

Linguistic Variations in Korean-to-English and Korean-to-Filipino Translations of Selected K-Dramas

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Abstract

This paper investigates the underlying linguistic variations that have prompted different representations or deviations in the translated dialogues of three selected K-dramas with Netflix English subtitles and Viu Filipino dubs: *Reply 1988*, *Weightlifting Fairy Kim Bok Joo*, and *Hotel del Luna*. Delving into K-drama translations in English and Filipino target languages, the study determined linguistic variations in drama transcriptions using Yau's (2018) Linguistic Variations in AVT. Linguistic variations were analyzed in the form of register, dialect, sociolect, diglossia, and humor. The paper found translated dialogues that may present different interpretations of the source language, which may then result in the deviated meanings as the target viewers consume drama content through the subtitles and dubbings. Despite the findings not being limited to this consequence, the Korean-to-English translation tends to be simplified, standardized, and monotonous at times while the Korean-to-Filipino translation has applied some adjustments by using appropriate local nuances. The findings of the study uphold the significance of considering the sociolinguistic factors in translation to foster cultural understanding.

1 Introduction

Translation plays a crucial role in the increasingly diverse international media landscape by enabling cross-cultural representation and communication. As foreign media productions gain recognition in what was once an English-dominated industry, translation has facilitated global exposure to different cultural realities. Methods of audiovisual translation (AVT), such as subtitling and dubbing, help overcome linguistic barriers, making foreign productions accessible worldwide (O'Sullivan & Cornu, 2019).

Effective translation in media involves capturing not only linguistic features but also cultural

nuances to maintain authenticity. As Pavesi (2014) notes, audience satisfaction depends on the accurate portrayal of characters, settings, and their dialogues. Through selective mimesis, filmmakers can replicate linguistic conventions that mirror the source language (SL) and the target language (TL), considering elements like intonation, dialect, and idioms (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993). Since language reflects societal values and structures, incorporating these cultural aspects in translation ensures a more authentic representation (Trudgill, 1983). Moreover, linguistic variations like dialect, register, sociolect, diglossia, and humor present additional challenges in AVT due to differences between the SL and the TL (Yau, 2018). Therefore, a focus on sociolinguistic aspects in AVT can foster cultural sensitivity and build stronger intercultural connections.

Among the media productions that have transcended cultural boundaries through AVT is K-drama, one of the most accessible forms of entertainment with a wide range of storytelling approaches (Han, 2020). It has grown in popularity for highlighting and allowing viewers across the globe to experience Korean culture through their food, fashion, sports, and tourism. To stay abreast with the international audience and meet commercial objectives, K-drama streaming platforms typically include English subtitles, as it is considered the universal *lingua franca*. While most media are translated into English for broader global consumption, AVT can also target specific audiences, such as translating Korean content into Filipino.

As the Philippines is one of the highest consumers of (South) Korean culture, Filipinos have become an integral part of the growing Korean cultural invasion (Blas & Erestain, 2020). Therefore, with the increasing number of Filipino viewers, Viu, one of the main legal distributors of K-

drama series, produced Filipino-dubbed versions to cater to the Filipino local audience.

With the rising demand for global media products, along with the necessity for AVT, it has become a “burgeoning body of research” (Wang, et al., 2020, p. 475). For instance, a study among Asian-Canadian K-pop fans by Yoon (2017) revealed that due to cultural differences between Canada and South Korea, there were numerous instances where translations are often recontextualized and reappropriated to fit into the context of popular Western pop. Similarly, Van Rossum’s (2015) study of honorifics in K-drama and translation procedures, focused on the difference between the amateur and professional subtitlers’ foreignizing and domesticizing strategies, respectively. Both studies highlight the importance of cultural considerations in Korean translation. On the contrary, Ramière’s (2006) study demonstrated that subtitlers claimed to “systematically select strategies on a case-by-case basis, and not to have any form of ideological, aesthetic or didactic agenda” (p. 161). Moreover, they did not follow any guidelines when translating cultural references.

In the Philippines, Montalvo (2015) conducted a comparative analysis of Korean to English subtitles and Korean to Filipino dubs in an episode of the *Empress Ki* drama, focusing on the grammatical and syntactic aspects of the three languages (specifically case markers) in informal and polite discourse. While it explored the pedagogical and linguistic benefits of translating Korean dramas, it did not delve further into the cultural aspects of the three languages.

Parallel to Yoon’s (2017) study, Cruz and Joseph (2019), in their comparative critique of *Endless Love*, the Filipino adaptation of the Korean series *Autumn in My Heart*, found that Korean culture was recontextualized to fit the Philippine context through characters’ dispositions.

Despite the abundance of research on AVT, there are not many that explore Korean-to-Filipino translations, especially Korean-English-Filipino translations. Although researchers have attempted to scrutinize Korean-to-Filipino translation, these focused on the genre, pedagogy, and politics of language for migration purposes.

Therefore, this study aims to examine English subtitle translations and their Filipino-dubbed versions of K-dramas with focus on the linguistic variations. The results of the study may contribute to

research on Korean to Filipino AVT. Furthermore, the results may provide insights on how sociolinguistic factors influence translation.

2 Theoretical Framework

Yau (2018) introduced a sociolinguistic perspective focusing on linguistic variation, the way language is utilized significantly in various contexts by different individuals. The five categories of linguistic variation are *register*, *dialect*, *sociolect*, *diglossia*, and *humor*.

The concept of register refers to “specific styles of speech connected with certain professions or groups within society” (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 52). It is a term that applies to the distinctive styles of speech. The formal and informal language contexts, for instance, influence the translation process substantially, whereas TL translations do not generally have a similar register as the SL.

As adopted by Yau (2018), a dialect is a “variant of language that is recognizably spoken in a particular area” (Spolsky, 1998, p. 122). Speakers may use a variety of styles, registers, and genres to communicate in a range of social contexts. As a result, translating dialectal dialogue could make it challenging to understand the subtitles.

Yau (2018) defined sociolect as *social dialect*, which is a variation of the language spoken by individuals of a specific social group. It could refer to a social class, occupation, cultural background, or age range. The application of sociolect in translation may provide insights on variations in sociolinguistic factors that affect contextual meaning in the TL.

Diglossia refers to a situation in which more than one language variation is spoken in a particular society, as explained by Yau (2018). It occurs when a community uses the same language in two discrete forms. In a diglossic society, formal speeches and significant written interactions are conducted in a high variety (H), whereas regular discussion and informal or casual writing communication are conducted in a low variety (L). Thus, difficulties arise due to the functional separation of linguistic types during translation.

The last concept in Yau’s model is humor. It is an intriguing context for studying how translated languages are determined from a sociolinguistic viewpoint. To be able to discern and develop humor, it is necessary to understand context and

schemata. Because humor is reliant on sociocultural contexts, its ability to transcend reflects social uses of language in both the source and target cultures.

Yau's (2018) sociolinguistic viewpoint places value on linguistic diversity and how language is used differently by several persons in various situations. This paradigm aided the analysis of linguistic variations in translations that affect the contextual meaning and cultural aspects transferred from the SL to the TL.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative-descriptive design. Paltridge (2012) defines it as an approach that examines linguistic patterns of texts with the consideration of their social and cultural contexts. Specific utterances from the three K-dramas were selected for analysis using Yau's (2018) Linguistic Variations in AVT.

3.2 Data Source

The data source for this study are three selected K-dramas with English subtitles available on Netflix and Filipino-dubbed episodes available on Viu, namely: *Reply 1988*, *Weightlifting Fairy Kim Bok Joo*, and *Hotel del Luna*. They were selected based on the "Filipino Dubbed: Popular Filipino Dubbed" category of K-dramas on Viu Philippines' (2022). The criteria for selection include the K-drama's availability in both Netflix and Viu Philippines streaming sites, its popularity, and its inclusion of cultural elements (Van Rossum, 2015).

A minimum of three and a maximum of five lines from each K-drama episode were selected depending on the occurrences of linguistic variations in the translations. A total of 27 selected utterances were analyzed: four for register, six for dialect, five for sociolect, seven for humor, and five for diglossia.

3.3 Data Gathering Procedure

After reviewing episodes from the selected K-dramas on Netflix and Viu, two episodes from each title were analyzed for questionable translations and cultural elements. These episodes, including the original Korean dialogues, English subtitles, and Filipino-dubbed versions were transcribed verbatim into a tabulated corpus. Timestamps and speaker names were included for better organization. Utterances were divided by speaker, and

lengthy ones were split based on conceptual meaning.

3.4 Data Analysis

Selected utterances were categorized based on Yau's (2018) categories of linguistic variations in AVT: register, dialect, sociolect, humor and diglossia. These categories were employed to explore how the forms of linguistic variation influenced the translations per se. The findings were used to account for the influence of sociocultural factors on both SL and TLs, thus producing varied representations of the original intended meaning. The study then explains the influence of linguistic variations on the intended contextual meanings of the source text reflected in both translations.

4 Results and Discussion

Using the specified range of three to five selected utterances per episode for its analysis, this section presents the examined 27 units of linguistic variations from the selected K-dramas.

4.1 Register

Register, a crucial aspect of sociolinguistic context, guides the use of linguistic elements such as honorifics, formality, and tone based on the situation, social groups of participants, and the function of language. Dropping of honorifics is a prominently observed variation in K-drama translations. Korean registers are notable in the use of titles like "~님" (*nim*) or "씨" (*ssi*) (Mr., Ma'am, and Sir) and polite markers like "~요" (*yo*) or "입니다" (*ibnida*). In Korean culture, honorifics do not always signify "respect"—they are used for anyone older, in professional settings, for less intimate relationships, and even for humorous effect, so what matters is the nuance. As a complex language, Korean exhibits many variations and choices of register.

The example in Table 1 (See Appendix) demonstrates how Sun Woo, upon starting to date Bora, immediately informs her that he will stop using honorifics, typically ending in the "~요" (*yo*) form, and will no longer address her as "누나" (*nuna*; older sister). In translation, "누나" was rendered as "ma'am" in English and "matanda" (elder) in Tagalog. This change highlights how honorifics in Korean reflect the speaker's level of formality depending on the relationship. Thus, the shift from formal to informal is evident when honorifics are dropped.

Another observable variation in the translations is switching speech style. Lewandowski (2010) explains that a register is a situationally conditioned variety of language, where speakers adjust their speech according to the context.

In Table 4 (See Appendix), Joon Hyung practices how to apologize to Bok Joo, focusing more on varying tones. He practiced in two ways: First, “내가 미안해, 내가 진짜 잘못했어 내가 진짜 죽을 죄를 지었어. 내가 진짜 네가 좋아하는 고기 사줄게 내가.” (I’m sorry. I really did something wrong. I committed a sin that deserves death. I will buy you a meat that you really like.), translated to “Bok-Joo, I’m sorry. I’m really sorry. I’m terribly sorry. I’ll buy you your favorite meat.” in English and to “Alam kong kasalanan ko ang lahat, Bok Joo. Sorry, hindi ko sinasadya. Sorry na talaga, ililibre kita ng favorite mo.” (I know it’s all my fault, Bok Joo. Sorry, I didn’t mean it. I’m really sorry. I’ll treat you to your favorite.) in Filipino, which implies sincerity with a low tone. Secondly, “야, 내가 잘못 했어. 내가 고기 살게!” (Hey, I did something wrong. I’ll buy you some meat!), translated to “Hey, I’m sorry. I’ll buy you some meat.” in English and to “Teka, hoy ikaw, Bok Joo, sorry talaga ah, lilibre na lang kita.” (Hey, you, Bok Joo, I’m really sorry, I’ll just treat you.) in Filipino, which denotes a pretended lack of guilt. As a result, there are discernible register shifts that are primarily concerned with circumstances.

A third variation under register is seen in requesting a favor from someone older. As shown in Table 3 (See Appendix), Yoo Na’s formal speaking manner reflects the workplace setting and the seniority of the person she is interacting with. Various speaking situations influence vocabulary choices, and Yoo Na’s use of terms like “사장님” (CEO), “드시고” (formal for “eat”), and the polite marker “요”(yo) shows her consideration of both the person and the setting. The register of the dialogue was not effectively translated into either target language due to the lack of relevant concepts, even though Filipino also has a polite marker, “po.”

Using language appropriately in a particular situation helps establish the level of formality. Similarly, Seo Hee’s use of “마십시오” (*masibsi-o*; please don’t) further illustrates formality. This di-

alogue underscores the importance of understanding and applying the appropriate register to suit the context.

4.2 Dialect

Korean dialects, known as 사투리 (*saturi*), refer to regional dialects unique to certain areas. Despite the significant role that the dialectal speech takes part in drama, the subtlety and tone of the speakers’ original dialects are unlikely to be transmitted in a “one-to-one correspondence” to the target languages (Yau, 2018, p. 288).

Il Hwa speaks in the Gyeongsang-do 사투리 (*saturi*; dialect), known for its rough, fluctuating tone, which can also sound affectionate depending on the context. This combination gives Il Hwa’s speech a bold yet tender quality, reflecting her caring nature. Her accent, lexical choices, and candid tone are cultural and audiovisual elements that are difficult to fully translate (See Table 5, Appendix).

Her use of non-standard dialectal terms like “맞나” (*mat-na*; Is it true?; an agreeing or responsive expression) is common among Gyeongsang-do speakers to show attentiveness. It is equivalent to “진짜” (*jinjja*; really) or “정말” (*jeong-mal*; really) in standard Korean. This dialectal nuance was standardized in the translations, likely due to the difficulty of finding an equivalent dialect. “반피” (*ban-pi*; halfwit) is used by Il Hwa to question her son, No Eul, about why Jeong Hwan is not dating anyone. Her phrase “그러면 저, 저 뭐 저 정환이 저기가 반피가?” (Then, is Jeong Hwan the ‘반피’?) is translated as “Is Jung-hwan the only one?” in English and “Si Jung Hwan na lang pala ang wala.” (It’s only Jeong Hwan who doesn’t have [one]) in Filipino. The translations modulate the terms and change the sentence types, losing dialectal nuances.

Throughout the drama, while Il Hwa’s speech is rich with Gyeongsang-do dialectal features, these nuances are largely lost in translation due to limitations that smooth over the linguistic variations that give the original dialogue its distinct regional flavor.

The dialects in *Weightlifting Fairy Kim Bok Joo* are not as full-blown as in *Reply 1988*, but the nuances were occasionally woven to add charm into the character’s speech and to achieve specific

purposes. In Table 6 (See Appendix) Joon Hyung's default tone is the casual standard Seoul accent, as he playfully rejects his cousin's offer to share an umbrella with “에이, 남자 둘이 미쳤냐?” (Ay, two men together, are you crazy?). This reflects Joon Hyung's mischievous character.

On the other hand, he also produces a dialectal nuance in the delivery of “또 봅세,” translated as “see you” in English and “kitakits” in colloquial Filipino style of farewell. “봅세” conveys a relaxed vibe, often linked to regional dialects of older generations. Hence, this instance demonstrates that Joon Hyung uses it for humorous effect, adding depth to his character.

There were no notable dialectal nuances in *Hotel del Luna*. The drama's plot involves fantasy and spans past, present, and future, incorporating a historical theme, so the dialogue features archaic terms and expressions from the Joseon Dynasty era. The translation distinctions are presented in Table 7 (See Appendix).

The speaker in the dialogue, Kim Sun Bi (or scholar Kim), maintains a traditional way of speaking typical of a Joseon-era elite, holding grudges over being falsely accused of writing vulgar and lascivious stories. His speech shifted from modern formality to an obsolete style, using the archaic verb suffix “-올시다” (-*olsida*). Initially, Kim Sun Bi spoke formally with a neutral tone in the line, “두 분 다 글을 쓰는 작가시지요?” which literally translates to “You two are writers, right?” In the following utterance, his speech style transitioned to an archaic expression when he said “백주올시다” (*baek-ju olsida*), which literally means “This is *baek-ju* (traditional white liquor).” Therefore, the dialogues in *Hotel del Luna* do not employ regional dialects but instead present different speech styles to reflect distinctive character traits.

Languages convey meanings tied to their speakers' social and cultural contexts, and dialects are no exception. However, adapting an SL dialect into a TL local dialect is often incompatible, resorting to standardization of non-standard forms into standard TL expressions. While this approach conveys the general meaning but often fails to capture the nuanced subtleties of characters' speech. The argument over standardizing dialects

remains unresolved, as it can diminish the characters' backgrounds and speech styles (Dyck et al., 2014).

4.3 Sociolect

A sociolect is anchored on social interactions and identifiable social factors such as education, age, residence, and cultural background, among others. With those considerations, the analysis is pinned on three distinct characters from the selected K-dramas, each representing specific social groups.

Sung Deok Sun of Reply 1988: adolescent lower-class

Deok Sun, an 18-year-old high school student who lives in a semi-basement home, a common solution to Korea's 1980s housing crisis (Anantharamakrishnan, 2021; BBC News, 2020). Her family struggles financially due to unpaid debts. These details suggest Deok Sun's language reflects the sociolect of a lower-class female high school student in late 1980s Seoul.

As shown in Table 8 (See Appendix), Deok Sun uses the Korean slang “웬열” (*wen-yeol*; what the heck) to express surprise and frustration when teased by her friends about being ‘dumped’ by the guys she dated. Her childhood friends make fun of her, prompting her to try harder to save face and prove her popularity. The English translation “Seriously?” conveys denial, while the Filipino “Asa ka pa!” (You wish!) expresses a more escalated tone, even humorously. These expressions are common among people close in age to Deok Sun, though they are not limited to any specific social group.

Jung Jun Hyoong of WFKBJ: Middle-class Sophomore College Athlete in Seoul

Jung Joon Hyung, a character from the coming-of-age sports drama, is a 21-year-old sophomore athlete on Haneol Sport University's swimming team in 2016. After his widowed mother left for Canada to remarry, he was raised by his aunt and uncle, who run a local pharmacy, while his cousin became an obesity doctor. Though he grew up without financial difficulties, he primarily lives in the school dorms with fellow college athletes.

In Table 9 (See Appendix), Joon Hyung references “태릉” (*Taereung*) in a conversation with his gymnast ex-girlfriend, Si Ho. *Taereung*, the Korea National Training Center for elite athletes and Olympians, is well-known to local Korean

viewers. However, in both translations, the term was kept as “Taereung,” which can be unclear to speakers unfamiliar with its cultural significance.

Table 10 (See Appendix) shows the difference in the representation of the borrowed English term “풀” (*pul*) in Korean which literally translates to ‘full. In this context, “풀” refers to the concept of a full course meal, from the main dish to desserts. Joon Hyung uses “풀” to suggest treating Bok Joo to popcorn and drinks at the cinema, which is appropriate in Korean. However, the literal English translation, “I’ll treat you in full,” can be ambiguous. Similarly, the Filipino translation “lahat [pati]” (everything) could exaggerate the meaning to include all expenses, like movie tickets. This example highlights the importance of understanding context and carefully selecting words to effectively convey the intended meaning and overcome linguistic barriers.

Gu Chan Sung (구찬성) of Hotel del Luna: Working Upper Class in Seoul

Gu Chan Sung is the 30-year-old general manager of Hotel del Luna who had humble upbringing. His Harvard MBA was made possible with the help of the hotel owner. The story is set in 2019 Seoul, with Chan Sung living in a remodeled *hanok* courtesy of his wealthy friend Sanchez. He was as an assistant manager at an international hotel chain before working at Hotel del Luna. With these considerations, it can be said that Chan Seong’s speech represents the sociolect of Seoul’s upper-middle-class working adults.

The term “회식” (*hwesik*) combines “회” (company/meeting) and “식” (eating/food) to describe a company-sponsored meal for employees (See Table 11, Appendix). Since company dinners are not common in English or Filipino cultures, the term requires additional contextual explanation in translation. Both target languages attempt to convey the concept more clearly: “meal with colleagues” in English and “dinner kasama ang mga workmate” (dinner with workmates) in Filipino, using modulated translations to express the idea more literally. This example demonstrates that despite cultural differences, descriptive translation efforts can effectively convey foreign concepts for better understanding.

The analysis of the three characters illustrates how social factors shape language use, creating unique varieties distinct from standard language. Language acts as a bridge between cultural codes, requiring careful interpretation. While equivalent terms help comprehension, excessive reliance on them may ignore the original context. This aligns with Bassnett’s (2007) view that translators should understand both linguistic and cultural complexities to ensure accurate representation and nuanced translation.

4.4 Humor

This section examines how translations considered linguistic differences and various characteristics for the viewers to understand humor.

As shown in Table 12 (See Appendix), Deok-Sun humorously defends herself, claiming she dumped the guys she dated after her friends tease her about always being dumped. In Korean, she uses “찬밥” (*chan-bab*; cold rice) to imply she is overlooked by her friends but popular elsewhere. In Filipino, “cold rice” translates to “bahaw,” meaning someone unattractive or undesirable, changing the humor. Though the context is preserved, the “cold rice” humor is less effective in the English and Filipino translations.

In Table 13 (See Appendix), during their conversation, Bok-Joo, feeling cold, says she is only “wearing” a muffler. Joon-Hyung teases her by correcting her use of the word “wear,” as Korean uses different verbs: “입다” (*ib-da*) for clothing and “매다” (*mae-da*) for accessories like mufflers and bags. Bok-Joo mistakenly uses “입다” (*ib-da*) instead of “매다” (*mae-da*). The humor comes from Joon-Hyung’s playful attempt to keep her from leaving, as he enjoys their time together. While the translation has been adjusted, non-Korean speakers may miss the original humor due to the cultural and linguistic nuances that are lost in translation.

In a scene where Jang Man-Weol and Chan-Sung eat *naengmyeon* (cold noodles) together, humor arises when Man-Weol jokes, “Let’s eat. *Naengmyeon* is getting cold,” playing the irony of “cold noodles” getting cold (See Table 14, Appendix). This joke relies on a cultural understanding of *naengmyeon*, which may be lost to non-Korean audiences unfamiliar with the dish. This analysis highlights the importance of accurately

conveying cultural references in TLs to avoid loss of context and cultural misrepresentation.

4.5 Diglossia

Yau (2018) introduces the concept of diglossia as a “clear functional separation” (Wardhaugh and Fuller, 2015) within the same language that creates “two distinct codes.” This section’s analysis of diglossia contrasts the high variety with a low variety, attributed to the three key aspects: linguistic situation, cultural function, and lexicon.

To explain the context of this translation (See Table 15, Appendix), Deok Sun picks up the phone and hears a recorded message from her date canceling their plans for Lee Sung Hwan’s live concert at the last minute. The message contains a formal apology in high-register Korean, using politeness markers like “-합니다” (*hamnida*) and “-입니다” (*ibnida*) to sound formal and respectful. The speaker also addresses Deok Sun as “덕선씨” (Deok Sun *ssi*) where “씨” (*ssi*) is a respectful suffix similar to “Miss” or “Mister” in English.

In the Filipino translation, a mix of high and low varieties appears. English phrases like “press one, to page” represent a high-variety formality, while Taglish expressions like “nag cancel” and “importante” (more commonly used than “mahalaga”) indicate a low variety. The English translation maintains a formal tone but adapts it, translating “실례를 하게 되어” (for I committed a discourtesy) to the more natural “for being disrespectful.” The Filipino translation simplifies this to “Nakakahiya” (it’s embarrassing), conveying the meaning in a culturally appropriate way.

Al Afnan (2021) suggests that a low variety of language is what individuals acquire at home and use in everyday, casual interactions, such as informal conversations with friends. For example, Tae Kwon speaks to the juniors with the phrase “수고가 많네, 따까리 하느라” (You are working hard, playing the lackey). The slang term “따까리,” which corresponds to the English word “lackey,” was translated into the informal term “minions” (low variety) in Filipino (See Table 16, Appendix). In other Filipino contexts outside of this drama, the term “sunod-sunuran” (someone who blindly follows) may be used to convey a similar idea. Meanwhile, the English translation lost the sarcastic and humorous nuance, rendering it in a monotonous tone without a counterpart.

This shows how high and low language varieties serve different social functions based on context.

Lesada (2017) notes that both diglossia and bilingualism are prominent in the Philippines, particularly in Metro Manila, where English and Tagalog are commonly spoken. This blend has led to the emergence of “Taglish,” contributing to widespread bilingualism and social diglossia.

In Table 17 (See Appendix), the Korean text “네 동생 간병인 아줌마다” (It is the caregiver ajumma [a middle-aged woman] of your younger sibling) is translated into Taglish in the Filipino version, where the speaker mixes Tagalog and English, as seen in the term “nag-text.” This casual conversation style, using phrases like “응, hey, and hmmm,” shows that the speaker is addressing a love interest.

While linguistic variations shape meaning in translation, each can provide appropriate contexts in the target language or pose challenges in conveying the full depth of the original dialogues. These challenges often stem from the lack of equivalent concepts, cultural differences, and linguistic limitations.

4.6 Representation of the Source Language

Yau (2018) claims that translation does not merely serve as a tool in securing intelligibility between languages in AVT but also in bridging linguistic variations — tackling attributed sociocultural contexts in both the SL and the TL. In the case of drama translation, the translated text in subtitles and dubs accounts for the delivery of the dialogues, context, and plot comprehension of the target viewers.

The Korean-to-English translation is generally standardized in that it transmits the essential context but is lacking in terms of sophistication of meaning. With this translation technique constantly applied, the English expressions tend to sound more monotonous and simplified than what is actually said by the drama characters. For example, the translation of addressing or “호칭” (*hoching*; name title) deviated with similar frequency in both TLs. The English and Filipino translations share almost the identical terms to transmit job titles (e.g., head manager [부장님] to sir or Mr. Lee, room service manager [객실장님] to Ms. Choi, Teacher [선생님] to Dr. Jay). Aside

from this, the standardization of the Korean-to-English translation is depicted in the consequences that are associated with the generation-related catchphrase, the verb suffixes that created either formal or archaic terminologies, dialect, interjections, and slang.

Further, various speech styles are present in Hotel del Luna, but they were indistinguishable in the translated versions. Lost in the English and Filipino translations were tone and archaic expressions that were distinctive in the Korean dialogues. Speech tone is also seen on the lexical level in the SL, when characters use specific terms that reflect authoritative speech.

In the transmission of dialect in the TLs, the data shows how dialects were transferred into standard English where no dialectal nuances were noticeable. Moreover, some omissions of expression in particular dialects were observed. For instance, the term, “판박이” (duplicated thing), was passed over in Sun Yeong’s utterances. Most pervasively, the interjections like “아이고” (*aigo*) were frequently omitted in the English translation while the Filipino translation conveyed it as “Hay nako.” Additionally, slang such as “따까리,” the similar context of which is “lackey,” was underrepresented. The word is classified as low variety, but it was insufficiently translated in English as “it must be a lot of work for you,” while in the Filipino translation, “minions” was used making it closer to the original context in the SL.

Meanwhile, in terms of changing registers to communicate emotions of attachment and formal interaction with older people, the Filipino TL employs the terms “po” and “opo” to denote formality and respect in the Philippine setting. This is different from Korean culture because there is sentence formality in Korean. The particle 요 (*yo*) and the verb suffix 습니다 = (*subnida*) make sentences sound more polite and add formality to a phrase.

Another instance is seen in the fight between Bok Joo and Si Ho. In literal translation, Bok Joo’s sentence “열라 이중인격” means “freaking two personalities” which was translated as “sobrang plastik mo!” in Filipino. The word “plastic” in the Philippines refers to the elastic material intended to hold and carry items, but in this context, it refers to a hypocritical person or a backstabber. Thus, even though there is no similar phrase in the

source language, the context in Korean has been captured in the Filipino translation.

Additionally, there are instances when humor is translated literally in the Filipino dubs, making it incomprehensible to a broader audience. Selected utterances also demonstrate that the humor is altered when translated into Filipino since some phrases have connotations that Filipino speakers are not necessarily aware of. Therefore, although the Korean-to-Filipino translation appears to be a closer portrayal of the original text, there are instances when certain elements such as formality, honorifics, and humor cannot be translated and understood by a wider audience without prior understanding of both cultures.

5 Conclusion

The analysis of K-drama translations using Yau’s categories of linguistic variations shows how sociolinguistic factors significantly impact translations of K-dramas into English and Filipino. Through the close examination of the individual translation methods applied in the translation products, the study discovered how the subjectivity of the translator in their strategic approaches and attempts to communicate what is expressed in the SL may render how a group of people (specifically the speakers of a specific language) may be perceived as the representation of an entire culture by an audience. In addition, the comparative analysis of linguistic variations between the SL and two TLs showed the contrast of how certain sociolinguistic factors play a key role in distinguishing the specific barriers between cultures, beliefs, and social ideologies attached to specific languages.

The English subtitles’ translation maintains a surface-level interpretation of conceptual meanings and contextual undertones of the SL. However, the study does not go as far as assuming that this is due to the negligence of the translator; rather, it considers that Netflix subscribers may not all be native English speakers; thus, understandability, clarity, and direct-to-the-point translations prove to be a realistic and practical approach. Unfortunately, it becomes a barrier for the appreciation of the SL’s complex nature, defeating the potential of the platform for worldwide representation.

Contrastingly, the study asserts that the Filipino translations of the SL utilized by the Viu dubbed

episodes provided closer representations. Translators have the freedom to use their preferred translation strategies since Filipino dubs are made to cater to the Filipino audience. Nevertheless, intelligibility and commercial considerations are also important possible reasons for this.

Conclusively, this study affirms Yau's (2018) perspective on the importance of considering the categories of linguistic variations for a deeper and a more cohesive understanding of the role of society, culture, identities, and language in translation as well as the correlation of all the identified factors. However, a more exhaustive analysis of an entire series or complete films instead of just selected drama episodes can be conducted to further validate the findings.

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Appendix

Table 1

Dropping of Honorifics: Reply 1988 Episode 19 (00:09:20 - 00:09:33)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Sun Woo	첫째. 저 말 놔요. 우리 다시 사귀면 저 말 놔요. 누나라 고안 해요. 존대도 안 할 거예요.	First...I'm dropping honorifics. If we start dating again, I'm dropping honorifics. I won't call you "ma'am" or use honorifics.	<i>Una sa lahat, ayoko na'ng mag-ing pormal. Kung mag-dedate tayo ulit, dapat pantay tayo. Wala na 'kong pakialam kung mas matanda ka sa'kin.</i>

Table 2

Switching Speech Style: WFKBJ Episode 8 (00:05:15 - 00:05:35)

Speake	Korean	English	Filipino
Joon Hyung	야 복주야 내가 미안해, 내가 진짜 잘못했어 내가 진짜 죽을 죄를 지었어. 내가 진짜 네가	Bok-joo, I'm sorry. I'm really sorry. I'm terribly sorry. I'll buy you your favorite meat. This isn't right. Okay, let's say she's here.	<i>Alam kong kasalanan ko ang lahat, Bok Joo. Sorry, hindi ko sinasadya. Sorry na talaga, ililibre kita ng favorite mo. Hayyy, pa'no kaya? Teka, hoy ikaw, Bok</i>

<p> 좋아하는 고기 사줄께 내가. 아이, 이건 아닌데... 슝. 와, 딱 와. 야, 내가 잘못 했어. 내가 고기 살게! 에헤이, 이것도 아니야... 야, 어잇! </p>	<p> Hey, I'm sorry. I'll buy you some meat. This isn't right ei- ther. </p>	<p> <i>Joo, sorry talaga ah, lilibre na lang kita. Ayyy, pa- rang 'di okay. Eh kung gan'to kaya, nga pala, Bok Joo...</i> </p>
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	<p> 이거 다시 드시고 계속 이 호텔에 있어 주세요 </p>	<p> this ho- tel? </p>	
<p> Seo Hee </p>	<p> 이러지들 마십시오. 진정들 하시고 자, 이쪽으로 어서요. </p>	<p> Please don't do this. Please calm down and come this way </p>	<p> <i>Pakiusap, iti- gil niyo na 'to. Kalma lang kayo at sundan niyo 'ko. Dito ho.</i> </p>

Notes: Joon Hyung's attempt to practice the different possible options to approach Bok Joo

Table 3

Requesting a Favor From a 'sajangnim' who is Older in a Workplace Setting: Hotel del Luna Episode 15 (01:15:40 - 01:16:00)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Yoo Na	<p> 사장님, 제가 마고신 약방에서 술 훔쳐 왔어요. 새로운 주인한테 먹일 술 이랬어요. 사장님이 </p>	<p> Ms. Jang. I stole this wine from Mago's phar- macy. I heard it's for the new owner. Can you drink this and stay at </p>	<p> <i>Miss Jang. Ninakaw ko ang alak na 'to sa tinda- han ni Ma Go. Sabi niyo para sa bagong may ari 'to. P'wede bang ikaw na lang ang uminom nito? Para dito ka na lang sa ho- tel?</i> </p>

Table 4

Switching Speech Style: WFKBJ Episode 8 (00:05:15 - 00:05:35)

Speake	Korean	English	Filipino
Joon Hyung	<p> 야 복주야 내가 미안해, 내가 진짜 잘못했어 내가 진짜 죽을 죄를 지었어. 내가 진짜 네가 좋아하는 고기 </p>	<p> Bok-joo, I'm sorry. I'm really sorry. I'm terribly sorry. I'll buy you your fa- vorite meat. This isn't right. Okay, let's say she's here. Hey, I'm sorry. I'll buy you </p>	<p> <i>Alam kong kasalanan ko ang la- hat, Bok Joo. Sorry, hindi ko si- nasadya. S orry na tal- aga, ililibre kita ng fa- vorite mo. Hayyy, pa'no kaya? Teká, hoy ikaw, Bok Joo, sorry talaga ah, lilibre na</i> </p>

사줄께 내가. 아이, 이견 아닌데... 습. 와, 딱 와. 야, 내가 잘못 했어. 내가 고기 살게! 에헤이, 이것도 아니야... 야, 어잇!	some meat. This isn't right ei- ther.	<i>lang kita.</i> <i>Ayyy, pa- rang 'di</i> <i>okay. Eh</i> <i>kung</i> <i>gan'to</i> <i>kaya, nga</i> <i>pala, Bok</i> <i>Joo...</i>
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Table 5

Il Hwa's Gyeongsangdo Dialect: Reply 1988 Episode 18 (00:14:20-00:14:31)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Il Hwa	맞나? 그러믄 저, 저 뭐 저 정환이 저기가 반피가? 하기사 뭐 그거 어디고, 그 사천인가 뭐 거기서 지낸다고 연애도 뚝디 못하겠다. 그자?	Really? then...is Jung- hwan the only one? It must be hard for him to date while living over in Sa- cheon, right?	<i>Ah, talaga?</i> <i>Mabuti na-</i> <i>man kung</i> <i>gano'n. Si</i> <i>Jung Hwan</i> <i>na lang pala</i> <i>ang wala.</i> <i>Sabagay,</i> <i>nasa kampo,</i> <i>mukhang</i> <i>mahhirapan</i> <i>nga siya</i> <i>makanap</i> <i>ng date dahil</i> <i>madalas</i> <i>nasa Sa-</i> <i>cheon s'ya,</i> <i>hindi ba?</i>

Table 6

Use of Dialect for Witty Utterance: WFKBJ Episode 2 Episode 2 (00:42:33 - 00:42:38)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Joon Hyung	에이, 남자 둘이 미쳤냐? 어이, 또 봄세!	I'm not crazy to share an umbrella with a guy. See you.	<i>Hay,</i> <i>hindi tayo</i> <i>kasya</i> <i>d'yan.</i> <i>Ayyy,</i> <i>kitakits.</i>

Table 7

Switching From Modern to Archaic: Hotel del Luna Episode 15 (01:12:36 - 01:12:41)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Kim Sun Bi	두 분 다 글을 쓰는 작가시지 요? 이건 이태백이 즐거 마셨던 백주올시 다.	Both of you are writers, aren't you? This was Li Bai's favorite drink.	Pareho kayong manunu- lat, hindi ba? Si Li Bai, talagang paborito itong inuming ito.

Table 8

Deok Sun's Expression "웬 열?": Reply 1988 Episode 18 (00:15:11 - 00:15:14)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Deok Sun	웬 열? 야 누가 차여, 내가 늘 잤다니까	Seriously? Why would I? I'm the dumper.	Asa ka pa! Ako'ng marami nang nabasted na lalaki

Table 9

Joon Hyung's Specific Reference to Taerung: WFKBJ Episode 02 (00:26:51 - 00:26:58)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Joon Hyung	그러게. 오랜만이네. 태릉밥이 맛있긴 한가 본데? 얼굴 좋은데?	I know. It's been a long time. I guess they serve nice food at Taereung. You look good.	Alam ko, matagal na nga. Mukang masarap ang pagkain sa Taerung. Malusog ka.

Table 10

Joon Hyung's Treat in "플": WFKBJ Episode 08 (00:34:34 - 00:34:40)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Joon Hyung	그럼 영화 보러 갈래? 그건 내가 쓸게. 팝콘에 음료수까지 플로 짹!	Do you want to go see a movie? I'll treat you to everything including popcorn and drinks.	Kung mag movie na lang? Sagot ko na lahat pati popcorn at drinks!

Table 11

Gu Chan Sung: "회식" Hotel del Luna Episode 15 (00:57:50 - 00:57:54)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Chan Seong	이렇게 다 같이 모여서 밥 먹는 게 처음이라서. 원래 직장 동료들 회식하면 기분 좋잖아?	It's our first time having a meal together. It feels good when you have a meal with your colleagues, right?	Unang beses naming kumain magkasama. Masarap mag dinner kasama ang mga workmate mo 'di ba?

Table 12

“찬밥” (Cold Rice) : Reply 1988 Episode 18 (00:44:25-00:44:29)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Deok-Sun	왜 이러셔. 내가 여기서만 찬밥이다 판데가면 캡인기 있어.	Why do you say that? I'm left out in the cold here, but it's differ- ent elsewhere.	Ano 'ng sabi mo? Kayo lang ang gan 'yan sa 'kin. Sa ibang lu- gar sikat ako 'no.
Jung-Hwan	야, 인간적으 로 우리끼리 는 거짓말 하지 말자.	Hey, let's be honest among us.	Hoy. Hindi mo kasi kailangan mag sin- ungaling sa 'min.

Notes: Deok-Sun tries to explain that she is actually the dumper in her relationships.

Table 13

“Muffler”: WFKBJ Episode 8 (00:07:35 - 00:07:40)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Bok-Joo	아니 나 목도리 밖에 안 ‘입고’ 나왔단 말이야.	I only have a muffler on me.	Muffler lang ang suot ko, ang lamig.
Joon-Hyung	목도리 ‘매고’ 나왔겠지.	You mean you also wore a muffler.	'Di lang naman muffler ang suot mo ah?

Table 14

“냉면” (Cold Noodles) : Hotel del Luna Episode 16 (00:38:42 - 00:39:32)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Jang Man-Wol	마지막으 로 네가 꼭 먹어 줘야 될 게 있어. 그거 나중에 꼭 먹어. 꼭. 얼른 먹자, 냉면 식겠다.	Lastly, there is something you have to eat. You have to eat that later. You have to. Let's eat. Naengmyeo n is getting cold.	Baka malimu- tan ko, may iinumin ka pa para sa 'kin. Basta... kailanga n inumin mo 'yan. Kuha mo? Bi- lis, kain na. Lumal- amig, sayang.

Table 15

Recorded apology to cancel last minute: Reply Episode 18 (00:57:46 - 00:58:04)

Speaker	Korean	Eng- lish	Filipino
Deok Sun's Suitor	첫번째 메시지입니다. “정말 죄송합니다. 오늘 콘서트는 아무래도 못 볼 것 같습니다.	This is your first mes- sage. “I'm so sorry. I don't think I'll be able to make it to the	Press one, to page. “Deok Sun, pa- sens'ya na. Tungkol sa con- cert, baka hindi na 'ko

제 개인적인 문제로 이렇게 덕선씨에게 크게 실례를 하게 되어 정말 뭐라 드릴 말씀이 없습니다. 정말 죄송합니다.”	concert today. It's be- cause of a per- sonal issue. Sorry for be- ing disre- spect- ful. I have no ex- cuses for it. I am re- ally sorry.”	maka- punta ngayon. Nawala sa isip ko, may im- portante pala akong lala- karin. Naka- kahiya, bigla akong nag can- cel. Pa- sensiya na tal- aga.”
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Table 16

“Minions”: WFKBJ Episode 2 (00:13:45 - 00:13:47)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Tae Kwon	어우 고마워. 수고가 많네 따까리 하느라.	Thanks for taking care of it. It must be a lot of work for you.	Uyyy, salamat ah? Ang hirap sig- uro mag- ing min- ions?

Table 17

“Taglish as a Low Variety”: Hotel del Luna Episode 15 (00:36:33 - 00:36:36)

Speaker	Korean	English	Filipino
Yoo Na	응? 네 동생 간병인 아줌마다.	Hey, I got a text from your sis- ter's care- giver.	Hmm? Yung nurse ng kapatid mo <u>nag-</u> <u>text.</u>