

”Is it true that you messed up at the NBI?”

Translation of culture-specific words in the crime series

Bordertown

Bachelor’s thesis

Aino Valtonen

University of Jyväskylä

Department of Language and Communication Studies

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Käsittelen tutkielmassani suomalaisen rikossarjan <i>Sorjosen</i> englanninkielisiä tekstityksiä. Selvitän laadullisen tutkimuksen menetelmiä sekä Jan Pedersenin (2011) käännösstrategioiden kategorioita hyväksi käyttäen, mitä kulttuurisidonnaisten viittausten käännökset paljastavat tekstittäjän käännösideologiasta: onko suomalaiseen kulttuuriin viittaavat asiat tehty ulkomaiselle yleisölle helpommin ymmärrettäviksi, täten kotouttaen tekstiä, vai onko kääntäjä pysynyt uskollisena alkuperäiselle tekstille, eli käyttänyt vieraannuttavaa strategiaa. Lisäksi pohdin sarjan genren, eli nordic noirin, sekä tekstityskäytänteiden, kuten tekstirivin pituuden ja keston, mahdollista vaikutusta käännökseen. Keräsin dataa katsomalla <i>Sorjonen</i>-sarjan ensimmäistä jaksoa ja poimimalla sieltä kulttuurisidonnaisia viittauksia. Tämän jälkeen analysoin ilmaisun käännöstä ja pohdin, mitä käännösstrategiaa prosessissa on käytetty. Lopuksi päättelin, mitä käytetyt käännösstrategiat mahdollisesti paljastavat jakson yleisestä käännösideologiasta. Huomasin, että jaksossa oli käytetty monipuolisesti käännösstrategioita ja lopputulos kallistuu hieman vieraannuttavan käännösideologian puolelle, mutta analyysin perusteella ei voida määrittää selkeästi, onko kääntäjä pyrkinyt kotouttavaan vai vieraannuttavaan kääntämiseen. Tulosten vertailu toiseen tuoreeseen aihetta käsittelevään tutkimukseen osoittaa, että suomalaisia elokuvia on tekstitetty englanniksi vastaavalla tyyllillä.</p>	
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1. Introduction

I have always been curious about subtitling; once my English skills were good enough, I started spotting errors in subtitles, but also appreciating the especially clever translations. I even tried subtitling myself on a fan website for Asian drama, and that was the first time when I really noticed how much effort it takes to translate spoken language into a written form with a very limited amount of time and space on the screen. Considering these experiences, choosing subtitling as a theme for my bachelor's thesis occurred to me quite naturally.

Finding my own perspective and angle to the theme was quite challenging at first. While many countries in the world tend to use voiceovers or dubbing as the most common means for audiovisual translation, in Finland as well as in other Nordic countries, foreign shows and films are often subtitled. Therefore, there is quite extensive amount of research, including theses, done about subtitling in Finland (e.g. Lassila 2019, Raivio 2018), also from the point of view of word play (see Paajoki 2012), which was one of the first ideas for my own topic. However, most of the previous research look into Finnish subtitles of foreign series, and this is a gap in research that I noticed; there are not as many studies written about English subtitles of Finnish series. That is, of course, understandable, since few Finnish-speaking productions have made it to foreign audiences. There are studies considering translation of Finnish movies, though, such as those of Mörntinen (2018) and Ruuttula (2018).

However, foreign TV series and films have recently gotten more attention and interest from the English-speaking audience. Especially the Scandinavian crime fiction has become popular. So popular, that it has its own genre, Nordic Noir (Toft Hansen and Waade 2017). Even though most Nordic Noir series come from Sweden or Denmark, there are some Finnish series as well that have gained audience from all around the world. There I have my angle; a Finnish crime series subtitled in English. I chose to use a relatively new and internationally successful Finnish crime series *Bordertown* (orig. *Sorjonen*) as my data. The series is found in Netflix, thus available for a large international audience.

One part of the theoretical background for the thesis consists of the translation ideologies domestication and foreignization, which consider the translation of culture-specific language. The two ideologies are discussed more extensively in the upcoming chapters, but a summarized definition is that domestication brings the source text closer to the audience's own culture, whereas foreignization appreciates the original source text language and culture

(Venuti 2008, Lefevere 1992, Chesterman 2000). Further background theory introduces the concept of Extralinguistic Cultural References and the taxonomy of different translation strategies that are used in translating them (Pedersen 2011). My research questions are:

- 1) What kind of translation strategies are used in translating Extralinguistic Cultural References in the English subtitles of *Bordertown*?
- 2) What does that reveal about the translator's attitude towards the foreignization and domestication ideologies?

I use qualitative methods in analyzing the data and classifying the strategies that are used in the translation process.

In the next chapter I discuss the theoretical background in more detail. The following chapter describes my data and research methods. In the fourth chapter I display my analysis examples and discuss the outcome, also in relation to another research done on similar topic (Ruuttala 2018). Lastly, I give concluding words where I summarize my findings and put forward ideas for future research.

2. Literature review

In order to answer my research questions, I have to introduce the most important theoretical background for my research, which I will be doing in this section. First, I will be discussing two translation strategies, or rather ideologies, domestication and foreignization as well as other terms that are needed in describing translation processes. Secondly, I will define the concept of Extralinguistic Cultural Reference and a taxonomy of different translation strategies that are used in subtitling ECRs (Pedersen 2011). Lastly, I will consider some of the conventions of subtitling that might affect the translation process.

2.1. Translation ideologies

Different cultures have specific features that might not exist in other cultures at all. This of course also affects language since those features need to be expressed with language. Consequently, we find ourselves in a situation where interlingual translation might get quite difficult due to different vocabulary between languages. Guerra (2012) writes about the challenge of translating culture-bound texts:

One of the problems a translator can face arises from the fact that some words or phrases denoting objects, facts, phenomena, etc... are so deeply rooted in their source culture (SC) and so specific (and perhaps exclusive or unique) to the culture that produced them that they have no equivalent in the target culture (TC), be it because they are unknown, or because they are not yet codified in the target language (TL). (Guerra 2012: n.pag.)

In solving problems effectively in the translation process, translators often make use of different kinds of principles or rules, which are called translation strategies (Chesterman 2000: 87). Lefevere (1992: 8) argues that translators, who are rewriters, manipulate text to suit the current dominant ideologies of their time and society. The ideology “dictates the basic strategy the translator is going to use” and thus affects the way how the translator solves translation problems (Lefevere 1992: 41). As Suojanen, Koskinen and Tuominen (2012) write, Eugene Nida, one of the most influential authors in the field of translation, created the concept of dynamic equivalence in the 1960. According to this concept, the most important aspect of a text is to fulfill a certain purpose and to convey meaning. This is done by choosing a translation that is not necessarily a copy of the original text in the sense of exactly same vocabulary and syntax, but closest *natural* equivalent for the original text. Nida also emphasizes the fact that communication should always be examined in relation to the cultural context it appears in (Nida 1964, as quoted by Suojanen et al. 2012: 48).

Foreignization and **domestication**, as briefly mentioned before, are translation strategies - or rather, ideologies - that relate to translating culture-specific expressions (Venuti 2008, Chesterman 2000, Rahtu 2011). In domestication translation strategy the culture-bound language is translated in a way that brings it closer to the target culture audience (Rahtu 2011: 24). As Eugene Nida states in his model of dynamic equivalence, the target culture audience might have less cultural knowledge regarding the text that is being translated, which is why it must be modified so that the target culture audience is able to receive the same information as the original text offers for the source culture audience (Suojanen et al. 2012: 46). Venuti (2008: 12), argues that domestication is a widely used strategy especially in the British and American cultures.

Foreignization, however, is a strategy that does not accommodate texts to the culture of the target audience. Instead, the culture-specific elements remain close to the original form and might even not be translated. This strategy can be used to display the source language and culture more authentically. As Venuti (2008: 15) describes it, using a foreignization ideology

in translating is like “sending the reader abroad”. According to Pedersen (2011: 3), examining the translation of cultural references is a good way to unfold the translator’s attitude towards domestication and foreignization strategies.

Before discussing the theoretical background further, I think it is useful to consider some of the terms that I use in my present analysis to describe the translation processes. They are the same terms that Pedersen uses in his model. These terms are used quite generally in translation studies, as by e.g. Guerra (2012), Rahtu (2011), Pedersen (2011) and Chesterman (2000). Furthermore, I explain what they mean in the context of my analysis. **Source language** (SL) is the original language of the crime series *Bordertown* (orig. *Sorjonen*) and **source culture** (SC) the culture where the series take place, that is, Finnish language and Finnish culture. I also refer to the spoken Finnish version as **source text** (ST). **Target language** (TL), the language to which the series has been translated to, is English, and **target text** (TT) is the subtitles. **Target culture** (TC) is the culture of the target audience for which the translation product is aimed at. However, it is not simple to define what exactly the target culture is in this case. As the target language English is spoken all around the world, I cannot say whether the TC is British, American, Australian, or perhaps Canadian culture. Furthermore, the series are available in Netflix, which means it can be viewed anywhere in the world. I presume the target audience in this case are people who are not able to understand Finnish nor are familiar with the Finnish culture, but who are able to understand English. That could mean almost any culture; thus, the TC could be considered to be a form of “global English-speaking culture”.

I think it is justifiable to argue that the target audience, choosing to watch a Finnish crime series with subtitles instead of an English-speaking series, is open or even seeking to experience a foreign or different tradition of television. In fact, I suspect most members of the target audience have chosen to watch the series because it represents the beloved **Nordic Noir** genre (Toft Hansen and Waade 2017), which I discuss in more detail in the next section of my thesis.

2.2.Extralinguistic Cultural Reference

Pedersen (2011) uses the term **Extralinguistic Cultural Reference (ECR)** to describe the phenomenon of culture-specific words and concepts. He states that ECRs are “references to people, places, customs, institutions, food etc. that are specific to a certain culture, and which

you may not know even if you know the language in question” (2011: 44). Pedersen differentiates between different categories of ECR, which are weights and measures, proper names, professional titles, food and beverages, literature, government, entertainment, education, sports, currency, technical material, and other. Proper names, being the largest category under which most ECRs fall, are further divided into personal names, geographical names, institutional names and brand names.

I expect the most central categories of ECR in my analysis to be proper names, professional titles and government, since the series revolve around the themes of crime, crime scenes and institutions involved in solving crimes. Geographical names are likely to be central as well. Most Finnish people should be able to derive quite a lot of meaning and interpretation of the events of the crime series just based on ECRs, especially on those that refer to geographical items. This assumption of ECRs being accessible to the primary target audience is also included in Pedersen’s definition of ECR (2011: 43). Foreign viewers on the other hand do not necessarily know how large lake Saimaa is and where the city of Lappeenranta is located, which can affect the understanding of the events to some extent. Of course, it is possible that there are Finnish people as well who have no knowledge of some of the ECRs, as they can be quite specific, especially if they refer to a distant location or institution. My interest lies on how the ECRs are dealt with in the English subtitles of the series, and what that says about the translator’s attitude towards domestication and foreignization issues.

In addition to “real life” ECRs, there are made-up characters and institutions in my data. Pedersen calls these imaginary words **Text Internal ECRs**, which means they do not exist in the world outside of the text in question (2011: 110). The text internal ECRs can be quite tricky from the perspective of my analysis. As Lassila (2019) points out in her research, depending on the genre of the examined data, proper names might contain different levels of meaning. In her thesis, she examined a fantasy series *Outlander*, which is set in an imaginary world. In the fantasy genre, proper names, which are often invented by the author, carry more interpretable meaning than “regular” names in series and movies that take place in real-life milieu. Since my data is meant to be set in real existing world and is not part of the fantasy genre, it can be argued whether the proper names are translatable, and even if they are, is it reasonable to translate them if they hold no special meaning. On the other hand, the characters in the text do not exist in the real world and their names are also invented for the text, even if they are based on real world names.

Pedersen's (2011) taxonomy describes the different translation strategies of ECRs. The taxonomy includes six categories, which I view in the study as a continuum between the two opposite poles of translation ideologies: foreignization and domestication. Pedersen himself calls the processes source-oriented and target-oriented. The first strategy, **retention**, leaves the ECR unchanged or slightly modified for example through using italics in the subtitles. **Specification** strategy keeps parts of the source language ECR but adds information, thus specifying the meaning of the ECR. **Direct translation** means replacing the ECR with a target language equivalent. In the **generalization** strategy the ECRs are replaced with a more general TL reference, e.g. a superordinate term or a paraphrase. **Substitution** means replacing ECR with another ECR either from the source or target culture, but not with the TL equivalent. The sixth strategy is **omission**; leaving the ECR out of the translation altogether. An additional category to these six is **official equivalent**, which means a pre-determined translation for an ECR that has been established "through common usage or by some administrative decision" (Pedersen 2011: 76). Pedersen also introduces some sub-categories for his taxonomy, such as Completion and Addition under the Specification strategy, and Complete Retention and TL-Adjusted Retention under the Retention strategy. However, I decided to use only the main categories in my analysis. Therefore, it can be said that I use a simplified version of Pedersen's taxonomy.

2.3. Readability of subtitles

Many of the studies and analyses considering translation and the theories of domestication and foreignization are done on literary works. Since my data is a subtitled crime series, I also have to discuss the principles and conventions of audiovisual translation and what kind of limitations that means in terms of translation. Subtitling conventions vary from country to country and channel to channel, but there are some common rules that can be applied to assessing the quality of interlingual subtitles. Pedersen (2017) describes in his FAR model three different perspectives for the assessment: Functional equivalence, Acceptability and Readability. Whereas functional equivalence and acceptability deal with issues such as correct translation of words and sentences, stylistic language, and grammar, and can be applied to almost all translation, readability requires more attention from the subtitler than e.g. a book translator.

Readability issues in subtitling include segmentation and spotting, punctuation and use of graphics such as italics, as well as assessing the reading speed and appropriate line length (Pedersen 2017: 221-223). In a nutshell, it can be stated that in order to make subtitles readable enough for the viewer, they need to appear on the screen at the same time as the speech occurs, the essential punctuation and graphics should be used to point out who is speaking, and the lines should be short enough so that the viewer has time to read the subtitle while simultaneously following what happens on the screen (Pedersen 2017). It is especially important that the line is readable enough to be understood with one reading, since the viewer has no chance to return to it afterwards, as the film continues, and new line appears (Kerkkä 2011). These requirements, undoubtedly, set certain difficulties for the subtitler and affect the translation choices the translator makes in the process. I assume subtitlers are more likely to use strategies such as Omission and Retention than translators who do not have as strict constraints what comes to time and space.

3. Data and methods

In this section, I first introduce the general information regarding my research material. Secondly, I discuss the concept of Nordic Noir genre, as it might be one of the defining factors for the results of my analysis. Third paragraph consists of reasoning behind my choice of research material. Lastly, I discuss my research methods and principles.

My data in the present study is the first episode of a Finnish crime series *Bordertown* (orig. *Sorjonen*), and its English subtitles. The main character of the series is detective Kari Sorjonen, who moves with his wife and daughter from Helsinki to a small town called Lappeenranta near the Finnish-Russian border. He uses his astonishingly sharp memory and deductive skills to solve crimes together with the Unit of Serious Crimes. The series produced by Fisher King Production and Federation Entertainment consist of three seasons, and the first season premiered in Finland in October 2016 on Yle TV1. The subtitled version is at the time of the research available on Netflix. Unfortunately, I was not able to find any information about the subtitle provider. The lack of such information seems to be usual for Netflix, since Lassila (2019) states in her thesis that she neither could determine who had translated the Netflix version of *Outlander*.

I stated earlier that the series belong to the Nordic Noir genre. As Toft Hansen and Waade (2017) state, Nordic Noir is essentially a commercial brand name for Scandinavian crime

fiction. One of the best-known authors of the genre is Stieg Larsson, whose novels have also been adapted into movies as well as a television series called *Millenium* (2009-2010). Other prominent and internationally viewed Nordic crime series are e.g. *Wallander* (2005-), *The Bridge* (2011-2018) and *The Killing* (2007-2012), which are also considered the defining series of Nordic Noir. Characteristic for Nordic Noir drama is the focus on the police procedural (Toft Hansen and Waade 2017) and on the personal life and struggles of the main character (Kerkkä 2010). *Bordertown* clearly meets these characteristics.

I chose this data because it is relatively new - the last season premiered during the making of this thesis - and it has been quite visible in the media recently. Behind the decision stand practical reasons as well. The series is internationally acknowledged, and thus, the subtitled version was easy to find and access. I also thought, since the series is set in the city of Lappeenranta in Finland, it could offer a great deal of examples of cultural references, due to the presence of Finnish nature and the closeness of Russian border. The first episode is a good base for the analysis, since it is the episode where most characters, places and institutions involved in the plot are introduced for the first time.

The series includes some spoken Russian as well. As I do not know Russian, I do not analyze any possible ECRs that come up in those sequences. In the original Finnish version, the Russian speech is subtitled into Finnish, which would make it possible for me to compare the Finnish and English subtitles of the Russian sequences. However, this would not be practical as I would have to constantly change languages, and I cannot be sure what kind of renderings have already taken place in the process of translating the Russian sequences to Finnish. Therefore, I will not focus on the possible ECRs appearing during scenes spoken in Russian.

I use qualitative methods in analyzing the data. I collected the examples from the data by examining the data carefully and keeping Pedersen's definition for ECR and their categories in mind. I watched the 57 minutes long first episode of the series called *A Doll's House, part I* ("Nukkekotii, osa 1") several times. Every time I noticed a case of ECR, I wrote down the exact timing and the example on a piece of paper. I had separate post-it notes for the different ECR categories and, in the end, I also conducted an Excel table with all the spotted ECRs and translation strategies. Since it is not simple to spot ECRs in a text, I used as a guideline the question that Pedersen introduces in his book: "Is the linguistic expression in itself transparent enough to enable someone to access its referent without cultural knowledge?" (2011: 48). Additionally, I paid close attention to differences between the spoken Finnish and the

English subtitles. Whenever I noticed a difference in vocabulary, I examined whether that could be due to translation of ECR. I stopped reviewing the episode after I was sure I had noted every ECR.

In order to have a clear overview over the used strategies, I counted how many ECRs I found and how many of them were rendered using each translation strategy. In total I found 126 ECR examples, which includes every instance of an appearing ECR, even those that occur continuously throughout the episode. The majority of ECRs are personal names. I chose to count every instance that I could find, since sometimes several different translation strategies were used with the same ECR.

After collecting the examples, I started examining them more closely. Sometimes I had to clarify the exact meanings of the Finnish as well as the English words in order to understand how they relate to each other and what kind of translation strategy had been used in the process of making the subtitles. In these cases, I used the internet: official websites, dictionaries and termbases. I chose ten examples for closer discussion in the thesis. I selected these examples, because they represent all the translation strategies used in the data, and they offered possibilities for deeper analyses and speculations; in other words, I found these examples interesting.

4. Analysis

4.1.Examples of ECR translation

In the analysis section I will be going through ten examples of ECR translation that I found from the first episode of *Bordertown*. The examples are divided into categories based on what kind of ECR they display: personal name, institution, geographical name, professional title or other. In each example I mark the exact timing for when the subtitle appears on the screen, the spoken Finnish line and the English subtitle. Additionally, I will be giving an English translation of my own in cases where the line has been significantly changed, or if I want to demonstrate another translation strategy that could have been used. Hereby an example of how I present the data:

“Original Finnish line”	English subtitle	<i>My own translation</i>
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Example X (Time)

I try to make my translations as literal and word to word as possible, but it needs to be remembered that I utilize translation strategies as well, and my ideologies affect the way how I adapt original text (Lefevere 1992), consciously or unconsciously. Had someone else done the translation, it could look different due to their different ideologies. My intention is not to tell how to make “better” subtitles or how the line should have been translated. In fact, my versions are in most cases quite long or complicated, or peculiar, and would most likely never be used as real subtitles. I merely want to point out different kind of approaches and I believe this will make it easier for readers to understand what I mean, especially if the reader has hard time following Finnish.

In the second sub-section I display the results and discuss them in a more general fashion as well as in relation to previous research (Ruuttala 2018). I also consider some influencing factors beside the translation ideology itself, such as the genre of the series and subtitling conventions.

4.1.1. Personal names

With the help of high frequency of personal names, the Retention strategy is the most used ECR translation strategy in the episode. Out of 90 cases of personal names, 85 were retained in the subtitles. The five other cases were omitted through leaving the reference out altogether or replacing it with a pronoun. During the very first scene quite many names come up, such as *Sorjonen*, *Kari* and *Heikkinen*, and they appear unchanged in the subtitles. Even though there are some characters with surnames that are based on common nouns that could be translatable (e.g. *Susi* “wolf”, *Metso* “wood grouse” and *Jänis* “rabbit”), the translator has chosen to retain the original forms. This suggests foreignization ideology was preferred, at least what comes to personal names.

Example 1 below displays a scene where Kari criticizes the candidates his boss Taina has chosen for the new team and example 2 shows a new team member introducing himself to Kari. My partial translation demonstrates a situation where the characters’ names would be directly translated. They do sound quite odd considering the genre we are talking about. Maybe this solution could work in a fantasy series, but Retention is probably the best strategy in this context.

”Johanna Metso esittää jotain muuta ku mikä se on. Parempaa ja kovempaa. Niko Uusitalo on mielistelijä. Nämäkö on parhaat jotka sä voit antaa mun tiimiin?”	Johanna Metso tries to be something she’s not. Tougher, better than she is. Niko Uusitalo is a brown nose. Are they the best fit for my new team?	<i>Johanna Woodgrouse</i> <i>Niko Newhouse</i>
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Example 1 (18:17)

- “Susi”	- Susi	- <i>Wolf</i>
- “Sorjonen”	- Sorjonen	- <i>Sorjonen</i>

Example 2 (47:04)

4.1.2. Institutional names

There are 11 institutional names mentioned in the first episode and many different strategies are used in translating them. Direct translation as well as official equivalent both appeared 4 times. Generalization was used twice and substitution strategy once. Based on that information, the translation of institutional names seems to balance between foreignization and domestication ideologies, not fixating on either of them too strongly.

VARE VAKAVIEN RIKOSTEN YKSIKKÖ	SECRI SERIOUS CRIME UNIT	-
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Example 3 (13:12)

The text in example 3 appears on a screen in the premises of the police. In the scene Kari introduces himself for his new team, which is called VARE in Finnish and translated as SECRI in English. The strategy used here is a direct translation, as the English version is

word to word similar to the original name. Since the serious crime unit in question does not exist in the world outside of the series, it is a Text Internal ECR.

“Isä sisäministeriössä, äiti korkeimmassa oikeudessa”	Father in the Department of the Interior, mother in the high court	<i>Father in the Ministry of the Interior, mother in the Supreme Court.</i>
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Example 4 (16:04)

Example 4 continues the same scene as example 3. Kari is showing off his memory and deduction skills to his new team. He uses the team members as examples, and in this line, he repeats the information that he just learned about Niko Uusitalo. The subtitler has used two different strategies in translating the two ECRs, *sisäministeriö* and *korkein oikeus*. In my own translation, I have used the official equivalents for the two Finnish institutions, which I found on their official English websites, as contrast for the original translation.

Sisäministeriö is translated as Department of the Interior, which is the U.S. American equivalent for the ECR referent in question. Thus, the translation strategy used is Substitution. This translation choice is contradictory to what has been done with the *KRP* case, where official equivalent is used (see example 5). The official equivalent, English name used to describe this Finnish institution, would be Ministry of the Interior.

Korkein oikeus is translated as “high court”. The official equivalent would be the Supreme Court of Finland. What comes to the translation strategy used, there are two or three different possibilities: substitution, generalization, and direct translation. As I am not able to access the thought process of the translator in the moment of making the subtitles, I can merely try to figure what the strategy might have been used. There is a High Court of Impeachment (*valtakunnanoikeus*) in Finland, but it is not the same thing as Supreme Court, which is meant here. Some countries do have “high courts” which have the same purpose as the Finnish supreme court, whereas some supreme courts around the world have different function than that of the Finnish one. Therefore, it is not clear whether the translation strategy used here is Substitution or Generalization, especially since the target culture is not straight-forward to define. On the other hand, the word form with its non-capitalized letters suggests it is a common noun, in which case this is an example of generalization. Additionally, *korkein oikeus* would be literally translated “the highest court”, which is very close to the form “high court”. Therefore, it could be argued that the example is actually a case of modified direct

translation strategy, which could be chosen due to lack of knowledge of the “correct” translation. After all, I believe the translator knew the possible options and chose to generalize the term.

“Pitääks ne paikkansa? Että mokasit KRP:llä ja tää paikka kiinnostaa sua takaporttina?”	Are they true? That you messed up at the NBI and this is your way out?	<i>Are they [rumors] true? That you messed up at the central crime police --</i>
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Example 5 (18:07)

In the scene where example 5 appears, Kari’s new boss Taina is questioning his motivations for wanting to work in a small distant town. KRP is an abbreviation for *keskusrikospoliisi*, literally translated “central crime police”. In the subtitles, it is translated as NBI, which is abbreviation for National Bureau of Investigation, the official equivalent for the institute. Interestingly, the translation offers only the abbreviation for the viewer. How can the target audience know what the letters NBI mean? They can conclude from the context that it is Kari’s previous workplace, which they know has something to do with crime investigation, but they probably are not able to define the meaning of the abbreviation. Thus, example 5 showcases an example of foreignization, even though the original name is rendered into an English version.

4.1.3. Geographical names

Several strategies are also used in the case of geographical names. Out of 14 geographical names appearing in the episode, 8 were retained, 2 omitted and 2 generalized. Additionally, 2 official equivalents appeared in the form of a Russian city *Pietari*, St. Petersburg. Based on these numbers, it seems that geographical names are slightly more often foreignized than domesticated, even though the difference is very small.

”Pauliinahan vois järjestää meille joku päivä sellasen opastetun turneen Lappeenrantaan.”	Pauliina could give us a guided tour of the city someday.	<i>Pauliina could organize one of those guided tours for us in Lappeenranta.</i>
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Example 6 (9:22)

In example 6, Kari and his wife and their daughter are driving towards Lappeenranta, the town where they are moving. Pauliina, the wife, is born and raised in the town, which is why Kari suggests she could give a tour for the family. The town name has been left out and replaced with “city”, which is an example of generalization strategy. The use of this domesticating strategy helps the target audience realize what kind of place the family is going to. A foreign audience with no knowledge of Finnish cities would have no idea what kind of place “Lappeenranta” is without some help.

Lappeenranta	-	<i>Lappeenranta</i>
Hyvien ihmisten kaupunki		<i>City of good people</i>

Example 7 (9:45)

The family drives past a sign. This line is not spoken aloud, but from the way the scene is shot, I believe it is the purpose of the shot that viewer notices the text in the sign. In fact, it acts as an ironic element in the show: how come city of good people needs a unit for serious crime? It is quite exceptional that there is no translation for this sign in the subtitles. I cannot be sure whether this is conscious use of Omission strategy or merely an error.

“Missä tää Saimaanharju on?”	Saimaanharju? Where’s that?	-
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Example 8 (22:51)

Kari answers a phone call from work and gets called to a crime scene (Example 8). Retention strategy has been used in this line. Saimaanharju is an ECR that probably is familiar to only limited number of Finnish viewers. It is a neighborhood which belongs to a municipality called Taipalsaari just next to Lappeenranta. However, even though the place is quite unknown for someone who has no ties to the area, the name itself can evoke some interpretations in the Finnish audience. *Saimaa* is the largest lake in Finland and an important element in the area of Lappeenranta, and *harju* means an esker. The application of Retention strategy is quite important at this stage since it later turns out that a holiday village in Saimaanharju is a central place for the plot of the series. Therefore, it is important to introduce the name for the audience.

4.1.4. Professional titles and other

Analyzing which professional titles are cultural and could be considered as ECR was not simple, since many of them are transcultural and appear in both SC and TC. On the basis of the guideline question “Is the linguistic expression in itself trans-parent enough to enable someone to access its referent without cultural knowledge?” (Pedersen 2011: 48), I decided to regard some professional titles as not ECRs. One of them was the expression *lastenhoitaja*, a nanny. The literal meaning of the word *lastenhoitaja* is “caretaker of children”, thus making the linguistic expression transparent. Additionally, the subtitles did not leave room for misunderstandings, as the word was translated as “nanny”.

Example 10 presents a similar case. The linguistic expression *kaupunginjohtaja* literally means “leader of a city” and is transparent, which is why choosing this example for my analysis contradicts the guideline question. However, as there is a slight difference between the meanings of the SC and TC expressions, I think it is reasonable to consider it an ECR and examine the translation strategy.

“Tapaatsä tänää sen kaupunginjohtajan?”	Are you meeting with the mayor today?	<i>Are you meeting with the chief executive today?</i>
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Example 9 (35:47)

In the scene, Pauliina and Kari are discussing the tasks of the day. Here the subtitler has used Substitution strategy when translating *kaupunginjohtaja* as “mayor”. The official equivalent for a mayor would be *pormestari*, which is slightly different than *kaupunginjohtaja*, a chief executive. A mayor and a chief executive in Finland have approximately the same tasks, but mayor is an elected official and chair of the local executive whereas chief executive is a municipal official who is not elected but in a public-service employment relationship (TEPA). This is a minor difference, and the use of the word *mayor* is reasonable since it is probably more widely known term than *chief executive*, which, in turn, can be used in many other contexts as well and has multiple meanings.

"Mut mähän oon vaan tämmönen obduktiopreparaattori."	I'm just the medical examiner, after all.	<i>I'm just an autopsy technician, after all.</i>
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Example 10 (43:37)

The last example presents a scene in which Kari and Taina are consulting an autopsy technician when trying to find out a victim's cause of death. It was not simple to ascertain, what kind of translation strategy was used in this case, since the word *obduktiopreparaattori* in itself was unknown for me. I only knew from the context what the word approximately means. Thus, it was easy to realize that the linguistic expression is not transparent at all and start examining it as an ECR. When I researched the exact meaning of the word, I realized, that it is not the same thing as a medical examiner. *Obduktiopreparaattori*, an autopsy technician or autopsy assistant in English, is someone who helps the medical examiner or pathologist in the autopsy. Thus, the translation strategy used is Substitution.

In total, I found 5 professional titles, out of which 2 were substituted and 3 were rendered as direct translations. Additionally, there were 6 other types of ECRs. Three instances of measurements were all translated directly. Christmas, Christmas Eve and the salutation *kippis*, "cheers", were rendered as official equivalents.

4.2. Results and discussion

My intention in the thesis is to answer these two research questions:

1. What kind of translation strategies are used in translating Extralinguistic Cultural References in the English subtitles of *Bordertown*?
2. What does that reveal about the translator's attitude towards the foreignization and domestication ideologies?

As an answer to the first question I can state that the subtitler seems to have used almost every translation strategy listed by Pedersen: Retention, Direct translation, Generalization, Substitution, Omission and Official equivalent. Only Specification strategy is not used. Retention, on the other hand, stands out as a most used strategy due to the large number of personal names in the episode. Surprisingly, Omission was used much less frequently than I had anticipated.

What comes to the translation ideology, at first sight it seems like foreignizing is the prevalent ideology. However, personal names, which are most often rendered with the foreignizing Retention strategy, make the majority of the ECRs in the episode, which might distort the outcome. For that reason, I will also analyze the numbers by disregarding the personal names

in order to get a more accurate picture of the translation ideology. In the tables 1 and 2 below, I have marked the number of personal names in brackets to separate them from other ECRs.

Another aspect I need to consider is the Official equivalent strategy, as it is a special translation strategy what comes to its location on the domestication-foreignization axis. Pedersen (2011) does not locate it on the line at all and states it as a strategy outside of the classification. It is different from the other strategies, since it is imposed by authorities or an established convention, but the actual linguistic expression can be based on any strategy (Pedersen 2011: 97-98). For the means of my analysis, I look into each official equivalent as an individual translation in order to place it into one of the ideology categories. Out of 9 official equivalents, all but two fall under the domestication ideology. The two occasions in which the SC ECR *Keskusrikospoliisi* was rendered into NBI, I consider foreignized translations, as the mere abbreviation NBI most likely does not clarify the meaning for the TC audience.

Table 1. Foreignizing translation strategies in the episode

Foreignizing strategy	Prevalence
Retention	8 (+85)
Specification	0
Direct translation	10
Official equivalent	2
Total	20 (105)

Table 2. Domesticating translation strategies in the episode

Domesticating strategy	Prevalence
Omission	2 (+5)
Substitution	3
Generalization	4
Official equivalent	7
Total	16 (21)

In the tables above, it can be noted that if personal names are counted, foreignizing strategies are significantly more frequent: out of the total 126 ECRs, as many as 105 are rendered using a foreignizing strategy. However, when the personal names are disregarded, the numbers appear much more even. Based on these numbers, it seems that foreignizing strategies still are slightly more frequent, but since the difference is small, it seems like the translator has not particularly aimed for either of the ideologies.

The variation of translation strategies used can be explained in many ways. First of all, the translator has to notice an ECR in order to be able to render it (Pedersen 2011: 101).

Translator's relation to the SC and TC could affect the outcome: if the translator is a member of the SC, it might not be easy for him or her to assess which words can cause a translation problem. As discussed before, it is also difficult to define, what actually is the TT audience of this particular TV series, as it is broadcasted in an international streaming service and can be viewed by audiences all around the world. This fact can further challenge the translator in estimating the target audience's knowledge of the SC, or even affect the conscious choice of translation strategy. If the TT audience is not considered to be part of particular TC, the need, or even the possibility, of domestication of ST could be questioned. There is also always the possibility of humane errors. Furthermore, since the translation is made in form of subtitles, there are even more factors affecting the translation choices, such as the need to keep the lines short and readable (Pedersen 2017, Kerkkä 2011).

Omission especially is a strategy that could be affected due to the context of subtitles, since it is a strategy that allows the subtitler to save space, which can be essential from time to time. Sometimes it is quite difficult to know whether an ECR is omitted due to translation reasons or because of lack of space. Pedersen also states that omission could be either considered as target-oriented (domesticating) strategy or placed entirely outside of the categorization (2011: 76). Thus, some of the cases of Omission that I have marked in table 2 might actually not even be instances of domestication, but merely of saving space. If this were true, the gap between the two ideologies could grow even more in favor of foreignization.

Nordic Noir is probably not the most fruitful genre for analyzing cultural references. Terms referring to institutions like police and government, which occur in crime series quite often, are more or less transcultural, as they exist in both SC and TC, which makes it difficult to define what should be considered an ECR in the first place. A comedy show or movie would more likely display the unique aspects of Finnish culture better. According to the information

that Pedersen presents in his research, it seems that this presumption actually has truth to it: comedy series seem to include significantly more ECRs per hour than crime series (Pedersen 2011: 64). Due to the fact that few shows like that have been professionally translated, I have found no data to analyze. However, there are successful Finnish comedy movies that have been translated into English and even analyzed using the concept of ECR, as seen in the next paragraphs.

Ruuttala (2018) has also used the concept of ECR and the taxonomy of translation strategies in examining English subtitles of two Finnish films, the comedy *Lapland Odyssey* (orig. *Napapiirin sankarit*) and a drama film called *The Happiest Day in the Life of Olli Mäki* (orig. *Hymyilevä mies*) in her master's thesis. She found out that the most used strategy in the subtitles was retention. Direct translation, generalization and omission were used quite evenly. The fifth most used strategy was specification. She created a category of her own called "combinations of several strategies", which was a bit more frequent than the use of official equivalent. She found no examples of the substitution strategy (Ruuttala 2018: 52).

Her results have similarities as well as differences with my results. The total amount of ECRs found in the dialogue (109) was quite close to how many I found. However, she examined two individual movies that together last much longer than a single hour-long episode of a series. This comparison contradicts what I previously speculated about the amount of ECRs in comedy versus crime. Like in my research, also in hers the personal names were mostly retained or sometimes omitted in the subtitles. However, there were some cases of direct translation of names or nicknames, such as the translation of the nickname *Pikku-Mikko* into "Little Mickey" (ibid: 53). The biggest difference between our findings was the fact that Ruuttala found no cases of Substitution, but 10 cases of Specification, whereas I found no cases of Specification but a few (3) cases of Substitution. It is also worthy to notice, that my findings include 9 cases of Official equivalent, and hers only 3. Interestingly, those three official equivalents in her research present the original names of Finnish cities (ibid: 58). I have treated such cases as Retention.

There were also differences between the domains or types of ECRs presented in each study. Ruuttala had several ECR examples considering nature and climate, commercial names, buildings, and attitudes, mindset and lifestyle, which I barely noticed in *Bordertown*. These included everyday items, places and phenomena, such as ice hockey teams, dancing venues or certain groups of people (e.g. 'hippies'). She does not mention institutional names or

professional titles in her analysis. The differences between the findings can be partly explained through different genres of entertainment. Ruuttala examined a comedy movie and a drama film, whereas my data was a crime series. That clearly affects the themes that are considered in each movie or series, which leads to varied vocabularies and thus, ECRs and their renderings.

Ruuttala discussed the concepts of domestication and foreignization in her thesis, but to the question whether the movies in her analysis were translated in a domesticating or foreignizing manner, she does not give an explicit answer. However, concluding from the numerical data she conducted of the used strategies, it seems that foreignizing was the more prominent ideology in her material as well. The foreignizing strategies Retention, Specification and Direct translation occur 60 times, whereas domesticating strategies Omission and Generalization only 40 times (ibid: 52). I left the 9 ECRs that belong to the categories Official equivalent and “combinations” out of this rough comparison, but even if they belonged to the domesticating ideology, it would still not outnumber foreignization.

5. Conclusion

In the present analysis, I examined the first episode of a Finnish Nordic Noir series *Bordertown* (orig. *Sorjonen*) from the viewpoint of rendering culture-specific words in the English subtitles. As a baseline theoretical framework, I used Jan Pedersen’s concept of Extralinguistic Cultural Reference (ECR) and taxonomy of different translation strategies. With the help of these models and qualitative research methods, I set to answer two research questions:

1. What kind of translation strategies are used in translating Extralinguistic Cultural References in the English subtitles of *Bordertown*?
2. What does that reveal about the translator’s attitude towards the foreignization and domestication ideologies?

I found out that all the translation strategies listed by Pedersen were used in the episode, except for Specification strategy. The translation ideologies domestication and foreignization seem to be quite balanced in the episode, even though it seems like foreignizing strategies were used more often than domesticating strategies. I also discussed the fact that there are several factors that might have influenced the translation choices, such as the translator’s

relation to SC and TC, the genre of the series and subtitling conventions. Comparison with another recent analysis on the topic (Ruuttala 2018) revealed that even though types of ECRs and their renderings differ between our analyses, foreignizing strategies are frequent in English subtitles of Finnish movies as well.

Like all qualitative research, my analysis leans on my own perceptions and interpretations of the data, which makes it rather subjective and possibly prone to shortcomings. Like the translator, I also have to be able to notice the ECR in order to analyze it. Since I am a member of the SC, the challenge of spotting what actually is an ECR and what is not, is sometimes complicated. Defining the used translation strategy was also difficult sometimes. Especially knowing the difference between direct translation and official equivalent is not simple in every case. Furthermore, it is challenging for me to assess whether a translation is domesticating or foreignizing from the point of view of the audience, since I cannot be sure how much encyclopedic knowledge the target audience have regarding the ST and SC or the world in general. I can only try to conclude which terms they are familiar with and which are unknown to them, and rely on the theoretical models and what they say about the issue.

There are many other viewpoints that could be considered in future research. In a broader analysis, the subcategories of Pedersen's taxonomy could be included. The influencing factors behind the translation choices could be examined more closely, and in addition to ECRs, the translation of dialects and other linguistic material could be analyzed in defining the used translation ideology. It would also be interesting to compare subtitled and dubbed versions of the series and examine whether they differ from each other in relation to translation ideologies.

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