



CHAPTER VII

Re-Translations of Shakespeare's Drama: A Case Study on the Re-Translations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

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The focus of this article is the re-translations of Shakespeare's drama, particularly the three major Turkish re-translations of Shakespeare's early comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. To this end, it would be useful to explain the concept of re-translation as a frequently-occurring phenomenon. The term re-translation briefly refers to new translations of earlier translated texts. All kinds of texts including popular fiction and/or technical texts such as brochures or instructions are retranslated. However, sacred texts, and canonical literary works have been massively re-translated.

According to the early theories, re-translations occur either because of the ageing of the previous translations, or the wish to reach a perfect translation. The changing language is precisely one of the reasons a retranslation is undertaken. "As cultures continuously change, every generation may take a different view" (Desmidt 2009: 670) on what is good or functional. As a result, existing translation or translations do not meet the new/altered requirements of the receiving culture, and the receiving culture may demand the creation of a new translation, in other words, a re-translation.

In addition, retranslations are also closely related with the changing ideologies and linguistic, literary, cultural and - of course - translational norms, since "language, poetics, and notions of approved translational behavior evolve over time" (Brownlie 2006: 150). As a result, the translation is thought to have

aged or is unacceptable because it no longer conforms to the current ways of thinking or behaving. Apart from the re-translation theory focusing on the ageing of translations, some theoreticians argue that re-translations are needed in order to reach a perfect translation.

As mentioned above, although technical texts and popular fiction (remember the Harry Potter series) are also re-translated, re-translation is mostly related to canonical literary texts. Since it is believed that 'great translations' of these texts are so few, retranslations exist. In other words, re-translations are regarded as a way of an improvement on the previous translations. It is believed that re-translating the text, the translator "can make use of knowledge of earlier translations, evaluations of those translations, and of the critical reception of the work" (Brownlie 2006: 153). Theorists have explained the nature of such an improvement. For example, Antoine Berman, Bensimon, and more recent theorists notably Chesterman and Koskinen have suggested that first translations are more target-oriented since their main aim is to make the target audience become acquainted with the text, while subsequent retranslations are expected to be more source-oriented. As Brownlie has translated from Berman's *Pour une Critique des Traductions*, there are different stages of retranslations:

First there is a courageous 'introduction' without literary pretension (usually for those studying the work); then comes the time of the first translations with literary ambition – they are generally not complete translations, and as is well-known, full of flaws; then come the (many) retranslations... Eventually a canonical translation may be produced which will stop the cycle of retranslations for a long time. (qtd. in Brownlie 2006: 148)

Bensimon has also explained why earlier translations tend to be target-oriented and later translations source-oriented, and he has suggested that

[t]his is because initially a culture is often reluctant to embrace a text which is very foreign to it, so in order for the foreign text to be accepted into the new cultural sphere, it has to be adapted to the target culture. Later on, since the text has already been introduced, it is really no longer foreign, and translations can return to the original and be more source-oriented. (qtd. in Brownlie 2006: 148)

However, some of the recent theorists have criticized the early re-translation hypothesis. First of all, it is mostly mentioned that retranslations do not always occur in a different time period, instead more than one translation can be undertaken during one time period, and this situation can reflect the change in norms and ideologies by different initiators.

For example, Susam-Sarajeva, who has studied the different translations of works by the French theorist Barthes into Turkish undertaken during a fairly short time span (1975–1990), points out re-translations may come about within a very short time span. According to Susam-Sarajeva “re-translations do not come about only when the source text is canonical and literary [...] or are not necessarily the consequence of ‘ageing’ translations [...] or do not arise only when the existing translation(s) are deficient/assimilative/adaptive/literal, etc., or when the readers’ attitudes, tastes, and competence change” (2003: 5). Rather, “re-translations may have more to do with the needs and attitudes within the receiving system than any inherent characteristics of the source text which make it ‘prone to’ re-translations” (Susam-Sarajeva 2003: 5). In the case of Turkish Barthes, retranslations occurred as the result of a [...] situation in the receiving system, which was struggling to create an indigenous literary critical discourse through competing terminological proposals in translations (Brownlie 2006: 156-157).

I think, although ageing of translations is an important factor in re-translations, the historical period experienced by the receiving culture is much more important, since different time periods suggest different ideologies and different norms. However, I believe theatre re-translation is also different from re-translations of novel or poetry because of many different reasons. Unlike a novel and a poem, the duality is inherent in the art of theatre (Anderman 2009: 92), since drama is viewed both a literary text and a work of visual arts. Thus, “the theatre translation differs from literary translation both in the requirements it has to meet and in the relation the text has with its audience” (Mathijssen 2007: 12). First of all there are more than one target group in drama: the audience, the armchair reader, the players and the director. Secondly there are two different texts in a dramatic text: dialogues and the stage directions. Thirdly, the dramatic text is incomplete unless it is performed, which presents two other elements: performability and speakability. In addition to the duality problem, there should be interaction between the audience and the players who perform the play.

As for re-translations of drama, translations of drama get older more quickly when compared to translations of novel or poem, probably because the dramatic text is fully composed of dialogues and is performed for the contemporary

audience. Although “the Dutch publisher Mark Pieters (2004) claims that after fifty years a translation can be considered obsolete” (Mathijssen 2007: 17), the time span for translation of drama is much shorter.

Another explanation for this assumption can be related to the incompleteness of dramatic texts and the interaction between the audience and the players. As Marta Mateo suggests in her article on translation strategies and the reception of drama performances, due to the close communication between addresser and addressee in the theatre, plays are usually subject to alterations so as to fit the established theatrical conventions and cultural expectations of the target audience (1997: 105).

These assumptions can explain why there are often several translations of the same play, as every generation would ideally require a new translation with which to share a new experience.

Thus, retranslation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* should be interpreted according to different context, requirements of drama, and social agents of translations, norms and personal choices.

As checked in Turkish National Library, it is seen that there are 1009 entries for Shakespeare, which include source texts, translations, re-translations, booklets, posters, and critical texts on Shakespeare's plays and sonnets. As for re-translations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, although there are almost 40 entries, when we exclude the posters and reprints, there remain 7 re-translations of the play. Some of them were re-translated 50 years ago, although there are re-translations which almost belong to the same time period. Due to time constraints, I will discuss three main translations of the play: the translations undertaken by Nurettin Sevin, Can Yücel and Bülent Bozkurt.

Nurettin Sevin translated the play first in 1936, which was published by Hilmi Kitapevi with the title *Yaz Ortasında Bir Gecelik Rüya*; then he revised his translation and it was published in 1944 by Maarif Vekilliği with a different title *Bir Yaz Dönümü Gecesi Rüyası*. The copy used in this study was printed in 1962, and is the reprint of the translation of 1944.

Can Yücel translated the play first in 1980s and it was published in 1981 by Ağaoğlu Yayınevi; then the translation was reprinted by four different publishing houses in four different time periods: 1984, 1992, 1996 and 2003. The copy used in this study was printed in 2003, and is the reprint of the translation of 1981.

Bülent Bozkurt translated the play first in 1988, which was published by Dönem Yayıncılık; then he translated the play in 1992 which was published by

Remzi Kitapevi. There are 14 reprints of the translation according to the data received from Turkish National Library. The copy used in this study was printed in 2002, and is the reprint of the translation of 1992.

In order to reach more concrete solutions, I have chosen 5 different examples among many others:

Example 1

SOURCE TEXT	Egeus: [...] And my gracious Duke, This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child: Thou, thou Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes, And interchang'd love-tokens with my child: Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung, With feigning voice, verses of feigning love, (22)
SEVİN	Egeus: [...] işte ey devletli dük, Bu adam Hermia'nın gönlünü büyülemiş. Ah sen, ah Lysandrus, ona destanlar yazdın: Benim masum yavrumla sevda hatıraları, Nişanları değiştin. Ay ışığında gidip Penceresi önünde yalancı beyitlerle O yalancı aşkının şarkısını okudun; (6)
YÜCEL	Ege: [...] Bu namussuz da, haşmetlim, allem etti kalem etti, kızımı da kendine benzetti. Ah, İskender, ah, bir elime geçirsem düğümünü, ümüğünü senin! Gül gibi kızıma maniler mi, destanlar mı düzmedi! Ya o günde dört posta yolladığı allı pullu, pembe zarflı nameler! Geceleri balkonunun altında gitar-mitar döktürdüğü nameler! Ayışığı, mayışığı, yapmacığım aşığı aldı kızın aklını başından. (40)
BOZKURT	Egeus: [...] Ama bu adam büyüledi onu, gönlünü çeldi. Sen Lysander, kızıma şiirler yazdın sen; Armağanlar verdin ona, yalan aşkını yalan sözlere döktün; Penceresine gelip şarkılar söyledin ay ışığında; Sinsi sinsi sokuldun, aşkına yerleştin. (22)

In this first example extracted from Act I, Scene i, Egeus brings Lysander, Demetrius, and Hermia to Theseus to “beg the ancient privilege of Athens.” Egeus wants Hermia to marry Demetrius and she has refused because she is in love with Lysander. While Sevin and Bozkurt have literally translated the text and remained

source-oriented, Yücel has used “gitar mitar döktürmek” meaning “to play guitar” and modernized and also domesticated the theme. As “singing at her window sung under the moonlight” is considered very romantic by the seventeenth century reader and audience, Yücel would create the same effect Shakespeare created during his time from the thematic point of view, but he has failed to give the archaic taste in this part.

Example 2

SOURCE TEXT	Titania: These are the forgeries of jealousy: And never since the middle summer's spring Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead, By paved mountain, or by rushy brook, Or in the breached margin of the sea, To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind, But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport. (35)
SEVİN	Titania: Bunlar bütün kıskançlık icadı uydurmalar: Mevsimin başladığı yaz dönümünden beri Ne kırlarda buluştuk, ne vadide görüştük, Ne ormanlara geldik ne çayırlara indik, Ne sazlı çayırdı, ne taşlı pınar başında, Ne denizlerin kumsal, çakıllı çevresinde Rüzgârlar dem çekerken devrana gelebildik. (31)
YÜCEL	Müzeyyen: Bu sendeki kıskançlıktan da öte bir kompleks, bir nevroz! Furoyt diye bir Yahudi doktor var, ona görün sen istersen! Baksana, erişti erişeli beri Nevruz , ne orman, ne çayır, ne kumsal, ne pınar, ne fıskiyeli havuz, senin şu deli saçmaların yüzünden, cem olup buluşamıyoruz. (54)
BOZKURT	Titania: kıskançlıktan doğan kuruntular bunlar. Yaz başından bu yana, Tepelerde, vadilerde; ormanlarda, otlaklarda, Çakıllı pınarlarda, şırıl şırıl sularında; Denizin kumsal kıyılarında Islık çalan rüzgâr eşliğinde Halka olup dans etmek için Ne zaman buluşsak, Huysuzluğunla neşemizi bozdun, tadımızı kaçırdın. (40)

In this second example from Act II, Scene i, Titania and Oberon are having a quarrell, and Titania says to Oberon “These are the forgeries of jealousy.” Yücel has added extra sentence in this part in order to stress the jealousy of Oberon, and made Titania say “Furoyt diye bir Yahudi doktor var, ona görün sen istersen!” Yücel’s choice “Sigmund Freud” lived between the years 1856-1939, more than 200 years after Shakespeare wrote the play. Yücel, adding extra sentence, and making an anachronism, has followed domesticating strategy.

Moreover, he has changed “the middle summers spring” into “Nevruz,” while Bozkurt and Sevin have followed a more source-oriented approach and translated the part by using literal translation procedure respectively as “yaz başından” and “mevsimin başladığı yaz dönümünden.” “Nevruz” is a composite noun combining Nev (new) and ruz (day), and it means new day and is a mythological day celebrated as New Year’s Day by Turks living in Central Asia, Anatolian Turks and Persians. It is the symbol of nature’s release from winter and arrival of plentiness and abundance. Thus, Yücel has followed a target-oriented approach. From the thematic point of view, his translation choice of domesticating, maybe, can be justified.

Example 3

SOURCE TEXT	Puck: I go, I go, look how I go, Swifter than arrow from the Tartar’s bow (56)
SEVİN	Puck: Gittim gittim yaman çabuk Bir Tatarın yayından fırlıyan oktan çabuk (68)
YÜCEL	Fuzulû’nin yayından çıkmış berceste bir beyitim (80)
BOZKURT	Puck: Gidiyorum, gittim bile, baksana bir hızıma. Tatar’ın oku (dip not) gelse, yetişemez tozuma (68) Dip Not: Doğuda yapılan ok ve yayların üstün nitelikli olduğuna inanılmış (118)

Another example is extracted from the Act III, Scene ii, when Puck is intending to leave the scene very swiftly. Tartar has been translated by Bozkurt and Sevin as Tatar. Bozkurt has also added a footnote explaining “tatar,” which is not very common in drama translation. The Tartars were natives of Tartary in central Asia, and associated with the Mongol hordes which threatened parts of Europe in the middle ages. Their bows were said to have special power. Yücel,

on the other hand, has domesticated the part, and translated it as “Fuzulî'nin yayından çıkmış berceste bir beyitim” (80). Fuzuli (who lived until 1556) is one of the most famous and greatest poets of Turkish literature, who has given us the most sensitive examples of lyrical Turkish poetry, *Leyla ile Mecnun*. Since Fuzuli means a lot to the target reader/audience, such a translation will arouse their feelings.

Example 4

SOURCE TEXT	Null
SEVİN	Null
YÜCEL	Null
BOZKURT	İskender: Haklısın. Demek istiyorsun ki sen, resepsiyondaki siyasallı katip bizden nüfus soracağına göre , ayrı odalarda kalacağız mecbur. Ona da razı bu mecnun. Sade bu gecelik ama, haberin olsun! Hermiya: Telaştan geceliğimi unutmuşum. İskender: Çıplak yat o zaman ruhlar gibi, ruhum.

In the following two examples, Yücel, contrary to other translators, has preferred to add many different extra sentences. For example, in this scene, Lysander and Hermia flee to the forest, they get tired and decide to stop walking and rest for a while. Lysander wants to sleep together. However Hermia prefers to lie off further. Lysander and Hermia sleep far apart on the ground, as Hermia's sense of propriety has required. Yücel, willing to emphasize the flirting of young lovers, has added extra dialogues in this scene, and presented Lysander as a passionate man, who is willing to be with Hermia that night and Hermia as a coy young girl. He has made Lysander say: “Demek istiyorsun ki sen, resepsiyondaki siyasallı katip bizden nüfus soracağına göre, ayrı odalarda kalacağız mecbur.” Yücel's translation choices belong to the modern world.

Example 5

SOURCE TEXT	Null
SEVİN	Null
YÜCEL	<p>İskender: Hep söylerim, karanlıkta güç oluyor direksiyon. Ha, onu soracaktım: Senin çıktığın okul? Bilmez miyim, canım, tabiy, Damdasyon!... Ben çok egoist bir adamım, Hermiya. Yoruldum derken, bak, kendim, nasıl da dalga geçtim. Daha yorucu olmalı, eminim, karanlıkta araba sürenin yanında oturup onu seyretmesi.</p> <p>Hermiya: sen sade egocu değil, mizahistsin de, İskender! Keşki otomobil icat edilinceye kadar, yaşasak seninle beraber.</p> <p>İskender: Pekiy, bir füzeye binip kucak kucağa, ay mehtabına çıkmaya ne buyrulur?</p> <p>Hermiya: Sen, sevgilim, hayaline çüş de biraz, şuracıkta biraz dur!</p> <p>İskender: Ben de onu istiyordum zaten, Marlen Mur. Tamam! Tamam! Göründü ışıkları. Gelmişiz bile Koru Park Moteli'ne. (64).</p>
BOZKURT	Null

In this last example, Yücel has again added extra dialogues, and attributed to the American actress “Marilyn Monroe,” and first boarding school for girls in Turkey, “Notre Dame de Sion.” However, Marilyn Monroe lived between 1926 and 1962, and “Notre Dame de Sion” is a French High School in İstanbul, which was founded in 1856 as the first boarding school for girls. Thus Yücel has resorted to anachronisms, again. In addition, he has made the characters talking about cars and rockets, and he has mocked himself in terms of the anachronisms within the play.

As examples are examined, it is seen that while Sevin and Bozkurt have preferred a source-oriented translation, Yücel has followed domestication strategy, to the extent that the text he has created with the added and omitted parts, local concepts and anachronisms has become an example to adaptation rather than a translation.

The reasons for the translators to follow different strategies can be explained by different reasons. These may include the impact of the historical period in which texts have been translated, the contextual factors and translators' personal choices.

The possibility that translations grow old, and need revising, may hold true for the translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* into Turkish. However, the re-translation theory suggesting that the first translations are more target-oriented does not hold true for Sevin's translation. Rather, Sevin's translation choices can be explained by the historical context of the time in which he first translated the play, which was important for the Turkish literature and translation activities in Turkey.

During the period between 1940s and 1960s great steps in translation were taken in Turkey. In 1940, translation becomes a state-organized activity thanks to the efforts of Hasan Ali Yücel, who was Turkish Minister of National Education of the time (1938-1947), and systematic and purposeful translation and publication activities began (Kayaoğlu 1998: 278). Lists of books to be translated were prepared and the objectives to be followed in translation were determined by the Ministry. First of all, the Translation Bureau, as explained by Aksoy, aimed at developing a Turkish language derived from the daily spoken tongue of Anatolia and to eliminate the Arabic and Persian vocabulary. It also aimed at contributing to the Turkish culture and enriching the Turkish language with all the concepts of modern western thought through translated texts. It also aims at filling the cultural gap that existed in the first two decades of the 20th century by means of translational activities in order to shape a cultural identity that would create awareness of the potential of the Turkish language and an enthusiasm for establishing a literature of our own (Dino qtd. in Aksoy).

Thus, while the classics from different languages were being translated into Turkish, the aim was to enrich the Turkish language and literature by using a new, fluent and effective Turkish.

Series called the world classics, among which *A Midsummer Night's Dream* also took place, can be considered as one of the most important moves for emphasizing the philosophy of enlightenment of the west in Turkey. In this context, "the study of retranslations can thus reveal changing norms and ideologies in society" (Brownlie 2006: 150).

Therefore, we can say that Sevin has followed a certain policy while translating the play. However, when the time passed, translation needs also

changed for Turkey, thus the play demanded for different translations. The time span between the time when Yücel has translated the play and the time when Bozkurt has translated the play is not long. Thus, we can say that Yücel satisfied one of the demands, while Bozkurt satisfied another.

Yücel's translation choices, which are closer to the target text rather than the source text, supports the re-translation theory, since Bozkurt's translation, which comes later, is more source-text oriented. However, I believe the main reason behind the translators' translation choices is the differing context. As Brownlie has stated "explanation for what is going on in retranslations may be found not (only) at the broad social level, but in specific contextual circumstances which give a significant role to the individual commissioner and translator" (2006: 156).

The translation of *Sevin* had dual characteristics. His translation was performed in İstanbul State Theatres in Turkey at different times. In the prologue, he has stated that while performing the play he has worked closely with the director and the actors and adapted the acts and scenes. In addition, he has mentioned that the work he translated was included in the List of the Classics to be translated in 1944 by the Ministry of Education. Although his translation was being performed, he has added footnotes probably because of the objectives of the Translation Bureau, which have aimed at filling the cultural gap by means of translation activities.

As for Yücel, he has translated for the stage, his translation was performed in 1980-81 at the İstanbul Municipality State Theatres Tepebaşı Deneme Stage at first, and it is still being performed. He has also worked closely with the director and the actors, omitting some scenes and characters and creating modern settings with a view to gaining maximum audience acceptability. He has wished to bring the foreign play under the theatrical home rule in order to appeal more to contemporary theatergoers.

On the other hand, Bozkurt's translation wasn't performed, but published as a part of a series of the plays of Shakespeare, and used as reference book on Shakespeare. In other words, Bozkurt has translated for the page, and presented a book of the play, which will be a source for the ones who want to read and learn Shakespeare. He has also added footnotes which may create the performability problem, if the play is to be performed.

Lastly, I believe translators' personal choices are effective in different translation strategies they have preferred in re-translations. For example, *Sevin*'s extra explanation, I think, reflects her respect to the project taken by the Translation Bureau. As explained above, although his play was performed, he

has added footnotes, because it is likely that he has regarded his translation as a cultural contribution to the society.

On the other hand, Can Yücel's identity as a poet has given him some kind of authority to the extent that he has domesticated the play. In addition, he was not referred as a translator, but as "Türkçe söyleyen," which means the person who says in Turkish.

As for Bozkurt, he has explained his views on the translation strategies he has preferred while translating different works of many different writers and dramatists that using the old language in the target text as a counterpart of the old language used in the source text doesn't solve the problems encountered in translation. At the end the one finds himself face to face with the sultans, sadrazams, who live in Denmark (qtd. in Karantay 1995: 111). We can see that he is not in favor of domestication. Bozkurt might have seen translation as a way of cultural contribution to the target culture. He might have wanted to give the taste of the respective period and the source culture.

As to conclude, although re-translation hypothesis makes sense in the translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* into Turkish, there are other factors which are needed to explain preferences in re-translations. The impact of the historical period in which texts were translated, the contextual factors and translators personal choices are among these reasons. And I believe considering the different translation processes they have experienced, three of the re-translations are acceptable, since all of them have satisfied one of the demands.

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