Generic Fluency in Professional Subtitling: Neology as the Voice of Science Fiction in Audiovisual Translation

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Abstract

This article evaluates the translation of neologies in professional subtitling of audiovisual science fiction from the point of view of genre-specific features. Neologies are seen to be the most important linguistic element of science fiction as they produce the science fiction genre-specific cognitive estrangement and hence cognitively estrange the viewer from reality. Evaluating the translation of neologies is thus used as a tool to evaluate the transfer of the source text genre to the target text and to hypothesise whether the target text meets the expectations of the viewers. When the neologies are retained as genre-specific features of science fiction, the target text genre is seen to be generically fluent and the target text meets the viewer's expectations. Even though the translation solutions which render the genre unfluent (misplace the science fiction cognitive estrangement produced by the source text) are in minority in the study material, the neologies can be seen to normalise towards common language in the translation process. This means that as neologies are considered as one of the producers of the science fiction genre-specific cognitive estrangement, the source text genre becomes less accessible for the target text viewer.

Key words: audiovisual translation, cognitive estrangement, generic fluency, neology, novum, science fiction, accessibility.

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1.   Introduction

The genre of science fiction (SF) can be seen to be characterised by linguistic elements that are typical for the texts of the genre, and according to Peter Stockwell, neologisms are "the intuitive feature" (2000, p. 106) of SF language. Hence neologies can be regarded to be the most visible genre-defining element of SF which constitute the voice of the genre (Korpi, 2017), through which the readers of SF novels or viewers of audiovisual SF recognise the genre and differentiate it from other genres (Stockwell, 2000, p. 108). The term *neology* refers both to the creation of new words and to the new words themselves, *neologisms* (Stockwell, 2000, p. 109). In this article neology is used in the latter purpose.

For the contemporary genre critic Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, "fictive neologies of sf are variations and combinations based on the actual process of lexicogenesis experienced in social life" (2008, p. 5) and as such they are "the first beauty of science fiction" and "an aspect of sf that audiences desire from the genre" (Csicsery-Ronay, 2008, p. 5). The importance of neology in the worldbuilding of SF has been recognised also by Gary Westfahl (1993, p. 1), who states that "The new world is thus understood and absorbed by means of its new words" and by Stockwell (2000, p. 106), who argues that SF "…creates new worlds by conjuring and coining new words" and that these neologisms assume "a fundamental importance as an act of creation that is not just conceptual but real" (Stockwell, 2000, p. 125). Thus, I hypothesise that neologies are important in building up the *cognitive estrangement* of a SF text, making it more plausible for the readers or viewers, who expect to find neologies in a SF text in order to construct the narrative world. This cognitive estrangement in SF means that the reader or viewer of SF is estranged from the reality by a new phenomenon, *a novum*, which does not exist in the empirical reality, but which is similar enough for them to consider it plausible (Suvin, 2016, p. 79).

When a SF text is translated, the choice of translation strategies determines whether the genre-typical elements as the voice of the genre are preserved and hence whether the source text (ST) genre is accessible for the target text (TT) readers or viewers to immerse[1] in. This expands the idea of providing access to the ST content for all via translation (Díaz-Cintas, 2005, p. 4) to providing access to the idiosyncrasies of a certain genre via translation. Thus, accessibility here means that the viewers of the target text can experience the target text, or immerse in it, similarly to the source text viewers. Hence the translation strategies could affect the transfer of the SF genre to the target language and culture.

This study explores the extent to which the genre-typical elements of the English ST have been transferred to the Finnish TT in professional subtitling of the audiovisual TV series *Stargate Atlantis* (Wright et al., 2004), *Star Trek Enterprise* (Roddenberry et al., 2001), *Star Trek Discovery* (Roddenberry et. al., 2017) and *Battlestar Galactica* (Moore et al., 2003), and aims to answer the

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[1] Immersion in a narrative world (transportation or an escape to alternate universes) as a major goal of the movie viewers has been discussed by Wissmath and Weibel (2012).

following research question: how are fictive neologies translated and how does translation affect genre adherence, given that such neologies constitute one of the defining characteristics of the SF genre? Professional subtitling is seen here as subtitling produced for commercial use (see e.g. Pedersen's (2019, p. 52) distinction between professional subtitlers and fansubbers). The hypothesis is that a significant percentage of neologies will not be preserved in the TT and hence the neologies as genre specific elements become normalised in the translation towards more conventional target language expressions. A potential explanation for this can be that neologies are not necessarily regarded as important enough elements to maintain in the translation within the limits of the constrained medium of subtitling. More specifically, it can also be due to what Toury chose to call the "growing standardization" (1995, p. 267), which Anthony Pym aptly interpreted to mean that "a source-text feature in some way specific to that text will tend to be replaced by a feature from the stock held in waiting in the target-language genre" (2008, p. 314)."

More specifically, this article tests the concept of *generic fluency* (genre fluency) in the subtitling of SF (Korpi, 2017) and seeks to develop it further. This generic fluency is related to the quality of reception rather than textual fluency. A translation of a SF text is suggested to be regarded as generically *fluent* when it preserves the voice of the genre, the fictive neologies. When these neologies are not preserved, the translation is regarded as *unfluent*. In order to examine generic fluency between the STs and TTs of the material used in this study, the translation of each neology was characterized in terms of a certain *local translation strategy*: direct transfer, direct translation, generalisation, specification, omission or compensation. The translations of the neologies were further categorised as representing either retentive or recreative *global translation strategies*, which either preserved the voice of the genre (*retention*) or misplaced that voice (*recreation*). This dichotomy between retentive and recreative global translation strategies was first introduced by James S. Holmes (1988, p. 48). As will be further argued and explained in detail in the next section, the retentive strategies preserve a SF ST neology's *cognitive estrangement*. As an example, if the neology in the ST is both cognitive (intelligible in terms of the narrative world) and estranging, but the TT neology has lost either of these aspects, the neology is translated recreatively and the voice of the genre is lost. This also means that the TT genre is unfluent and the ST genre is hence less accessible to the TT reader or viewer. In other words, the smaller the overall percentage of retentively translated neologies is, the less generically fluent the translation is, the more normalised the translation becomes, and the more the voice of the genre is lost.

This study's focus on the dichotomy between retentive and recreative strategies is based on genre critic Darko Suvin's categorisation of fiction, in which SF represents estranged and cognitive fiction as opposed to naturalistic and noncognitive fiction (2016, pp. 31–33, pp. 81–82). Suvin proposes that estrangement in SF must be explained scientifically (2016, p. 82). Hence the translation strategies of neologies which combine both the "cognitive" and the "estranged" similarly as the ST, are considered as retentive and to preserve the cognitive estrangement of the ST SF. Conversely, translation strategies of neologies which misplace either the "cognitive" or the "estranged" aspect of a ST neology are seen to be recreative and to misplace the cognitive estrangement of ST SF. Retentive

strategies are suggested to result in a generically fluent SF TT, whereas the recreative strategies lead to an unfluent SF TT, a loss of genre's voice and hence to a less accessible genre.

2. Generic Fluency in Subtitling SF

This section explains the concept of generic fluency of SF in relation to subtitling. The concept is based on Darko Suvin's (2016 [1979]) definition of the genre,[2] which determines the genre-specific features and operationalises neologies as the voice of the genre. According to Suvin, SF is a genre "whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment." (Suvin, 2016, p. 20). The key element in Suvin's stance is the concept of *cognitive estrangement*. Estrangement means that the world of a SF text is different, in other words estranged, from the real world of the author. It differentiates SF from the realistic literary mainstream. However, even though the SF world is different, it must be plausible or cognitively understandable. SF demands that the estranging differences obey rational causation or scientific laws, even though they are not plausible according to the scientific principles of the author's reality.

The cognitive estrangement of SF is accomplished by what Suvin (2016, p. 79) proposed to call the *novum*. This Latin word translates into "new" or "new thing". It refers to the new idea, phenomenon or concept in the narrative world, which estranges the reader or viewer from the real world. As an example, the novum could be an alien race, their language or other cultural elements, an android or simply a weapon from another galaxy.

Fictive neologies are linguistic representatives of the novum in SF. They are the voice of the novum and its cognitive estrangement. Neologies estrange the reader or viewer from reality but at the same time they are cognitive building blocks which make the story's world accessible for the reader or viewer who constructs the world of a SF text with their help. Therefore, as the dialogue and neologies are the only thing that can change in subtitling of audiovisual content, they are the only means to measure generic fluency in audiovisual translation of SF. Hence other factors of the audiovisual product, such as plot, character portrayal or style, are not suggested to be part of the evaluation of generic fluency in translation of SF.

Furthermore, fluency in translation has been defined by many, for example by Lawrence Venuti (1994, p. 1), but none of the definitions can be considered to apply to the study of SF neologies as such. Instead of focusing on textual fluency, generic fluency in SF is a quality of reception. I propose that because the linguistic peculiarities (neologies in SF) are important as the voice of the genre, the translation is fluent when they are retained. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term

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[2] Even though Suvin's theory has been criticized for oversimplifying distinctions between SF and what he calls "naturalistic" literature and excluding fantasy and various SF texts as sub-SF (see e.g. Renault (1980)), it suits the purposes of this study.

fluent is associated with the ability to express oneself easily, speak a foreign language easily, or gracefulness and effortlessness (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). As the essential genre-defining element, neologies make the translation of a SF text read fluently. In other words, fluency in this study means that when the neologies are retained, the voice of the genre is expressed easily or effortlessly, in other words fluently, and the ST genre is more accessible for the TT reader or viewer.

When a translation favours textual fluency, the ST's neologies as linguistic peculiarities are likely to be normalised towards realistic conventional language in the translation process through recreative translation strategies. Normalisation in translation has been discussed previously by for example Dorothy Kenny (2001), who described normalisation in translation as "exaggerated use in translated text of features that are typical of the target language" (2001, p. 65). Kenny sees that "normalisation occurs when translations contain fewer instances of abnormal or creative target language features than would be expected on the basis of their respective ST alone" (2001, p. 66). This can also happen in the process of translation of SF neologies. It is possible that if neologies as genre specific elements are normalised towards common everyday language and their estrangement is lost, the genre of the ST could become less accessible for the readers or viewers of the TT.

The normalisation of the genre in subtitling can be seen to be mostly caused by the predominantly recreative strategies of omission and generalisation. The need to condense and reduce the dialogue due to the space and time constraints is a possible reason behind the use of these strategies. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007, p. 146) have divided text reduction into partial and total reduction, of which omission represents total reduction and generalisation partial reduction. Due to the limitations in time and space, the subtitler needs to either eliminate what is not relevant or reformulate the relevant in as concise form as possible (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007, p. 146). The subtitler's decisions on what is relevant and reducible, influence the generic fluency of the SF TT and the viewer's access to the voice of the ST genre.

Notably, the concept of generic fluency is affected by the expectations of the readers or viewers of SF. When a text is translated, the readers of the translation have expectations that are based on the genre characteristics of the translated text (Neubert & Shreve, 1992, p. 126). The readers of SF "anticipate words and sentences that refer to changed or alien worlds." (Csicsery-Ronay, 2008, p. 13). Hence, the readers or viewers of audiovisual text expect to encounter neologies to include them in their process of bringing the world of the text to life in their mind.

The translators are responsible for carrying the neologies as the voice of the genre of SF to another language and thus they can control the building of the TT's SF reality. Therefore, they have the power to make the ST genre, within the limits of the medium, for example, more plausible for the TT viewers. Since the dialogue and its neologies are the only thing that can change in subtitling of audiovisual content, they are the only means to measure any change in the accessibility of the genre. Ideally the SF genre's characteristics would be considered and used as a base for the decisions about translation strategies, but in audiovisual translation and subtitling this is not always the case due to the constraints imposed by the medium. Hence the aim is not to suggest that translators should translate

SF neologies in a certain way. Instead it is suggested that the aforementioned factors affect the adherence of the ST genre.

As the idea of generic fluency is based on the important role of neologies in the SF genre, the following section discusses neologies and their role in audiovisual SF.

2.1. Neology and Audiovisual SF

As previously explained, the generic fluency of SF is dependent on the translation of neologies. This study follows Peter Stockwell's (2000) categorisation of neology into *neologisms* and *neosemes*, for according to Stockwell (2000) and Csicsery-Ronay (2008), neology in SF operates with either neosemes or neologisms.

Neosemy, a term coined by Peter Stockwell (2000), refers to the development of new meanings for existing words. Hence, they represent both their historical aspects and the possible futures they might have, inviting the reader to decipher the connection. According to Stockwell (2006, p. 5), neosemes make "the imaginary world seem close and more nearly extrapolated from the reader's familiar world" when compared to the relatively disjunctive and alien neologisms. For example, *Ancients* and the *stargate* in the SF TV series, *Stargate Atlantis* (Wright et al., 2004) are neosemes.

Neologisms, in turn, are new words which do not have histories (Csicsery-Ronay, 2008, p. 19). Their strength in producing the SF estrangement lies in their "ability to evoke imaginary differences of culture and consciousness" (Csicsery-Ronay, 2008, p. 19). As an example, the name of the alien race *Goa'uld* in the *Stargate Atlantis* (Wright et al., 2004) is a neologism.

In audiovisual SF, the dialogue between the characters is an essential part of cognitive estrangement. The dialogic interaction between the characters, their words and the visual signs on screen determine what the program communicates to the viewer (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007, p. 48). While it is the spectacular visual image that is largely responsible for the estrangement, the explanation for it, in other words the previously mentioned Suvinian scientific explanation or cognition (Suvin, 2016, p. 82), can be produced in the verbal dialogue. In addition, when there is nothing spectacular in the visual channel, the dialogue takes precedence. Neology is in the centre of this process in the dialogue, which highlights its role as the producer of the cognition even in audiovisual SF. When the message is conveyed through "the verbal auditory channel" (Gottlieb, 1998, p. 245) (the spoken dialogue), the presence of a novum in "the non-verbal visual channel" (Gottlieb, 1998, p. 245) (the picture composition) is not always a sufficient reason for a recreative translation solution, such as the omission of a neology in the subtitles. This is because neologies and other linguistic factors, such as explanations of a phenomenon in the subtitles, can be regarded crucial in understanding the novum and its cognitive estrangement. The channels do interact in SF, but their interaction is intertwined to produce the desired cognition and estrangement.

2.2. Subtitling SF in Finland

This section discusses SF in Finland. The SF genre has its roots in the Anglo-American literary tradition. Finnish SF has been strongly influenced by translated literature because of the high amount of translated SF (Koponen, 2011, p. 96). The majority of this translated SF has come from the English-speaking world (Koponen, 2012), which applies to audiovisual SF as well. This is reflected, for example, in a Finnish film magazine's list of the best SF films, which lists ninety-four films of which only one is Finnish (Genret: Sci-fi, n.d.). Hence, the Finnish mainstream audience's idea of audiovisual SF comes from the Anglo-American tradition. For this reason, and to limit the number of variables, this study applies the research question of how translation affects genre adherence in subtitling to the Finnish subtitles of Anglo-American SF TV series.

Literary SF has a strong history, but audiovisual SF has become an important part of the genre of SF in recent decades. Pedersen (2007) states that subtitles are the most frequent reading form in Scandinavian countries. This also applies to Finland, where foreign audiovisual SF is the dominant mode of audiovisual SF in television and cinema. This suggests that a large part of the Finnish people's perception of the genre is rooted in their experiences as viewers of audiovisual SF who perceive the verbal content of these audiovisual SF programs via subtitles.

3. Material and Method

The material of this study consisted of 1596 translations of neologies in the Finnish DVD subtitles of four contemporary SF TV series. These include the first two episodes of season one of *Stargate Atlantis* (Wright et al., 2004), the first five episodes of season one of *Star Trek Enterprise* (Roddenberry et al., 2001), the first and last episodes of the first season of *Star Trek Discovery* (Roddenberry et. al., 2017) and the three-hour first episode of the first series of *Battlestar Galactica* (Moore et al., 2003). The four series were chosen in order to have a diverse spectrum of contemporary popular SF series. Multiple episodes per series were chosen to reflect possible differences between the translations of neologies due to possibly different translators and the different number of episodes per TV series reflects the varying number of neologies per TV series. The series *Star Trek Enterprise* (Roddenberry et al., 2001) and *Stargate Atlantis* (Wright et al., 2004) had fewer neologies in relation to program running time than *Star Trek Discovery* (Roddenberry et. al., 2017) and *Battlestar Galactica* (Moore et al., 2003). To ensure that the translations of the neologies in the latter two series would not dominate the results, a greater number of episodes from the first two series were analysed to compensate for their smaller number of neologies.

The generic fluency of the material was determined on the basis of the translation strategies that were used in translating neologies. As previously mentioned, the strategies were divided into two main categories, *retention* and *recreation*, depending on how the neologies were transferred from the ST to the TT. Retentive translation strategies retain the SF's cognitive estrangement (of the neology) and recreative translation strategies neutralise the cognitive estrangement. In other words,

retentive strategies in the material have retained the novum's cognitively estranging nature and preserved the neology. Hence the ST genre remains, from the point of view of neologies, fluent and accessible to the viewers to immerse in in the translation. For example, if the neologism *Cylons* from the *Battlestar Galactica* (Moore et al., 2003) TV series is translated with the local strategy of direct translation as *Cylonit* ("Cylons"), the cognitive estrangement of the ST is retained. Recreation means the opposite, that is, the misplacement of the cognitive estrangement of a SF work. Hence, recreative strategies can either generalise or completely omit a neology. Complete omission of a ST neology from the TT is an example of recreation as both its estranging and cognitive aspects are lost. It is therefore suggested that omission is recreation as it creates the voice of SF anew and makes the ST genre less accessible for the viewer.

The retentive and recreative strategies were divided into six local translation strategies. Their selection is based on Jan Pedersen's (2011, p. 73–74) taxonomy of six categories of local strategies, which are needed in the study of subtitles: retention, direct translation, specification, generalisation, omission and substitution. Pedersen's (2011) category of "substitution" was replaced with the category of "compensation" to better suit the purposes of this study. Pedersen's (2011) category of "retention" was replaced with "direct transfer" to avoid confusion between the global and local strategies in the study. The category of direct translation refers to literal translation. The neologies in the material were thus divided into six local translation strategies: *Direct Transfer, Direct Translation, Specification, Generalisation, Omission and Compensation*, which lead to either retention or recreation of the neologies. Examples of the use of each of these local strategies will be given in the discussion of the study's results.

Furthermore, one of the elements analysed in the material was whether the *pictorial link*, i.e. the link between the picture and the dialogue (Schröter, 2005), is weak or strong. A strong pictorial link means that the novum, which the neology represents, is present in the picture simultaneously with the subtitles. As audiovisual SF produces the cognition (understandability) for its visual estrangement through the dialogue's neologies, the presence of a strong pictorial link does not, as such, allow an omission or generalisation of a neology. When the link is strong, the picture is considered to produce estrangement (without cognition) or complement the estrangement produced by the neology. Thus, the picture complements the cognitive estrangement in dialogue neology and vice versa. As an example, when the alien name *Saru* in *Star Trek Discovery* (Roddenberry et. al., 2017) is uttered in the dialogue, but omitted from the subtitles, when the alien himself is visible in the picture, the utterance of his name complements the estrangement produced by the visual channel. However, the estrangement would be stronger if the name were retained even in the subtitles. Subtitlers are generally trained to avoid repeating personal names (Vertanen, 2007, p. 152), but as unfamiliar phonetically strong names, alien names such as *Saru*, are also in danger of becoming victims of what Díaz-Cintas and Remael refer to as the "feedback effect", which leads to subtitling being an instance of "vulnerable translation" (2007, pp. 55–56). In order to avoid the negative feedback effect, a common strategy is to "transfer all those terms from the original that have strong phonetic or morphological similarities in both languages, and that the viewer may recognize in the original language" (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007, p. 56). This strategy would complement the previously

mentioned SF viewers' expectation to encounter neologies describing the estranging SF world. The fans of SF seem to be aware of the role of neologies in the genre and as a group they seem to be exposed to the feedback effect and eager to announce their opinion. This is proved by, for example, their actions in the social media when they see that something is wrong with the subtitles. In October 2015, the Finnish media broke headlines about a social media outrage due to problems with wrongly timed subtitles of a television screening of the SF film *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (Someraivo – Fox pilasi suomalaisten Tähtien Sota -fanien elokuvaillan, n.d.). The reactions of the SF fans on that occasion reflect the feedback effect. They also reflect the expectations of the SF fans, who, despite the fact that Finnish people tend to understand the source language English relatively well (due to, for example, language teaching in the Finnish basic education system), demand to be able to follow the program via subtitles.

For these reasons, and because of the significant role of neologies in the SF genre, the role of the pictorial link was seen as complementary with regards to SF generic fluency. Estrangement of the visual channel needs a cognitive explanation, which is produced by the verbal channel. The visual and the verbal are mutually complementary. Nevertheless, the role of the link was considered separately in each case to determine how it affects the generic fluency of the translation. In the case of a strong pictorial link the verbal neology is not the only cognitively estranging element of the audiovisual context. The role of the pictorial link will be further discussed in relation to the study's results in the following section.

4. Analysis

This section presents and discuses examples of the translation strategies identified in the data. The order of the examples aims to allow comparison between the different local strategies used for the translation of identical neologies. The overall results are discussed after the examples. The dichotomy between the retentive and recreative local strategies does not mean that using one or the other would guarantee the generic fluency of a text. The results indicate that many of the local strategies can be both retentive and recreative, depending on the context. The strategy of compensation (adding a neology in the TT) was not used in the subtitles. This is likely due to the constraints of the medium, as the restricted space that is reserved for the subtitles rarely allows for additions. The pictorial link is referred to in the examples with the abbreviation PL and neologies in the examples are underlined and backtranslated (BT).

Examples 1 to 3 demonstrate how the strategy of direct transfer can be interpreted as both retentive and recreative, depending on the context. The three examples are subsequent lines of speech in the dialogue.

(1) *Stargate Atlantis* (Wright et al., 2004, s1, e1, Weak PL)

English subtitle:

We need the Zed-PM to power the gate.

Finnish subtitle:

Tarvitsemme ZPM:ää porttia varten.

Back translation of neology:

ZPM

(2) *Stargate Atlantis* (Wright et al., 2004, s1, e1, Weak PL)

English subtitle:

Zee-PM. He's, uh, he's Canadian.

Finnish subtitle:

O'Neill on kanadalainen.

Back translation of neology:

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(3) *Stargate Atlantis* (Wright et al., 2004, s1, e1, Weak PL)

English subtitle:

Oh, Zero-Point Module, General.

Finnish subtitle:

Nollapistemoduuli.

Back translation of neology:

Zero-Point Module

Example 1 shows an instance in which direct transfer is estranging but not cognitive. The neologism *Zed-PM* is an abbreviation of the neoseme *Zero-Point Module*. When translated with the strategy of direct transfer, the result is estranging, but not cognitive as such or in relation to the two instances of the same neology in examples 2 and 3. Example 2 represents omission, which is seen as a solely recreative strategy as both the estrangement and the cognition of the neology are lost. It also

presents the same neology as Example 1, trying to add cognition to the neology *Zed-PM* of Example 1. Instead of trying to explain the novum neology, the subtitler has brought up the national identity of a character. Example 3 on the other hand represents the strategy of direct translation of the neoseme *Zero-Point Module* to *Nollapistemoduuli*. This is an instance of retention and generic fluency as the translation produces the same cognitive estrangement as the source neoseme. The three examples refer to the same novum and its neological name, which is not present in the visual channel simultaneously. Even though the third example explains what *Zed-PM* of the first example means, it is not enough to explain the neology of Example 1 cognitively and thus render it generically fluent. The neology *Zed-PM* is an abbreviation of *Zero-Point Module* but not that of *Nollapistemoduuli*. The fact that this can be interpreted as inconsistency on the part of the translator doesn't affect the interpretation that as this is the first instance in the TV series that this novum is discussed, the cognitive aspect of the translation *Zed-PM* is lost and the genre is thus rendered unfluent in examples 1 and 2.

The previous Example 1, and the following examples 4 and 5 represent the strategy of direct transfer. Examples 4 and 5 show how the neology *frak* loses its cognitivity with direct transfer. In the ST TV series *Battlestar Galactica* (Moore et al., 2003), <u>*frak*</u> is the estranging fictional version of the English swear word *fuck*, which it completely replaces in the series. Although this could also be a technique of euphemism, in this case it is a typical example of how SF estranges the viewer from reality by reflecting it back. The TT estranges the viewer, but it does not follow similar cognitive logic to the ST word *frak* as *frak* is not related to any Finnish swear word. In other words, the translation is a neologism in the Finnish language, but its estrangement is not cognitive. Hence, the Finnish translations cannot be translated back to English. Therefore, these examples illustrate a decrease in the generic fluency of the text.

(4) *Battlestar Galactica* (Moore et al., 2003, s1, e1, Weak PL)

<u>English subtitle:</u>

Nothing Sir, just another leak in that <u>frakking</u> window.

<u>Finnish subtitle:</u>

S [sic] <u>*frakin*</u> ikkuna vuotaa taas.

<u>Back translation of neology:</u>

<u> </u>

(5) *Battlestar Galactica* (Moore et al., 2003, s1, e1, Weak PL)

<u>English subtitle:</u>

Oh, <u>frak.</u>

Finnish subtitle:

Frak!

Back translation of neology:

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(6) *Battlestar Galactica* (Moore et al., 2003, s1, e1, Weak PL)

English subtitle:

Frak me.

Finnish subtitle:

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Back translation of neology:

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Omission, presented in examples 3 and 6, is always recreative and the generic fluency of a SF text decreases each time this strategy is used. This reflects the role of neology as a producer of cognitive estrangement in SF, which is lost with omission. In most instances of omission, as with other strategies, the pictorial link is weak, which further supports the interpretation of omission as a producer of generically unfluent TT.

The strategy of specification cannot lead to both retentive and recreative outcomes. Specification, represented in Example 7, seems to always lead to a retentive outcome as the result is both estranging and cognitive. Specification is often used when an alien race is referred to (Example 7) and this way it adds to the cognitive estrangement by replacing a personal pronoun with a neology. Hence the generic fluency of the SF text is increased. Interestingly, the specification here adds to the number of characters used in the subtitle. This is why subtitlers are generally trained to avoid repeating names in subtitles (Vertanen, 2007, p. 152). The direct translation option *He* would have taken significantly less space than the specified *crepusculaanit*.

 (7) *Star Trek Discovery* (Roddenberry et. al., 2017, s1, e1, Weak PL)

English subtitle:

They've survived here for over a thousand years, Michael.

Finnish subtitle:

Crepusculaanit ovat selvinneet täällä yli tuhat vuotta, Michael.

Back translation of neology:

Crepusculans

Generalisation produces both retentive and recreative translations whilst the great majority of instances seems to lead to recreation. Heather MacLean states in her article about the translation of SF that "if a more general word can be used, especially for new concepts, it should be, as this allows the reader a greater participation in creating the textual world." (1997, p. 25). The concept of generic fluency is suggested to entail the opposite. A more general word can lose the estrangement or the cognition of the neology (as discussed in sections 1 and 2). Examples 8 and 9 represent the strategy of generalisation.

 (8) *Star Trek Enterprise* (Roddenberry et al., 2001, s1, e1, Weak PL)

English subtitle:

Maybe we should get back to where there are more people.

Finnish subtitle:

Ehkä meidän pitäisi palata ihmisten pariin.

Back translation of neology:

humans

(9) *Star Trek Enterprise* (Roddenberry et al., 2001, s1, e1, Weak PL)

English subtitle:

Let's take a look at the lateral sensor array.

Finnish subtitle:

Vilkaistaan sivutunnistimia.

Back translation of neology:

lateral sensors

Example 8 represents a situation in which the English word *people* is used to refer to the people of a city on a foreign planet in which there are no humans present. Hence, the word *people* here refers to the aliens in that city (instead of humans) and works as a neoseme. It seems that either the subtitler was unaware of the context or the possibility that the word *people* could refer to more than humans, or that the restricted space of the subtitles has forced such a decision. By generalising the neoseme into *ihmiset*, the Finnish word for *humans*, the strategy lessens the expression's cognitive

estrangement and misleads the viewer. It is possible that the translation may lead the viewer to wonder why *humans* would suddenly be in that alien city. In Example 9, limited space is the likely reason for the generalisation of the neology *lateral sensor array* into *sivutunnistimia* ("lateral sensors"). This neoseme translation triggers cognitive estrangement similarly as the ST neology. Therefore, this generalisation leads towards a fluent TT genre.

To conclude, let me analyse the overall results of the study. The SF genre of the ST is interpreted to be generically fluent in the majority of the TT subtitles, as 81.77% (*n*=1305) of the subtitled neologies were interpreted to retain the cognitive estrangement of the ST neologies. However, 18.23% (*n*=291) of the subtitled neologies were interpreted to recreate the cognitive estrangement of the ST and render the TT generically unfluent. Notably the majority of the recreatively subtitled neologies are linked to a weak pictorial link. This means that the dialogue (the verbal auditory channel) is not supported by the picture (the visual channel) when the ST utterance is performed and the TT text is displayed. The link between the visual and the verbal channel was strong with a greater percentage in the instances in which a retentive strategy was used. The visual and the verbal do indeed seem to be mutually complementary, but this also seems to entail that a weak pictorial link somewhat protects the recreative strategies from the feedback effect. The viewer is less likely to react to the missing neologies when they are not supported by the picture. However, as the role of neology is to produce cognitive estrangement, the recreative neology is seen to render the genre unfluent.

The strategies of direct transfer and direct translation were the most prominent strategies. Direct transfer led to both retentive and recreative outcomes because many of the ST's cognitively estranging neologies translated with this strategy were estranging, but not cognitive in the translation. However, the majority of the neologies translated with direct translation are names, which are as estranging and cognitive in the TT as they are in the ST. Hence there is a stronger tendency towards retention when direct transfer is used. Direct translation, however, led to a recreative outcome only 5 times, representing only 0.5% of the instances of direct translation. This is most likely due to the tendency of the strategy to both estrange and explain (cognitively) the translated neology. The neologies translated directly are mostly neosemes, for which the most obvious choice of strategy is direct translation.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was not to suggest a specific guideline on how SF neologies should be translated, but rather to evaluate translations as conveyors of the genre of SF through their translation decisions. Hence it is another question whether for example the predominantly recreative strategies of omission and generalisation are inevitable in subtitling due to space and time constraints. Nevertheless, it is necessary to contemplate the reasons behind the translation decisions which render the TT's genre unfluent, in order to understand the effect of translation on the genre.

The preliminary hypothesis of the study was that at least a significant percentage of the neologies of the ST would not be retained in the TT due to for example "growing standardization" (Toury, 1995, p. 267), and consequently they would become normalised towards conventional language in the translation, making the ST genre less accessible for the viewers. The analysis of the material confirmed this hypothesis, entailing that the generic fluency of the TT suffers due to the chosen translation strategies. Hence the cognitive estrangement of the ST is not completely retained, and the genre of a SF text becomes less accessible in the translation process. Even though the translations are by and large generically fluent, the remaining 18.23% of generically unfluent translations of neologies have a genre-normalising effect on the TT genre. This means that when the generically unfluent translation strategies are used, neologies as genre-defining elements are normalised into standard or conventional language expressions, which could decrease the viewers' immersion into the ST.

Normalisation in translation, a concept previously introduced with regards to Dorothy Kenny's (2001) study, also applies to what happens in the process of translation of SF neologies. The translation of neologies demands creativity from the translator as s/he may need to invent new words based on the ST. The SF genre of the TT is rendered unfluent and the ST genre becomes less accessible in the TT when the translation contains fewer instances of the SF genre specific cognitively estranging neologies than would be expected based on the ST. I will call this phenomenon of normalisation of genre specific features of SF in translation, the *centrifugal effect in translation.* This means that the neologies as genre-typical elements are partly neutralised towards normal language in translation, centrifugally away from the centre of the genre. Figure 1 demonstrates this phenomenon.

Figure 1.

The Centrifugal Effect in Translation of SF. Original Position – New Position

Source: Author's own elaboration.

This model of genre normalisation is formed by modifying a model by Henrik Gottlieb, which is titled *The centripetal effect in translation* (Gottlieb, 2004, p. 22). Gottlieb's model is also designed to describe the normalisation of unusual words in translation. In his model, the unusual words become neutralised towards normal language (the centre of his circles). However, this model needs to be upended to fit a study of translation of the genre of SF. Thus, the model for the centrifugal effect describes genre normalisation in translation of SF. The starting position of the "x" (the circle on the left) is the original position of the genre specific element inside the genre. In translation this element

is the neology manifestation of the SF novum in the ST. The new position after the translation (the circle on the right) shows how the "x" has moved from the centre of the genre towards the outer limits of the genre (the inner circle). Neologies as genre specific elements "x" may first move towards the genre's generic others, such as fantasy or horror (the space between the inner and outer circle), before their eventual complete normalisation (outside the circles). For example, if the neologies were completely retained in the translation of a SF text, the "x" would remain in the starting position. At the other extreme, the neologies would be completely omitted and hence the "x" would have moved outside both circles. However, as some of the cognitively estranging neologies have been omitted or recreated in a way which produces only their estrangement but not their cognition, this "x" has moved towards the outer limits of the genre. Hence if the neology loses the cognitive logic typical for a SF novum and neology, the estrangement can still be retained. This means that the neology is not completely normalised, but moves towards, for example, the estranging genre of fantasy, which does not demand plausibility or cognitive logic from its neologies.

Díaz-Cintas and Remael note that some reduction is usually required, but the amount of cutting or reformulating will vary depending on the genre and context (2007, p. 148–149). Professional subtitlers, however, are not necessarily familiar with the genre conventions of SF and even if some of them are fans of the popular genre, their level of education varies. A Finnish university degree in translation and the English language usually entails knowledge about literary conventions, but professional subtitlers do not necessarily have such an education, or they can just regard the genre conventions as peripheral when compared to other features of the subtitled content. The semantic differences between the target language words, as presented in Example 8, can also affect and limit the subtitler's choices. Hence there might not be a cognitively estranging translation available for the subtitler within the limits of the target language and space and time restrictions of the subtitles. Furthermore, the subtitler is usually bound to respect the subtitling company's guidelines, which can define how names, for example, must be translated. In addition, the subtitling companies tend to use time coded master templates for translating into different languages, which means that the space available for the subtitles is the same regardless of the target language. These company guidelines and master templates can limit the individual translator's choices of strategies even further. This means that there might not be a cognitively estranging translation available.

The study has shown that defining the translation strategies in detail and evaluating the neologies in the material one by one is important in order to investigate whether the ST genre becomes normalised, or at least less accessible, in the process of translation. The answer is not always unambiguous and the different translation strategies cannot be easily defined as either retentive or recreative. Notably, the role of the pictorial link between the different channels was weak in a great majority of the material, which suggests that the role of neologies in audiovisual SF is not inferior to that in literary SF. This is because cognitive estrangement as the dominant genre feature is produced by the audiovisual channels complementing and supporting each other. Even though dialogue and neology are not the only producers of cognitive estrangement, the role of neology is essential in bringing the SF world alive even in the spectacular audiovisual SF.

The concept of generic fluency was utilised in order to answer the research question as to how translation affects genre adherence of SF when neologies are considered to be an important genre-typical element of SF. The study suggests that generic fluency, while still in need of further testing, is a useful tool in evaluating the normalisation of the SF genre in translation. Nevertheless, it seems that total maintenance of the generic fluency would never be possible due, for example, to the differences in the interpretations of the ST and TT neologies and restrictions imposed by the medium. These possible differences in interpretations apply both to the translators themselves and the scholars interpreting the translations. Consequently, and based on the study results, it seems inevitable that if translation of SF is studied with regard to generic fluency, some forms of the centrifugal effect of translation and genre normalisation are likely to be found in such a study. This can be due to, for example, the space and time constraints and the subtitling company's guidelines and master templates, which limit the individual subtitler's choices of strategies.

In conclusion, as dialogue and neologies are the only elements which can change in translation of audiovisual SF, and hence, when the fluency of the SF TT genre is evaluated based solely on the retention of neologies in subtitles, the possible reasons behind an unfluent SF TT genre are many, ranging from the constraints imposed by the medium to the translator's personal stand. Suvin sees SF as educational literature, which denies the cultural gaps efficiently and "demands from the author and reader, teacher and critic… a social imagination whose quality of wisdom (sapientia) testifies to the maturity of his critical and creative thought" (2016, p. 50). The translator is one of the operators in this process, in which the nature of the genre itself calls for knowledge and social imagination of critical and creative thought. Hence, we can discern that the interpretation of the ST SF in the translation process can affect the viewers' immersion in the ST genre. The subject could be further studied for example with material consisting of non-professional subtitling (fansubbing) of SF texts in order to reveal whether the translation strategies used by professional subtitlers differ from those used by non-professional subtitlers, or fans of the genre. It is possible that the lack of guidelines and master templates in fansubbing can affect the chosen translation strategies. Furthermore, viewers' reactions to certain translation strategies could be studied to further develop the concept of generic fluency, to test whether retaining the neologies indeed makes the immersion in the SF genre easier for viewers, and to evaluate translator's role in retaining the SF genre via neologies.

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