Moments of relational work in English fan translations of Korean TV drama

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

This study is situated in the field of the pragmatics of fiction and audio-visual translation studies and explores renditions of relational work and im/politeness in the English fan subtitles of Korean dramas, as provided by the platform www.viki.com (Dwyer, 2012, 2017; Locher & Messerli, 2020). Within story lines, the indexical potential of language is used (among others) for character positioning, character development, relationship development and (indirectly) reflection of cultural norms and expectations (Planchenault, 2017). Fictional data is thus an ideal source for studying linguistic ideologies about relational work. The case of Korean is challenging for subtitlers since it dynamically indexes relationships through a complex system of grammaticalized politeness forms and a set of honorific morphemes and vocabulary (see, e.g., Rhee, 2019). The Korean nuances often cannot be translated as there is no straightforward correspondence to indexes of politeness in the target languages. Nevertheless, the English subtitles give access to an abundance of foregrounded *relational work moments*. The paper works on 215 scenes (from 4 dramas) and explores in what ways the complex Korean politeness system and the fictional play with this system is made accessible in the subtitles for non-Korean audiences. Four themes emerged: (1) character address term negotiations; (2) character meta-comments on relational work; (3) character meta-discussions on role understanding; and (4) subtitler meta-comments on language and culture. The results demonstrate two main issues: (a) these relational work moments are intricately connected with (character) identity construction in the fictional artefact; (b) the subtitlers take an active role in translating cultural assumptions about relational work and lean towards foreignization rather than domestication.

1. Introduction

In this paper, English fan translations of Korean TV dramas (K-drama for short) are studied with a particular focus on moments of relational work. As an im/politeness scholar of English, my interest in Korean TV dramas bears some explanation. It stems from a sabbatical spent at the University of British Columbia in Canada in 2012, where I met many Koreans who acquainted me with aspects of the Korean culture, such as TV series, music and food, and they made me aware of the importance of complex positioning of one person vis-à-vis another which is indexed in the Korean language through different politeness levels. Although we were conversing in English, it was important to my friends to establish directly after meeting

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how old I was, whether I had already completed my degree and secured a job. Since how to properly address each other in Korean is a matter of knowing one's own and the addressee's place in society,[1] my Korean colleagues also wanted to understand who I was despite the fact that English did then not allow them to express the same nuances of positioning as Korean.

When watching Korean TV drama, it is also immediately apparent to what extent the characters' relationship negotiation on a linguistic level is part of the fictional artefact. This is the case on an implicit level in the sense that characters use particular levels of politeness and thus constantly make relationship claims (Rhee and Koo, 2017; see also Section 2.2). There are many encounters depicted in K-drama where relational work is foregrounded. By observing or exploiting existing norms, the characters position each other by the use of address terms (including the use of honorifics) and the level of politeness forms and conventions (the link between politeness concerns and identity construction has been established in the literature for a while now; see Locher, 2008 for an overview). In cases where the characters perceive a clash between their expectations and how they are addressed, they can comment on this clash explicitly in meta-comments on relational work (e.g. "don't start speaking informally to me all of a sudden", *Goblin*, 2017, Ep. 11, 21:28). We are therefore dealing with what Eelen (2001, p. 35) terms classificatory politeness1,[2] i.e. "hearers' [character's] judgments (in actual interaction) of other people's interactional behaviour as 'polite' or 'impolite', etc. and metapragmatic politeness1, i.e. "instances of talk about politeness as a concept about what people perceive politeness to be all about". As cultural artefacts, the telecinematic data will thus (also) transport ideologies about norms of behavior and culture in general (Alvarez-Pereyre, 2011; Jucker and Locher, 2017).

To illustrate this, consider Extract (1) from the legal fantasy drama *While You Were Sleeping* (*WYWS*, 2017). The Korean subtitles in the first line in the column 'subtitle' are provided by Viki and appear above the English subtitle in case viewers activate this option.[3] The Romanized version in square brackets is not displayed on the screen. The English subtitles rendered in bold are added by the fan subtitlers and are the focus of interest in this paper. The Korean subtitles are drawn on to explain aspects of the source language when explaining a choice in the subtitles but are not the focus for investigation in this paper per se. The context of the scene is that colleagues of the prosecution team are gathering for lunch in a restaurant and are all seated around a table, when Prosecutor Shin Hee-min arrives late. Jung Jae-chan, a newcomer in the team, sees her and calls her over.

(1) *While You Were Sleeping*, Ep. 2, 00:46:35, subtitles in Korean and English from Viki.

	Character	Subtitle	Action description
1	Jung Jae-chan	어, 신 프로 여기! 신 프로 여기! *[e, sin phu-lo ye-ki! sin phu-lo ye-ki!*]* **Pro Sin, over here! Pro Sin, over here! Hey, this way!**	Shin Hee-mi looks around the room, ignoring Jung Jae-chan. She turns her back to the table.
2	Jung Jae-chan	야, 이쪽! 신 프로! *[ya, i-ccok! sin phu-lo!]* **Over here, Pro Sin!**	Shin Hee-mi keeps ignoring Jung Jae-chan.
3	Lee Ji-kwang	제가 지금 안 들려서 저러겠냐, 그냥 신 검사님이라고 불러줘 *[cey-ka ci-kum an tul-lye-se ce-le-keyss-nya, ku-nyang sin kem-sa-nim-i-la-ko pwul-le-cwe]* **Do you think she's really doing that because she can't hear you? Just call her Prosecutor Sin.**	
4	Jung Jae-chan	야, 이쪽! 신 프로! *[ya, i-ccok! sin phu-lo!]* **Hey, Pro Sin! Pro Sin!**	Shin Hee-mi keeps ignoring Jung Jae-chan.
5	Son Woo-joo	신 프로~ 여기! *[sin phu-lō ye-ki!* **Pro Sin, over here.**	

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[1] Status in Korean society depends on five factors that all play a role at the same time: (1) birth, family, marriage, (2) hometown, region, (3) education, (4) profession, and (5) financial wealth (Yuh, 2020). This status is then reflected in linguistic forms as well as body language (Brown and Winter, 2019).

[2] The numerical index 1 refers to the distinction between emic and etic usages of the term politeness: politeness1 thus refers to the emic usage of the term rather than the technical, scholarly usage, which is referred to as politeness2, as for example used by Brown and Levinson (1987) (see Eelen, 2001).

[3] The Korean subtitles are not available for all dramas. They are usually added later than the English subtitles and are part of what viki calls the "learn mode" (https://support.viki.com/hc/en-us/articles/231829048). When you hover your mouse over the Korean word, a dictionary definition appears. The Korean subtitles are displayed in addition to the English subtitles.

(*continued*)

	Character	Subtitle	Action description
6	Shin Hee-min	거기 계셨구나, 아이 죄송합니다. *[ke-ki kyey-syess-kwu-na, a-i coy-song-hap-ni-ta.]* **Ah! That's where you were. I'm sorry.**	She looks over to the table.

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* The Romanization was made with http://roman.cs.pusan.ac.kr/input_eng.aspx (Yale transcription).

This is one of many scenes in this drama where the main character Jung Jae-chan, who just started work in a prosecutor's office, is explicitly reprimanded by his colleagues for what the characters construct as inappropriate behavior. This inappropriateness is indexed in different ways. As he is a rookie in the office, he should address Shin Hee-mi, who is senior in work experience, formally with her work title (신 검사님, Prosecutor Sin, with honorific) rather than by abbreviated title of the English loanword Prosecutor[4] and last name (Pro Sin) and informal language. This is despite the fact that Shin Hee-mi is his former classmate (hence he uses informal forms of address, claiming a prior relationship). In a prior scene of a similar nature, the rookie had been told off already and he was given the explanation that "You should've called her Prosecutor Sin! Hui Min, Sin Hui Min, or Pro Sin. Those won't do. It's Prosecutor Sin. Even if she was your junior in school, if she has seniority at work, you should call her Prosecutor, no matter what." (*WYWS*, Ep. 2, 32.30). However, Jung Jae-chan resists this and keeps using informal language and address terms. As a consequence, in Extract (1) above, Shin Hee-mi blatantly ignores him by turning her back to him and the entire table. His senior Lee Ji-kwang tells Jung Jae-chan in a meta-pragmatic comment (subtitle 3) that he should pick the respectful form of address. However, Jung Jae-chan ignores this advice again. Finally, Son Woo-joo, a senior to both Jung Jae-chan and Shin Hee-mi, succeeds in calling Shin Hee-mi, who turns, smiles and accepts the more informal form of address from her senior. In doing so, she once again underlines that she does not accept Jung Jae-chan's informal use of language and stresses their work hierarchy. This brief extract is one of the examples of interest to this paper since it represents an explicit scene of relational work negotiation where norms of politeness and the factors that shape politeness (seniority, age, hierarchy) are made accessible to the viewers by means of the plot and the translation.

The challenge of how to translate such acts of positioning (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005; Davies and Harré, 1990) from Korean into English in these moments of relational work in fiction is faced by the fan community of Korean drama whose members translate these fictional artefacts for their peers. The computer-mediated streaming platform studied here (viki.com) makes it possible to engage with the artefact in a number of roles, as viewer, translator, commenter and reviewer. This paper asks how English is used in the subtitles to make the relational work negotiations by the characters accessible for comprehension for a non-Korean audience, which also might function as learning opportunities for those viewers interested in Korean culture and politeness negotiations. It is important to stress that the paper is concerned with the English translations of explicit relational work moments, rather than the complexity of the Korean original where politeness issues and positioning occur mandatorily in every sentence (see Section 2.2).

This project combines interpersonal pragmatics (the focus on im/politeness and relationship negotiations), computer-mediated communication (via the practices of the online streaming platform), translation and AVT studies (with the focus on the subtitles) with the pragmatics of fiction. This interface will be briefly reviewed in Section 2. Section 3 introduces the data and method, while Sections 4–6 present the analysis and Section 7 conclusions.

2. Positioning of the study in its theoretical field

2.1. Current state of research in the field

This research project combines different research fields in order to zoom in on the pragmatic angle of language in subtitling processes, a hitherto fairly neglected research niche in pragmatics (but see below). It combines insights from the pragmatics of fiction, translation and audio-visual translation studies, interpersonal pragmatics and computer-mediated communication.

The project is situated within the pragmatics of fiction and focuses on telecinematic discourse (Locher and Jucker, 2017). While fictional language is not necessarily representing exactly how people speak in comparable non-fictitious situations, the texts are of interest for pragmatics. The texts of TV series and movies are considered cultural artefacts that deserve to be studied in their own right since they transport ideologies about norms of behavior and culture (Alvarez-Pereyre, 2011; Jucker and Locher, 2017). This understanding of artefacts includes translations in dubbed and subtitled form, and we can thus examine subtitles as naturally-occurring language within this research paradigm. Key concepts for the pragmatics of fiction are participation structure, audience design, narrative/plot development, fictional character creation and stance among others (for overviews see Bednarek, 2017; Culpeper and Fernandez-Quintanilla, 2017; Hoffmann, 2017; Landert, 2017; Locher, 2017; Messerli, 2017, 2019, 2020). The background derived from this literature will be pertinent when discussing examples in context.

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[4] The use of this English loanword was commented on online: https://m.blog.naver.com/sooyeon86/221111746968.

Insights from translation studies and especially audio-visual translation are relevant to this paper and research in this area has also increasingly focused on pragmatic challenges of translation (e.g. Díaz-Cintas and Anderman, 2009; Díaz-Cintas et al., 2010; Díaz-Cintas and Neves, 2015; Díaz-Cintas and Nikolić, 2018; Dwyer, 2012; Gottlieb, 1994, 1997; Guillot, 2016; Messerli, 2019, 2020; Pedersen, 2011, 2019; Pérez-González, 2007, 2012b; Taylor, 2000). I build on those fields when it comes to the differences that exist between the source and target texts. The literature addresses this in the form of translation strategies (e.g. simplification, explicitation, normalization, and leveling out in Baker's (1992, 1996) terminology, or retention, specification, direct translation, generalization, substitution, omission or the use of an official equivalent in Pedersen's (2011) terminology). In other words, there are recurring translation strategies that might form norms for particular practices over time (see Ulrych, 2000; Pedersen, 2011: 37). More generally, translations can orient more or less to the source or target language, which is typically discussed as the dichotomy of domestication versus foreignization (see, e.g., Hatim and Mason, 1997; Venuti, 2013). As Dwyer (2017, p. 7) puts it, "translation cannot help but risk niceties in its attempts to mediate between non-equivalent cultures, values, languages and communities". In other words, "a degree of selection, condensation and thus reinterpretation will always be necessary" (Dwyer, 2017: 30). In addition, subtitling as a process faces specific cognitive and technical constraints that affect the translation product (Dwyer, 2017; Koolstra et al., 2002; Pedersen, 2011). Subtitles require text reduction because their audiences are limited in terms of reading speed and attention (Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2007: 146). As a result, choices need to be made by translators between what aspects they deem dispensable or indispensable (Kovačič, 1991; Massidda, 2015). Oksefjell-Ebeling (2012, p. 117) notes that it is often the interpersonal elements of language that are omitted, such as "vocatives, reaction signals, and initiators." It has also been found that dialects, sociolects, ethnolects or idiolects do not travel well from the spoken to the written, translated form (see, e.g., Ellender, 2015; Queen, 2004).

It is these indexicalities, however, that have been shown to be so instrumental in the identity construction of fictional characters (Locher, 2017; Planchenault, 2017; Queen, 2004). Normalization as a translation strategy — i.e. simplification and adaptation to the cultural and linguistic categories of the target language (see, e.g., Baker, 1993; Ulrych, 2000) — is thus likely to also extend to complex interpersonal moments in spoken dialogues and affect characterization in subtitles. The degree of domestication/normalization manifest in the data can be understood as indexical of the translators' orientation towards the source or target text. This means that the subtitles are expected to show effects of particular attitudes towards the fictional artefact by the translators and of communicative strategies by the collective sender, which in turn lead to particular positioning of the target audience.

The production and reception processes of fictional films and television series are understood as acts of communication between a collective sender and a participating viewership, mediated through the fictional interactions that take place on screen (Brock, 2015; Dynel, 2011; Messerli, 2017, 2019, 2020). From this perspective, lay subtitling functions as an additional voice that speaks from a hybrid space: It is integrated into the multimodal artefact and thus part of the message the collective sender originally designed for their audience; and it also serves as a linguistic and cultural accomplice to the audience (Messerli, 2019, 2020). Such considerations point to the importance of understanding subtitling as situated language use, informed by a context and shaped by the participants and their communicative acts.

For this paper, the research field of Interpersonal Pragmatics is particularly pertinent. It describes an approach to language in use that foregrounds the relational aspect of communication (see Locher and Graham. 2010). Interpersonal pragmatics is not a unified theoretical or methodological approach, but it describes a particular perspective on language use. Key concepts are relational work, identity construction, and acts of positioning (see also Haugh et al., 2013). The concept of *relational work* (Locher and Watts, 2005, 2008) has been developed within im/politeness research but is larger in scope. It refers to all work that people invest in shaping, challenging, contesting and confirming relationships in interaction. This relational work involves linguistic as well as multimodal indexicals. As such the term is more encompassing than phenomena of politeness alone since it can be used to describe face-enhancing, face-maintaining and face-aggravating/ challenging behavior alike. Studies on relational work in fictional data have been conducted on plays and novels (e.g., Jucker, 2016; Jucker and Kopaczyk, 2017; Kizelbach, 2017), and more recently telecinematic data (e.g. Culpeper, 2005; Dynel, 2015, 2017; McIntyre and Bousfield, 2017). The element of translation, however, has not yet been given the center stage it deserves within this framework.

In this paper, I will explore the ways in which im/politeness and relational work is made salient in translated texts. As outlined in the introduction, I will deal with scenes in which characters explicitly comment on each other's (lack of) use of politeness (Eelen, 2001; see below), but also on scenes where politeness ideologies are more implicitly indexed, for example in the negotiation of use of address forms and modes of behavior (roles). Scenes entailing such "moments of relational work" will transport ideologies about norms of behavior and culture in general. The challenge of translating relational work is easily understandable but not extensively studied (but see Guillot, 2016; Hatim and Mason, 1997; House, 1998). However, see the chapters on pragmatics in general in Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007), Desilla (2012, 2014), and Hatim and Mason (1997), as well as work on speech acts such as greetings and leave-taking (e.g., Bonsignori and Bruti, 2015; Bonsignori et al., 2012), compliments (Bruti, 2007) and advice (Pinto, 2010). For example, English does not have a *tu/vous* (T/V) distinction, while French and German do (see also Guillot, 2010). When characters switch from a V to a T form in a French or German source text, English has no obvious means of adequately rendering this nuance word by word or grammatically. Alternatively, when an English source text is translated into French/German, the translators need to decide whether and when a change in T/V form is appropriate. Similar decisions need to be made when translating the Korean language into English. However, the complex system of politeness norms in Korean makes the mapping of relational work between the two languages particularly challenging. While there is a body of literature dealing with Korean

im/politeness per se (see Section 2.2), the literature published in English suggests that online translation has not yet been fully studied.

Finally, insights from studies in computer-mediated communication are pertinent as well. The subtitles that constitute the main corpus of this research are produced, distributed and viewed within an online platform that we understand as pertaining to a Web 2.0 interface (Bolander and Locher. 2014; Herring, 2013; Locher, 2014). This platform provides the technical means for teams of fan subtitlers to add their subtitles to licensed videos. The product of this form of fan translation serves as the source material for the compilation of the "Moments of Relational Work in Fiction" (MoRWF) corpus (see Section 3).

2.2. The Korean wave and Korean politeness

The Korean wave (*Hallyu*) is made up of the international consumption of "Korean music, television programs, films, online games, and comics" (S. Lee and Nornes, 2015, p.: back cover) and presents rich data for scrutiny by scholars in Asian studies, media studies, and culture studies (see, e.g., Hong, 2014; J. Kim, 2014b; Y. Kim, 2013; S. Lee, 2015a). However, studying Korean wave phenomena is also of interest to English linguistics. Within the international viewing of K-drama, English plays an important role since it is often the first language for subtitling for a Western (i.e. non East-Asian) viewership, and is likely to function as a source language for subsequent translations. This project deals with the translation of K-drama into English with a special emphasis on pragmatics. While in East Asia K-drama was first broadcast through TV stations (Chua and Iwabuchi, 2008; J. Kim, 2014a; S. Lee, 2015b), the US, South American, and European viewing today takes place mainly via online (licensed and illegal) streaming platforms (Dwyer, 2012, 2017). The edited collection *Hallyu 2.0* (S. Lee and Nornes, 2015) nicely discusses the background of this latter phenomenon and the importance of the online interaction.

From the point of view of a politeness scholar, translating Korean drama poses obvious challenges for translation with respect to im/politeness phenomena. Korean culture is highly complex with respect to how the individual is positioned vis-à-vis other social groups and individuals. The Korean language accounts for this complexity by marking social status, age, closeness, class and hierarchy differences explicitly and in complex ways (e.g. L. Brown, 2011, 2013, 2015; L. Brown and Winter, 2019; L. Brown, Winter, Idemaru and Grawunder, 2014; Choo, 2006; Kiaer, 2018; Kim, 2015; King, 2006; Koh, 2006; Park, 2006; Rhee, 2019; Yuh, 2020). As Rhee and Koo (2017, p. 101) point out, "in Korean the speaker-addressee relationship is reflected in mandatory sentence-final verbal morphology" and the speech level has been "grammaticalized to such an extent that any violation of proper honorification would render the utterance not only pragmatically unacceptable but often ungrammatical". The four to seven speech levels differ in degree of politeness and formality, and how they index honorification (Rhee and Koo, 2017: 102). There is specific honorific vocabulary which replaces more common nouns and verbs. There are honorific case morphemes and the verb morphemes index "attitudinal, emotional, epistemic, and evidential stance toward the addressee or proposition" (Rhee and Koo, 2017, p. 101). In addition, there is a plethora of address terms which index family, seniority and work relationships (Koh, 2006; Kim, 2015; Rhee, 2019). The complexity of the Korean address terms is challenging for translation. For example, many of the address terms have no equivalent in English or, if they do exist, their use would be non-idiomatic in English, which prefers first and last names. According to Kiaer (2018: 108), the complex interplay of honorification, formality and politeness as expressed in address terms, vocabulary choice and particles in Korean is not translatable into English word by word, but is best expressed in aiming for a similar 'tone' (see also House, 2018, for functional pragmatic equivalence in translation). Consequently, the subtitlers have to make complex choices with respect to how they can get the nuanced relational work in the original across to their target audience.

2.3. Research question

The above mentioned linguistic indexicality of politeness achieved through a complex address term system and sets of honorific morphemes and vocabulary in the Korean language is by no means static. People play with different forms and negotiate each other's standing vis-à-vis each other in real life situations (L. Brown, 2011; L. Brown et al., 2014; M. Kim, 2015; Koo and Rhee, 2013; E.M. Lee, 2018; Okamoto, 2010; Rhee, 2019; Rhee and Koo, 2017). Brown (2013) and Brown and Winter (2019) show that this playing with the indexicalities of linguistic and multimodal politeness (or deference as it is often called in the literature on East Asian languages) also shows up in K-dramas. As story lines and, within those, the development of relationships between characters are an important aspect of TV drama as a cultural artefact, it is not surprising that this possibility of language is exploited for stylistic means. To the non-Korean viewer, the number of scenes in K-drama in which the level of politeness is explicitly discussed seems rather striking. This may be either due to Korean culture being immersed in ideologies of deference, which means that Koreans indeed move frequently and quickly to a meta-level with respect to politeness in conversation in non-fictional contexts, which is then reflected in the fictional artefacts (e.g. it is important to establish each other's age in order to understand in what ways to pay proper respect, as indicated in the introduction).[5] It may also be due to the telecinematic nature of the data, which might use these scenes as pivots to advance the character relationships in connection with the plot. Since such scenes are thus likely to be important for the plot, the necessity to translate the relational nuances are particularly pressing. While it seems evident that there must be a process of reduction in

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[5] There are a number of Korean scholars working with data from TV dramas who claim that the language used in these artefacts is so close to non-fictional language use that it can be used for a corpus linguistic approaches to Korean (e.g., Brown and Winter, 2019; Kim, 2018; Kim and Strauss, 2018).

complexity and loss of relational detail from Korean to English, the scenes themselves need to be translated and their purpose needs to be somehow made accessible for the fictional plot to work. As a consequence, it will be of interest to ask:

> In what ways is the complex Korean politeness system and the fictional play with this system made accessible in the subtitles for non-Korean audiences within scenes of explicit moments of relational work?

It is important to emphasize that this project is interested in exploring the ways in which im/politeness is made salient in the *translated* versions of the texts and in the creative means the subtitlers employ to make the text culturally and linguistically accessible. It is assumed that these scenes might also function as opportunities to learn about Korean politeness. While it is expected to find well-documented translation strategies such as simplifications, transformation or omission and more specifically such procedures and strategies as have been observed for audiovisual translation (Tomaszkiewicz, 1993, 2010), this paper does not explore the quality of translation per se but instead is interested in taking the perspective of the audience which does not know Korean and thus depends on the subtitles as means to gain access to relational work negotiations in the first place.

3. Data and method

3.1. Data

Subtitling data was gathered from the streaming social platform www.viki.com, which presents an interesting intersection between commercial and community interests. As a company, Viki (owned by Rakuten) acquires the rights to the distribution for Korean and other Asian TV dramas outside of South Korea and makes them available for viewing. The site offers a social network with participatory elements for its viewers such as writing comments on series, episodes and actors, rating shows, or commenting on the episode while viewing (see Locher and Messerli, 2020). Importantly, Viki serves as a platform for fan subtitling, which is to say that members *of* the community translate *for* the community (Díaz-Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez, 2006; Dwyer, 2012, 2017; Pedersen, 2019; Pérez-González, 2012a, 2012b). Teams of fans first segment the episodes and then add subtitles. The resulting subtitles are under a Creative Commons License, so that we deem it ethically fine to work on this data.[6] On Viki, English is of particular interest since it functions as a lingua franca: It is usually the first language into which Korean is translated, and it also serves as one of the source texts for translations into many other languages (for pivot translation, see Gottlieb, 1994: 117). In 2020, Viki claims on its website to be

> the global TV site where millions of people discover, watch and subtitle global primetime shows and movies in more than 200 languages. Together with its fans, Viki removes the language and cultural barriers that stand between great entertainment and fans everywhere (https://www.viki.com/about; 21/1/2020).

The corpus for the current case study consists of the subtitles of four dramas of 16—20 episodes of about 1 h each (Table 1). The dramas were first screened between 2014 and 2017. Column 3 in Table 1 shows the languages that episode 1 was translated into by fans at the time of collection (12—15 May, 2018). For this paper, only the English translation is of relevance.

Table 1
Information on Korean TV dramas from which the MoRWF corpus is built.

Name of drama	# of episodes	Subtitle language in Ep 1 (Viki)	Screening	TV channel	Genre (Viki)	Name of Viki subtitling team
Goblin, 도깨비	16	Ar, bg, cs, de, el, en, es, et, fi, fr, hr, hu, id, it, ko, lt, mne, nl, no, pl, pt, ro, sh, si, sk, sv, th, tl, tr, vi, zh (31)	2016.12–2017.02	tvN	Romance, Sci-Fi & Fantasy	The Immortal Team
Twenty Again, 두번째 스무살	16	Ar, de, el, en, es, fr, id, it, ja, ko, lt, nl, pl, pt, ro, tl, tr, vi (18)	2015.08–2015.10	tvN	Comedy, Romance	FOREVER 21 Team
While You Were Sleeping, 당신이 잠든 사이에	16	Ar, bs, cs, da, de, el, en, es, et, fi, fr, he, hi, hr, hu, id, it, ja, ko, lt, mne, nl, pl, pt, ro, ru, sh, sk, sv, th, tl, tr, uk, vi (34)	2017.09–2017.11	SBS	Romance, Sci-Fi & Fantasy	The Dream Team
You are All Surrounded, 너희들은 포위됐다	20	Ar, bg, cs, da, de, el, en, es, et, fa, fi, fr, he, hr, hu, id, it, ja, ko, lt, ms, ml, no, pl, pt, to, sk, so, sq, sr, sv, te, tl, tr, vi, zh (36)	2014.05–2014.07	SBS	Action & Adventure, Crime & Mystery, Thriller & Suspense	The Freeze! Team

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[6] The platform is accessible without a subscription. Paid membership gives access to content without advertisement.

The genre description is taken from Viki. The selection criterion was the genre romance because relationship negotiation and development was likely to be plot relevant. *You Are All Surrounded (YAAS)*, which also includes romantic sub-plots but is otherwise more crime-oriented, was included as a potential counterpart. The last column lists the name of the team of volunteers whose members subtitled. Table 2 describes the size of this collection. Overall, 408,935 subtitled words make up the corpus in 51,270 subtitles. On average a subtitle contains 8 words.

Table 2
Number of subtitles and words.

	Episodes	Number of words	%	Subtitles	%	Average no of words per subtitle
Goblin	16	101,427	24.8	12,830	25	7.9
Twenty Again	16	100,920	24.7	12,419	24.2	8.1
While You Were Sleeping	16	104,357	25.5	11,862	23.1	8.8
You Are all surrounded	20	102,231	25	14,159	27.6	7.2
Total	68	408,935	100	51,270	99.9	8

3.2. Methodology

In order to address the research question, the first unit that has to be identified is the scene that contains relational work moments. These scenes contain staged moments of relational work in the subtitles, i.e. scenes where either classificatory politeness1 appears (i.e. terms from the semantic field of politeness used by the characters: polite, impolite, rude, formal, informal, etc.) or metapragmatic politeness1 comments surface (i.e. comments in which characters discuss politeness phenomena). Both metapragmatic comments by characters and metapragmatic comments by subtitlers are included. To identify such moments of relational work as made accessible in the English subtitles, the four series were watched by the author and four coders (one additional coder for each drama).[7]

In a first step, the author watched the series and noted down the beginning of the scenes. The second coders were all trained with the first episode of one drama and given feedback on identifying the scenes. They then watched their assigned series with the aim of coding in mind. All of the scenes identified by the author in step 1 were found, which means that there is agreement about what such scenes look like. In a third step, lexical searches for comments in brackets added by subtitlers, and lexemes such as formal, informal, rude, polite, etc. yielded some more scenes to add to the corpus. Finally, the author checked all scenes again before including them in the main corpus.

Apart from identifying the scenes, the coders also prepared the scenes for analysis. The subtitles from Viki only contain the actual text displayed in the subtitling field plus a time stamp for each subtitle. In an excel spreadsheet, the coders therefore added the names of the characters (who speaks is of course clear when watching the episodes but this information is not contained in the subtitles) and they gave background information on the scene overall. They also added comments on multimodality and identified those subtitles that contained the relational work moment within the scene. This means that a scene can contain more than one relational work moment (RM).

The collection of scenes that form the corpus all fulfill the criterion of containing moments of relational work and present the agreement of coding between two coders. However, since relational work can never be coded exhaustively, I do not claim that the scenes contained in the corpus are the only scenes containing relational work negotiations in the dramas. It is also important to stress once more that the Korean original source is of course immersed in complex relational work. This study, however, is particularly interested in what is made accessible to the viewer within the translated subtitles, and thus zooms in on a very specific aspect of relational work in this particular form of translation. In other words, the scenes that are part of this corpus are bound to be fewer in number than the scenes in the original if a similar approach were used focusing only on Korean.

The results are presented as follows. In Section 4, I will illustrate the typology of scenes that were found to contain this explicit relational work negotiation. This is followed by an overview of distribution in Section 5 and a discussion of translator comments provided in brackets in the subtitles (Section 6).

4. Categories of scenes containing relational work moments in K-drama

As a first step, I describe what kind of relational work moments were identified in the scenes. They can be grouped into the following categories:

a. Character address term negotiations
b. Character meta-comments on relational work
c. Character meta-discussions on role understanding
d. Subtitler meta-comments on language and culture

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[7] The additional coders do not know or read Korean. For the purpose of this paper this is fine since the task was to identify relational work as it is made salient in the English translations. These coders are thus aligned with the majority of viewers on Viki who do not know Korean and need the subtitles in order to follow the dramas.

4.1. Character address term negotiations

Example (1) in the introduction illustrates how characters negotiate the inappropriate use of address terms by one of the characters. In doing so, the use of address terms for positioning in Korean society is foregrounded in the fictional artefact. By following this scene, the non-Korean viewers can pick up that choosing the right address term is important and wrong usage might be reprimanded and have consequences for character judgment.

A further example for this category is taken from the same legal drama (2). Lee Yoo Beom, a former prosecutor who is now working as a lawyer is being called in for an interview. He is questioned by Prosecutor Sin and an investigator, both of whom he used to work with before. A policeman involved in the case is present as well. Just prior to the extract, all three imply that Lee Yo Beom manipulated evidence during his time as prosecutor. The former prosecutor is increasingly irritated about being on the other side of the table. He addresses Prosecutor Sin as follows:

(2) *While You Were Sleeping*, Ep. 10, 00:23:16, subtitles in Korean and English from Viki.

	Character	Subtitle
1	Lee Yoo Beom	와! 사방이 적이네. *[wa! sa-pang-i cek-i-ney.]* Wow! I'm surrounded by enemies.
2	Lee Yoo Beom	야, 신 검사야. *[ya, sin kem-sa-ya.]* Hey, Prosecutor Sin.
3	Lee Yoo Beom	아니, 신 검사님. *[a-ni, sin kem-sa-**nim]*** I mean, Prosecutor Sin.
4	Lee Yoo Beom	이거 참고인 조사 맞습니까? *[i-ke cham-ko-in co-sa mac-**sup-ni-kka**]* Is this a reference interview?

Before considering the English rendition, let us look at the Korean. In subtitles 1 and 2, Lee Yoo Beom uses informal language (*wow*, *hey* and verb endings) and the informal vocative (야) to address his former colleague who was hierarchically lower than him in their former work relationship. He then self-corrects (*I mean*, informal) in line 3 and adds the honorific ~nim to the title 'prosecutor' (검사~님). Subtitle 4 is rendered in polite, formal language (~습니까). While this switch in Korean adds politeness on the surface, in combination with his tone and in this context, what he has achieved in doing is reminding his former colleague of her past lower status and insulting her.

Some informal aspects appear in subtitles 1 and 2 (*Wow!*, *Hey*) but the addition of the honorific in subtitle 3 is not made transparent. Despite this, this scene was tagged as making relational work visible to the non-Korean audience, because the self-correction is made apparent and the repetition of the same address term (*Prosecutor Sin*), while being odd, since there is no correction visible, still alerts the viewer to an address term issue. In addition, viewers with a keen ear, might pick up that the second address term in subtitle 3 is longer (by adding ~nim).

4.2. Character meta-comments on relational work

The second category of relational work moments contains explicit meta-comments on the linguistic level of relational work by characters in addition to address term negotiations. Characters explicitly use English lexemes such as 'formal', 'too informal', 'casual', 'rude', 'polite', etc. within the English subtitles. In other words, the characters themselves make comments about the level of relational work so that we are dealing with instances of classificatory politeness1 (i.e. terms from the semantic field of im/politeness are used by the characters) or metapragmatic politeness1 (i.e. comments in which characters discuss politeness phenomena). Example (3), from the fantasy drama *Goblin*, shows the main character Kim Shin, who is an immortal goblin, being introduced to Deok-hwa, the young grandson of his human servant Yoo Shin-woo, who is an older man and also present in the scene.[8]

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[8] In this drama, the goblin Kim Shin speaks in an archaic Korean speech style to signal his longevity and status; this nuance is not of relevance for this particular analysis which focuses on what is being made salient in the subtitles.

(3) *Goblin*, Ep. 1, 00:26:57, subtitles in English from Viki (the hyphens in 1a/b and 3a/b indicate a line break and speaker switch within the same subtitles display)

	Character	Subtitle	Action
1a	Kim Shin	- No one from your lineage ever disappointed.	He looks at Deok-hwa while speaking.
1b	Deok-hwa	- But, Uncle...	
2	Deok-hwa	Why do you keep using informal speech to my grandpa?	Deok-hwa looks at Kim Shin.
3a	Deok-hwa	- Do you want to die?	Deok-hwa challenges Kim Shin with wide-open eyes and head movement.
3b	Yoo Shin-woo	- You rascal!	Yoo Shin-woo raises his hand as if he wanted to beat Deok-hwa.

The goblin's servants all come from the same family lineage. The grandson addresses the goblin informally throughout the entire scene (not shown here) and is quite suspicious of this new person. What he notices in particular is that the young-looking Kim Shin uses informal language when addressing his grandfather. In a meta-comment in subtitle 2, uttered in informal language itself, the grandson asks about this and challenges Kim-shin in subtitle 3, again in informal language. Throughout the scene, the grandfather is upset about his grandson's lack of showing respect to the goblin (who deserves respect because he is much older and God-like and because they are servants and the goblin is their master) and apologizes profoundly. In this scene the positionings of the characters are thus puzzled out by the characters themselves for the benefit of the audience. Through the meta-comments of the characters the non-Korean viewers learn that the level of formality is one key aspect of this negotiation and that age is one of the factors that deserves respect.

4.3. Character meta-discussions on role understanding

The third category is less directly linked to discussions of im/politeness but is relevant to identity construction and role understanding. Here we looked for discussions where characters negotiated adequate behavior in light of explicit role mentioning. For example, characters talk about their expectations of how certain societal roles such as a mother/daughter/friend should be enacted. Consider example (4), from the drama *Twenty Again*. The main character Ha No Ra, a woman in her late thirties, is in the process of getting a divorce after a life as an unfulfilled and suppressed wife and mother. She decides to go to university, which she could not do in her twenties because of her son. When she announces that she received her acceptance letter to her husband Kim Woo-chul and son Kim Min Soo at dinner, her son is not happy for her. In the ensuing discussion, role understanding of what it means to be a mother in Korean society (according to the son's character) ensues.

(4) *Twenty Again*, Ep. 1., 00:26:11 (the hyphens in 6a/b and 13a/b indicate a line break and speaker switch within the same subtitles display).

	Character	Subtitle	Action
1	Ha No Ra	Aren't you surprised?	Ha No Ra smiles and looks very happy.
2	Ha No Ra	Isn't it surprising?	
3	Ha No Ra	Actually, you don't know how surprised I was, too.	
4	Ha No Ra	How did I end up going to the same college as you. I feel like I'm dreaming.	She is very happy but looks down after speaking. Kim Woo-chul and Kim Min Soo put away their cutlery.

(*continued*)

	Character	Subtitle	Action
5	Kim Min Soo	Mom, aren't you crazy?	
6a	Kim Woo-chul	- Kim Min Soo! What kind of way is that to speak to your mother!	Kim Woo-chul looks at his son and talks in a severe tone.
6b	Kim Min Soo	- Isn't it true?	Kim Min Soo gets louder.
7	Kim Min Soo	Who in the world goes to the same college with their mother!	Shouting.
8	Ha No Ra	Min Soo, this …	Speaks reluctantly and interrupts herself, looks at her husband searching for support but he remains quiet.
9	Kim Min Soo	Mom, how could you do this to me all the way to the end?	With a calm but complaining voice.
10	Kim Min Soo	Is a mom there to embarrass her son?	
11	Kim Min Soo	Did you give birth to me to embarrass me?	Louder and reproachfully; Ha No Ra looks at him disappointed.
12	Kim Min Soo	Father, I'd rather decline my admission.	Kim Min Soo stands up. Ha No Ra stands up as well.
13a	Ha No Ra	- Min Soo.	Kim Woo-chul talks in a commanding tone.
13b	Kim Woo-chul	- Min Soo, you go to your room.	
14	Kim Woo-chul	And you come talk with me.	Looks at Ha No Ra.

The scene foreshadows nicely what challenges Ha No Ra will have to face during the drama since neither her son nor her husband can reconcile her future role of student with the role of mother and wife. In the extract, it is the son who clearly defines what being a mother does *not* entail (subtitles, 9–11), and he indicates that he strongly objects to studying at the same university by threatening to not start studying himself (subtitle 12). This is a strong statement in a society where students have to work hard for college entry exams.

The drama is rich in such role negotiations, often revolving around the question of how to address interlocutors, since the mature student puzzles both her fellow students and teachers with respect to how she should be addressed and how both sides should comport themselves. The drama thus makes gender roles and emancipatory efforts visible and accessible.

4.4. Subtitler meta-comments on language and culture

Finally, subtitlers also made relational work moments accessible to the viewers by adding their own voices to the subtitles beyond the fact that they turn the source content into the target language. This was achieved with the help of explanations in

brackets. Consider example (5), from *While You Were Sleeping*, where Park Dae-young, Prosecutor Shin Hee-min's boss, en-quires about why Jung Jae-chan, the newcomer in the team, addresses her informally.

(5) *While You Were Sleeping*, Ep. 2, 00:25:21, subtitles in from Viki.

	Character	Subtitle
1	Park Dae-young	아니 근데 말석이 왜 자네 한테 말을 놔? *[a-ni kun-tey mal-sek-i way ca-ney han-they mal-ul nwa?]* Ah but, why is he lowering his speech (speaking informally) to you?
2	Shin Hee-min	I guess it's because I was his junior at school.
3	Park Dae-young	Regardless of school status, it's by rank here!
4	Park Dae-young	Our Newbie doesn't seem to know a lot.
5	Shin Hee-min	I know, right? Our Mr. Newbie has a long way to go.

In subtitle 1, the Korean 말을 놓다…. is translated as "lowering his speech" which is a verbatim transliteration of the Korean idiom and then the subtitle explains the metaphor in brackets: "(speaking informally)". Rather than directly using the expli-cation in brackets, the original flavor of the language is retained and thus gives access to Korean metaphors about appropriate language use. The continuation of the example gives further information on cultural expectations about role understanding.

From this overview, we can take that there is a richness of range of different types of scenes in K-dramas containing relational work moments that come with their own translation challenges. Some of these scenes are rather long and cannot be glossed over for translation as they are plot relevant. Even in cases when the translation cannot give justice to the intricate language indexicalities of the original, the viewers are still given access to situations where relational work is negotiated. In the next section, we will explore the distribution of these scenes and discuss their challenges for translation further.

5. Discussion of distribution

As mentioned in the methodology section, while relational work cannot be tagged exhaustively, a quantitative tallying of relational work scenes and relational work strategies can nevertheless give us a glimpse into the distribution patterns of the chosen focus. Table 3 shows the distribution of scenes that were identified to contain relational work moves (RM) per drama series. Overall, there are 215 scenes in four dramas (68 episodes), which means that there are three scenes per episode on average (s.d. 2). *You Are All Surrounded* shows the highest number of such scenes (3.8 per episode on average, s.d. 1.9). The scenes are also of considerable length with on average 23 subtitles per scene (but the variance is quite high, s.d. 14). These

Table 3
Distribution of scenes containing relational work moments (RM) and types of RMs (gray indicates the highest value of types of RM).

	Goblin (16 ep.)		Twenty again (16 ep.)		While you were sleeping (16 ep.)		You Are All Surrounded (20 ep.)		Total	
Scenes		s.d.		s.d.		s.d.		s.d.		s.d.
Scenes containing RMs	48		55		37		75		215	
Average # RM scenes / episode	3	2	3.4	2.3	2.3	1.5	3.8	1.9	3.2	2
Average scene length in subtitles	26	15	18	13	21	11	25	15	23	14
RMs		s.d.		s.d.		s.d.		s.d.		s.d.
Number	51		87		62		94		294	
Average # RM / episode	3.2	1.9	5.4	4.8	3.9	3.6	4.7	3.3	4.3	3.4
Average RM length in subtitles	5.1	7.6	2.7	1.9	3.3	3.4	4.8	4.6	4	4.7
Type of RM	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Character address term negotiations	12	24	23	26	17	27	28	30	80	27
Character meta-comments on relational work	25	49	32	37	31	50	28	30	116	39
Character meta-discussions on role understanding	4	8	16	18	7	11	18	19	45	15
Subtitler meta-comments on language and culture	6	12	8	9	6	10	8	9	28	10
Other	4	8	8	9	1	2	12	13	25	9

distribution numbers show in themselves that the stylistic use of such scenes is far from infrequent in Korean fictional TV artefacts, and that non-Korean viewers are indeed exposed to the performance of relational work concerns even when they have no access to the details of the use of Korean honorifics or knowledge of the complex politeness levels.

In the 215 scenes, we identified 294 relational work moments. In other words, a scene could contain more than one RM. Meta-comments by characters occurred in 116 (39%) RMs. Address term negotiations were used in 80 (27%) RMs, followed by meta-discussions on roles in 45 (15%) RMs and meta-comments by subtitlers in 28 (10%) cases. The first two categories combined (66%) are directly linked to linguistic indexicalities of relationships and demonstrate the importance of positioning through the Korean linguistic properties. In Section 6, we will briefly examine the subtitlers' comments in more detail.

The average number of RM scenes per episode (3.2, s.d. 2) and RMs per episode (4.3, s.d. 3.4) hides the fact that such positioning negotiations can cluster to a certain extent. I therefore established the distribution for each quarter of the series to see whether we can see a pattern of the occurrence of relational work scenes within the development of the dramas. As Fig. 1 shows, the first quarter contains most RMs for three of the four dramas, and a high number in the fourth drama. In comparison with the first quarter, all dramas show fewer or least RM scenes in the last quarter.
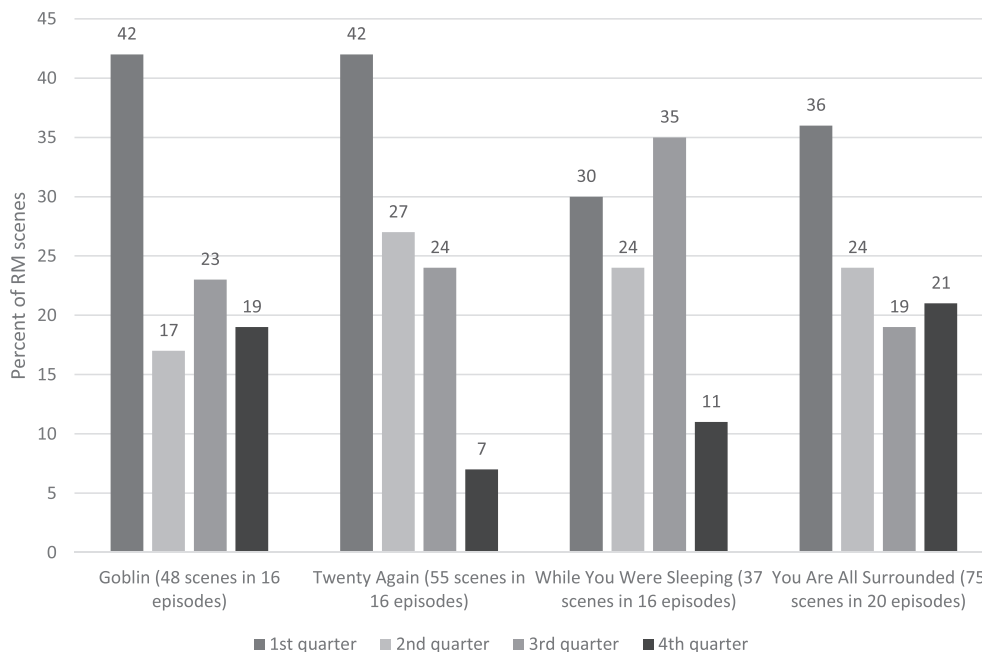

Fig. 1. Distribution of scenes containing RMs per quarter of the drama in percentages.

We can interpret this cluster of scenes at the beginning of the dramas as a means of introducing the characters and their positioning of each other for the benefit of the viewers.[9] The fact that these scenes do not simply stop but continue throughout the dramas shows that relationship negotiation is part of plot development. In the case of *Twenty Again*, the last quarter contains noticeably fewer explicit negotiations. In this case the plot is the mature student's emancipation and the reaction of her fellow characters to her. She changes her role from housewife to student and thus puzzles her new fellow students, teachers, her husband and son as to how to address her. Most of this re-positioning is done in the first part of the drama, while the end shows the result of her emancipation. Of course, I do not wish to imply that the RMs scenes alone can give us access to a complete interpretation of the dramas, but the identified scenes and their clustering point to one aspect of character development and character identity construction.

6. Meta-comments by subtitlers

There are 28 identified relational work moments that contain meta-comments by subtitlers. Of these, 14 cases refer to explanations of address terms such as in Examples (6) to (9).

(6) Look here, Orabeoni (older brother). Why do you keep looking at me since earlier? (*Goblin*, Ep. 10, 00:06:27)
(7) The ahjusshi (older male) had a bandaid on his hand. (*WYWS*, Ep. 1, 00:08:44)

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[9] In first encounters, Korean people have to work out how they stand vis-à-vis each other. Kim (2015), in a discussion of naturally-occurring data, shows how two married women during 24 min laboriously avoid addressing each other directly as there are no safe address terms available for them. It might therefore not come as a surprise that similar scenes in fiction also cluster at the beginning of the dramas.

(8) Because of his hyung (older brother) Seung Won becomes a murderer. (*WYWS*, Ep. 2, 00:37:38)
(9) I'm truly cheering you on as a Hoobae (junior colleague). (*WYWS*, Ep. 6, 00:32:57)

While Korean prefers address terms that pertain to the person's family status, seniority, and profession (Koh, 2006; Rhee, 2019), English has a preference for using first and last names. Consequently, the subtitlers have to make choices in agreement with expectations of their target audience. As we have seen, the subtitlers often retain the original Korean address terms (and sometimes translate these in brackets). In doing so, they use borrowing and explication rather than adaptation (in Tomaszkiewicz (1993, quoted in Pettit, 2009, p. 45—46) typology of translating strategies), i.e. they do not look for English equivalents (since they often do not exist). As a result, the translation retains a Korean flavor and over time, the audience is able to pick up some of the more common address terms.

Eight cases refer to the addition or dropping of morphemes that index grammatical relational work or word choice that shows a change in style. This is referred to in terms of honorifics and formality. The subtitlers thus alert the viewers to (changes in) positioning and relational work that cannot be rendered in English (Extracts 10 to 12).

(10) When you are a bit hungry, that's what you eat. (She says "meogeusijanayo" to conjugate "to eat" in an honorific style.) (*Twenty Again*, Ep. 1, 00:03:19)
(11) Who could I speak to, Seon? (spoken formally) (*Goblin*, Ep. 11, 00:04:25)
(12) What rights do you have! (speaking informally) (*YAAS*, Ep. 4, 00:07:24)

The subtitles also make other aspects of the Korean language or culture in connection with relational work accessible. In Example (13), we can see a combination of a meta-comment by characters and making further linguistic aspects of the language accessible. The scene is from *Goblin*, and a customer is complaining to the fried chicken shop owner Kim Sun about being addressed informally in subtitle 1. The customer is the aunt of the shop owner's part timer. The aunt neglects and exploits her niece, which explains Kim Sun's antagonistic stance.

(13) *Goblin*, Ep. 2, 01:09:09, subtitles in from Viki.

1	Ji Yeon-suk	아니 근데 이 여자가. 너 자꾸 어디서 반말이야?!
		[a-ni kun-tey i ye-ca-ka. ne ca-kkwu e-ti-se pan-mal-i-ya?!]
		This lady... Why are you talking to me informally (ban mal)?
2	Kim Sun	그죠? 나도 반마리 시키는 사람 딱 싫어.
		[ku-cyo? na-to pan-ma-li si-khi-nun sa-lam ttak silh-e.]
		Right? I hate people ordering only half a chicken (ban ma ri).
3	Kim Sun	닭은 한마리지.
		[talk-un han-ma-li-ci]
		Chicken should be ordered whole.

In subtitle 1, we have a case of meta-comment by a character which is backed up with a comment in brackets (반말, ban mal). *Ban mal* literally means "half words"; a metaphor for informal speech in the sense that any honorific morphemes or final verb endings are dropped, which makes the words shorter. In subtitle 2, the fried chicken shop owner Kim Sun chooses to misunderstand the customer's statement about language and seemingly changes the topic. In Korean the words for *ban mal* sound similar to *ban mari* (반 마리, half an animal) in this context. This word play cannot be rendered in the English translation. However, the subtitles alert the viewers to this seeming non-sequitur in subtitle 2 with the help of comments in the brackets. Since the Korean term *ban mal* might be known to many viewers in the fan community, these viewers might now have access to the word play. From a relational work perspective, Kim Sun comes across as a witty and feisty interlocutor.

In six cases, the subtitles retain the Korean metaphors or idioms that relate to relational work and positioning in context and explain them in brackets (borrowing in (14); literal translation in (15) and (16)) and give access to their meaning in brackets:

(14) This "Geh Sal" (crab meat)! (Gae Sal is slang for a person who provokes another) (*YAAS*, Ep. 16, 00:23:28)
(15) She told me that she wouldn't catch and eat a house rabbit. (One should not date a coworker.) (*YAAS*, Ep. 15, 00:02:15)
(16) They keep making passes at any chance, whether there's a goalie or not. (Goal keeper = significant other) (*YAAS*, Ep. 16, 00:23:48)

By using a literal translation of the Korean original, the subtitlers stay closer to the original and resist the strategy of domestication. Rather than targeting English idiomaticity, they thus give access to Korean ways of understanding the world. This aim is also observable in other subtitler meta-comments that are not linked to moments of relational work negotiations.

In addition to the 28 cases discussed here, there are 204 more cases that explain aspects of the drama in brackets in the subtitles.

7. Conclusions and outlook

The lay translations of Korean into English are made possible by the computer-mediated streaming platform, which provides the technical affordances for segmenting and translating in teams. The analysis of 204 identified scenes that contain relational work moments in Korean TV drama shows that, even in the absence of a linguistic translation that can transport the complex nuances of the Korean original, the viewers still get access to the importance of relationship negotiation through language in Korean culture. This means that the dramas provide the international viewers with insights into Korean culture and the interconnectedness of politeness ideologies and language and can serve as learning opportunities.

The abundance of RM scenes, which are often of considerable length (Table 3, 23 subtitles on average) makes it impossible to gloss over this means of highlighting relationship negotiation in the artefacts. These scenes have been found to contain (a) address term negotiations by characters, (b) meta-comments on the linguistic level of relational work by characters, (c) meta-discussions on role understanding by characters, and (d) meta-comments by subtitlers on language and culture.

The translators show awareness of the pragmatic challenges of translating relational work in Korean into English, as evidenced in the comments in brackets that give the non-Korean viewers information on how to understand the relational work entailed in the original. This information is often only pointing at the phenomenon of relational work negotiation rather than explicating it in detail. For example, mention of dropping/adding of honorifics or formality leaves away the level of politeness that can also be altered (e.g. a sentence can be polite and informal at the same time). This lack of detail might be due to space restrictions in the subtitles or because the labels used might be sufficient for the general viewership to understand that there is relational work negotiation in the first place.

In some cases, the translators retain the use of some Korean address terms as borrowings. In doing so, lay subtitlers create an in-group of K-drama fans with the viewers, as they often take it for granted that their particular target audience will be familiar with the more frequent Korean address terms. The translators also often translate Korean idioms verbatim rather than exchanging them for similar English expressions that might be closer to the target audience. In other words, they often use borrowing and explication rather than adaptation or replacement as alternative strategies (Tomaszkiewicz, 1993; Pettit, 2009). In doing so, they thus also function as cultural translators and orient more towards making the source language and culture accessible than towards normalization in direction of the target language (see Bassnett, 2012, on translators as cross-cultural mediators).

These findings are similar to what Díaz-Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez (2006: 46) found for fan translations of Japanese anime. Like the fan translators for the K-dramas, these translators also assumed that their special target audience is interested in the culture of the artefact and "preserve some of the cultural idiosyncrasies" such that they used meta-comments to explain cultural points or preferred Japanese address terms rather than using first or last names of the target language like the professional translators did.

Much more can be done with the identified scenes of the MoRWF corpus. As the definition of relational work shows, linguistic indexes are only one means of encoding relational work (Locher and Watts, 2005). As K-drama is an audio-visual data source, attention to other forms of how relational work is enacted in the fictional artefact, such as intonation, voice quality, posture, bowing, nodding, lowering eye gaze, or reactions to im/politeness through facial expressions is vital (see Brown and Winter, 2019). We could therefore explore further whether the embodied relational work challenges or supports the linguistic relational work cues in the fictional artefact.

A further research step is to compare the English translations with subtitles in other languages in Viki. The choice of these languages is motivated by the linguistic competences of the current research team (German, French, Italian, and Spanish). Since these languages have (varied) T/V distinctions, it will be especially revealing to observe how the T/V complexity is reintroduced in cases where English levels this distinction.

Finally, we also plan to link the identified scenes with the timed comments that viewers can contribute to the episodes to establish in what ways the viewers discuss the observed identity constructions (on timed comments on Viki in general, see Locher and Messerli, 2020). For example, in the case of *Twenty Again*, the main character's status as mature student receives a number of comments from the viewers:

(17) *Twenty Again*, compilation of timed comments from viewers.

1	In my uni in UK, we have grannies. No one look down on them. Never too late to learn. Weird over there:(
2	I study in the UK and we have a 40 year old in my course. I admire how she is eager to learn despite her age.
3	I also go to uni in the uk and we have mature students on my course as well. its's not like this, they mix with others
4	in Switzerland, we have people from every age at university. We respect the older people more cause they have experience
5	a man in my class is 58 and we speak to him a lot and he is never isolate § it's so sad for me to see her like this !
6	Do you know how much you could learn from people with some actual life experience? These kids are just ignorant.
7	When I was in school, the older students were the best, most serious students. Now at 38 I regret that I didn't take more advantage of...

8   in UK, unis prefer mature students because of their experiences and responsability levels lol i am a mature student.

These comments show how viewers add their own understanding of societal issues and discuss them in light of what is presented as the Korean 'other' in the fictional artefact. The TV dramas as streamed on Viki thus interweave different voices (the original artefact, the subtitlers translations and the viewers' comments) and create a new artefact (see Locher and Messerli, 2020). The scenes thus also serve as moments of learning about different cultural im/politeness norms and/or can make the viewers become aware of their own cultural reference points.

Acknowledgments

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