

A Comparison of
Commercial and Non-Commercial
Finnish Subtitles of *Game of Thrones*

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Tiivistelmä

Vaikkakin kääntämisen akateeminen suuntaus on ollut olemassa jo 1970-luvulta asti, sen alasuuntaus, audiovisuaalinen kääntäminen, on vielä osittain kartoittamaton. Audiovisuaalisella kääntämisellä on monia hyödyllisiä ominaisuuksia nyky maailmassa, jossa suuri osa mediasta (esim. televisio-ohjelmat, elokuvat ja videopelit) käyttää audiovisuaalisia työkaluja kuten dubbaamista ja tekstittämistä. Viime aikoina audiovisuaalisen kääntämisen alalla on yleistynyt uusi ilmiö, jota kutsutaan fanitekstitykseksi (fansubbaus) ja jonka juuret voidaan jäljittää 1980-luvulle japanilaisen animaation vapaaehtoiseen kääntämiseen. Kääntäminen on ammatti, joka vaatii tietoa lähde- ja kohdekielestä, joten ammattilaisten ja vapaaehtoisten tekemien tekstitysten tarkastelu ja vertailu voi tuottaa mielenkiintoisia tuloksia.

Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee vertailevasti televisiosarjan *Game of Thrones* (2011) ensimmäistä jaksoa nimeltään 'Winter is Coming'. Tutkielmassa vertaillaan ammattilaisten ja fanien vapaaehtoisesti tuottamia käännöksiä Vinayn ja Darbelnet'n (1958) ja Malonen (1988) esittämien luokitusten valossa. Vertaileva tarkastelu näiden taksonomioiden kautta paljastaa mielenkiintoisia lopputuloksia siitä, kuinka käännökset eroavat toisistaan ja mitkä ovat tyypillisimmät erot ammattilaiskääntäjän ja vapaaehtoisen kääntäjän tekemien käännösten välillä.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että ammattilaiskääntäjät suosivat alkuperäisen dialogin muuttamista ymmärrettävämmäksi viestiksi, kun taas vapaaehtoiset kääntäjät mieluummin suosivat dialogin suoraa kääntämistä. Kahden käännöksen välillä on myös huomattava ero tavoissa joilla informaatiota jätetään pois, ja milloin näin tehdään. Tutkimuksen tulokset myös osoittavat, kuinka jotkin elementit ovat käännöksissä erittäin samankaltaisia. Tällaisia elementtejä ovat muutetun sanajärjestyksen käyttäminen englannista suomeen käännettäessä, yksiköiden muuttaminen ja yleisesti ottaen sanojen lainaamisen välttäminen.

Abstract

Although the field of translation studies has existed in the academic setting since the 1970s, the subfield of audiovisual translation has some aspects that are unexplored. Audiovisual translation has many beneficial qualities in the modern world, in which most of popular media (television shows, films, video games) use audiovisual tools such as dubbing and subtitling. A recent notion in the field of audiovisual translation is the phenomenon of fansubtitling (also known as fansubbing) which can be traced back to the 1980s and to the volunteer translation of Japanese animation. Translation is a craft that requires knowledge of the source language and the target language, which is why an examination and comparison of professional subtitles to volunteer-created subtitles can yield interesting results.

For this study, a comparative examination will be performed on the first episode of the television series *Game of Thrones* (2011) titled 'Winter is Coming'. The thesis will examine the professional and fan-created translations through the translation taxonomy presented by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) and Malone (1988). The comparative examination through the lens of these taxonomies will represent interesting results of how the two different translations differ and what are the typical differences between the ways in which a professional and a volunteer translate.

The results of the study reveal that professional translators tend to favor modifying the original dialogue to a more comprehensible message, whereas the volunteer translators favor translating dialogue more literally. There are also significant differences in how the two handle omitting information and in what contexts. The results of the study also show how some elements are extremely similar between the two, such as using modified syntax when translating from English into Finnish and the overall lack of borrowing terms from English to Finnish.

Tiivistelmä

Abstract

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1. Introduction

Although translation has existed conceptually ever since there has been more than one language, the field of translation is still relatively new. In Europe, the origins of translation studies are most often traced back to the writings of ancient Rome, and writers such as Cicero (106 to 43BC) and Horace (65 to 8BC) (Malmkjær, 2005, pp. 1–2). One of the first to “compose a theory of translation” is considered to be Étienne Dolet (1509–1546) who was burned at the stake in 1545 because he had translated a passage from Plato’s *Axiochus* which contradicted Christian beliefs (Malmkjær, 2005, p. 6). Despite these early roots, translation studies has found its place in academia only at the end of the twentieth century because of the rising need for internationalization in conjunction with globalization (Lambert, 2013, p. 7).

A subfield of translation studies, audiovisual translation (abbr. AVT) “has come into its own as a recognized form of translation and also as an academic field of research” only in the last 20 years (as of 2013) (Gambier, 2013, p. 45). The field’s rise in popularity also seems to coincide with “booming of the so-called new technology” (Gambier, 2013, p. 45). Audiovisual media includes such examples as films, television series, commercials, YouTube videos and videogames. Furthermore, it could be argued that the need for audiovisual translation has grown with the rising popularity of video streaming services such as Netflix, Youtube, Disney+ and HBO Now. The two forms of AVT, dubbing (speech to speech translation) and subtitling (speech to text translation) are used in different measures between cultures. For example, dubbing remains popular in Italy, Spain, Germany and France whereas subtitling is more popular in other European countries (O’Sullivan & Cornu, 2018, p. 23). This thesis will focus on subtitling.

Commercial subtitles are most often created by professional translators who have had proper training to do the task at hand. The translation process requires extensive knowledge of the source language and the target language (referred to as SL and TL, respectively, in this thesis) as the translator must take into account the proper syntax, grammar, and context of the text that they are producing. Additionally, translation is a heavily connotational practice because words hold different meanings within cultures. This is exemplified by the way a German

advertisement displayed a body spray in its original English form “Bodymist” even though ‘mist’ stands for ‘manure’ in German (Fawcett, 1997, p. 35).

Despite the expertise often required in the practice of translation, there also happens to be a trend of amateur subtitling. The phenomenon is better known as ‘fansubtitling’ (or fansubbing) which is translation work done entirely by volunteers who do not receive commercial benefit from their work. Although fansubtitling was originally surveyed in the volunteer translations of Japanese animation, it has since spread to other medias as well. The phenomenon can appear as a work of a single individual (see Boguki, 2009), but it is more often the work of a group with strict rules and roles (more on this in 3.3 and 3.4).

The juxtaposition of professional subtitles with the non-commercial alternative can display interesting results. The main basis most often is to show how the two translations are different and what the differences could indicate about the respective producers of the subtitles. Such studies are most often performed with the inclusion of some sort of ‘translation taxonomy’ which provides a theoretical background for the different choices that the translators have made.

For this study, the professional subtitles and the fansubtitles of *Game of Thrones* (2011) will be examined through the lens of linguistic translation theories suggested by Jean-Paul Vinay, Jean Darbelnet, and Joseph L. Malone. This examination will reveal (1) the typical differences between the two and what sort of techniques both translators use, (2) how a television series set in the genre of fantasy affects the translation process and (3) what are the typical hurdles of translating from English into Finnish in the context of audiovisual media.

2. Theories of translation

Many different theories of translation have been proposed in the entire history of translation studies. The field includes many different approaches which dictate how the data collection process transpires and how that data is analyzed. One popular approach is ‘comparative analysis’ in which the completed translation (known as Target Text, abbr. TT) is compared with the original work (known as Source Text, abbr. ST) (Malmkjær, 2018). Notably, this thesis is comparative analysis, with the caveat that the two different TTs (i.e. commercial and non-commercial Finnish subtitles) are compared with each other and with the single ST (i.e. the original English subtitles). In the context of the study, the results of a comparative study might reveal interesting results about the different methods that commercial and non-commercial translators use. On a more general note, it should be noted that in this context, a ‘text’ is a medium through which a message is conveyed

“A text is something that contains a complex of events (images, words, sounds) that are related to each other within a context, which can be a story or a narrative. All of the parts of a text cohere, work together towards a common goal of telling us something.” (Kolke, 2008, p. 10).

Audiovisual translation studies borrow heavily from its predecessor, translation studies. However, the two fields of study have somewhat different rules and issues. For instance, the translation of visual media (books, articles, websites etc.) allows the translator space to make vast changes and to make sure that the translated text is understood by the reader. This is done in some cases by the inclusion of a footnote, which can be used in case the translator needs to explain a certain change or cultural difference. Audiovisual translation uses subtitles which do not have the indulgence of meandering or explaining because of the short period of time that they appear on screen—although, in rare cases, even professional audiovisual subtitles can include a footnote. Furthermore, this description of footnotes does not take into account fansubtitling, which does not have rules and regulations that are being supervised.

As a clarification, it should be noted that because ‘a subtitle’ can refer to the entire set of subtitles within a text or the single subtitle (i.e. the two lines that appear on screen for a few seconds within a text), this thesis will refer to the latter as a ‘single subtitle’. The industry

standard in the US for AVT is to have the single subtitle be limited to two lines and 35 characters as a maximum (Abdelaal, 2019). In Finland, (the TL of this thesis) the industry standard for a single subtitle is 30 to 35 characters on two lines, and in movie format a maximum of 40 characters per line (Hartama, 2008, p. 192). In fansubtitling communities, the limitations vary upon the collective forum's rules. Bogucki points out that “[i]n amateur subtitling there is no strict limit as to the number of lines per [single] subtitle, but experienced subtitle producers realise that human perception is not boundless” (2009, p. 50). Indeed, DivX Finland which is a subtitling forum that will be later explained further, has a limitation of two lines that is specified in their guide for translators (Divx 1, 2010). However, it should be noted that DivX Finland allows 50 characters per line, more than the industry standard that is, although the recommended amount on the website is 40 characters (Divx 1, 2010).

2.1 Translation taxonomy

Apart from the technical differences between traditional translation and AVT, both fields are trying to do the same thing. The point, from a translators' perspective, is to find the most cohesive and accurate way to translate something from the SL to the TL. One of the main areas of research in the field of translation studies has been the concept of a taxonomy (i.e. schemes of classification). A taxonomy points out the different ways translation work can be done and in the history of translation studies, multiple different taxonomies have been presented and studied. For example, notable translation techniques have been posed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), Catford (1968), and Malone (1988). Conversely, in the context of AVT, techniques have been posed by Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), Tomaszewicz (2001) and Pederson (2005, 2017), although these specific theories have been criticized for their handling of cultural references in audiovisual texts the same way one would handle non-audiovisual text (Abdelaal, 2019).

The most famous of these taxonomies is the one created by Vinay and Darbelnet in 1958 (Fawcett, 1997, p. 34; Pedersen, 2011, p. 72). The two developed a taxonomy in which different types of translation techniques were demonstrated. These techniques were brought forward in their work *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* (1958) and it is considered the most famed, although the book was translated into English as late as 1995. This, at least according to Sager and Hamel, meant that the taxonomy was “terra incognita for students in the English-

speaking world” (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1995, Editors’ Note). The techniques, or procedures as Vinay and Darbelnet call them, are based upon translating English into French and vice versa. The seven techniques are as follows

1. Borrowing is a technique in which the translator borrows a term from the SL to the TL. This is done to add exotic flavor to the text (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1995, p. 32), and a good example of it is the fact that satellites were called ‘Sputniks’ by the Western media when Russia (then Soviet Union) launched the first satellite (Fawcett, 1997, p. 34). Well-established borrowings eventually lose their exotic feel and become part of the lexicon. An example of this is how ‘sauna’ was borrowed from 19th century Finnish to English, but has since become a part of the lexicon, no longer indicating exoticness. Another example could be the term ‘smorgasbord’ which is directly borrowed from the Swedish word ‘smörgåsbord’.

2. Calque is a technique in which an expression is borrowed from the SL and each element of it is translated literally to the TL (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1995, p. 32). A good example of this is how the English ‘skyscraper’ is translated into ‘skyskrapa’ in Swedish. Calque is exceedingly rare in translations simply because it involves the invention of new words or terms. Calque can feel intimidating to translators and hence it is often left to journalists (Fawcett, 1997, p. 35). Furthermore, and although Fawcett explains that there is no evidence to support this claim, “translators will resort more readily to borrowing than to calque, since the guidelines for using the latter are far less obvious than for the former” (1997, p. 35). However, it would make sense that translators would often consider calque as a technique that is too risky or unnecessary.

3. Literal translation is a technique in which the phrase is translated word for word from the SL to the TL (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1995, p. 33). This technique can sometimes work when the translated phrase is simple or when the SL and the TL are from the same language family (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1995, p. 34). It can also be used to signal incompetence in fiction, for example, if an English character is supposed to know French, they might use literal translation, i.e. not the correct syntax or an odd phrase.

4. Transposition is a technique which “involves replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the message” (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1995, p. 36). Fawcett points out that this is “parts of speech playing musical chairs in translation” (1997, p. 37), meaning that when translating from SL to TL, either the grammar or the word order changes. For

example, “l’économie n’a cessé de croître” (Engl. the economy did not stop growing) can be changed to the more natural sounding “economy grew steadily” (Fawcett, 1997, p. 37). It should be noted that this particular example also includes the eighth technique, **reduction**, which will be covered in a moment.

Transposition will naturally occur in most texts that are translated between two different language families. For example, when translating from Finnish into English, longer sentences will almost always have to rely on transposition simply because the two languages have such different rules and sentence structures. A simple example of transposition could be the English “the ducks were fed by my grandma” which could be literally translated into the Finnish equivalent “ankat syötettiin isoäitini toimesta”, which sounds very clumsy to anyone who speaks Finnish. A more accurate translation (using transposition) could be “ankat syötti isoäitini” or “isoäitini syötti ankat” depending on what the writer wants to emphasize.

5. Modulation is a technique in which the signifier changes while the signified stays the same. Modulation is used when literal or transposed translation leads to a grammatically correct result, but is considered unsuitable, unidiomatic or awkward (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1995, p. 36). Modulation is achieved by using metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche, and because of this, it requires extensive knowledge of the TL from the translator (Fawcett, 1997, p. 37).

6. Équivalence is a technique in which an idiom is translated when the TL and the SL refer to the same situation in completely different ways. The most interesting examples of such translation are when the TL does not have a suitable idiom, albeit the SL’s idiom is required (for example in advertising) (Fawcett, 1997, p. 38). For example, the Finnish idiom “sitä saa mitä tilaa” sounds clumsy if literally translated into English as “you get what you order”. However, if the idiom were translated as “you get what you pay for”, it would sound more natural. A hallmark of a poor translation, “overtranslation”, is when the SL’s idiom is translated literally when there is a plausible idiom in the TL (Fawcett, 1997, p. 38).

7. Adaptation is the final of the techniques presented by Vinay and Darbelnet. It is used in “cases where the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown in the TL culture” (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1995, p. 39). Adaptation is controversial among translators because its use deliberately changes the text that is being translated (Fawcett, 1997, p. 39). A common example of the adaptation technique is how miles are changed into kilometers when

translating from US English to Finnish. This, in a sense, implies that a character in a US-based narrative uses kilometers which could be deemed as unrealistic. However, it makes the narrative more digestible for the reader as they do not have to calculate how many kilometers some set of miles is. Adaptation can also function in a more abstract sense. For example, if one was to translate an American cultural object, such as “Walmart”, it could be translated into a more general “hypermarketti” (Engl. hypermarket).

The final technique, (or *trajection*) is from Malone (1988):

8. Reduction, involves the removing of information from the ST during the process of translation. The translator removes information that is “interpretable as *both* circumstantial or tangential to the story *and* unlikely to make much sense” (Malone, 1988, p. 47), meaning that the translator omits information that is not useful for the reader, or in the context of this study, the viewer. Although Malone does not talk about AVT specifically, reduction can be used in this thesis as a technique with which subtitles are made more concise, as AVT is restricted by a limited space for a single subtitle. It should be noted that, in the worst cases of reduction, the translator will omit “cohesive devices” such as personal pronouns or demonstrative pronouns (Abdelaal, 2019). This can lead to incomprehensibility and even change the original meaning of the ST. When translating from English into Finnish, it provides an interesting way to make the translation more concise because often personal pronouns are not required as the subject is already implied in the predicate.

Vinay and Darbelnet categorize the different techniques under two different labels. Techniques 1 to 3 are called ‘literal translation’ whereas techniques 4 to 7 are called ‘oblique translation’. Another way to categorize the techniques would be to look at how much they affect the translation. For example, techniques such as borrowing, calque and adaptation affect the translation at the lexical level, whereas techniques such as literal translation, transposition, modulation, *équivalence* and reduction affect the translation at the syntactic level, in other words, change the entire single subtitle. It should also be noted that these techniques are not mutually exclusive and sometimes their use is open to interpretation. A single subtitle that uses literal translation cannot use any other techniques (apart from reduction) as otherwise it would not be literal translation. However, techniques such as borrowing, calque and adaptation can appear

with transposition, modulation and equivalence. Reduction is a technique that can appear essentially in any single subtitle as long as some element is omitted from the ST.

2.2 Critique on the taxonomy

The techniques presented in 2.1 are important for the thesis because they establish a well-researched, academic background for the examination process. Despite that, however, a few different problems must be acknowledged when using the techniques. Vinay's and Darbelnet's techniques have been criticized of the fact that they are discernable only after the translation is done, rather than before it (Fawcett, 1997, p. 50). Additionally, despite knowing the techniques, only an experienced translator will know how and when to use them. One could even argue that translators do not deliberately use the techniques, rather; they use them subconsciously (Fawcett, 1997, p. 51). Furthermore, it should be noted that Vinay's and Darbelnet's work was never intended to be juxtaposed with different techniques, such as Malone's reduction. The juxtaposition of the different theories might make the examination process more difficult if not impossible or inaccurate. Finally, as was already mentioned, it should also be noted that these techniques were specifically designed for the translation of non-audiovisual content, which causes issues, as the two fields have different restrictions and tools that can be used when the translation process is difficult (e.g. footnotes are rarely used in AVT).

3. Data

Game of Thrones is a television series adaptation of the still on-going book series *A Song of Ice and Fire* authored by George R.R. Martin. The book series was translated into Finnish by Satu Hlinovsky—who despite coming up with most of the translated names—is not credited in the translation of the show (see section 3.6). Notably, this thesis will focus solely on the language used within the television series while also noting that many of the different names and terms were originally translated by Satu Hlinovsky.

The television series produced by Home Box Office (abbr. HBO) ran from April 2011 to its conclusion in May 2019. The show was an international success. The third episode of the final season, titled “The Long Night” for example, drew 17.8 million viewers (New York Post, 2019). Moreover, the first episode of the final season drew 38 million viewers in the three weeks after it was aired (New York Post, 2019). It should be noted that these numbers do not take into account the people who illegally pirated (i.e. streamed or downloaded from unofficial sites) the television series. According to The Verge, the first episode of the eighth season was pirated 55 million times within the first 24 hours of airing (Gartenberg, 2019). Not only do these points indicate how popular the series is, but they also relate to the phenomenon of fansubtitling (see section 3.3) as they are often linked to, sometimes undeservedly, piracy and illegal activity.

3.1 Choice of data

The rationale for selecting the first episode of *Game of Thrones*, titled “Winter is Coming”, was threefold. First and foremost, the first episode of the series consists of names, locations and idioms that can be translated in a myriad of ways. Names include character names such as “Jon Snow”; locations, such as “King’s Landing”; and proverbs such as “Winter is Coming”. The fact that the translation of these elements is subjective and varies based upon the translator’s personal preferences and experience gives motivation for my thesis to compare the differences in the

commercial and the non-commercial work. Additionally, this examination will show how these elements are processed through the taxonomy presented in 2.1.

Secondly, *Game of Thrones* is a fantasy drama series, which requires an understanding of a certain type of register from the translator. For instance, a subtitle in Finnish slang would be off register and, therefore, extremely jarring for the viewer. Thirdly, although there have been multiple studies done on comparing commercial subtitles to non-commercial subtitles, a study of the translation of *Game of Thrones* from English into Finnish has not been carried out in the context of AVT. Additionally, because of the popularity of the series, there are fansubtitles from which to choose, whereas with a less popular show, there might not be.

Due to the relatively long running time of the episode (62 minutes), the quantitative side of the study will only examine the chronologically first 113 *unique* single subtitles. In this case, unique means that the single subtitle appears only once during the entire length of the episode. For example, if a character is rambling and repeats the same dialogue multiple times, it will be included in the quantitative analysis only once because otherwise it would falsify the results of the study. 113 single subtitles amount to 20% of the entire set of single subtitles and therefore, should be enough to convey which techniques are used frequently. For the qualitative sections, the study will look at interesting solutions from the entire data set collected from the episode, which amount to 562 single subtitles.

Despite these criteria, a few problems arise from choosing only the first episode, and more specifically the chronologically first 20% of the subtitles. Arguably the data set does not represent the entirety of the series because this thesis only looks at a very specific, small portion of the series and therefore, the results of the study cannot be compared with other studies like it. This is further exemplified by the way television pilots (i.e. the first episode of a series) are written. Arguably, pilots traditionally convey the character dynamics and the story in a deliberately dramatized manner so as to make the viewer more interested, and in academic research, this may lead to results that are not comparable with the other episodes of the series.

In conclusion, this study can be compared with others like it, with the caveat that the first episode of the series might be significantly different from the other episodes. It could also be that there is no major difference between the pilot episode and the rest of the series, but it is important to note in case this study is used in a comparative manner.

3.2 Data collection

To accurately compare the translation of the episode, this thesis will compare the original English subtitles with the professional and non-professional versions of the Finnish translations. The original English subtitles have been transcribed from the official HBO streaming platform, HBO Nordic. Nobody is listed as the producer of the subtitle on the service and henceforth will not be credited. The professionally translated Finnish subtitle is produced by Sari Kumpula, and it is available on HBO Nordic for streaming. Kumpula's work gives the framework for what sort of techniques a commercial translation uses. It is assumed that Kumpula has done the translation work by herself, since the episode does not credit anyone else. Like the English subtitles, the Finnish subtitles have also been transcribed. The unofficial, non-commercial and presumably amateur work version of the translation is retrieved from a Finnish subtitling forum called DivX Finland. There was no need to transcribe this set of data because it was already in a transcribed form in the .sub file retrieved from the website.

3.3 Fan subtitling

'Fansubtitle' or 'fansub' as a term refers to a subtitle that has been created by a fan community. Hence the act of creating such a subtitle is called 'fansubtitling' or 'fansubbing'. Alternatively, fansubtitling has been called 'volunteer translation', 'crowdsourced subtitling', and 'non-commercial translation'. Within the context of this thesis, the terms will be used interchangeably. Fansubbing was first perceived in the 1980s and 1990s when communities began to rise around the translation of Japanese animation (better known as 'anime') (Barra, 2009, p. 517; Lee, 2011, p. 10). In the context of anime, the aim of fansubtitling was to "provide English-speaking fans with a wide variety of animes that were not available through authorized distribution" (Lee, 2011, p. 10). Therefore, the translation work was done simply because there was not a commercial alternative. This sentiment is echoed by Bogucki who notes that

"the rationale behind the decision to undertake the translation in the form of fansubs and amateur subtitling is largely the same: to make a contribution in an area of particular interest and to

popularize it in other countries, making it accessible to a broader range of viewers/readers, who belong to different linguistic communities.” (2009, p. 49)

However, this description of fansubbing does not apply to the modern context of the phenomenon, as now-a-days, most Western media has a commercially subtitled alternative. For example, the subject of this study, *Game of Thrones* has a commercial alternative that can be found on a streaming platform. The use of a fansubtitle could indicate that the viewer is using a non-commercial alternative of the media (more on ethical issues in 3.6). In other words, fansubtitles are often used to circumvent the legal option of purchasing media.

3.4 How DivX Finland functions

The translations of DivX Finland are performed in teams. Each team has multiple translators, a proofreader and a project leader. Each member of a translation team is assigned a part of the text which is called ‘paketti’ (Engl. a package) (DivX 2, 2011). A package consists of 100 to 120 lines of dialogue, or in the case of this thesis, 100 to 120 single subtitles (DivX 2, 2011). Each member translates their own section of the text (DivX 2, 2011). The team has one proofreader, who, after the packages have been translated, combines them into a full subtitle (DivX 3, 2010).

The translation process itself has strict rules which are conveyed on the numerous guides on the DivX Finland website. For example, there is a guide that displays the most common mistakes made when translating from English into Finnish (DivX 4, 2010), a guide for a translator (DivX 1, 2010), a guide for a proofreader (DivX 3, 2010) and a guide for a project leader (DivX 2, 2011).

After the proofreader has put together the subtitle, it goes to the “insiders of the forum” who examine it. This is referred to as a “karenssiaika” (Engl. waiting period) (DivX 5, n.d.). If the insiders deem the subtitle publishable, it goes to the subtitle archive on the website, where it is available for download by anyone. However, this does not mean that the translation of the particular subtitle is finished. According to the rules and FAQ of the website, the subtitles are almost always changed after the initial release, which is why the .sub files also receive a version number indicating which iteration of the translation is in question (DivX 5, n.d.).

This process is similar to that of Italian fansubbing communities such as www.subsfactory.it and www.italiansubs.net, which Barra investigated in a study comparing fansubtitling to commercial work (2009, pp. 517–519). The main differences between the Finnish forum and the two Italian forums are that the “project leader” who in the Finnish equivalent is called “the proofreader” is called the “team manager” (Barra, 2009, p. 518), although it might be that Barra has simply given the title to this role, rather than the group itself using the title. However, based on this set of two countries and different fansubtitling conventions, it would seem that the phenomenon is similar internationally.

3.5 Organization of data

The data for the thesis was collected from the three sources mentioned previously. The data has been organized as a chart in order to make the comparison more comprehensible. Both Finnish translations have been inserted into the chart to adhere to the original English single subtitle. In other words, the English transcription of the subtitles remains true to the way it is seen on HBO Nordic, whereas the Finnish transcription has been slightly modified to fit in with the English equivalent.

A	B	C	D
#	HBO ENG	HBO FIN	DIVX FIN
1	Easy, boy.	Ihan rauhallisesti.	Rauhassa, poika.
2	What do you expect? They're savages.	Sellaisia villit ovat.	Mitä odotit? He ovat raakalaisia.
3	One lot steals a goat from another lot,	Kun yhdet vievät toisen vuohen,	Yksi joukko varastaa vuohen toiselta.
4	Before you know it they're ripping each other to pieces.	he tekevät toisistaan hakkelusta.	Ennen pitkää he repivät toisiaan kappaleiksi.
5	I've never seen Wildlings do a thing like this.	Eivät villit yleensä toimi näin.	En ole nähnyt villien tekävän tällaista.

Figure 1. Organization of the data.

The chart is divided into four different columns (fig. 1). The first column on the left (A) indicates the chronological order of the single subtitle. This chart contains the first five single subtitles of the 562 in the English transcript of the episode. The column to the right of it (B) shows the transcript of the original English subtitle. Each single subtitle in the column appears exactly as it was in the episode. The HBO FIN column (C) indicates the official Finnish Home Box Office translation produced by Kumpula. This column represents the side of the professional, salaried translator. The rightmost column (D) indicates the non-commercial, non-salaried and presumably amateur translation created by the translation team on the DivX Finland website.

The ‘|’ (vertical bar) symbol signifies a line break in which the translation jumps to the next line. As can be surveyed from the data in figure 1, single subtitles 3 and 4 were a singular single subtitle in the original subtitle, with the vertical bar signifying the place where the line break happens. ‘-/-’ signifies an example where the translator has combined two different subtitles into a single subtitle to make it more concise.

3.6 Ethical considerations about the data

There are a few questions of ethics that must be addressed before continuing further. First and foremost, it is worth noting how much the original translation of the book series, produced by the previously mentioned Satu Hlinovsky, has affected both the commercial and the non-commercial translations of the television series. Hlinovsky is not credited in the translation of the show, although most of the character names and location names are from her work (Majander, 2015). Therefore, when analyzing certain decisions to translate certain things in a particular way, they can often be traced back to the original translation done by Hlinovsky. Therefore, although the thesis might speculate some decisions made by the subtitle producers, part of the work can also be traced back to the original translator of the book series.

Another matter that must be addressed is the ethicality of potentially copyrighted data. DivX Finland uses, in a sense, copyrighted material as every single subtitle of dialogue from the show is copied and translated for anyone to use. However, it should be mentioned, that this is done in a non-commercial fashion: the users of DivX Finland do not gain any remuneration for

the translation work that they do. Rather, it could be seen as pedagogical in a sense—almost like training—for amateur translators that perhaps strive to become professionals. However, this does not change the fact that the dialogue is copyrighted material. Furthermore, the use of subtitles by DivX Finland would imply that the person using the subtitles may have an illegal version of the media. Lee explains that the copyright policy, which differs from country to country, has not yet caught up with the global phenomenon of unauthorized copying and sharing of subtitles (2011, p. 8). However, it should be noted that the administrators of DivX Finland are strictly against piracy and there are multiple warnings against it on the website (DivX 5, n.d.).

The final point on ethics is that the data collected from the episode cannot be used as an alternative to the episode itself. Therefore, this thesis is authored only for academic benefit and the researcher will not benefit from it commercially. Although the thesis uses copyrighted material, such as dialogue and translations, it will not hold the entire data for the episode. In conclusion, this thesis is not a commercial alternative to the first episode “Winter is Coming”.

4. Analysis and comparison

The process of comparison will be performed in the measures that were described in earlier sections of this thesis. First, the thesis will provide a quantitative examination of the techniques that appear in the data. After that, the thesis will carry out a qualitative analysis to compare the different solutions that the translators have used.

4.1 Quantitative examination

A quantitative examination of the chronologically first 20% of unique single subtitles from the perspective of the translation taxonomy has revealed the following results seen in Table 1.

TECHNIQUE USED	HBO FIN	DIVX FINLAND
1. Borrowing	1 = 0,7%	0 = 0%
2. Calque	1 = 0,7%	0 = 0%
3. Literal translation	42 = 28,9%	74 = 46,8%
4. Transposition	15 = 10,3%	11 = 7,0%
5. Modulation	56 = 38,6%	31 = 19,6%
6. Équivalence	4 = 2,8%	4 = 2,5%
7. Adaptation	2 = 1,4%	3 = 1,9%
8. Reduction	24 = 16,6%	35 = 22,2%
Total times techniques used	145	158

Table 1. Techniques utilized in the translations.

The results display the typical differences between the two translations. Borrowing and calque were rare overall but used more often by Kumpula. This would imply that the professional translator uses these techniques more than the volunteer, but then again, the results only differ 1 to 0. Therefore, nothing tangible can be discerned from these results.

An interesting difference in the numbers is the overall similarity in the use of transposition, equivalence and adaptation. This could imply that both professional and volunteer

translators consider them useful tools. The major differences appear when comparing literal translation, which was largely favored by the DivX Finland team and modulation, which was largely favored by Kumpula. This would imply a different approach to translation altogether, which will be further explored in the conclusion.

It is important to note that the percentages are counted out of the total number of times that the techniques were used in the translator-specific set of data, not from the set of 113 single subtitles. This is due to the possibility of multiple different techniques appearing within a single subtitle, which is also why the two data sets have different amounts of total times techniques used.

4.2 Qualitative examination

Borrowing appears only once during the first 20% of single subtitles. This is understandable as many instances of borrowing from English to Finnish would sound unusual to a Finnish viewer. However, there are a few instances where its use functions. For instance, Kumpula uses the borrowing technique once in the 39th single subtitle (fig. 2).

#	HBO ENG	HBO FIN	DIVX FIN
39	My lady.	Lady.	Rouvani.
516	A small gift, for the new Khaleesi--	Pieni lahja uudelle khaleesille.	Pieni lahja uudelle khaleesille.

Figure 2. Examples of borrowing.

This is done to emphasize “lady” as a title or a position of power, although it is missing the possessive suffix “ladyⁿⁱ” indicated by the “my” in the original English subtitle. The alternative translation by the DivX Finland team, “Rouvani” is equally accurate, although “rouva” (Engl. madam) does not imply a position of power in the same manner as the borrowed term “lady”. It could also be argued that borrowing the title “lady” can literally be confusing to a Finnish viewer that has never heard the term before.

A similar use within the subtitles (although not in the first 20%), is the use of the term “Khaleesi”, which both translators have borrowed into the Finnish translation (see single subtitle

#516). Khaleesi is a more typical example of borrowing because the TL does not have a counterpart to use. Furthermore, the use of Khaleesi as a title gives the translation an interesting, exotic and fantastical edge which would be lost if the translator had adapted it into a more commonplace title like ‘kuningatar’ (Engl. ‘queen’).

As expected, calque is exceedingly rare in the text. The technique appears only once within the first 113 single subtitles (see fig. 3). This is an interesting example as Kumpula has translated “bow arm” to “jousikäsi” which is not a commonly known term that could be found in a dictionary.

#	HBO ENG	HBO FIN	DIVX FIN
36	Relax your bow arm.	Rentouta jousikäsi.	Rentouta vasen kätesi.

Figure 3. An example of calque.

It would seem that this has been done to give the term some exoticness. However, it could also be argued that the term is slightly confusing because “jousikäsi” also happens to be a term used by violin players for the arm that holds the bow of the violin. Alternatively, this could be a deliberate attempt to link the two uses of the term. Conversely, the translation by DivX Finland uses the more traditional choice “vasen kätesi” (Engl. your left arm), which in the scene is the hand that holds the bow. Furthermore, DivX Finland has included the possessive suffix “kätesi” whereas Kumpula has omitted it from the translation.

Literal translation is used surprisingly often used in both translations. The technique appears often in short dialogue and interjections, as can be seen in figure 4. The major difference between the two translations concerning literal translation is that the DivX Finland team often uses it in conjunction with reduction for longer sentences, whereas Kumpula prefers to use modulation.

#	HBO ENG	HBO FIN	DIVX FIN
38	Lord Stark!	Lordi Stark.	Lordi Stark!
47	Ned.	-Ned.	Ned.

Figure 4. Examples of literal translation.

The fourth technique, transposition is not used often in either translation, although it should be noted that discerning the difference between transposition and modulation may be difficult. However, it is clear from the results shown in table 1 that, although the syntax is different in Finnish and English, the translators have still chosen to use literal translation. However, an interesting observation is that the use of transposition is not limited to just a single subtitle, but over multiple single subtitles. Transposition is, for example, used over multiple different single subtitles as can be seen in figure 5. This is done to achieve a more natural-sounding translation when the results of literal translation seem clumsy. Figure 5 also shows how transposition can be used heavily with reduction to make a single subtitle more concise.

#	HBO ENG	HBO FIN	DIVX FIN
64	In the name of Robert of the House Baratheon,	Baratheonin suvun Robert I:n nimessä..	Baratheonin suvun Robertin nimeen.
65	-the first of his name... -Don't look away.	-Älä käännä katsettasi	- Älä käännä katsettasi.
66	-...king of the Andals and the first... -Father will know if you do.	Isä huomaa, jos teet sen.	Andalien kuninkaan nimeen. - Isä saa tietää, jos käännät.
67	...lord of the Seven Kingdoms and protector of the realm,	-...valtakunnan suojelijan nimessä –	Seitsemän kuningaskunnan herran ja rajojen suojelijan nimeen, -

Figure 5. Transposition used over multiple single subtitles.

Figure 6 presents examples of transposition and modulation. The very first single subtitle in the episode shows how Kumpula has translated the command “Easy, boy” to “Ihan rauhallisesti” (Engl. calmly now) using modulation. Conversely, DivX Finland’s team has opted for the literal translation “Rauhassa, poika”. The 24th single subtitle shows how both Kumpula and the DivX Finland team have had to use transposition technique simply because the syntax is different between Finnish and English and because a literal translation would not seem natural to a Finnish viewer.

#	HBO ENG	HBO FIN	DIVX FIN
1	Easy, boy.	Ihan rauhallisesti.	Rauhassa, poika.
24	What is it?	Mikä se on?	Mikä se on?

Figure 6. Examples of transposition and modulation.

The sixth technique, *équivalence*, which converts an idiom to another appears a few times in the data. There is one instance of a translation of a common idiom as is the case with the 63rd single subtitle (fig. 7). “Forgive me” is an idiom that has to be translated in a culture-specific way for it to make sense. Both translators have noted this and correctly translated it to “anna anteeksi”. More often, however, *équivalence* appears when the translators must convert a fictitious proverb, as is the case with 49th, 74th and 422nd single subtitles.

#	HBO ENG	HBO FIN	DIVX FIN
49	And winter is coming.	Ja talvi tekee tuloaan.	ja talvi tekee tuloaan.
63	Forgive me, Lord.	Antakaa anteeksi, lordi.	Herra, anna anteeksi.
74	“Our way is the old way”?	Noudatamme perinteitä.	"Meidän tapamme ovat vanhat tavat."
422	Winter is coming.	Talvi tekee tuloaan.	Talvi on tulossa.

Figure 7. Examples of *équivalence*.

Game of Thrones has come to be known for these proverbial ‘house words’, such as “winter is coming”, which are the house words of family Stark. Of note is that the proverbial house words should always be translated in the same way within one translation, although their use and meaning usually depends on the context. Interestingly, the translator in DivX Finland team has translated the same house words in two different ways within the one subtitle, as can be seen from the 49th and 422nd lines.

In the 74th single subtitle (fig. 7), it seems that an idiom within the show has been literally (albeit in the polite plural form) translated into its Finnish equivalent by the DivX Finland team, whereas Kumpula has chosen to use the more abstract, modulated version “noudatamme perinteitä” (Engl. we follow tradition). Whether the original citation is a proverb in the depicted Westerosi culture, or a quotation of another character, is unclear. However, one might suspect the latter as the proverb is not used in the series after this.

Adaptation is a technique which appears only once in the 113 chronologically first dialogue prompts in the translation. Furthermore, *Game of Thrones* is an interesting example when it comes to the use of adaptation because the translator must consider which concepts in

the translation should be adapted into the TL. A fantasy setting might benefit from the use of borrowing for instance, because if the translator uses adaptation too liberally, the text will lose its exotic, fantasy edge.

Figure 8 shows an instance in which the term “Lord” is translated into “lordi” (i.e. a man of noble rank or high office; a nobleman) by Kumpula and into “herra” (i.e. a name for God or Christ; a title before the forename of a knight or baronet; or in a modern context, mister) by the DivX Finland team. Kumpula’s translation is literal and refers to the character of Eddard Stark who is about to execute the character who utters the line of dialogue. Conversely, the translation by DivX Finland has two different implications: either the character is asking for forgiveness from Eddard Stark just like in Kumpula’s translation or the character is asking for forgiveness from God. The latter, however, would be odd as the Northern characters in the television show do not pray to a single god.

#	HBO ENG	HBO FIN	DIVX FIN
63	Forgive me, Lord.	Antakaa anteeksi, lordi.	Herra, anna anteeksi.
69	lord of Winterfell and warden of the North.	-//-	Talvivaaran herra ja pohjoisen vahti,

Figure 8. Examples of adaptation.

In a sense, the DivX Finland translators have potentially used adaptation incorrectly, making the character in the series pray to a singular god. However, one could also argue that adaptation has been used in this way to make the world of the story more relatable for Western viewers of the series. It is difficult to discern which is the case simply because ‘herra’ is capitalized at the beginning of the single subtitle. In Finnish, the capitalized ‘Herra’ would refer to god as the capitalized first letter would refer to a proper noun, whereas the non-capitalized ‘herra’ could simply be a title.

However, in the 69th single subtitle (fig. 8), Eddard refers to himself as a ‘lord’, which is then translated into “herra” by the DivX Finland team. This would indicate that in 63rd single subtitle “herra” refers to Eddard and therefore this would not be a case of adaptation after all. However, even this presents a problem considering that the DivX Finland team has translated “lord” into “lordi” earlier in the text (see fig. 4 and single subtitle #38).

Figure 9 shows a very common case of adaptation. In it, both translations have changed the “100-foot drop” into the metric system equivalent of 30 meters. This is done so that the Finnish viewers (who use the metric system) would understand the magnitude of the drop. However, it also inadvertently implies that the medieval, fantasy-based Westerosi culture uses the metric system, which may not be as believable as the imperial system of measurement.

#	HBO ENG	HBO FIN	DIVX FIN
115	100-foot drop into the water, and you were never afraid.	30 metrin pudotus veteen. Sinua ei edes pelottanut.	30 metrin korkeudesta veteen, et koskaan pelännyt.

Figure 9. An example of adaptation.

The final technique, reduction, can be seen in dialogue that has been shortened and in lines of dialogue that have been omitted from the subtitles, presumably because they have been considered insignificant. The most common reductions are the removal of personal pronouns, which can be easily done when translating into Finnish because the predicate will often imply the pronoun and therefore, it does not have to be mentioned as a separate pronoun subject (see fig. 10). For example, the 52nd single subtitle could be literally translated into “Minä näin valkeat kulkijat”, but both translators have omitted the personal pronoun “minä” (Engl. I), simply because the predicate “näin” (Engl. ‘saw’ or ‘I saw’) implies that the character is referring to themselves.

#	HBO ENG	HBO FIN	DIVX FIN
50	Lad, go run back and get the rest.	[NOT INCLUDED]	[NOT INCLUDED]
52	I saw the White Walkers.	Näin valkeat kulkijat.	Näin valkeat kulkijat.
514	Jadi, zhey jorah andahli!	<i>Tule lähemmäs, andali Jorah.</i>	[NOT INCLUDED]
515	Khal vezhven.	[NOT INCLUDED]	[NOT INCLUDED]

Figure 10. Examples of reduction.

Another interesting example of reduction is the 50th single subtitle which shows how both the translators have omitted a line of dialogue from the translation, perhaps because it was considered insignificant. Similarly, the 514th and 515th single subtitles which display a case of a fictitious foreign language ‘Dothraki’ are omitted from the translation. Notably “Khal vezhven” has been omitted by both translations, whereas “Jadi, zhey jorah andahli!” has only been omitted by the DivX Finland team. This perhaps indicates that the translators can sometimes decide to omit information as a stylistic device, where the viewer is not perhaps supposed to know what the Dothraki-speaking character is saying.

5. Conclusion

The combined results of the qualitative and quantitative analyses of the study have shown a few significant differences between the types of translations produced by the two targets of examination. The professional translation favored borrowing and calque more than the non-commercial one, as both techniques were used once by Kumpula, whereas the DivX Finland team did not use them at all. This could indicate a few different things: it may imply that the professional translator has more confidence in riskier techniques such as calque and borrowing. Conversely, it could also reflect how strict the rules and regulations are on the DivX Finland forum. Without interviewing the actual translators, such analysis unfortunately veers into speculation and, to be fair, the differences between the two were minor.

Comparing the use of literal translation to transposition and modulation shows that the professional translator tended to favor modulation (i.e. changing the way the meaning is conveyed through the subtitle) over literal translation, which was applied much more by the non-professional, volunteer translators. The reason for this could be that the non-professional translators lack experience and training in translation and therefore use English syntax more often, even if the results are not very natural. Furthermore, transposition was used more by Kumpula, although the differences were minor. However, it should be noted that the professional translation used modulation often so heavily that it sometimes altered the original ‘poetic’ nature of the dialogue, which was not lost in a literal translation. In general, it seems that the volunteer

translators were more cautious of losing the original ‘poetic nature’ of the dialogue, whereas the professional translator tended to focus more on conveying meaning.

Équivalence appears in the data a few times, although mostly in the form of the series’ own fictitious proverbs that can be translated in multiple different ways. It is possible that with a larger set of data, one might find the series to contain more traditional idioms and proverbs, and different results might be discerned. The set of data examined in this study included a single ‘traditional idiom’, “Forgive me”, which was correctly translated by both translators using the equivalence technique. Therefore, no differences can be discerned in the use of the technique. A similar case was attained from the analysis concerning the adaptation technique which use was similar in both translations. Perhaps if the set of data was larger, more cases could be found. The major difference between the two translations was that the DivX Finland team had translated a singular proverb in two different ways.

Reduction is the only technique that was not from Vinay and Darbelnet’s taxonomy and its implementation into the study proved problematic because it made discerning the differences between literal translation, transposition and modulation more difficult. However, the implementation revealed interesting results about the practices of omission used by each translator. It displayed how the amateur translators often tended to use literal translation while also omitting non-relevant elements from the sentence. Seemingly the DivX Finland team tended to use reduction more than Kumpula.

Due to time and space constraints, this study lacks a few aspects that could be expanded upon. First and foremost, the legitimacy of the quantitative results could be tested by applying another set of data (113 single subtitles, 20%) from the episode and comparing how many times each of the techniques is used. For the most accurate results, the 113 single subtitles could be selected at random, since this research used a chronological set of data, which might affect the results.

Despite the fact that similar studies have been conducted by different scholars with the same taxonomy, comparison of such results could be problematic. The results rely heavily on the researcher’s interpretations of their materials and understanding of the taxonomy. Therefore, the results between the studies might be misleading. The qualitative side of this study can be used as a point of comparison to others like it, as long as the examiner carefully notes how each

technique works. If the thesis is compared with someone else's, who has a different interpretation of what the techniques mean, then the results will also differ, which could lead to inaccuracies concerning the practices of translators.

The qualitative section of this thesis could be further expanded upon by interviewing the translators on their work process. One could find out if the translators even consider the techniques covered in the thesis. One could also find out how different the work process is between a single translator (Kumpula) and a team of translators (DivX Finland). Furthermore, the entire set of data could be examined further to see if there are any other interesting observations to be made.

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