completed’ holds 7585 threads and announced projects are gathered under this title once they are completed. The section ‘translation activities’ (104 threads) functions as an invitation board for all translators, a film is announced with a new thread and info taken from IMDb is presented with IMDb logo.

Another headline concerns Turkish Cinema activities; 229 threads. Under this headline translators prepare Turkish subtitles for hearing impaired, which can be considered as a charity work since there is no translation work involved but still a lot of time invested synchronizing. These subtitles also have to follow a set of rules to provide high quality hearing impact subtitles.

Furthermore headlines concerning peer to peer communication, Anime and Manga products, Forum storage and Divxplanet Administration are present on the forum.

#### 4.1.2. Description of Türkcealtyazi.org

Main page Türkcealtyazi: The registered members menu is again located on the far right corner of the page. This menu consists of translated oriented information as well as cultural

products consumed by the members. The menu holds a watch list, favourite shows and films, recently browsed film, recently browsed persons, favourite artists, my ratings, new subtitles, a subtitle track list translations announcements and messages. The search bar for subtitles is located on the top bar of the menu. Furthermore this bar holds links to the forum, film and TV series, photo gallery, top 100 subtitles, last 100 subtitles uploaded, waiting list, best 250 films, translation groups, TV show calendar, send subtitles and profile. The centre box on the main page gives daily updates on films that are in movie theatres. Scrolling down, there is a list of Turkish subtitles. Information on these subtitles is categorized according to TV shows, 2011 films, 2010 films, 2009 films, 2008 films and 2008 and earlier films. To other boxes five update information on progress reports of translation projects for both films and TV shows. The bottom left box lists the most popular translators for today, this week, this month and this year. On the bottom right a small box presents statistics of the website: how many subtitles they have, how many registered members etc. The main page also provides trailers form new films, reviews on cultural products listed from most recent to older ones and updates on forum threads. Right under the top bar space is reserved for non-commercial adds, currently the message is inviting people to donate for the victims of the earthquake in Van, Turkey.

The forum of Türkcealtyazi shows the last five posts of all threads, which appear on top of forum page (this way completed projects will always be visible immediately as the status changes from in progress to complete). The forum is categorized as follows, first is the category 'general' which holds surveys, cineSquare, cinema and TV-Series. All the translation activities are gathered under the general head line 'translations'. This is further categorized in group activities, film translations, TV-series translations, translation requests, documentary translations and Anime translations. The next category is 'for fun', under which is threads for playing games with community members, dropping character names and trying to find the film title, the game "guess from which film this scene is?", discussions for 2012 Oscars, music and so on. Under the category 'help' the following topics are placed: assistance threads for all users, software related questions, and troubleshooting. The category 'guidelines' has threads mostly for translators but also other users who need assistance on technical aspect of CMC (computer mediated communication). Furthermore topics such as 'most common mistakes when preparing subtitles', Turkish/ Ortography, 'how to write a film review?', translation sync trouble shooter and graphic explanation of software use (subtitles workshop).

The main pages of both SFWs show that there is more activity on the websites than just translating. This would suggest that the scope of the online community is beyond the activity of providing translations for TV shows and films.

## **4.2. People**

The aim of the thesis is to analyze whether the group of Turkish online translators form an online community of practice. Thus, the people who are analyzed are those translators. However, an online community also requires hosts or administrators, and it is not only the translators who are active on the SFWs. For the purpose of this research only the translators were analyzed.

### 4.2.1. Divxplanet.com

Divxplanet today has 123.683 members in total and counting. Between 2004 and 2010 the website stopped taking on new members in order to maintain the quality of the community. The amount of users and translators was not manageable for the administrators of the website, because people cursed on the forums and terrorized the websites when subtitles were not delivered. Therefore the admins referred aspirant members to an exact copy of their website called Divxplanetbonus.com, which served as a test case for the translators. Those who proved themselves on this page gained access to the real Divxplanet. In 2010 everyone could become a member (again) of Divxplanet.com, due to the conviction of the administrators that online communities and use of these kinds of services grew rapidly. Divxplanet is also accessible for non-members who want to download the subtitles. The request of the hosts is to not become a member unless one is actually contributing with subtitles.

Once you are a member there are different levels which one can achieve. The road to being recognized as a translator depends on your contribution to the community. The entry level is called a 'new member'. As a member you cannot start a new message thread on the forum except for general discussions. You must first have responded twenty times to messages on the forum before you can gain access to threads on translations. By joining group activities you introduce your work to others, which will increase the credibility of your individual projects in the future. From the level of 'member' one can grow into a new level. Since there is a division of labor on the website, a member does not always evolve into being a translator. There are also members who become an admin of genre-specific groups, a

reviewer of cinema and shows or a member of a control group who checks and confirms the work of translators.

Focusing on translators, after being a new member, one can become a member, then an experienced member. From being an experienced member you can become a candidate translator. Then, after proving that one's work is and remains good, you can become a translator. Getting the 'official' title of translators on the website doesn't happen overnight. A translator is required to translate an unspecified number of shows, and the quality of the translations needs to be of good quality. The admins of the website decide who gets which status.

#### 4.2.2. Türkcealtyazi.org

There are 95.026 members registered on Türkcealtyazi and counting. Like Divxplanet the website and its content is also open for users who want to download the subtitles of the website and read their forums.

When registering on Türkcealtyazi you will get the status of 'member'. After contributing, in the form of subtitles or reviews you can get the following status: commentators, admins, translator candidate, translators, Türkce Altyazi (TA) translators, subtitle control group, subext, cinephile, confirmation group, frequent visitors, moderators, trusted uploaders, veterans, editors, co-moderators. Like Divxplanet, one has to contribute an undefined amount of work of good quality before one can get a higher status. You will then be invited to join a group with a specific status.

#### 4.2.3. Demographics

The data from the online questionnaire provided demographic information on the translators' age, gender, and education. The group of respondents is very diverse. There is a lot of age difference between the translators, varying between younger than 18 till over 50. The age groups mostly represented are those between 18 and 34 (over 77 percent, see Appendix B, table 1.1). Most respondents are male, namely 83 percent (table 1.2).

Concerning education the respondents also vary a lot between finishing 12<sup>th</sup> grade, up to having a PhD (table 1.3). Almost 37 percent holds a bachelor degree, and more than 28 percent at least had some college education though without a diploma. Concerning the topic of the studies most participants did not study something related to language studies, media or IT-studies. Only a small 16 percent of the respondents has a degree or participated in translation studies (see table 1.4).

A group of the translators who are not registered at neither SFW, or on any SFW for that matter, is committed to translating media products with atheist and anti-creationist content. This group is referred to as the one of atheist translators. Though they are not registered members at the websites, they do make use of the information provided by these websites. The researcher stumbled upon this group of translators by following the work and personal blog of GarajimdakiEjder ([garajimdakiejder.blogspot.com](http://garajimdakiejder.blogspot.com)). These translators were also invited to participate in the questionnaire.

#### 4.2.4. Translation activities

The largest percentage, 37 percent, of the respondents has been translating for one to two years now. 27 Percent has been translating between two and three years and approximately 16 percent has been translating over three years (see table 2.5). A large part of the group would still classify him/herself as an amateur (37 percent) or a semi-professional translator (38 percent) (see table 2.6). Only a small 10 percent states that they are of the opinion that their work is better than a professional's.

The average amount of hours of translating a week is between four and eight hours. 21 Percent says that they are translating between one and four hours a week, 38 percent is translating four to eight hours a week, 19 percent is translating eight to 12 hours a week, and 22 percent is translating more than 12 hours a week (see table 2.2). Less hours are spend on group translations however, almost 41 percent even stated that they do not spend time on group activities (see table 2.3). 37 Percent spends between one and four hours on translating in a group. All the translating hours resulted in a lot of finished projects, one would assume. However, most participants (65 percent) of the survey stated that they have between 1 and 50 finished projects. 17 Percent has between 50 and a hundred finished subtitles, and 18 percent has over a hundred finished translations (see table 2.1).

Furthermore the participants were asked to give an indication of the time they spend of reading and writing on the forums. The data is very diverse: 28 percent spends 30 minutes to one hour a week on forum activities, 23 percent spends between one and two hours weeks on the forum, 14 percent between two and four hours and again 14 percent between five and ten hours a week. 21 percent is even spending more than ten hours a week reading forum messages and responding or writing on the forum (see table 2.4). The average total amount of time spend on translation activities, varying from translating alone, to in a group to participating on forums is six to twelve hours a week.

This data shows that the translators invest time regularly in making subtitles and participating in forums. Most of the translators do not qualify themselves as professional which indicates that they see room for improvement/development of their hobby.

#### 4.2.5. Conclusion

By entering an a SFW, people gain access to information on translating, making subtitles, and language-related information. A member has the opportunity to ask question on the forums, and read the questions and answers already posted. However, this information is not solely for the registered members, but also for non-members such as the atheist translators. Thus, the total amount of visitors and users of the SFWs is higher than just the registered members.

The additional value of becoming a member is recognition for your work, as Spawn the Undead also argued in his interview. The ranking system, through which members can achieve higher statuses, shows the level of translating and subtitle making skills of a member. This also gives an indication of whether or not ones subtitles are actually used. Furthermore it is also a learning experience in that one's work is reviewed. This feedback gives the member an opportunity to learn and grow in its work.

### 4.3. Purposes

The purpose of this online community is to provide in subtitles of English-spoken films, TV shows and documentaries. Next to that they also provide subtitles for Japanese Anime-shows which have already been translated into English. Thus, the practice of this community is fansubs.

Translators can choose what they want to translate, for example based on genre, show or producer. When discussing the practice of fansubs one expects to find that the translators in fact translate the films, shows or documentaries of which they are a fan. Empirical data shows that this assertion is correct. The main reason for the translators to translate, is that they enjoy the practice of translating, it is their hobby (see Appendix B, table 3.3). 58 Percent of the participants state that 'translating being a hobby' is their most important motivation for executing the practice. 24 Percent states that it is an important factor of their motivation. Secondly being a fan of certain shows or films and improving language skills is important to the translators, roughly 18 percent stated that the both being a fan as improving language skills is the main motivation for translating. Least important to the translators is building a



portfolio (approximately 42 percent) and educative reasons (30 percent stated of little importance and 34 percent checked not important).

For the purpose of translating a film, documentary or (season of a) series, translating groups can be formed (on both websites). Translating groups can exist of different type of members and are not restricted to members of one specific website. Doing this, a group can for example translate a whole movie in a short amount of time. On the level of translators, group activities is also an opportunity for low ranked translators to prove themselves as translators. It also provides a possibility to learn from more experienced translators. The translators in group activities are also checked and corrected quickly, thereby giving the 'rookies' a chance to learn. Data from the questionnaire shows however that little time is spend on group activities, most of the translators, roughly 37 percent spends between one and four hours a week on group translations (see table 2.3). It would be asserted that new translators, i.e. those who have not been translating English spoken media products for a long time, would spend more time on translating in a group. This would be beneficial for their learning process. The data from the questionnaire showed however no significant relation between how a translators would classify him/herself and translating in a group. If any, there is a slight negative relation, meaning that the higher a translators rank themselves, the less time they spends on translating in a group (see table 2.10).

The atheist translators provide subtitles for media products with atheist content for two reasons. First, they are fan of certain atheist TV shows, of comedians who discuss atheist matters such as Bill Maher, or of academics in the field such as Richard Dawkins or Carl Sagan. Often these products are already available on Youtube in English, the translators then provide the subtitles for these products. The second motivation of these translators is that they want to contribute to the education in (non)religious matters of the Turkish people. In the interview Ibrahim Kesecegi Ismael stated that with his work he wants to get rid of the invasion of archaic doctrines.

#### **4.4. Policies**

In paragraph 4.2. the policies concerning membership was discussed. It showed that there are regulations of members and translators. The fact that subtitles are offered for free does not result in bad subtitles. Translating policies differ between Divxplanet and Türkcealtyazi.

On Divxplanet the subtitles provided by the translators, as well as the collective work of a translator are reviewed. Subtitles are classified as 'approved' or 'unapproved'. The

Divxplanet administration chooses to assign unknown number of reporters that will review the subtitle project uploaded by any member and report it to a board called ADG (the subtitle arrangement group) (forum.divxplanet.com). By this division of labor ADG members are responsible for scanning the project according to the reports delivered by reporter members, and grade the project. These grades are represented with colors. **Green** is considered sufficient, this class is for approved projects. Unapproved projects receive an orange or red grade. The **Orange** rank is given to project with small mistakes as typos and long appearing sentences on the screen. This rank however has the possibility to become green when an updated version of the project is provided and approved. If another uploader provides better subtitles for the same content, users whose projects are ranked orange are given some time to update the project with a better version. The **Red** grade is for translation related issues, serious punctuation mistakes and time laps issues. Subtitles with a red grade are often removed quickly, at least as soon as a better version is uploaded by any member. The ranking and reviewing is done according to the following points:

<b>Mistake</b>	<b>Example/Explanation</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Technical structure issues	Long sentences, long duration on screen, badly divided	<b>ORANGE</b>
Rip mistakes	Gaps between letters and numbers	<b>ORANGE</b>
Heavy rip mistakes	Attached words, serious overlapping	<b>RED</b>
Punctuation mistakes	Unimportant amount of punctuation mistakes, typos	<b>ORANGE</b>
Heavy punctuation mistakes	Repeating mistakes that lowers the viewing quality of the content, typos	<b>RED</b>
Average translation	Troubled wording, small translation mistakes, ambiguity	<b>ORANGE</b>
Below average translation	Severly troubled wording, serious translation mistakes	<b>RED</b>
Weak translation	Translation fails to deliver proximity to original meaning of the content	<b>RED</b>
Pirate Turkish	Unidentified low quality projects	<b>RED</b>
Pirate English	Translations made by unrecognized translators, fansub level translations	<b>RED</b>

On Türkcealtyazi a translator can post his or her subtitles on their forum, but if it is below the admin's standard of grammar and spelling sufficiency, then the subtitles are removed.

Türkaltiyazi involves the community in the evaluation of the posted subtitles. Everyone is allowed to build a portfolio of subtitles. If a project is finished other translators are invited to check the work and edit where necessary. Afterwards, the subtitles are offered on the website as a finished product. When requesting subtitles for a certain film, show or documentary on Türkcealtiyazi an overview of available subtitles are shown. The viewer can review the translators profile and the evaluation of his/her work of the specific product the viewer is interested in. The most popular/most downloaded subtitles are shown first. Divxplanet organizes it differently in that they choose which subtitles to offer on their website as the best. New translators therefore often choose and recommended by experienced members to translate less popular products so their work will be used.

The atheist translators do not adhere to a specific translating standard, nor do they have a reviewing system. It is however to be noted that often translations about certain topics, such as evolution, are made by students or professional in that area who are thus also familiar with the terminology of the science (for example see the Facebook page of Evrim Agaci, Tree of evolution).

Both SFWs have a strict policies concerning the quality of the subtitles which are offered on and through their website. It is strict in the sense that if one wants to share its work with others, one must adhere to the rules. Furthermore there is a regulation of statuses of the translators, as discussed in paragraph 4.2., and distribution of work, i.e. translators, reviewers such as the ADG group, admins and so on. These policy rules are an indication of an organized community who provide high quality subtitles for TV shows and films.

#### **4.5. Computer technology**

Translations can be done using a text-edit program. However, in order to offer it as proper subtitle for a series, film or documentary it must be processed in a software program for translations. The main and most popular software is called Subtitle Workshop provided by Urusoft a free software company from Uruguay that operates on donations, This software is not provided on either SFW. However, they do facilitate learning environment for all translators, graphic in depth explanation how to use the software is visible in the forums of

both SFW. On both website there are steady threads with questions and answers concerning this software. Furthermore, they refer to ebooks and other sources on how to translate.

In the questionnaire participants were asked which software program they preferred for making subtitles. Most popular is the program Subtitle Workshop, seventy percent works with this program (see table 4.2). Secondly, with 13 percent, the program Aegisub is used.

Both SFWs make use of social media to gain more brand awareness and to give updates on their work. Divxplanet uses Twitter for updates on their website, cultural products and services. On Twitter they have 1048 followers. Türkcealtyazi has a Facebook account with 1047 followers. The websites also offer links to personal social media accounts of translators via their profile menu. The empirical data however showed that even though the option to communicate via different channels is available, most translators are not in contact with their fellow translators through channels other than the SFWs.

In the questionnaire distributed amongst the translators data was required concerning their use of social media. In response to the question whether the translators were communicating with their fellow translators on social media platforms, 55 percent stated that they use Facebook for communication (see table 4.5). Secondly, with 33 percent, Twitter is used as a communication channel between translators. Social media platforms are less used for giving updates and progress reports on translation work. More than half of the translators (almost 57 percent) responded that they do not share updates regarding their work through social media channels. Those who do mainly use Facebook (22 percent) and Twitter (17 percent) (see table 4.6). These results could be explained through the instant messaging service both SFWs offer, next to the option of sending a fellow member a message through his/her profile. Translators can for example discuss their translating activities when translating in a group by using the instant message service. Furthermore, when regularly contributing to the forums and providing translations a translator receives an email account of the SFW. This could cause that those most active on these websites do not use other social channels to communicate through since they are well provided in communication channel option on their SFW.

The atheist translators make more use of other social media channels such as Facebook and Youtube than the members of the SFWs. This is because they address a specific group of people interested in discussions of atheist topics. Table 4.4. shows that of the 20 translators who said that they translate mainly educational and scientific content, 18 have a Facebook

page which is used for their work. In addition 11 translators also have their own Youtube account with the purpose of sharing their work. The fact that they make more use of other social channels can also coincide with the fact that they are not registered members of the SFWs and therefore cannot and/or do not make use of their communication services.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

The answer to the research question posed in the introduction of this chapter is that the group of Turkish translators do in fact function as an online community of practice. This is because the online community consists of registered members, who's common practice is providing subtitles according to strict regulations with the help of computer technology. Though it must be stated that they are a part of a larger group who are interested in providing and discussing visual cultural products. Thus, the translators are a large part of this community, though not the only subgroup. As described in the section on people, a member can grow into different statuses which do not necessarily concern translating. Other functions are admins, commentators of (new) films, series and/or documentaries, editors or moderators and group admins.

The purpose of the group of translators is first providing in subtitles. One can also grow as a translator which is shown in their status on the website. It however not a fixed course one must go through before gaining a higher rank. The second purpose of translating is gaining more knowledge of the English and Turkish language. Thirdly, also building a portfolio is an incentive for translators to provide their subtitles for free.

The policies of the communities, both on divxplanet.com and türkcealtyazi.org, are pretty strict. Divxplanet is stricter in that it also removes translations which do not qualify according to their high standards. Furthermore, the admins of the website decide who has deserved a higher rank and gains in status. Türkcealtyazi.org is less strict in that one can upload their translation, no matter how bad the quality is, and people will review and give comments on the translation. On this website, again, it is the admins who decide whether one gets a higher rank. These admins can also be the admins of specific groups, who also have the privilege to invite a certain (non-qualifying) member into their group activity.

Concerning computer technology the websites do not offer the software which is needed to produce proper subtitles. They do however provide help through steady threads on how to use it. Technology convergence is used by both the SFWs as by translators to communicating with fellow translators and in some cases update their followers on their

work. The SFWs also have social media platform accounts, Facebook and Twitter, links to these websites are also provided on the main page of their own website.

The group of atheist translators is cannot be considered as a subgroup of the online community of translators since they do not interact with and participate in this community. Meaning that they are not registered members, they do not contribute to the forum and their translations are not reviewed. These atheist translators use the SFWs for information on how to make subtitles. Their subtitles are also not uploaded on these websites with the exception of the rare occasion that they translate a commercial film with atheist content. However, even though they are not a subgroup of this community, their work can be described as fan-based translations.

Drawing on the work of Bey et al. (2005) and O'Hagan (2009b), the online community of registered entertainment translators is best defined as O'Hagan's third type of online community of translators of cultural goods. The atheist group is better defined as a Bey et al.'s subject-oriented translator community consisting of individual translators who translate online products and make the translations available on a personal or group webpage. The main difference is thus the priority and motivation of the two groups of translators.

## **Chapter 5 Research results on cultural remediators**

### **5.1. Introduction**

Chapter two introduced a new concept cultural remediators, derived from Bourdieu's 'cultural intermediary' and the concept of UGT 'remediators'. This concept focuses on the role an active consumer plays in reproducing and intermediating cultural products. This chapter analyzes the Turkish translators in this role of cultural mediator. Following Smith Maguire and Matthews (2010) it first locates the translators, secondly it analyzes the process of producing fansubs, and thirdly it discusses how their work is mediated and promoted to their consumers. The research question answered in this chapter is: *How do the Turkish translators of fansubs function as cultural remediators?*

### **5.2. Working in media**

There are several links in the (re)production chain before a film, show or documentary is consumed by a Turkish viewer. Most of the films and shows analyzed for this thesis originate from The United States, furthermore they come from Great-Britain and Australia. These products are both produced and consumed in those states. Most of these products, nearly all of them would not be aired in Turkey due to the censorship or lack of popularity. Only one channel on Turkish national TV shows English-spoken films or TV shows in English on a daily basis. The second channel does show English-spoken products, however most of the time these are dubbed. Thus, there is little airtime for English-spoken films or shows on Turkish TV. In the cinema most of the films shown are Turkish. The English spoken films are shown with subtitle or dubbed. Turkish people thus have limited access to English spoken cultural goods both on TV.

When a product is released in the state of origin it can be illegally digitally distributed throughout the world. And so, the product is also available for the Turkish people on the internet. Thus, the next link in the chain are those people or consumers who upload and stream English-spoken goods. Where they originate from has not been researched, nor whether large amount of streamers/uploaders draw from the same source. Looking at Turkish websites offering these products it becomes clear that all the films and shows have subtitles. The only exception is when a really popular show (such as Dexter or Gossip Girl) is directly

uploaded after it was aired in the country of origin. A remark is added to the show stating that subtitles will follow soon and usually they are added within day. The lack of English-spoken shows without subtitles on these website sheds a light on another problem, the language barrier. Most Turkish people do not speak English, and even if they do, often it is not sufficient enough to understand an English spoken film or show. This is where the translators come in, they are thus the next link in the chain, after the ‘streamers’ of the shows. The translators make the digitally accessible products linguistically accessible for the viewers. Next to the choice of the streamers to upload a show, it is also the choice of the translators to make a product accessible. Thus, it is the streamers who make the cultural goods digitally accessible, and the translators who make the goods linguistically accessible.

The main incentive for translating a particular shows or film is the personal taste of the translator, according to 73 percent of the translators (see table 3.4). This does not necessarily mean that they only upload or translate their favorite shows, they also take on requests of people. Data shows that besides personal taste, request of family and the community determine the products which are translated (see table 3.4). (The incentives and motivations for translating are further discussed in paragraph 5.3.) Thus, even though the translators take in account requests from the consumers’ side, they are the ones selecting the products that are translated.

Furthermore they translate Anime products from Japan which have already been translated into English. In this process there is an extra link in the chain. Looking at Anime-shows, this product was produced and consumed in Japan. Japanese Anime fans, who wanted to share it with non-Japanese speaking fans translated Anime products and distributed them. These translated products were then translated again from English to for example Turkish.

### **5.3. Working with media**

As stated before, the shows and films offered on VSWs are almost always with subtitles. This could mean that shows are depending on translations whether or not they are uploaded online. Obviously both the streamers and the translators are depending on each other to provide their services to the people. A streamer does not upload a show without subtitles (with the exception of most popular show which are occasionally uploaded without subtitles, but where is promised that the subtitles will following in the next 24 hours). However, subtitles are also not made for shows which are not going to be or are uploaded. Concerning the role of cultural mediator there is a difference between the two links of streamer and translator.



Though this research was not focused on the incentives and motives of streamers, it is asserted that they stream whichever product is available digitally and linguistically.

With regards to the translators, the questionnaire brought about data on their reasons for translating a certain show. Main reasons for the translators to translate is that they enjoy doing it as a hobby, because they are a fan of certain shows and films and because it improves their language skills (see table 3.3). Least important to the entertainment translators is building a portfolio and adding to education. Contrary to these translators, adding to education is one of the main motivations for the atheist translators. Though translators might not all provide free subtitles as a gesture to the Turkish society or to be of influence of that Turkish people consume, they do all feel that their work is of additional value to the Turkish society (see table 3.10). The open interviews concluded that the translators are aware that a lot of Turkish people are not able to consume English spoken products without their help. Most important to the interviewees were that they wanted to share certain shows with friends and family. Due to the language barrier of their loved ones, translators started to provide subtitles to shows. The ethnography provided the following data through a similar question which was posted (by someone else than the researcher) on the forum of Divxplanet, regarding how responsible the translators feel towards the followers of the series one translates. On the forum of Divxplanet.com under the thread called ‘How responsible do translators feel towards the subtitle followers’ the following comment was made by the experienced member AkrieL on October 22, 2011:

Şahsen ben uzun süre gönderemediğimde kendimi kötü hissederim. O dizinin bekleyeni olmasa bile. Salı ve Cuma günleri sırf bu yüzden arkadaşlarımla dışarı çıkmam mesela.

Personally I feel bad if I do not send it [subtitles] for a long time. Even when followers are not expecting the show. For instance, only because of this I don’t go out on Tuesday and Fridays [because the show is available on Monday and Thursday].  
(forum.divxplanet.com).

Another member, the veteran Kilit Adam, posted in the same thread on October 22, 2011:

Büyük bir çoğunluğun izleyicilere karşı bir sorumluluk hissettiğini düşünmüyorum. Olsa olsa kendine karşı bir sorumluluk hissediyordur (boş vakit değerlendirme, ingilizceyi

geliştirme, vs.). [...] Birileri o dizinin çevirisini bekliyor diye çeviri yapan sayısı çok çok az.

In my perspective most translators only do it because they feel responsible towards themselves (they have spare time, to improve their English, etc). [...] I think it is very few who translate on time because people wait for it [the subtitles].

After an observation the researcher found that a large group of translators responded that they are of the opinion that they have no obligation toward the followers, since translating is 'just' their hobby. Only some state however that they are very responsible in that they wake up early to translate shows which are on air.

#### **5.4. Work of mediation**

The question here concerns the ways in which the Turkish translators mediate and promote the cultural products they produced. Data showed that there is no extensive use of social media channels to give updates on their work. This could coincide with the fact that the main motive behind translating is that it is a hobby, which is mostly enjoyed by the translator him/herself.

Concerning the promotion of translated products, or updates and progress reports, the data collected shows that little use is made of social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace. On the SFWs the profiles of the members have links to a person's Facebook or Twitter account. When asked whether one is giving updates on their work, or whether one is communicating with fellow translators through social media channels almost half of the participants confirmed and more than half denied (see table 4.6).

It appears however that there is a difference between those who translate mainly entertainment products and those who translate education and scientific products, the atheist translators (see also table 4.4). The researcher conducted an open written interview with a translator who translates mainly anti-creationist products. Promotion of these translators' work is done through dedicated Facebook pages for alike-minded people. By translating these products the translators does not make him/herself popular amongst the great masses. However, their work is very much appreciated by those who think alike. Sometimes request

are send it to translate a certain product, though this seems to be more the exception than the rule (based on an interview with Ibrahim Kesecegi Ismail).

Since Turkey is becoming more and more conservative concerning the Islamic religion, media products with an anti-creationist content are forbidden. This censorship is in the form of a voluntary internet filter for children, which is also targeted at blocking atheist, evolutionist, and anti-Islamic pages (December 8, 2011, bianet.org). Over the last years there has been a significant increase in the number of blocked websites in Turkey, due to the 2007 law No. 5651 on blocking websites (Akdeniz, 2010, p. 2). Statistics provided by dr. Yaman Akdeniz (2010, p. 17) showed that in may 2008 there were 293 websites blocked, in 2009 this was already 2126 websites. Though more and more websites are blocked or indirectly censored, promotion through Facebook and other social media channels has the advantage of avoiding the censorship of the government. Furthermore, the translated content of the blocked webpages can be distributed through more channels by using social media. The advantage here is that besides being able to reach more recipients, it is also more work to block all these websites. Atheist translators experience constant attack on their web pages amongst others by the Muslim community, hence they often also have back-up pages. In the interview with GreenerNautilus the following comment was made:

Durmadan saldiriyorlar yeniden yukleyene kadar takipcilerimizin bizi kaybetmemesi icin boyle Facebook, Youtube, Vimeo'dan olusan birbirine bagli bir kanallar agi ile paylasmak zorunda kaliyoruz islerimizi.

Constant cyber attacks forced us to share our work through interlinked channels of Facebook, Youtube and Vimeo [and others]. We do this in order to stay in touch with our followers which would be interrupted otherwise [as a result of these attacks].

This shows that it is necessary to promote atheist (translation) works through multiple online channels.

In regards to the promotion of translated work, the atheist translators differ from the entertainment translator community in that they have to facilitate the promotion of their work by themselves. On the SFWs good translation work is promoted by being uploaded on their website and used by VSWs. Further promotion to the public is asserted to be executed by the VSWs. The atheist translators who are not active in these communities have to use many

channels for promotion, also because the content they translate is more and more under attack and censored in Turkey.

## **5.5. Conclusion**

Social shaping of technology brought about a new type of cultural intermediary, namely the remediator. The role of the remediator goes beyond being a gatekeeper, bridge or critic to certain cultural products. It makes these products accessible through the added value of his/her work, in this case the translations. New technology invited people to be actively involved in the (re)production and (re)distribution of cultural products. The cultural remediators who function as a filtering process by the choices they makes, reproduce and redistribute the media products to those who are not able to access it.

By selecting particular media products for translation, translators are fulfilling a cultural role by filtering the products which are made accessible to the people. Though a lot of translators do not make a strongly motivated decision of which entertainment product (s)he's translating, the ones who translate educational and scientific content do. Next to translating as a hobby, they also want to make topics concerning anti-creationism accessible to those in Turkey who do not have a sufficient knowledge of English. It is these translators who also promote their work, or rather the work they made accessible through other channels such as social media. However, perhaps this should not be solely labeled as cultural filtering but also as political filtering (or de-filtering for that matter), since it is making a genre of (cultural/political/scientific) media products available in a state with censorship.

This chapter further showed that in regards to the function of cultural remediator, the translator is a part of a larger group consisting of streamers but also reviewers of films and TV shows. For now, it cannot be conclusively stated that the translators are the ones making the *all* the 'filtering' choices, i.e. deciding which show gets streamed or not. Though they are of great influence in that most of the streamed products on Turkish VSWs are in fact with Turkish subtitles, it might also be that the function of cultural remediators is executed by the whole online community/communities who are involved in making, providing and streaming TV shows and films with Turkish subtitles. Meaning that it is not only the translator, but also the admin, streamers, reviewers and critics who together function as the cultural remediators.

## Chapter 6 Conclusion

### 6.1. Online community of practice of fansubs

This thesis first provided a research on whether and how the Turkish translators function as an online community of practice. An online community, as was discussed in chapter two, is defined along the lines of four characteristics; people, purposes, policies and computer technology. The characteristics of the communities on Divxplanet and Türkcealtyazi, referred to as Subtitle and Forum Websites (SFWs), were researched through a survey and ethnography. This research found that the Turkish translators do function as an online community, with the practice of providing pro-bono fan-based subtitles.

The characteristic ‘people’ is further described as members on an online community. The exact number of people affiliated to and members of the online community of Turkish translators is unknown, but a sample is analyzed of the registered members of Divxplanet.com and Türkcealtyazi. In addition a group atheist translators was analyzed.

Regarding membership on the SFWs there are different statuses a member can have. One does not immediately acquire the status of ‘translator’ (or ‘admin’, ‘critic’ or ‘editor’). Though exact numbers are not provided by the websites, someone who wants to obtain the status of ‘translator’ should participate on the forums, provide a certain number of translations which has to be according to the standard of the SFW. The admins of the page decide when someone’s status is upgraded. On Türkcealtyazi one can also be invited into a translation team consisting of higher ranked translators and experienced members and hereby increase the likelihood of an earlier upgrade.

Looking at the membership options on the SFWs it is evident that the community of Turkish translators is part of a larger group facilitating the process of producing subtitles. There is a division of labor aimed at providing statuses to those who have proven themselves in a certain function, one of which is translating. The community of translators even goes beyond the registered membership of all SFWs, since you do not have to be a member of the websites to gain access to their information on, for example, on how to use a certain subtitle software program. Most atheist translators are not registered members of the two analyzed SFWs, but they do use these websites as a source on how to make subtitles.

Furthermore the online community was specified as one of practice, with translating products and providing subtitles as the practice of the Turkish translators. Howard (2010, p. 4) stated that a community of practice is “primarily made up of practitioners in a field or profession who are passionate about the work that they do”. This is then an important finding of this research. It was asserted that next to translating as a hobby the translators would have other incentives for translating, such as building a portfolio or contribute to education. However, most translators, who translate entertainment products, stated in the survey that they translate because it is their hobby and/or because they are a fan of certain shows and films. This finding shows that, following Howard, that the Turkish translators are ‘simply’ passionate about the work that they do, and that this is the main reason for executing their practice. Hence, the practice of the Turkish translators is referred to as one of fan-based translations, i.e. fansubs.

A group of atheist Turkish translators was also researched. As discussed in chapter four, these translators do not actively participate in the community of Divxplanet and Turkcealtyazi, nor on any other translating-related website for that matter. They do, however, make use of these website for information on how to make subtitles and which software to use. The motives of this group differed from the entertainment group in that they wanted to provide access to media products with atheist content. As discussed above there is an informal censorship by stimulating highly recommended internet filters which also block atheist, anti-creationist and scientific content. Next to this indirect censorship, the content translated by the atheist translators is often not commercial. Hence there are also financial barriers to broadcasting these products. Since atheist films and shows are hard to access, translators want to make this content linguistically and digitally accessible to the Turkish people. In this case, their motive is to contribute to the education of the Turkish people, as opposed to the plenty religious content and religious messages in a show or film. In the long run their aim is to transform the Turkish society by “ending the invasion of archaic doctrines” (quote from Ibrahim Kesecegi Ismail). The author argues that the subtitles by the atheist translators can also be qualified as fansubs because these translators are fans of certain atheist comedians or documentary producers. It is also concluded that even though the work of the atheist translators is similar to the entertainment translators, they are not a part of the online community since they do not participate in this group, they do not adhere to their policies and they promote their own work through different channels (as also discussed below).

Regarding the policies of the online community of Turkish translators the main finding is that there are strict regulations of the group and their practices on the SFWs. Concerning membership statuses one has to prove him/herself of a certain status (s)he wishes to obtain (see above and chapter four). Furthermore there are guidelines posted on the forum for making translations; the grammar and spelling has to be of a high level and ‘street language’ or ‘slang’ is forbidden unless necessary. It is forbidden to the extent that a member can be banned from the website when violating these rules. When one uploads their work on Divxplanet, it is checked by reviewers who report to a board who grades the projects. A project then is either denied (red), given an option to improve (orange) or accepted (green). This way only the subtitles with the highest quality are accepted by the SFW and therefore used by video streaming websites (VSWs) and others. Türkcealtyazi is as strict as Divxplanet when it comes to translation standards, but they do however have a different reviewing system which filters and ranks the subtitles which are uploaded on the website. Türkcealtyazi lets the community review and rate the uploaded subtitles. One might expect free translations to be of a lesser standard than professional work, but due to these strict regulations only the best work of translators gains visibility on the website and therefore used by people. Thus, if one has the ambition to be a pro-bono translator the quality of their work has to be excellent, and the quantity of their work has to be high. Though this seems very strict from the perspective of pro-bono and fan-based translating, part of this hobby is the pleasure of sharing it with people. Therefore the translations must be of the highest standard possible, otherwise people will not use nor appreciate the work of a translator.

The last characteristic of an online community is the use of computer technology. The translators use different subtitle software programs to format their translations into a proper subtitle. These freeware programs are not offered on the SFWs, but there are in depth instruction manuals with graphic explanations offered on the websites. Next to that, the websites also offer links to different social media platforms such as Twitter, Youtube and Facebook. The research showed however that most translators do not make use of these channels to communicate, promote or give updates of their work. The SFWs offer a lot of communication options through the forum but also through personal membership profiles. It is therefore asserted that this renders other channels unnecessary for communication between translators. Furthermore, the promotion of shows and films is mostly done by VSWs. In regard to the atheist translators, their communication is mainly through their personal websites, Facebook profiles and Youtube channels. They do actively though cautiously

promote the shows, films and documentaries for which they provided subtitles. This is also because their motivation for translating goes beyond fandom, since they also want to create awareness amongst Turkish people regarding atheist and anti-creationist topics and theories.

In conclusion, this research found that the analyzed group of Turkish entertainment translators do function as an online community of practice according to the four characteristics. It is an organized community aimed at providing top quality subtitles for their favorite English-spoken TV shows and films. The boundaries of the whole community is unknown and the researcher feels that this thesis shed a light on but a small part of this community. Further research on this topic is discussed below.

The atheist translators function more as a subject-oriented community, consisting of individuals who promote their work on personal pages.

## **6.2. Cultural remediators**

The second aim of this thesis was to analyze the cultural function of the Turkish translators. It was asserted that, based on Bourdieu's cultural intermediaries, the Turkish translators function as cultural remediators. This concept is suggested as a contemporary version of cultural intermediary because due to the social shaping of technology consumers are invited to actively contribute to the products they consume. Bourdieu's cultural intermediary had the function of promotion of certain media products through which the added value lies in the choice of the intermediary. The added value of the remediator is that (s)he makes the product accessible for example by providing translation.

The Turkish translators fulfill the role of remediator in that they make English-spoken product linguistically accessible for Turkish people. However, regarding the concept *cultural* remediators there is not a clear cut outcome. The entertainment translators find themselves in a larger group consisting of streamers, critics, editors and admins. Translators choose the shows they want to translate, and this choice is mainly made based on fandom. Making content linguistically accessible is however useless when that product is not made digitally accessible and vice versa. Thus, it is in combination with streamers that media products can be offered to the Turkish people. It is also the streamer's websites on which shows and films are promoted. The previous chapters shows that most translators do not promote their work. In addition, critics of shows and films also contribute to the choices made by streamers and translators. Furthermore the role of the editors and admins of the SFWs, and also of the VSWs



is significant, since they filter the subtitles made by the translators. In conclusion, the Turkish translators are part of a larger group of streamers, critics, editors and admins who together fulfill the role of cultural remediators.

The atheist and anti-creationist translators also stream the shows, films and documentaries that they translate. Hence they are cultural remediators by making media products digitally as well as linguistically accessible for Turkish people. By making these accessible through social media platforms as Facebook and Youtube, and personal websites and blogs they also avoid internet filters aimed at blocking website with atheist content. Atheist translators also promote their work more than the translators of entertainment products, since their work is not collectively promoted through the SFWs and/or VSWs. They must thus provide for their own promotion and their main motivation for this is to contribute to the education of Turkish people and provide a countermovement against all creationist doctrines but especially Islam. Thus, atheist and anti-creationist translators are “cultural” remediators who make (a mix of) cultural, political and scientific products with atheist content digitally and linguistically accessible for Turkish people, and who promote their work through blogs and social media channels.

### **6.3. Discussion of the research**

The research methods used for this thesis were a questionnaire and a virtual ethnography. These two methods were a good combination for this research since the questionnaire provided quantitative data on a large group, and the ethnography provided data on the space of the community, the regulations and in-depth information through the interviews. The researcher is content with the ethnography since it gave insight on the space in which the community takes place and how this space is organized and structured. The ethnography could have been executed more thoroughly since the forums offer a lot of categories and topics, however, due to limited time and space this was not possible. Concerning the questionnaire and the data collected through it, there is room for improvement. The current data did not lend itself for extensive statistical analysis since it contained mainly nominal and ordinal variables. Furthermore, since the exact number of Turkish translators is unknown the researcher is unable to tell if the sample in this research can represent the community, i.e. whether this data can be generalized.

A potential problem with obtaining data for this research was the legal grey area in which the SFWs find themselves. Streaming media products without consent of the original producers is illegal, and translations could be seen as a derivative work of streaming. However, almost all scripts are in text form available online for free. This would mean that providing translations is not illegal. On Divxplanet there is a warning when you log-in, saying that it is forbidden for government officials and employees of media production companies to enter and download content from the website; pointing out the internet privacy agreement (code number 431.322.12); it forbids all legal action against members of Divxplanet; and it states that all subtitles are for personal use and not for commercial purposes. This shows that they are cautious about their work and providing information on their work. The admins of the website were not keen sharing their data with the researcher. Therefore there was not enough data collected to entangle how upgrades in membership statuses are organized for example. Gaining access to their data would have provided extensive information on regulations of the website and the practice. Since the admins did not want to cooperate in this research, it was also suspected that little data might be obtained from the translators. This turned about to be untrue. The translators were cooperative and curious about the outcome of this research. There was also no problem with obtaining data through the ethnography. The interviews were also open and honest as far as the researcher can tell. This was mainly because the interviewees only gave their alias, and saw this research as an opportunity for recognition from an institution and appreciation of their work. Reaching the atheist translators was harder since they are cautious due to serious threats from radical groups and fanatics. The researcher therefore first had to gain their trust, which was established by being referred by a mutual friend. Even then, these translators did not consent to a Skype call, but in stead agreed to answer the researcher's question through instant messaging services.

#### **6.4. Further research**

As stated above and in previous chapters, this research only sheds a light on a small part of larger community and affiliated people who make English-spoken media products (and products originated from other language areas) both digitally and linguistically accessible. The first recommendation for further research is thus that the scope of the objects of analysis is enlarged. This means that in addition to the translators, the VSWs and the streamers, the critics and reviewers of films and shows and the admins of the websites should be thoroughly analyzed. With this recommendation comes the advice to increase the number of participants

in the surveys per object. This is especially recommended since the exact number of translators and other functions is unknown. Thus, the larger the group is that is researched, the more the data will represent the actual group. Besides quantitative data, it is also advisable to add qualitative data through in-depth structured interviews with the translators, as well as with people fulfilling different functions. If possible, it would be very helpful if the admins of the website could/would participate in the research. These admins have a lot of information on regulations, for one, but next to that they might also have statistical information on the translators, but also on the consumers of the subtitles. In addition, it would be interesting to question the people who consume the remediated TV shows and films, in order to find out how they perceive the work of the above listed people.

Another potential research can be done focusing on atheist and anti-creationist translators and streamers in states with large Muslim population. Interesting would be, besides analyzing the work, work ethics and motivation of the translators and streamers, to analyze the relation between censorship and translation of atheist content products. There might be a relation between the strictness and extensiveness of the censorship and the number of translators. Next to that, it would be interesting to shed a light on the effects of this anti-religious countermovement on the consumers of the remediated atheist products.

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire

No.	Question	Answers
1a	Before the survey commences, I would like to make sure that everything is clear. You are participating in research about the practice of the community of Turkish online translators. The answers you provide will be entirely anonymous. I will not distribute your answers nor will I publicize your IP address to others. Please indicate if everything is clear to you below:	a. Yes b. No
1b	It is unfortunate that my research is not clear to you. If you would still like to contribute to my research you can click below to fill in the survey. You can also choose not to participate.	a. Yes, continue to the survey b. No, end the survey
2	Do you use an alias?	a. Yes b. No
3	What is your age?	a. Under 18 b. 18-24 c. 25-34 d. 35-54 e. 55+
4	What is your gender?	a. Male b. Female
5	What is the highest educational degree you have received?	a. 12th grade or less b. Graduated high school or equivalent c. Some college, no degree d. Associate degree e. Bachelor's degree f. Post-graduate degree g. PhD
6	Have you studied / are you studying one of the following topics?	a. English/ American studies b. Translation studies c. IT-studies d. Media studies e. None of the above
7	Please put the following cultural products in order according to your most consumed weekly to least consumed:	a. Turkish (language) TV shows b. Turkish films c. English (language) TV shows d. English films e. Films and TV shows in other languages

8	Are you uploading your translation work to any of the websites listed below?	a. Divxplanet.com b. Türkcealtyazi.org c. Divxaltyazi.com d. Subtitles. yedincigemi.com e. No, I do not
9	Do you have your own blog/website, Youtube channel, Facebook page to share your translation work?	a. Blog b. Website c. Youtube channel d. Facebook page e. No, I don't have any of those.
10	How would you classify the content you regularly translate?	a. Entertainment b. Scientific/ educational c. Political d. Literature
11	How many translation projects have you completed (films and shows combined)?	a. 1 – 50 b. 51 – 100 c. 101 – 150 d. 151 – 200 e. 200+
12	How much time a week do you spend translating by yourself?	a. 1 – 4 hours b. 4 – 8 hours c. 8 – 12 hours d. 12 – 16 hours e. 16 + hours
13	How much time a week do you spend translating in a group?	a. 1 – 4 hours b. 4 – 8 hours c. 8 – 12 hours d. 12 – 16 hours e. 16 + hours f. None
14	How much time a week do you spend reading and writing on a forum?	a. 30 minutes – 1 hours b. 1 – 2 hours c. 2 – 4 hours d. 5 – 10 hours e. 10 + hours
15	How long have you been translating media content from English to Turkish?	a. 6 months – 1 year b. 1 – 2 years c. 2 – 3 years d. 3 – 5 years e. 5 + years
16	Which software do you prefer the most for providing subtitles?	a. Subtitle workshop b. Aegisub c. Eztitles d. Adobe premier e. Virtual dub f. Other



17	Why do you translate English media products for free (put in order)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Hobby</li> <li>b. To make portfolio</li> <li>c. I am a fan of certain shows</li> <li>d. I want to improve my language skills</li> <li>e. To contribute to education</li> </ul>
18	Do you intend to be a professional translator, to make a living in the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Yes</li> <li>b. No</li> <li>c. Maybe</li> </ul>
19	What determines the priority of your translation work (put in order)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. My personal taste</li> <li>b. Requests from family and friends</li> <li>c. Requests from community members</li> <li>d. Joining group activities</li> <li>e. Others</li> </ul>
20	Would you qualify the quality of your work as professional?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. No, I am an amateur</li> <li>b. I am a semi-professional</li> <li>c. My work is just as good as professional translators</li> <li>d. My work is better than a professional's</li> </ul>
21	Being involved in pro-bono translation activities and interacting with fellow translators, would you consider yourself as a part of a community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Strongly agree</li> <li>b. Agree</li> <li>c. Maybe</li> <li>d. Disagree</li> <li>e. Not applicable</li> </ul>
22	Do you feel that the translations you and your fellow translators provide is of additional value to the Turkish community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Yes</li> <li>b. Maybe</li> <li>c. No</li> <li>d. Other</li> </ul>
23	Do you communicate with fellow translators on social media platforms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. LinkedIn</li> <li>b. Facebook</li> <li>c. Twitter</li> <li>d. Friendfeed</li> <li>e. mySpace</li> <li>f. other</li> <li>g. no</li> </ul>
24	Do you give update (progress report) of your translation work on social media platforms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Facebook</li> <li>b. Twitter</li> <li>c. Friendfeed</li> <li>d. mySpace</li> <li>e. other</li> <li>f. no</li> </ul>

25	Pro-bono online translation work helped me improve my language skills (English written) rate:	a. strongly agree b. agree c. maybe d. disagree e. not applicable
26	pro-bono online translation work helped me improve my language skills (English spoken) rate:	a. strongly agree b. agree c. maybe d. disagree e. not applicable
27	Pro-bono online translation work helped me improve my language skills (Turkish written) rate:	a. strongly agree b. agree c. maybe d. disagree e. not applicable
28	Pro-bono online translation work helped me improve my language skills (Turkish spoken) rate:	a. strongly agree b. agree c. maybe d. disagree e. not applicable
-	Thank you for taking our survey. Your response is very important to us.	

## Appendix B

### B.1 Demographics

Average age: between 25 en 34

Table 1.1

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Under 18	5	4,8
18 – 24	45	42,9
25 – 34	36	34,3
35 – 54	17	16,2
Total	103	100

Table 1.2

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	85	82,5
Female	18	17,5
Total	103	100

Table 1.3

<b>Education past</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
12 <sup>th</sup> grade or less	5	4,9
Graduated high school	19	18,4
Some college, no degree	29	28,2
Associate degree	5	4,9
Bachelors degree	38	36,9
Post graduate degree	7	6,8
Total	103	100

Table 1.4

<b>Education topic</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
English literature	5	4,9
Translation studies	16	15,5
IT-studies	8	7,8
Media studies	8	7,8
None of the above	66	64,1
Total	103	100

## **B.2 Translation activity**

Table 2.1

<b>Alias</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	85	82,5
No	18	17,5
Total	103	100

Table 2.2

<b>No. of finished translations</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1 – 50	67	65
51 – 100	17	16,5
101 – 150	8	7,8
151-200	2	1,9
200+	9	8,7
Total	103	100

Average number of finished translations: 1- 50

Table 2.3

<b>Hours a week translating</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1 – 4 hours	22	21,4
4 – 8 hours	39	37,9
8 – 12 hours	20	19,4
12 – 16 hours	7	6,8
16+ hours	15	14,6
Total	103	100

Average number of translating hours a week: 4 – 8 hours a week

Table 2.4

<b>Hours a week group translation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1 – 4 hours	38	36,9
4 – 8 hours	13	12,6
8 – 12 hours	7	6,8
12 – 16 hours	2	1,9
16+ hours	1	1
None	42	40,8
Total	103	100

Average hours of translating in a group: 1 – 4 hours a week

Table 2.5

<b>Hours a week reading/writing forum</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
30 min – 1 hour	29	28,2
1 – 2 hours	24	23,3

2 – 4 hours	14	13,6
5 – 10 hours	14	13,6
10 + hours	22	21,4
Total	103	100

Average hours of reading and writing on subtitle forums: 1 – 2 hours

Table 2.6

<b>How long have you been translating</b>	Frequency	Percentage
6 months – 1 year	21	20,4
1 – 2 years	38	36,9
2 – 3 years	28	27,2
3 – 5 years	10	9,7
5 + years	6	5,8
Total	103	100

Average years of translating activities: 1 – 2 years

Table 2.7

<b>Quality of work</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Amateur	38	36,9
Semi-professional	39	37,9
Professional	16	15,5
Better than professional	10	9,7

Table 2.8 Years of translation x Quality of work

	Amateur	Semi-professional	Professional	Better than professional	Total
6 months – 1 year	9	3	6	3	21
1 – 2 years	17	19	2	0	38
2 – 3 years	8	14	5	1	28
3 – 5 years	2	3	3	2	10
5 + years	2	0	0	4	6
Total	38	39	26	20	103

Gamma: 0.221

Table 2.9 Quality of work x No. of completed translations

	1-50	51-100	101-150	151-200	200+
amateur	27	5	2	1	3
Semi-pro	25	12	0	0	2
pro	10	0	3	1	2
Better than pro	5	0	3	0	2

Gamma: 0.209

Table 2.10 **Quality of work x Translating in group**

	1-4 hours	4-8 hours	8-12 hours	12-16 hours	16 +	none
amateur	10	3	4	2	0	19
Semi-pro	24	4	1	0	1	9
pro	2	5	1	0	0	8
Better than pro	2	1	1	0	0	6

Gamma: -0.014

### **B.3 Translation content and motivation**

Table 3.1

<b>Content</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Entertainment	78	74,3
Scientific/Education	21	20
Political	8	8
Literature	9	9

Table 3.2

<b>Type of cultural product</b>	Turkish film	Turkish TV	English film	English TV	Other film	total
Most consumed	7	18	20	47	11	103
Consumed a lot	13	5	43	21	14	96
Average	16	15	20	14	22	97
Consumed little	33	21	9	6	6	75
Not consumed	13	21	3	4	31	72

Table 3.3

<b>Motivation</b>	Hobby	Portfolio	Fan	Language	Education	Total
Most important	58	3	18	18	6	103
Important	24	10	30	24	7	95
Average	10	14	15	30	11	80
Little importance	4	14	17	12	20	67
Not important	4	25	7	5	23	64
total	100	66	87	89	67	

Table 3.4

<b>Priority</b>	Personal taste	Request family	Request community	Group activities	Total
Most important	73	10	10	4	99
Important	10	24	23	19	76
Average	7	20	22	14	63
Little importance	3	13	16	22	54
Not important	2	4	2	10	18
Total	95	71	73	69	

Table 3.5 (pro-bono online translation work helped to improve my language skills)

<b>English written</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	50	48,5
Agree	29	28,2
Maybe	15	14,6
Disagree	2	1,9
Not applicable	7	6,8

Table 3.6 (pro-bono online translation helped to improve my language skills)

<b>English spoken</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	18	17,5
Agree	44	42,7
Maybe	30	29,1
Disagree	3	2,9
Not applicable	8	7,8

Table 3.7 (pro-bono online translation helped to improve my language skills)

<b>Turkish written</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	51	49,5
Agree	24	23,3
Maybe	14	13,6
Disagree	1	1,0
Not applicable	13	12,6

Table 3.8(pro-bono online translation helped to improve my language skills)

<b>Turkish spoken</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	21	20,4
Agree	23	22,3
Maybe	36	35,0
Disagree	9	8,7
Not applicable	14	13,6

Table 3.9

<b>Part of community</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	17	16,8
Agree	34	33,7
Maybe	39	38,6
Disagree	7	6,9
Not applicable	4	4,0

Table 3.10

<b>Additional value to society</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	75	74,3
Maybe	21	20,8
No	2	2,0
Other	3	3,0
Total	101	100

Table 3.11

<b>Intention for being a pro translator</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	17,5
Maybe	42	40,8
No	43	41,7
Total	103	100

## **B.4 Technology**

Table 4.1

<b>Website to upload</b>	Yes	No	Total
Divxplanet.com	58	47	105
Türkcealtyazi.org	46	59	105
Divxaltyazi.com	13	92	105
Yedincigemi.com	8	97	105

Table 4.2

<b>Preferred software</b>	Frequency
Subtitle workshop	89
Aegisub	17
Eztitle	1
Adobe premier	7
Virtual dub	5
Other	9
Total	128

Table 4.3

<b>Own channel</b>	Yes	No	Total
Blog	8	97	105
Website	10	95	105
Youtube channel	18	87	105
Facebook	37	68	105
None of the above	55	50	105

Table 4.4 **Channel x Content**

	Entertainment	Scientific	Political	Literature
Blog	8	1	0	0
Website	9	1	1	2
Youtube	12	11	3	1
Facebook	29	18	3	4
Total	48	31	7	7



Table 4.5

<b>Communication with translators on soc. media</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Linkedin	4	3,8
Facebook	58	55,2
Twitter	35	33,3
Friendfeed	0	0
mySpace	1	1
Other	37	3,5
No	21	20

Table 4.6

<b>Give updates on soc. media</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	23	21,9
Twitter	18	17,1
Friendfeed	0	0
mySpace	0	0
Other	27	25,7
No	59	56,2

Table 4.7 **Quality of work x Progress report**

	Facebook	Twitter	Friendfeed	Myspace	No
amateur	8	5	0	0	25
Semi-pro	8	3	0	0	24
Pro	3	6	0	0	5
Better than pro	4	4	0	0	5
total	23	18	0	0	59