

Honorifics in Korean Drama:

A COMPARISON OF TRANSLATION PROCEDURES BETWEEN AMATEUR AND  
PROFESSIONAL SUBTITLERS



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## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Chapter 1: On Fansubbing and Korean Drama .....	7
1.1 Introduction .....	7
1.2 Literature Overview .....	7
1.2.1 Professional and Amateur Subtitling .....	7
1.2.2 Characteristics of Fansubbing .....	10
1.2.3 The Abusive Subtitler .....	16
1.3 On Korean Drama and the Korean Honorific System .....	17
1.3.1 The Korean Wave and Korean Drama .....	18
1.3.2 Korean and its Honorific System .....	20
1.4 Conclusion .....	25
Chapter 2: Method .....	27
2.1 Introduction .....	27
2.2 Method .....	27
3.2.1 Extra-linguistic Entities, Procedures and Strategies .....	27
2.2.2 Corpus .....	30
2.3 Conclusion .....	32
Chapter 3: Analysis .....	34
3.1 Introduction .....	34
3.2 Analysis of <i>Coffee Prince</i> .....	34
3.2.1 <i>Oppa</i> .....	34
3.2.2 <i>Hyung</i> .....	42
3.2.3 <i>Unni</i> .....	47
3.2.4 <i>Noona</i> .....	51
3.2.5 Multiple Honorifics .....	54

3.3 Conclusion to <i>Coffee Prince</i> .....	56
3.4 Analysis of <i>Reply 1997</i> .....	57
3.4.1 <i>Oppa</i> .....	57
3.4.2 <i>Hyung</i> .....	62
3.4.3 <i>Unni</i> .....	63
3.4.4 <i>Noona</i> .....	64
3.5 Conclusion to <i>Reply 1997</i> .....	66
4. Discussion and Conclusion .....	68
References .....	74

### Abstract

This thesis summarises some of the research done on fansubbing. Most of this research is anime-centred. However, another genre where fansubbing has become common practice is the focus of this thesis, namely Korean drama. One of the characteristics of fansubbing discussed in this thesis is that many fansubbers have appropriated a foreignizing style of subtitling, instead of domesticizing. I suspected that this was true for the fansubbers of Korean drama as well. To investigate whether this was the case, I focussed on one specific aspect of the Korean language, which is the intricate system surrounding Korean honorifics. I chose to focus my analysis on four Korean age-related honorifics, *hyung*, *oppa*, *noona*, and *unni* and I compared the translation procedures applied to these terms by both amateur and professional subtitlers. I followed Henrik Gottlieb's method on extra-linguistic entities to classify the translation procedures found in the subtitles as either foreignizing or domesticizing. The fansubs of the first drama, *Coffee Prince*, contained many foreignizations, while the fansubs of the second drama, *Reply 1997*, contained fewer foreignizations. This difference may be the result of the increasing amount of legal online streaming sites where fansubbers subtitle Korean dramas for free or it could be coincidence. More research is needed on fansubbing as it cannot yet be said with certainty that the conclusions drawn from anime-related research apply to other genres as well.

## Introduction

For the past two decades audiovisual translation has continued to gain scholarly attention. As more and more films, series, documentaries and other audiovisual material is translated, more and more translation scholars are starting to pay attention to this branch of translation studies. Subsequently, this branch has developed as a considerable field of itself. This has resulted in more varied academic attention and within the audiovisual translation branch separate fields of study have come into existence, including that of fansubbing. Fansubbing, also referred to as amateur subtitling or fan subtitling, is a form of subtitling which emerged in the nineties and is has slowly been gaining academic popularity.

Most of the research related to fansubbing has been centred on Japanese anime, a Japanese hand-drawn animation. This is not surprising, since this is where the phenomenon of fansubbing originated from. In the nineties, English-speaking fans of Japanese anime took it upon themselves to subtitle anime films and anime series because they were unhappy with the way anime was culturally ‘flattened’ when it was translated into English and released on the American market (Dwyer, 2012, p. 229). At that time amateur subtitling was a time-consuming process, but due to the rise of the Internet this process has become faster and easier, which may have attributed to the spread of fansubbing to other genres. In 2005, translation scholar Matthew Kayahara stated that “other genres will pick up on fansubbing, thus providing a more diverse field of source material to work with” (qtd. in González, 2007, p. 274) and one of these genres is Korean drama.

Korean dramas are popular Korean TV shows often consisting of only one season lasting from twelve to twenty episodes. While it is classified as one single genre, the contents can vary greatly. Some dramas, in which school children play the main protagonists, are targeted at teenagers. Yet, there are also dramas that are targeted at a more adult audience where, for example, North Korean spies infiltrate the South Korean government. It is perhaps

this variety that has resulted in Korean drama becoming a phenomenon which has not only conquered South Korea (henceforth referred to as Korea) itself, but has also swept across the whole of Asia since the middle of the nineties. Since then it has continued to spread around the globe and had accumulated a steady following in South-America, North-America, and most recently in Europe. Naturally, subtitles are needed to facilitate such a growth. Korean dramas are constantly being translated into English, Spanish and many other languages by professional translators, but many are also translated by their fans. Despite their popularity and the growing fansubbing culture surrounding Korean drama, there has been little research on the fansubbing of Korean drama.

Instead, most conclusions on fansubbing come from anime-centred research and there have been few researchers who have tested whether these conclusions also apply to fansubbing cultures besides anime fansubbing. One of such conclusions is that professional subtitlers apply different translation procedures than their amateur counterparts. According to Abé Mark Nornes (1999), one of the first scholars to acknowledge fansubbing as a new niche in translation studies, professional translators make translation choices based on a more domesticizing translation strategy, which means that they stay as close as possible to the target audience – to the culture in which the audiovisual material is translated in. Amateur subtitlers, on the other hand, are more foreignizing in their approach and try to remain as close to the source material as possible.

Nornes based his conclusions on anime, just as most other translation scholars, but while this difference in strategies has been questioned multiple times when anime was concerned few researchers have extended their research to other genres. The purpose of this thesis will therefore be to investigate whether the conclusions drawn on the foreignizing and domesticizing strategies of amateur and professional subtitlers respectively also applies to subtitlers of Korean drama. I believe that the conclusions drawn from anime research actually

hold true within the fansubbing practices of Korean drama as well. However, to find out whether this hypothesis is valid I will compare the professional and fan-made subtitles of two popular Korean dramas called *The First Shop of Coffee Prince* and *Reply 1997*.

In Chapter 1, I will first give a brief introduction to the practice of fansubbing and its characteristics. Secondly, I will describe the genre of Korean drama and the Korean language, in particular its honorific system. Subtitlers – whether professional or amateur – who translate material from Korean into other languages will face multiple translation problems. The focus of the analysis will be one specific translation problem. This problem is related to the age-related titles commonly used by most, if not all, Koreans. In Chapter 2, I will explain the methodology on which I will base my analysis; Chapter 3 offers said analysis in which the translation procedures used by both amateur and professional subtitlers to deal with the Korean age-related titles *hyung*, *oppa*, *noona*, and *unni* are compared. The final chapter offers a conclusion and suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter 1: On Fansubbing and Korean Drama**

### **1.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, first, the concept of fansubbing will be discussed in more detail and the existing literature on the phenomenon of fansubbing will be reviewed and explained. Second, Korean drama, the genre where fansubbing has become common practice and which will be the focus of this essay, will be examined and explained. Finally, I will look at some of the peculiarities of the Korean language, including its complicated honorific system. This chapter is therefore the basis from which an understanding will be formed on all factors involved in the method and analysis of the following chapters.

### **1.2 Literature Overview**

#### **1.2.1 Professional and Amateur Subtitling**

Audiovisual Translation (henceforth referred to as AVT) means any form of translation of audiovisual material. This material includes, but is certainly not limited to, films, TV shows, and documentaries. The manner in which this material is translated also differs greatly. In *Introducing Translation Studies*, Munday mentions seven different AVT categories, including dubbing, “which covers ‘lip-synchronisation’ or ‘lip-sync’ where the [source language] voice track is replaced by a [target language] voice track”; and intralingual subtitling, where subtitles are provided for the hard of hearing (2012, p. 271).

The category which is of most concern for this paper is interlingual subtitling. This is the most well-known form of subtitling, where subtitles are an integral part of the film, TV series, or other audiovisual material. The main difficulty of subtitlers is that AVT is a heavily constrained type of translation, such as the “co-existence of the sound channel and the vision channel, which restrict procedures open to the translator” (Munday, 2012, p. 269). A subtitler’s priority is therefore “to ensure that maximum synchronisation obtains in time and



space between the delivery of speech in the source language and the display of subtitles in its target counterpart” (Pérez González, 2007, p. 260).

Subtitling and AVT in general were originally a somewhat overlooked part of translation studies and even now “we still lack a proper historiography of audiovisual translation and its study today” (Díaz Cintas, 2009, p. 1). However, for the past two decades AVT and subtitling has been gaining scholastic attention. First, subtitling was studied from a professional point of view, where the focus mainly lay on the mechanics of subtitling, “on technical issues such as time and space constraints” (Díaz Cintas, 2009, p. 8). Professional subtitlers wanted and also needed to know how long their translation needed to be; they needed to know, for example, what the audience’s average reading speed was. Yet, slowly scholars moved away from these more technical questions towards an increasing awareness of “the cultural embeddedness of translation, of any kind” which has “drawn the fields of Translation Studies and Cultural Studies together” (Díaz Cintas, 2009, p. 8). This ‘cultural turn’ led to an increased interest in different forms of subtitling, including the form which will be the focus of this paper: fansubbing.

Fansubbing, also referred to as amateur subtitling or fan subtitling, is a form of subtitling which emerged in the nineties. It was “a new subtitling-based mediation phenomenon postulated by anime fans (and hence amateur subtitlers)” and it was born “to provide fellow fans worldwide with the fullest and most authentic experience of anime action and the Japanese culture which embeds it” (Pérez González, 2007, p. 260). Fans of anime, a Japanese hand-drawn animation, were dissatisfied with the way that anime was culturally ‘flattened’ when it was translated into English and released on the American market and its distinctly Japanese flavour was removed (Dwyer, 2012, p. 229). Thus, these fans decided to translate the anime’s themselves. In the nineties, this process could take up weeks if not months, since the internet was not as widespread and developed. Fansubbed anime’s were, for

example, distributed by post as videotapes. Nowadays, the process takes less time, but most importantly, it is not only anime which is being fansubbed but other genres as well.

The newest episodes of *Game of Thrones*, for example, are subtitled by fans in sometimes less than a day. The episodes are provided with subtitles like French, German or Dutch and put – illegally – on the Internet for free. Amateur subtitling has thus clearly become a widespread phenomenon and is no longer limited to anime. However, most research carried out on the phenomenon of fansubbing has been centred on Japanese anime. In 2006, a year after translation scholar Matthew Kayahara's previous statement on the diversification of fansubbing practices, Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez define fansubs as a “fan-produced, translated, subtitled version of a Japanese anime programme” (p. 37), making no reference to non-anime-related fansub practices.

This limited definition of fansubbing has led to a lopsided view of fansubbing “emphasizing its formal and textual difference to mainstream, commercial AVT while downplaying its heterogeneity and geopolitical complexity” (Dwyer, 2012, p. 219). Yet it is slowly becoming clear that fansubbing is not such a straightforward practice as definitions such as the one by Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez make it out to be. Instead, fansubbing should be defined more appropriately as “any instance of subtitling produced by fans or amateur enthusiasts rather than professional translators” (Hu, 2010, p. 224). However, a broader definition does not immediately result in the broadening of the scope of current fansub research.

Research on the fansubbing of Japanese anime does offer new and interesting insights into the world of fansubbing. However, because this research is anime-centred it offers only a limited view, given that while it looks at fansubbing, it only looks at the fansubbing of Japanese anime into English. The research has not looked at other genres where fansubbing has become common in recent years, such as Korean Drama, the topic of this thesis, and

conclusions drawn from this type of research are still mostly being treated as if they apply to all fansub practices. However, a few articles have been published recently which move away from this anime-centred approach.

### **1.2.2 Characteristics of Fansubbing**

One such attempt has been made by Tessa Dwyer. In her article “Fansub Dreaming on ViKi”, which examines the fansub practices on the popular online streaming site ViKi<sup>1</sup>, Dwyer attempts to “challenge and change the way in which [fansubbing] as a whole has been approached to date” (2012, p. 221). Dwyer shows that the manner in which fansubbing has been characterised should be challenged, because while this characterization may apply to the fansubbing of anime, other fansubbing practices may not fit into this model. What these characteristics are exactly will be discussed below. Using the website ViKi as an example, Dwyer attempts to shift the parameters of fansub research (2012 p. 221). However, to do so she first summarizes the general aspects of fansubbing, basing herself mostly on anime-related research, some of which she later refutes. Based mostly on her article, which offers an interesting mix of anime-related and non-anime-related research, I will briefly discuss these general characteristics below.

The first characteristic discussed by Dwyer is the fansubbers’ collaborative method. The emergence of the Internet and consequently the gradual shift to a new, digital culture have brought about “radical changes in subtitling practices” (Pérez-González, 2012, p. 336). One of these changes is the fact that nowadays translation, and thus also subtitling – whether professional or amateur – increasingly takes place via the Internet through, for example, online networking and online translation tools. Tools such as Subtitle Workshop, Aegisub and

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<sup>1</sup> ViKi is an abbreviation of video and wiki. It was launched in December 2010 and it now has millions of users every month. ViKi is an online streaming site which streams films, series, and shows from around the world, including Bollywood and anime. While ViKi provides the licenses which makes it possible to stream the material across the globe, a volunteer community of fans provide subtitles for many of these films, series and shows. ViKi thus needs amateur subtitlers to function (viki.com).

Subtitle Edit can be downloaded for free and play an important role in speeding up the subtitling process. It can safely be said that without the Internet, fansubbing practices would probably not have been as common and widespread as they are now. While fansubbing is sometimes done by individuals, the most “common scenario is for fans to produce translations within collaborative online communities that deploy particularly effective teamwork protocols, producing impressive subtitling feats within very short timeframes” (Dwyer, 2012, p. 228).

The members of these communities share their knowledge – technical, linguistic, or otherwise – through their websites and other online platforms. Within these communities fans discuss, for example, translation problems and teach ‘newbies’ how to use the online segmenting tools and other software programs. This sharing of knowledge encourages greater fan participation (Hu, 2010, p. 37) and fansubbers continuously emphasise the ‘co-creational’ nature of their endeavours (Barra, 2009). It is clear, from the manner in which fans interact with each other within these communities and interact with the material they translate, that fans do not feel as if they are passive consumers. Instead, fansubbers and community members are active consumers who take pleasure in interacting with the product they love and with fans who love it as well.

Through their active involvement, fansubbers have become quite skilled in dividing the labour among them. Fansubbing communities have reached a “semi-professional level of specialization and organization” (Dwyer, 2012, p. 228) and, as pointed out by Hye-Kyung Lee, “the work involved, such as copying, translating, editing, encoding, distributing and managing, is spread between voluntary participants who are closely connected via online communications” (2011, p. 1137). Lee touches upon the two main differences between amateur and professional subtitlers when discussing the collaborative method. Firstly, amateur subtitlers are volunteers. They do not receive any pay for their translations, while professional subtitlers do receive pay for their work. Professional translators have signed a

contract with a company as either a freelancer or an employee. This is, in essence, what makes them professionals. It can safely be said that money is in part a motivator for the professional subtitler, while it is not for the fansubber. Secondly, the entire fansubbing process takes place online. Most of the members of these online fansub communities have never met each other in person and probably never will. By contrast, professional subtitling increasingly takes place online, but some of it still takes place offline. There are professional subtitlers working in offices, many working in what Díaz Cintas calls the “main powerhouses of the AVT production industry”, which are Los Angeles and London (Díaz Cintas, 2009, p. 10).

The second characteristic is the fansubbers’ expertise. Using the term ‘expertise’ may seem to contradict their status as ‘amateur’ subtitlers. However, as pointed out by O’Hagan, while fan translators are indeed “*by definition* untrained” it does not have to mean that they are not knowledgeable (2008, p. 179; original emphasis). Instead, driven by their passion for the product, fansubbers have acquired considerable expertise on the genre they are translating and the culture the genre is embedded in. O’Hagan calls fansubbers “privileged” because of “their familiarity with the genre and the availability of fellow fans as critical peer readers giving immediate feedback” (2008, p. 190). However, these characteristics of fansubbers do not only make them privileged, it also sets them apart from professionals in that fansubbers are more cross-disciplinary. Fansubbers’ knowledge on subbing practices may be on an amateur level, yet because they often focus on one genre – be it anime, games or Korean Drama – they become experts on that genre. This differs from professional translators as they cannot always choose their own projects or choose the genre they want to specialise in. Having said that, Dwyer still argues that the in-depth knowledge of product and culture common to fansubbers is something which professional translators could learn from, as

“professional practice needs to become more cross-disciplinary, familiarizing itself, for instance, with cinema, television and gaming cultures” (Dwyer, 2012, p. 230).

The third characteristic, which according to some AVT scholars should be adopted by professional translators, is the fansubbers’ formal innovation. This characteristic is also immediately the most visible and striking characteristic of anime fansubbing and perhaps therefore the one covered most extensively by scholars when discussing the difference between professional and amateur subtitling of anime. Scholars have noted how fansubbers deviate from the norm of placing a subtitle as a non-serif, white font on the bottom of the screen. One of the reasons for this deviation is that fansubbers are not bound by the conventions normally applied when professionals subtitle a programme or any other audiovisual material. The conventions applied by professionals “will ultimately depend on individual companies [and] on the instructions given by the client” (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2014, p. 23) and fansubbers are not influenced by these restrictions. Instead, “[e]nsuring that the visual styling of subtitles is compatible with the aesthetics of the programme represents a priority for the typesetter” (Pérez-González, 2007, p. 270). Fansubbers have, in a sense, more freedom in deciding for themselves what type of font they want, what colour this font will be, and other stylistic choices. For instance, they use different colours to “denote each of the characters taking part in the interaction” or to denote different accents within the same episode (Pérez-González, 2007, p. 270-271). It should be noted that this is also common practice with subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (commonly shortened to SDH). However, the deaf and hard-of-hearing have to overcome both a language barrier (in the case of interlingual subtitling) and a sensorial barrier. Colouring the subtitles helps them understand a film, show, or documentary and helps avoid any confusion. For ‘regular’ interlingual subtitles only a language barrier needs to be overcome and the use of different coloured fonts is rare.

However, the major difference between professional and amateur subtitlers within this category may be the latter's use of translator's notes. Translator's notes are rarely used by professional translators, whether one is translating audio-visual material, a novel, or any text type. Fansubbers, on the other hand, regularly make use of these notes. Often placed at the top of the screen, "fansubber translator notes are used to explain untranslatable or culturally impenetrable terms and concepts and to provide overt instances of interpretation" (Dwyer, 2012, p. 226). These notes, also referred to as 'glosses' or 'headnotes', may vary in length and sometimes take up half the screen, with the subtitles simultaneously showing on the bottom. The "notes and glosses need not be synchronised with the subtitle they seek to clarify or elaborate on" (Pérez-González, 2007, p. 271), thus allowing the viewer the time to read the whole note before it disappears from the screen. Nowadays, most fansubbed material is watched online. With only one click of the mouse, a film, or episode can be paused and the note can be read. Therefore, a more recent strategy that fansubbers prefer to employ is to include the translator's note at the top of the screen for only a few seconds – whether the note is long or short – and the viewers can then pause the file if they wish to read the note. This results in maximising "the viewer's enjoyment of the original semiotic resources while minimising the mediator's intrusion" (Pérez-González, 2007, p. 270).

The final characteristic Dwyer discusses in her paper is the foreignization strategies applied by many fansubbers. According to Sean Leonard (2005):

"anime fansubbing emerged in response to two factors: firstly, the lack of professionally translated material; and secondly, the fact that commercially released, professionally translated anime tended to involve extreme 'flattening' or domesticating textual strategies that performed a culturally 'deodorizing' function, removing its distinctly Japanese flavour" (qtd. in Dwyer, 2012, p. 229).

Publishers overseas tended to “localize anime through editing, changing characters’ names, adopting non-literary translation and dubbing. In so doing, the publishers attempt to increase anime’s universal appeal and help it access consumers of broader age ranges (particularly children) and thus maximize their profit” (Lee, 2011, p. 1135). In response to this flattening anime fans took the matter into their own hands to provide a more ‘authentic’ experience of Japanese anime, which resulted in a foreignizing style. They kept, for example, typically Japanese suffixes such as ‘*-kun*’ and ‘*-senpai*’ intact. However, keeping such terminology intact increases the need for translator’s notes explaining their meaning. A suffix such as ‘*senpai*’ would perhaps be glossed at the beginning of an episode, for example, as ‘*senpai*’ can mean both ‘senior in school’ or ‘mentor’ and is added to a name as a sign of respect.

As Dwyer states, “foreignizing translation echoes the formal intrusion effected via headnotes in that it tends to disrupt the fluency of a translation, calling attention to its mode of production and to its interpretive, mediating role” (Dwyer, 2012, p. 229-230). It is precisely this intrusion which professional translators attempt not to make visible. The practices of professional subtitlers are guided by the industry’s validated standards, “notably the need for condensation and synthesis of the original spoken” (Pérez-González, 2012, p. 339). As Díaz Cintas and Remael state:

“long subtitles under a speaker who says very little, and short subtitles under a speaker who just keeps rattling on, will both have a disturbing effect. In the first case the viewers have too much reading to do, and in the other they may feel cheated out of information” (2014, p. 150).

Thus, professional subtitlers share characteristics with Venuti’s ‘invisible translator’ in that they need to produce a text which seems “natural, i.e. not translated” (Venuti, 1995, p. 5). Even when translating speech into writing, professional subtitlers need to create an illusion that what is written at the bottom of the screen is exactly the same as what the person is



saying. The subtitles need to be condensed to avoid lengthy subtitles that are no longer synchronous with the spoken language. Translator's notes are uncommon because they show the interference of the translator and linguistic peculiarities, including foreignizations and idioms, tend to be left out or 'flattened' in meaning to avoid making the subtitles seem unnatural. These are just a few of the strategies professional subtitlers employ to create a sense of naturalness and completeness which appeals to the target audience.

### **1.2.3 The Abusive Subtitler**

Abé Mark Nornes, one of the first scholars to acknowledge fansubbing as a new niche in translation studies, labels this type of subtitling 'corrupt'. In Nornes' view, the professional subtitler "pretends to move toward the foreign, dwell there, and bring its wonders to the waiting crowds" (Nornes, 1999, p 28). The standards set by the industry, while designed to guarantee the quality of the translation, actually accomplish "the appropriation of the source text and its thorough domestication" and conforms "the foreign to the framework of the target language and its cultural codes" (Nornes, 1999, p. 28-29). The corrupt translator hides his or her interference and keeps the audience under the misapprehension that they are experiencing, through the subtitles, the legitimate foreign. Nornes (1999) is strongly opposed to the method of the corrupt translator and instead calls for strategic 'abusive subtitling'.

Nornes acknowledges that all subtitling is 'violent' in that it requires the translator to tamper with the language for reasons mentioned above. However, while the corrupt translator hides the fact that he or she is committing this violence, the abusive subtitler enjoys it, calls attention to it, and tests its limits and possibilities (Nornes, 1999, p. 29). According to Nornes, it is the "places where capital does not enforce the rules and regulations of corruption" where abusive subtitles are emerging (1999, p. 31), which include the fansubbed anime films and anime series, a practice which Nornes also acknowledges and applauds. Translator's notes,

foreignizations, and the formal innovation common to fansubbing all disrupt the flow of the translation and call attention to the role of translators, their manipulation, their violence.

“Rather than smoothing the rough edges of foreignness, rather than converting everything into easily consumable meaning, the abusive subtitles always direct spectators back to the original text” (Nornes, 1999, p. 32).

In conclusion, the amateur subtitler is an abusive subtitler who is not afraid “to disrupt the fluency of a translation, calling attention to its mode of production and to its interpretive, mediating role” (Dwyer, 2012, p. 229-230). In online communities translation is a process divided amongst their members. While these communities have reached a “semi-professional level of specialization and organization” (Dwyer, 2012, p. 228), their translation strategies do not reflect the same professionalism. However, this does not mean that they are not knowledgeable. The fansubbers’ genre expertise is something which professional subtitlers can actually learn from. This expertise, their use of translator’s notes, foreignizations, and formal innovation reflects a new and different approach which distances itself from the influences of the industry’s validated standards. Fansubbing is a relatively new niche in translation studies and deserves more varied academic attention.

### **1.3 On Korean Drama and the Korean Honorific System**

In the previous section, I have looked the fansubbing progress as well as discussed its general characteristics. In the following section I will examine a particular genre where fansubbing plays a considerable and important role. This genre, called K-drama for short, will also be the focus of the following chapter where I will analyse two different K-dramas to see whether the aforementioned general characteristics also characterise the genre discussed below

### 1.3.1 The Korean Wave and Korean Drama

A new genre where fansubbing has become common practice and actually plays an important role is Korean TV drama (henceforth referred to as ‘K-drama’). When discussing the genre of K-drama, one cannot avoid mentioning the ‘Korean Wave’. Also called the ‘*Hallyu* wave’ or ‘*Hanryu* wave’, the term ‘Korean Wave’ was coined in China. The term first appeared in the Chinese celebrity gossip pages in 2001 and was based on “the title of a compilation of Korean pop songs that was a smash hit in China” (Cho, 2005, p. 149). Nowadays the term is used by people all over the world to refer to the rising popularity of Korean products and culture.

After the IMF crisis in 1997, when Korea was forced to open its cultural markets, there was an increased interest and spread of Korean products, mostly across East Asia. Food, music, films, and beauty products from Korea were suddenly being consumed by people across the whole of East Asia.

However, the Korean Wave truly gained momentum in July 2004 when the Korean Broadcasting System’s *Winter Sonata* (겨울연가) was aired on Japan’s NHK and its viewer ratings reached over 20 percent (Maliankay, 2006, p. 15). In 2013, at least 40 percent of the entire Japanese population had seen it at least once (Kim, 2013, p. 6). *Winter Sonata*’s success may have been the true start of the Korean Wave, but the wave continued with more K-dramas being imported through cable channels to Taiwan, Japan, China and other East Asian countries. Drama after drama became successful in those and other East Asian countries, causing “spin-off effects in terms of promoting Korean food, language study and cultural products, and tourism in Korea” (Cho, 2005, p. 150), and the economic value of the Korean Wave is expected to increase from \$ 10 billion in 2012 to \$ 57 billion in 2020 (Kim, 2013, p. 6). Korean films also gained popularity, such as the film *Oldboy* (올드보이), which won the Grand Prix at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival (IMDB). However, K-drama, together with Korean pop music, continue to lead the Korean Wave and its momentum only continues to

increase with the use of social media and other online cultures (Sung, 2013, p. 135), with Psy's 'Gangnam style' as a relatively recent peak in its international popularity with over two billion views on YouTube since July 2012.

K-drama thus played and continuous to play an important role in increasing the popularity of Korean products and culture world-wide. However, even the Koreans themselves do not fully understand the exact reasons why the genre has become so popular. When asked, the "first common response is that Korean TV dramas are emotionally powerful and self-reflexive" (Kim, 2013, p. 7). However, a definitive answer is impossible to give. In their article on the enjoyment factors of K-dramas in the United States, Lisa M. Chuang and Hye Eun Lee (2013) examine what American audiences enjoyed about K-dramas. These factors include "the storylines that are rooted in real-life family situations, characters that beat the odds, and a definite ending – 16-20 episodes compared to the indefinite American soap opera" (p. 594). However, one of the main reasons for K-dramas' popularity in the U.S. may very well be the fact that local Korean stations "such as KBFD, in Hawaii, California, and New York were pioneers in putting English subtitles on the dramas in order to attract a wider audience" (p. 594.). Subtitles are essential for the advancement of K-drama in the West and while official subtitles are provided, it is fansubbing which has played a crucial part in K-dramas' growth (Kim, 2013, p. 13).

The moment a new episode of a K-drama is broadcasted on a Korean television network, there will most likely be an online community which will 'take the responsibility' of translating it. Sometimes they do so because the community is devoted to a particular actor or actress who has a part in the drama and sometimes communities even follow certain well-known script writers. The fansubbing process of K-drama is quite similar to the fansubbing of anime. As mentioned before, the tasks are divided among the members, starting with acquiring and uploading the episode without subtitles. This episode is also called the 'raw'.

Then segmenting and subtitling take place, often by using free subtitling tools such as the aforementioned Aegisub and Subtitle Workshop. After the subtitlers have been finished, the editors and typesetters go over the file. Finally, the original – raw – version is encoded and merged with the subtitles (Lee, 2011, p. 1139). This version is also called a ‘hard subbed’ version. However, ‘soft subs’ are also quite popular. Soft subs are subtitles saved as a separate file from the video. Sometimes there is one raw version of the episode available for (illegal) download but countless subtitle files, often in different languages, which can be downloaded separately.

Some fansub communities have their own website where they make their subtitles available. A well-known fansub community of K-dramas is *With S2* ([www.withs2.com](http://www.withs2.com)). However, while their old fansubs are still available, they have recently stopped subtitling new dramas. Currently, one of the most popular website for fansubs of K-dramas is *D-addicts* ([www.d-addicts.com](http://www.d-addicts.com)), where all kinds of fansub communities upload their files. Providing hard subbed episodes or raw episodes in this manner is not entirely legal in most countries. However, despite their illegality *D-addicts* and similar websites have played an important part in increasing the popularity of K-drama. One could say that without fansubbing there might not even be a Korean Wave.

### 1.3.2 Korean and its Honorific System

All translators of Korean Drama – whether professional or amateur – face numerous difficulties when translating from Korean to English or any other language. According to some Korean linguists, “Korean is a complex language on par with Arabic in terms of difficulty” (Koh, 2013, p. 250). The official language of the Republic of Korea (referred to here as Korea) is called *Hangugeo* (한국어) and the alphabet used by Koreans is called *Hangul* (한글). It was invented by King Sejong of the Yi dynasty in the mid-15th century (Chang,

1996, p. 5). Naturally, since then the writing system and the language as a whole have undergone numerous changes. However, these changes will not be dealt with here. Instead, I will briefly discuss some aspects of only the modern *Hangugeo* and *Hangul* below.

The modern Korean alphabet consists of twenty-four basic *Hangul* letters, of which fourteen are consonants and ten vowels (Lee & Ramsey, 2000, p. 13). These basic letters can in turn be combined to form sixteen additional symbols (five consonants and eleven vowels). For example, the basic letters ㅏ [ya] and ㅣ [i] can be combined to form the complex vowel ㅘ [yɛ]. These letter, complex or basic, are in turn used to form syllables. The Korean alphabet is unlike that of most other alphabets in the world. Instead of writing the letters one after the other, the letters are grouped into syllables consisting of two or three letters, as in the following examples:

1a. □ ㅏ ㅘ ㅣ → 머리

m eo r i → *meori* 'head'

1c. ㄱ ㅏ ㅈ ㅣ ㅌ □ ㅏ ㅘ → 거짓말

g eo j i t m a l → *keojimal* 'lie'

The Romanisation of the Korean vowels stays mostly the same. However, the example shows that the Romanisation of the consonants does change. In the examples 1a and 1b above, the ㅘ was first Romanised as an 'r' and then as an 'l'. Depending on whether the consonant is in final or initial position, it will be Romanised as a different letter. For example, in initial position the ㅌ is Romanised as 'd' and in the final position as 't'. Thus, the Korean word for university, 대학, is Romanised as *daehak* and not *taehak* or *daehag*.

The basic word order of Korean is subject-object-verb (SOV). However, the word order is relatively free. To differentiate between, for example, object and subject, particles are

attached to uninflected words to indicate their function. When *가* (*ga*) is added to *나* (*nae*) to form the word *내가* it means ‘I’ as a subject – wherever it is placed in the sentence. In Korean it is still most natural to speak in SOV order. However, if the object of the sentence is the focus of the sentence, then the word order can change to OSV (Dong-Geun, 2010, p. 27). The word order can be changed relatively easily to subtly change the meaning or nuance of a sentence.

It is not, however, the word order or the numerous inflections to indicate the function of a word that is most difficult in Korean. The most challenging aspect of the Korean language may very well be its honorific system. There are many languages in the world that have some form of respectful language, but “no language on earth has a more finely differentiated system of honorifics” than Korean (Lee & Ramsey, 2000, p. 224). The Korean language “strictly reflects the hierarchical order” (p. 224). The complexity of the honorifics system finds its way into every layer of the Korean language. It is of such complexity that even few Koreans manage to master it completely (p. 224).

Thus, honorification means that the “speaker-hearer interplay and their relation with the subjects (and objects) referent are grammaticalized” (Chang, 1996, p. 190). It is ordinarily divided into three categories: subject honorification, object exaltation, and sentence style (Lee & Ramsey, 2000, p. 239). The first category, subject honorification, is divided into two levels: it “either represents a decision to elevate or not elevate the subject” (p. 239). It is usually indicated by the honorific suffix *si* and certain lexical items (Chang, 1996, p. 191). Object exaltation is marginal and formed by only “a handful of lexical items” (p. 191). Object exaltation is similar to subject honorification in that it also distinguishes only two levels, “in this case the degree of deference shown to the person affected by the action of the verb” (Lee & Ramsey, 2000, p. 239). The final category is divided into more levels than the previous categories. Which speech level one uses depends on the relationship between speaker and

listener: “it reflects sociological factors that are external to the utterance itself” (p. 239). Age, for example, plays an important role in determining which speech level a person uses.

Currently, around four to five speech levels are recognised and used in Korean (Dong-Geun, 2010, p. 87). As mentioned before, which speech level one uses depends on the situation and the speakers involved. The speech level influences the grammar and the words used. For example, in many languages the second-person pronouns are divided into a plain and honorific form. In Dutch there is *jij* and *u*; in German *du* and *Sie*; and in French *tu* and *vous*. In Korean, there are more than two ways to say the second-person pronoun. In the sentence ‘Is this your book?’ the possessive pronoun ‘your’ can be translated in five different ways. It would depend on the speech style and thus on the relative rank of the person being addressed which ‘your’ would be used. The following examples from Lee and Ramsey’s book *The Korean Language* (2000, p. 225) show the possibilities from high to low in both Korean and its Romanisation with the possessive indicated in italics:

2a. 이거 너의 책 이니?

Igeo *neui* chaek ini? (plain style)

2b. 이거 자네 책 인가?

Igeo *janae* chaek inga? (familiar)

2c. 이거 닥의책 이오?

Igeo *dangsin* chaek io? (semiformal)

2d. 이거 닥의 책 입니까?

Igeo *daekui* chaek nikka? (polite or formal)

2e. 이거 어르신 의 책 입니까?

Igeo *eoreusinui* chaek ipnikka? (formal)

There are many more possibilities, variations and examples to express how rich and complex Korean honorification is. However, describing all of these is beyond the scope of this thesis.



Instead, there is one particular aspect of the Korean honorifics system, called ‘titles’ (호칭), which poses an interesting challenge for translators. Unlike in most countries, it is uncommon for Koreans to call people by their names, “unless the speaker is a friend, colleague, or superior of the listener” (Park, 2010, p. 96). Close friends may also call each other by their given name, but generally it is more common to address each other using titles. These titles can be based on a person’s profession, such as a student addressing their teacher as *seonsaengnim* (선생님). Even when the student has graduated he or she will continue to call their old teacher *seonsaengnim* as many titles are often ‘for life’. However, there are many other titles one can use to address people and a fair number are not based on the position of the addressee but on their age. These titles are the ones that pose the biggest translation challenge. For example, a title such as *seonsaengnim* can be translated as ‘teacher’. While it may sound a bit contrived, it can be a relatively acceptable translation of this particular title and similar titles. However, Korean’s also use titles based on people’s age. These age-related titles, of which I will discuss the four most commonly used ones below, are difficult to translate.

The first age-related title is 형, commonly Romanised as *hyung*. This title can only be used by men addressing older men. The age differences can consist of a few years to a few months. *Hyung* is used by men to refer to their actual biological – older – brother, but also to other men they are close with, such as friends or close colleagues. Another title only used by men is 누나, often Romanised as *noona*. The title is used by men to refer to an older woman. Again, this can be their biological sister, but a man can call any woman he is close with in age and close with personally *noona*. Korean women also use titles to address older people. Women call their older brother 오빠, commonly Romanised as *oppa*. Women can also call their boyfriends, if they are older, *oppa*. However, a woman can also call any man she is close

to *oppa* without necessarily being in a romantic relationship with said man. Women can address older women as 언니, often Romanised as *unni*. A woman's older, biological sister is referred to as *unni*, but a woman can call any older woman she is close with *unni*.

#### 1.4 Conclusion

These age-related titles will be the focus of the next chapter. I will investigate whether professional subtitlers of K-drama translate these titles differently than their amateur counterparts, given the differences between professional and amateur subtitlers discussed in the previous chapter. As mentioned before, the Korean honorific system is rich and intricate: it depends on who is speaking; it depends on whom that person is speaking to; and it depends on the subject of the utterance, what kind of speech level is used. The titles are an important part of the honorific system and thus also an important part of a K-drama's (cultural) context. How they are translated can reveal a lot about the translation strategy a subtitler applies. Since there are no equivalents in English, translators will always have to make a choice: should they leave the title out, and if not, what translation strategy should be used?

In particular, I will look at whether the translators use a foreignizing or a domesticizing translation strategy. I will discuss in detail what type of translations of the four titles discussed above, *hyung* (형), *noona* (누나), *oppa* (오빠), and *unni* (언니), are domesticizing or foreignizing in the following chapter. According to Nornes, fansubbers, or what he calls 'abusive translators', will choose a more foreignizing translation strategy, while the professional, or 'corrupt', subtitlers will domesticate their translation. Nornes' conclusions on fansubbing have been supported by other translation and fansub researchers, such as Pérez-González (2007; 2012) and Lee (2011). However, as mentioned before, this research is mostly anime-centred. I therefore choose to focus on a different genre and a different language in

order to examine whether the conclusions drawn by the previously mentioned researchers can also be applied to other fansubbing practices besides anime-fansubbing.

## Chapter 2: Method

### 2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reviewed some of the research done of fansubbing and I discussed Korean Drama as a genre where fansubbing has become a common practice. In addition, I looked at some linguistic features of the Korean language and focused on its honorific system as a specific challenge to subtitlers, whether they are professional or amateur. These topics will be brought together in the following analysis, in which I will analyse the English subtitles of two K-dramas. In particular, I will look at how the Korean age-related titles discussed in the previous chapter have been translated by both the fansubbers and the professional subtitlers of the two K-dramas.

### 2.2 Method

#### 3.2.1 Extra-linguistic Entities, Procedures and Strategies

In his paper “Subtitling Against the Current: Danish Concepts, English Methods” the Danish-based translator and translation scholar Henrik Gottlieb investigates whether “those non-English films that make it into Anglo-Saxon territory are prone to have a substantial part of their verbal localisms deleted or domesticated” (2009, p. 22). Gottlieb analyses the English subtitles of five Danish films as well as Danish subtitles of two American films to find out what translation procedures the subtitlers of the films used. Gottlieb focusses on what he calls “extra-linguistic entities” (2009, p. 30), which include “lexical items, typically nouns and names, designating phenomena specific to the culture in which they are used” (2005, p. 200). In the case of the films analysed by Gottlieb, the “smooth communication via recognisable entities” was indeed preferred to “loyal representations of strange localisms” (2009, p. 25).

These extra-linguistic entities that were the focus of Gottlieb’s paper are also the focus of this thesis. The terms *hyung*, *oppa*, *unni*, and *noona*, which were discussed in detail in the

previous chapter, are extra-linguistic entities that clearly designate a phenomenon specific to Korean culture. Since these terms involve the same type of entities also investigated by Gottlieb, I will base my method for analysing the English subtitles of K-dramas on Gottlieb's method.

Gottlieb first lists the possible translation procedures subtitlers may use when dealing with an extra-linguistic entity. He identifies six possible translation procedures: retention, literal translation, specification, generalisation, substitution and omission (2009, p. 31). Retention means that the original term is left intact in the subtitles. In case of a literal translation the term is translated directly from the ST into the TT as if it was looked up in the dictionary: for example, the Korean island *Jeju-do* (제주도) will be translated to *Jeju Island*, since the literal translation of *do* (도) is 'island' but the name is left intact. Specification entails that the meaning of a term is specified by adding terminology or changing the original term. *Oppa*, the honorific which normally refers to an older man that another man is close to, for example, could be specified to be a brother or perhaps even 'I' or 'you'. Generalisation entails that something which was specific in the original utterance is translated into something more general. For instance, a term such as *unni*, which Korean girls and women use to refer to a girl or woman they are close to, can be translated into 'I'll respect you now'. When translators choose substitution they choose to translate original term into something more recognizable to the target audience. While most translation procedures discussed above involve some form of substitution, their intention and effect differ. Substitution does not have the intent to make the original utterance any more specific or general, while in the case of specification or generalisation this is in fact the intention of the translator. Substitution therefore has its own label. Finally, omission involves the simple process of omitting the original term or utterance from the TT.

Gottlieb then places these translation procedures on a scale to relate them to an overall strategy. On the one end of the scale he puts ‘maximum fidelity’, while the other end of the scale involves ‘minimum fidelity’ (2009, p. 31). The term fidelity indicates the fidelity a subtitler shows to the ST, thus, to the original utterance taking place within the audiovisual material. The term ‘minimum fidelity’ corresponds to the domestication – the term used in this paper. Omission, according to Gottlieb, shows minimal fidelity and it can also be classified as a domesticating translation strategy. Retention, in turn, is a procedure which, according to Gottlieb, shows maximum fidelity and this translation procedure can also be classified as being part of a foreignizing translation strategy. Since the terms used in this paper are in fact ‘domesticating’ and ‘foreignizing’ I will use these terms to replace Gottlieb’s ‘minimum fidelity’ and ‘maximum fidelity’. This change in terminology does not change the method, only the wording of the method, as this fits this paper better since this paper’s focus lies on domestication and foreignization. The advantage of using a scale rather than a dichotomy is that it leaves room for interpretation. Certain translation procedures, such as a specification, cannot be classified as either being completely foreignizing or completely domesticizing. Thus, based on Gottlieb’s paper, I have created the following scale (see Table 1) on which the analysis presented in chapter three is based.

Table 1.

Domesticizing					Foreignizing
Omission	Substitution	Generalisation	Specification	Literal Translation	Retention

In the analysis, I will classify the translation procedures of the Korean age-related terms *hyung*, *oppa*, *unni*, and *noona* encountered in the Korean dramas. Then, these translations will be placed on the scale; this will show whether the fansubbers do indeed prefer a more foreignizing strategy over a domesticizing one, and whether perhaps even the professional subtitlers choose a foreignizing strategy in the case of honorifics. However,

instead of a mere qualitative analysis based by counting every instance of the honorifics and the corresponding translation procedure, I have selected representative instances of the use of honorifics and the corresponding translation procedure. I will only discuss a limited number of translation procedures and present a detailed discussion on the translation procedures and why the translators – both professional and amateur – chose that particular procedure.

Perhaps, as Pérez-Gonzalez states, when professional subtitlers focus more on condensation and synchronisation, a character's personality "may not be perceived by viewers as the film director had intended" (2014, p. 16). Fansubbers, on the other hand, may focus more on portraying a character's personality more than their professional counterparts, which influences their strategy. Whether this is true can only be found out by discussing translation strategies in more detail instead of giving a general overview by mere counting of the translation procedures.

### **2.2.2 Corpus**

While Gottlieb analyses films, this thesis focusses on drama series. Series have a longer running time, which leaves one with more material to analyse. Also, a longer running time leaves room for more characters to be introduced and thus leads to more interpersonal connections, where terms such as *hyung* and *unni* may occur more often. The reason why I chose to analyse two dramas is that translators may have a personal translation style or preference for certain translation procedures when dealing with extra-linguistic entities. Analysing two dramas will avoid drawing conclusions based on a single translator's or a single group of translator's translation style. However, analysing three or more drama's will lead to too much material to evaluate, which would defy the purpose of discussing translation procedures and strategies in more detail.

I have chosen these two particular dramas because they were both popular when they were first broadcasted and therefore also made available by their broadcasting networks with official subtitles. Nowadays, many networks choose to affiliate themselves with a streaming website, such as the aforementioned ViKi or its competitor DramaFever. On sites like these, instead of paid professional translators, fans provide the subtitles for free. DVD boxes of K-dramas with professional subtitles are becoming less and less popular and therefore less easily available. On sites such as eBay and Amazon illegal copies of Korean dramas are being sold which are subtitled by fans while the sellers claims that they are actually legal copies that are professionally subtitled. The dramas discussed in this thesis were purchased directly from the broadcasting networks themselves and have been subtitled by professionals.

The dramas that I have chosen are *The First Shop of Coffee Prince* (커피프린스 1호점) and *Reply 1997* (응답하라 1997). *The First Shop of Coffee Prince* (henceforth referred to as *Coffee Prince*) first aired in 2007 on the Korean television network Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and immediately became a huge hit across Korea. The story centres on Ko Eun-Chan, a twenty-four-year old girl who became the breadwinner of her family when her father died. She takes care of her sister, called Ko Eun-Sae, and their mother by doing all sorts of odd-jobs, from food delivery to being a taekwondo teacher. Eun-Chan looks like a boy, which eventually leads to her landing a job at a café called *Coffee Prince*. This café is owned by Choi Han-Gyul, who hires Eun-Chan thinking that she is a boy. This misunderstanding, as well as the stories of the other employees, make up the seventeen episodes of *Coffee Prince*. Each episode lasts for approximately one hour.

*Reply 1997* (also known as *Answer Me 1997*) aired on the Korean television network Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) in 2012. The series centres on the lives of six friends from the Korean city of Busan (부산). The series shifts from the years 1997 and 1998 to modern



day Seoul (서울시) where the friends are having a reunion dinner. The main characters include Sung Si-won, a feisty girl who is a huge fan of the boyband H.O.T., and Yun Yun-Jae, a smart but typical boy who has been in love with Si-Won his whole life. The main storyline focusses on these friends and who ends up with whom. In fact, two friends will announce at the reunion that they are getting married. Who marries who, and who married who, is slowly revealed throughout the show's episodes. The series was immensely popular in Korea as its attention to detail and believable representation of a nineties Korea resonated with its viewers. The drama consists of seventeen episodes, each lasting for thirty to forty minutes.

As mentioned above, the professional subtitles on which the analyses in chapter three will be based on comes from the DVD boxes purchased from the broadcasting networks on which both dramas originally aired. The fansubs have been retrieved from two different sites. The fansubs of *Coffee Prince* are retrieved from withs2.com. This is a site of a fansubbing group of similar name. They are no longer actively fansubbing dramas, but luckily their archive is still accessible. The fansubs of *Reply 1997* are retrieved from dramafever.com. This is a streaming site similar to ViKi.com. where fans subtitle dramas and other audiovisual material for free.

## 2.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained the method that the next chapter will be based on in detail. The next chapter will be the analysis of the K-dramas' subtitles. The purpose of this analysis is to discover whether the amateur subtitlers of K-drama use translation procedures which are more foreignizing than the procedures used by their professional counterparts. In chapter 1, the research discussed on fansubbing of Japanese anime led to the conclusion that amateur subtitlers choose more foreignizing translation procedures. However, as mentioned before, since most research done on fansubbing has remained anime-centred, whether fansubbers of

other genres also use more foreignizing procedures than professionals is not clear. The purpose of this paper is to broaden the scope of fansub research by analysing the subtitles – both professional and amateur – of K-drama. K-drama, short for Korean drama, is a genre in which fansubbing has become common practice. It is therefore an interesting genre to see whether the conclusions based on anime-centred research hold true in another genre as well.

## Chapter 3: Analysis

### 3.1 Introduction

This analysis will be divided into two main parts. The first part will be the analysis of the subtitles of *Coffee Prince*. The subtitles will not be discussed in chronological order. Instead, the analysis of *Coffee Prince* will be divided into sections based on the relevant honorifics: *oppa*, *hyung*, *unni*, *noona*, and ‘multiple honorifics’. Then, in the second part, the subtitles of *Reply 1997* will be discussed. This part will also be divided into sections based on the relevant honorifics. The subtitles are presented in tables; each subtitle will be accompanied by a short description of the situation and the episode in which the subtitle was found. A brief analysis of the translation procedures used by both amateur and professional subtitlers will then follow, as well as a discussion of the possible reasons why certain translation procedures were chosen. A conclusion will follow in the last chapter.

The spelling of the names of the characters follows the spelling of the professional subtitles. A Korean name often has a standardised Romanisation which the person themselves or his/her parents have decided upon. However, fictional characters do not have such a standardised names and as such is it common to find a name spelled in various ways. For the sake of consistency, I therefore follow the spelling of the professional subtitles.

### 3.2 Analysis of *Coffee Prince*

#### 3.2.1 *Oppa*

The first fragment is a conversation which takes place between Eun-Chan and her younger sister, Eun-Sae, in the first episode. Eun-Sae calls her sister to ask her to come by because there is someone bothering her. Eun-Sae addresses her older sister using *oppa*, normally used by Korean women to refer to older men they are close with, instead of the proper *unni*, which is used by Korean women to refer to older women they are close with. The person who is

listening in on Eun-Sae's side of the conversation will automatically assume that the person on the other side is male since girls call older boys *oppa*, not older girls. The subtitles can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Eun-Sae	Hey boy!	Oppa!
Eun-Chan	I have to go.	End the call.
	Imelda <sup>2</sup> bought another pair of shoes.	Mom bought another pair of new shoes again.
Eun-Sae	Hey boy. This wannabee is bothering me!	Oppa, there's a guy who look [sic] like a gangster who is bullying me all the time.
Eun-Chan	A wannabee?	Gangster?

It is clear that the fansubbers decided to retain the original *oppa* while the professional subtitlers have chosen not to keep in the original extra-linguistic entity but to translate it with the more general 'hey boy'. I believe that in this case, the professionals decided that the confusion about Eun-Chan's gender – caused by the purposely wrongful use of *oppa* – took priority over the relationship she might have with the girl on the phone. This is also implied by the use of *oppa*, since by using this term Eun-Sae implies that she is close with the boy on the phone; he can be her biological brother or perhaps even her boyfriend.

The fansubbers, on the other hand, took a risk alienating their audience by retaining *oppa*. This is the first episode, and any viewer who has no knowledge of this terminology would not understand either the gender-confusion or the closeness indicated by the use of the term. However, almost all fansubbers assume that their audience does understand these types

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<sup>2</sup> The mother is not called Imelda. In this scene Eun-Chan actually says '*eomma-ga*' with *eomma* (엄마) meaning mother and *ga* being a suffix which indicates *eomma* is the subject of the sentence. The professional translator clearly misheard the original utterance, since her mother is called Ko Ji-Hyang.

of extra-linguistic entities. It is clear from the fansubbers' translation choice here that they assume that their audience has this type of knowledge.

In the following example the professional subtitlers have again chosen generalisation while the amateur subtitlers have chosen to retain the term *oppa*. In this scene, which takes place in episode six, Eun-Chan explains to Yoo-Joo how she manages to pretend being a boy. Eun-Chan explains that she has always been boyish and that many people actually thought that she was a boy. This resulted in her female schoolmates calling her *oppa* instead of *unni* or simply Eun-Chan.

Table 3.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Eun-Chan	The girls at my school used to call me a guy.	When I was in school, I would hear female students call me "oppa" many times.

The way in which Eun-Chan conveys this particular sentence implies that the girls at her school were fully aware of the fact that Eun-Chan was a girl but called her *oppa* to tease her. The professionals' generalisation does not convey this teasing. Instead, their translation sounds more factual. The previous generalisation where *oppa* was translated as 'hey boy' may have actually conveyed this teasing better than the current translation.

At the end of the first episode, Han-Gyul's friends, including Ha-Rim who will work at the coffee shop, throw him a party to welcome him back to Korea. A uninvited guest shows up who literally throws herself on Han-Gyul. While she does so, she calls him *oppa* in a cute and nasal voice. Han-Gyul clearly does not appreciate her efforts to seduce him. Nonetheless, the girl, called Ye-Rim, continuous to impose the unwanted familiarity, not only with her body language but also by calling Han-Gyul *oppa*.

Table 4.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Ye-Ran	Han-Gyul! Han-Gyul! Han-	Oppa! Oppa! Oppa! Oppa!

Han-Gyul	Gyul! Han-Gyul...	Excuse me.
Ha-Rim	NO SUBTITLE She's all over him.	Why are you still faking it with a body like this?
Ye-Ran	You're here for good, right? I was about to go to America to find you.	Oppa, you have returned for good this time? I planned to go to states [sic] to find you if you weren't coming back again.
Friend	I thought I asked your brother to come, not you.	Why are you here when we made contact with your brother?
Ha-Rim	She butts in even when she's not invited.	It's so like there to force herself in, No [sic] matter what the situation is.
Ye-Ran	Are you really going on a blind date? Don't do it.	But, Oppa. Are you really going for the match-making? No, don't go.
Han-Gyul	How did you know?	How did you know?
Ye-Ran	My friend told me she was going on a blind date with you! She's not the girl for you. She had a boob job and a nose job.	My friend gave me a call saying that she will be attending a match-making with you. She's really nothing at all. She did her chest and jaws before.
Han-Gyul	NO SUBTITLE	What's this?
Ye-Ran	I haven't seen you in a long time. Let's make a toast. Han-Gyul, let's lock our arms.	We should have a toast since we haven't met for a long time. Oppa, let's do a lover's shot.

The fansubbers clearly chose to retain the term *oppa* throughout the fragment, even going as far as to transcribe all four the *oppa*'s in the beginning of the fragment. This retention doubles the effect of Ye-Ran's overuse of *oppa*. The viewer not only hears the word *oppa*, but also sees it repeated in the subtitles, which emphasises the fact that Ye-Ran uses this honorific to impose a certain unwanted familiarity on Han-Gyul, as well as staking a

claim on him: Han-Gyul is her *oppa* and no one else's. Nonetheless, the retention of the *oppa* in the fansubs somewhat interrupts the flow of the conversation. Especially when Ye-Ran asks Han-Gyul if he is going on a blind-date, the *oppa* disrupts the flow of the sentence. Despite this disruption, the fansubbers retained the honorifics, thereby emphasising, as mentioned before, Ye-Ran's overuse of the honorific.

The professional subtitlers, on the other hand, chose two different procedures. The first four successive *oppas* have been substituted with Han-Gyul's name, as has this fragment's last *oppa* when Ye-Ran proposes a toast. However, Ye-Ran addresses Han-Gyul another two times as *oppa*: first, when she asks him about the blind-date and, second, when she proposes a toast. Both times these *oppas* have been omitted. The omission of both *oppas* has not only reduced the subtitles, but it has also made the text sound more natural to a non-Korean audience than the subtitles of the fansubbers.

Yet, the flow that the omitted *oppas* create is nullified by the *oppas* which have been substituted by the professional subtitlers with Han-Gyul's name. The four Han-Gyuls in the beginning of the fragment create a lengthy subtitle, seemingly leaving no room to Han-Gyul's 'excuse me'. However, I suspect that the professional translators wanted to make clear that every one of Ye-Ran's *oppas* refers to Han-Gyul and not to one of his other friends. I also suspect the same of this fragment's final *oppa* that was substituted by his name. The translators chose to make clear who Ye-Ran means with *oppa*.

The two times in this fragment that the honorific *oppa* was omitted made, as mentioned before, the subtitles sound more natural and reduced them in length. Leaving the honorific out may reduce the effect that Ye-Ran's overuse of *oppa* has slightly. However, the professionals have clearly taken into account that the subtitles should not be too long nor too choppy, while the fansubbers evidently paid less attention to this as their subtitles are

obviously longer than the professionals' one. The fansubs are also slightly more choppy, which is partially the result of retaining every single *oppa* in this fragment.

At the end of episode four, Eun-Chan's sister, Eun-Sae, asks her sister how Sun-Ki *oppa* is doing. Eun-Sae has a slight crush on Sun-Ki, one of the employees of the coffee shop, and she not only shows this affection towards Sun-Ki by her behaviour, but also by the way she addresses him. Eun-Sae calls him *oppa* to show she feels close to him and only wants to get closer to him. Sun-Ki is not present in this particular scene, thus it seems meaningless for Eun-Sae to call him *oppa* like this. However, I suspect that the main purpose of this particular scene is to inform the audience that Eun-Sae has a crush on Sun-Ki.

Table 5.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Eun-Sae	Hey, how is my Sun-Ki doing?	Is my Sun Ki oppa doing well?
Eun-Chan	'My Sun-Ki?'	How many times have you seen him, and it's already Sun Ki oppa?

In this case the fansubbers have once again chosen to retain the honorific, while the professionals have omitted it. However, the professional subtitlers have not only omitted the *oppa*, but also another large part of the subtitles. It appears as if the professional subtitlers wanted to avoid any mention of *oppa* and its related terminology. Thus, when Eun-Chan indignantly asks her sister how many times she has met Sun-Ki for her to call him *oppa*, Eun-Chan refers to the fact that Korean girls and women do not just call any man *oppa*. Instead, they often have to know the person for a long time and both the man and the woman must 'agree' to call each other on such familiar terms. Eun-Chan considers her sister's behaviour as rather inappropriate and childish.

The professional subtitlers omitted the *oppa* and any reference to the use of honorifics. Yet, their subtitles do retain some of the original meaning. Eun-Sae refers to Sun-Ki as "my Sun-Ki *oppa*". While the professional subtitlers omitted the *oppa*, they made good use of the



‘my’ that was already there. The retention of the ‘my’ leaves in some of the familiarity that Eun-Sae takes with Sun-Ki’s name and person. Sun-Ki is not just anyone – he is ‘hers’. While this is not as well conveyed by leaving in the honorific, like the fansubbers did, it is clear from the context – such as Eun-Chan’s reaction – that Eun-Sae’s behaviour is not appropriate.

The following excerpt was taken from episode eight. In this scene, two unknown men address Eun-Sae on the street at night. Eun-Sae is alone and clearly feels intimidated. The men say they just want to ‘ask her something’, but do so in an informal manner while also calling themselves her *oppas*. By calling themselves her *oppa* they impose a unwanted familiarity on Eun-Sae.

Table 6.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Ha-Rim	We just want to talk with you. Relax, relax.	We have something to discuss with you. Relax, relax.

Literally, they say: “these *oppas* just have something to talk to you about”. However, both the professional and the amateur subtitlers have left the honorifics out. In this particular case, the honorific functions as a subject, retaining them as is would lead to the somewhat peculiar and lengthy sentence mentioned above. Omission seems a logical choice in this case. While it does not convey the unwanted familiarity the men express towards Eun-Sae, the context makes up for that. The dark street, threatening looks and ‘the talk’ they want to have make the situation more than threatening enough.

The following fragment takes place in episode fifteen. In this scene Ha-Rim, one of the employees at the Coffee Prince, approaches a female costumer who has shown some interest in him. He first asks her age; this is not uncommon in Korea, since only after knowing how old someone is one will know how to address them. In this case, since the girl is younger

then him, Ha-Rim is her *oppa* and he literally says so, with which he means that he will address her informally (without using honorifics and formal language).

Table 7.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Ha-Rim	How old are you?	How old are you?
Han-Byul	Huh? Twenty.	What? 20 years old.
Ha-Rim	Then I'll drop the honorifics.	As your oppa, let me speak to you freely.
Han-Byul	Huh? Okay.	Oh! Fine.

The fansubbers have chosen to retain the honorific, leaving a literal translation which covers the whole spectrum of meaning behind *oppa*. Ha-Rim calls himself her *oppa*, which seems logical since he is older than her and they are of the opposite gender. That he is being familiar with her is also expected, since he is flirting with her. At this point, since it is one of the last episodes, there is also no risk of alienating the audience by retaining an extra-linguistic entity like this. Anyone who would not understand and like it would have stopped watching this K-drama by now.

The professional subtitlers did not choose to retain the honorific. Instead, they have chosen a generalisation. With 'dropping the honorifics' Ha-Rim means that he will address Han-Byul informally, which also includes using honorifics such as *oppa* or *unni*. However, while trying to avoid the honorific *oppa*, the translators managed to introduce the foreign concept of honorifics. Most of the English speaking audience would not be familiar with the intricate system of honorifics used by the Koreans, while the general meaning of a term such as *oppa* is more easily understood. With this generalisation, the professional subtitles have actually introduced an extra-linguistics term.

### 3.2.2 *Hyung*

The following subtitle, which contains the honorific *hyung*, normally used by Korean men to refer to older men they are close with, is taken from a phone conversation between Choi Han-Gyul and his friend Yoo-Joo. Yoo-Joo is in a relationship with Han-Gyul's cousin, called Choi Han-Sun. While Yoo-Joo and Han-Gyul are joking around on the phone, Yoo-Joo suddenly says that she is scared of 'the Choi-Hyungs'; the translation can be found in Table 8 below.

Table 8.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Yoo-Joo	I'm scared of the Choi cousins.	The Choi men.

This phone conversation takes place in the third episode and until now the precise relationship between Han-Gyul and Han-Sun was unclear. Whether they are brothers, cousins or simply friends remains vague until Han-Sun actually explains it to Eun-Chan himself in the fifth episode, when he says 'we are cousins, didn't you know?'

When the fansubbers chose to translate 'Choi-*Hyungs*' into 'Choi men' they left the ambiguity of their relationship intact. This generalisation procedure leaves the original interpretation of *hyung* as either brothers, cousins, or friends up to debate, since 'men' can be interpreted in a similar manner. The professional subtitles, however, take away this ambiguity. The professionals have clearly specified the relationship between Han-Sun and Han-Gyul as cousins. When this fact is later 'revealed' to Eun-Chan the audience already knows and the comedic suspense that was intended by the writers and the director is gone. In this case the fansubbers have chosen to generalise their translation while the professional subtitlers actually specified the original term with their translation. In this specific case, the fansubbers' translation procedure leaves the suspense in the original material intact.

The following translated utterance, taken from episode nine, originally contained the honorific *hyung*. Just as with the previous case the term is specified by the professional

subtitlers while the fansubbers chose to generalise it. In this scene Eun-Chan scolds Han-Gyul, who still is unaware of the fact that Eun-Chan is a girl. She calls him *hyung*. However, as mentioned before, the term is not retained in the translation, which can be found below.

Table 9.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Eun-Chan	What kind of elder brother are you!	What kind of a person does that?

The professional translators have chosen a rather general translation. The original meaning of *hyung* as an older male you are close with is completely gone. A person is not a friend, nor male, nor older. In this case, the professional translators have conveyed most of the original meaning of *hyung* since an ‘elder brother’ is actually male, older and someone you are generally speaking close with. The intention of the original utterance was to scold Han-Gyul because he failed as a *hyung* at treating his juniors (younger men he is close with). The professional subtitles convey this meaning better by keeping the meaning of *hyung* intact. The fansubbers clearly focused on the scolding more. Calling someone a ‘person’ in that manner amplifies the scolding, but somewhat neglects the relationship between the ‘scolded’ and the ‘scoldee’ as senior and junior respectively.

In episode five, Eun-Chan has been told by Han-Sun that her boss, Han-Gyul, is actually his cousin. Later on in the same episode Eun-Chan is having a conversation with Han-Sun and she wants to say something bad about her boss. However, that boss is actually Han-Sun’s cousin. Eun-Chan then asks him if she could say something bad about Han-Gyul as he is Han-Sun’s cousin and might be insulted on his behalf. However, she does not use the term ‘cousin’ but uses *hyung* instead.

Table 10.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Eun-Chan	Can I badmouth your cousin?	I don't know if I can insult your cousin.

Eun-Chan's use of *hyung* is unmarked. Han-Sun is the older cousin and thus a *hyung* to Han-Gyul. Also, the latter refers to his cousin as *hyung*, while Han-Sun calls Han-Gyul by name, which shows that they are close to each other. Both the professional subtitlers and fansubbers have chosen to translate *hyung* as cousin. This specification of their familial relation clarifies who Eun-Chan means when talking about Han-Sun's *hyung*. Yet, it is already evident from the context and the part of the conversation before Eun-Chan's question that she is talking about Han-Gyul. She even says 'my boss' earlier on and as she is an employee at Coffee Prince of which Han-Gyul is the boss there can be no confusion as to who this *hyung* is. Yet, both translations no longer contain the original term.

In episode four, Sun-Ki is introduced as a new employee at the coffee shop. Ha-Rim then asks him how old he is. At age twenty-five he is the same age as Ha-Rim, but older than Eun-Chan and Min-Jup. Subsequently, when Ha-Rim calls Min-Jup over to meet Sun-Ki he refers to Sun-Ki as Min-Jup's *hyung*. Min-Jup does not seem too thrilled to call Sun-Ki *hyung* however, as his response in Table 11 shows.

Table 11.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Ha-Rim	Hwang Min-Jup, come and say hi to Mr Noh.	Hey, Hwang Min Yeop, come over to say hello to a big brother.
Min-Jup	I'm not going to call him Mr Noh.	What huyng?

When the professional subtitlers specified *hyung* into Mr Noh (Noh being Sun-Ki's last name) they retained the respect the honorific *hyung* implies, instead of focusing on the familiarity it implies. The professionals have chosen to translate both instances of *hyung* in this fragment as 'Mr Noh' – the fansubbers have not. Instead, the fansubbers have first specified the honorific as 'a big brother'. Close to being a literal translation, 'big brother' is still more of a specification, specifying the relationship between the two parties involved. The

fansubbers evidently chose this translation procedure to emphasise the familiarity *hyung* implies: being as close as brothers. However, instead of being consistent and choosing to translate *hyung* in this manner twice, the fansubbers have instead retained the term the second time. This may cause some confusion with the audience, since the honorific is translated in two different ways in two subsequent sentences. I suspect this is a mistake on the subtitlers part.

While Min-Jup's initially refuses to call Sun-Ki *hyung*, he later on changes his opinion. In episode seven, after hearing how Sun-Ki moved from Japan to Korea to be with his girlfriend, Min-Jup declares that he will call Sun-Ki *hyung* from now on. Sun-Ki remains somewhat sceptical, as can be seen from the fragment below.

Table 12.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Min-Jup	How touching.	Wow! I'm so moved, hyung.
	I'll call you 'Bro' from now on.	From now on, I'll call you that.
Sun-Ki	Cut it out. Besides, I don't remember having a little brother like you.	Lower your voice. And I don't remember I have a rascal younger brother like you.
Min-Jup	You're a pretty cool person except for the fact that you speak Japanese.	If only he didn't speak Japanese, he'll be a great hyung.
	Hey Bro! Bro!	Huyng! Huyng!

I believe that the fansubbers no longer risk alienating their audience by retaining honorifics such as the one above. After seven episodes the audience is either aware of what these extra-linguistics entities mean, or they do not care if they know or not. Choosing to retain honorifics has one big advantage, namely the consistency it creates. This is something which is a little lacking in the professional subtitles of this fragment. Of the four instances of *hyung* in this fragment, three have been substituted with 'bro'. With this substitution, the

professional subtitlers have chosen to lay the focus on familiarity between the two parties, instead of age or respect, ‘bro’ being used as a term of affection.

Yet, one of the four *hyungs* is not substituted with ‘bro’, but instead generalised. Instead of being a “great *hyung*” Sun-Ki is a “pretty cool person” according to the professional subtitlers. Anyone can be a ‘cool person’, and one does not necessarily has to be a *hyung*. The professional subtitlers elected to play up the running joke of Min-Jup not liking Sun-Ki when the older man speaks Japanese. While Sun-Ki is sometimes a ‘cool person’, he is not when he is speaking Japanese.

The final fragment discussed in this section is taken from episode eleven. Eun-Chan and Han-Gyul have become close throughout the past few episodes; Eun-Chan has been calling Han-Gyul *hyung* and Han-Gyul calls Eun-Chan by her name, still being unaware she is a girl. However, they had a fight and are no longer talking to each other in this episode. Ha-Rim subsequently says to Eun-Chan that it was fun watching them “act like *hyungs*” with which he means that they were acting close. Both translation of this phrase can be found below.

Table 13.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Sun-Ki	Well, it was fun watching you guys call each other ‘Bro’ and goof off.	It was funny watching you act as brothers.

Both the amateur and the professional subtitlers have not chosen to retain the term. Instead, they elected to specify the relationship between Eun-Chan and Han-Gyul implied by the honorific *hyung*. As acting like *hyungs* involves acting like brothers: they are close to each other. The amateur subtitlers made use of this metaphor. The professional subtitlers, on the other hand, have chosen to specify the relationship a little bit more than their amateur counterparts. They partially generalised the relationship, but also kept in some of the original

meaning of *hyung* by using ‘bro’ as a substitution. This compensation leads to a somewhat lengthy subtitle and seems rather unnecessary as a simple simile or metaphor would have sufficed – as it did in the amateur subtitles.

### 3.2.3 *Unni*

In the following case the professionals have chosen to omit the age-related honorific *unni*, while the amateurs actually chose the other end of the scale and retained them. In episode two, Yoo-Joo, who is a successful painter, is using crayons to draw childish pictures of a lion together with children of about four years old. One of the children addresses her as *unni* while asking some questions.

Table 14.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Child	Is this a lion?	Unni, is this a lion?
Yoo-Joo	Yes, it is.	That's right.
Child	Draw me a flower!	Unni, draw me a flower please.
Yoo-Joo	After I finish this.	I finish up here then I'll draw one for you.
Child	Okay!	Yes
Mother	Mi-Jung, time for dinner!	Hye Jin, come and eat.
Child	Okay! Bye!	Yes. Unni, bye! Bye!
Yoo-Joo	Bye!	Bye!

This scene shows the audience a softer side to the otherwise somewhat cold Yoo-Joo. The children address her as *unni* showing that they are clearly comfortable with her. However, there is another reason as to why the children choose this particular title, instead of, for example *ajumma* (아줌마). The latter term is the proper term for a married woman and sometimes a married aged woman (although the latter use is becoming less popular amongst



Korean women nowadays). The fact that Yoo-Joo is not married is one of the storylines in this drama. The children's use of *unni* only emphasises this fact.

This subtle play will be understood by a Korean audience who grew up using these types of titles. Most of the foreign audience watching this drama with subtitles will not, however, recognize it – even if the translator leaves retains the term in the TT. Other strategies, such as a specification of the term into ‘older sister’ or ‘sister’ will also not convey this subtle implication of the word *unni* here. Even if this may be the case, the fansubbers have purposefully chosen to retain the original terminology. Perhaps as it gives a more authentic feel to the conversation, as *unni* is clearly said by the child who calls *unni* loudly both times to catch Yoo-Joo's attention. Those watching with original subtitles may feel like something was actually left out from the subtitles.

In the fifth episode, Min-Jup is already aware that Eun-Chan is a girl and not a boy. However, before he was told he thought that Eun-Chan was Eun-Sae's boyfriend, since Eun-Sae called her sister *oppa*. The fragment in Table 15 was taken from a conversation between Eun-Chan and Min-Jup. Min-Jup said to Eun-Chan that she was being too close to Eun-Sae; he is jealous since he is in love with Eun-Sae. Eun-Chan tells Min-Jup that her sister is not interested in him, but more importantly, she is her sister and therefore his jealousy is unfounded.

Table 15.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Eun-Chan	I'm her sister!	In addition to that, I'm Eun Sae's older sister.

Eun-Chan's calls herself Eun-Sae's *unni*. Both the amateur and the professional subtitles no longer contain the honorific. Instead, the professional subtitlers have chosen to substitute the honorific with ‘sister’. As Eun-Chan means that Eun-Sae is her sister – not a

close friend, not a cousin, not a colleague, but her sister. This substitution conveys the full meaning of the honorific in this context.

The amateurs subtitlers have chosen for a literal translation of *unni*. Instead of being a ‘sister’, Eun-Chan is an ‘older sister’. Besides making the subtitles lengthier, the addition of ‘older’ does not add any information that the audience already was not aware of. After five episodes, the audience knows that Eun-Chan is Eun-Sae’s older sister. The storyline revolves on around Eun-Chan being the older sibling and this resulting in having her to care for her family by pretending to be a boy. It seems as if the fansubbers want to remain as close to the original meaning of the honorific as possible.

In the following fragment, taken from episode seven, Min-Jup asks Hong Gae-Sik, the co-owner of the coffee shop and who he calls Mr Hong, if he already knew about Eun-Chan being a girl instead of a boy. However, he does so not by asking Gae-Sik if he knew Eun-Chan was girl, but instead if he knew Eun-Chan was Eun-Sae’s *unni*.

Table 16.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Min-Jup	I heard that you know about it too.	You know about it too, right?
Mr. Hong	What?	What?
Min-Jup	Ko Eun-Chan! Eun-Sae’s sister!	Go Eun Chan. Eun Sae’s sister.

Both the professional and the amateur subtitlers have substituted *unni* with ‘sister’. As with the fragment before, since Min-Jup means that Eun-Chan is Eun-Sae’s sister, this translation perfectly conveys the exact meaning of the ST. However, the fansubbers’ translation reveals that they are inconsistent, because only two episodes before the fansubbers translated ‘Eun-Sae’s *unni*’ as ‘Eun-Sae’s older sister’. I suspect that these subtitles are the result of a collaborative effort of the fansubbers, mentioned as one of the fansubbers’

characteristics in chapter one. Collaborations like these can naturally result in subtitles that contain inconsistencies.

Despite the fact that Eun-Chan calls herself Eun-Sae's *unni* and other people call her Eun-Sae's *unni* as well, Eun-Sae herself does not often call her sister that way. However, when she wants something from her sister she suddenly becomes very well behaved and calls her sister *unni* like a proper younger sister is supposed to, as the fragment in Table 17 shows.

Table 17.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Eun-Sae	But I want some triangle kimbab!	I just feel like some ice-cream.
Eun-Chan	Get some for me, pretty please! You're only nice to me when you have a favor to ask, you sly fox.	Unni, get some for me. Only at such times will you call me 'unni', you sly fox!

In this scene, taking place in episode ten, Eun-Chan is at a grocery store. She is on the phone with her sister who asks her for triangle kimbab. Eun-Sae adopts a sweet tone and emphasises the *unni*. Eun-Chan responds by laughingly calling her out, saying that Eun-Sae only calls her *unni* when she wants something from her. By saying this, Eun-Chan means that her sister calls her *unni* to both show her respect, but also to emphasise the bond they have as sisters. When the professional subtitlers generalise this to 'pretty please' they have captured and conveyed the essence of the ST quite well. Eun-Sae is being annoyingly sweet to get her way. Eun-Chan understands this and calls her sister out saying 'only then I am your *unni*'. The fansubbers have retained both this and the previous honorific, remaining consistent. The professionals have also remained consistent and have again chosen for a generalisation. While the generalisation takes up more space, it does convey the meaning of this particular *unni*, meaning that it is used as flattery.

The final fragment of this section is taken from one of the final episodes of the show, episode fifteen. Here, Eun-Chan tells her sister that Han-Gyul proposed to her. Literally, she says to Eun-Sae: “your *unni* received a proposal today.” However, as can be seen in Table 18 below, both translations no longer contain the word *unni*.

Table 18.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Eun-Chan	He... proposed to me today.	Someone proposed to me today.

*Unni* functions as the subject in the ST. However, in both translation a new subject has been introduced. For the fansubbers this is ‘someone’ and the professions chose the more specific ‘he’. Both were not present in the original utterance. Instead, the original subject was transposed and became the object ‘me’. I would still not classify this as a specification, since the object ‘me’ is necessary for the sentence to make sense; ‘someone proposed today’ would make little sense. It is clear that in both the subtitles *unni* was deliberately omitted. Nonetheless, since *unni* did not convey any special meaning that could not be understood from the context – that Eun-Chan is Eun-Sae’s sister – its omission has no effect.

### 3.2.4 *Noona*

One of the honorifics which occurs the least in *Coffee Prince* is *noona*, a honorific used by Korean men to refer to older women they are close with. Tables 19, 20 and 21 contain three instances where *noona* occurred. In all cases the amateur subtitlers chose to retain the honorific while the professional subtitlers omitted it. This remains true throughout the entire series. The first example, which takes place in episode seven, is also the first instance that the honorific is used. In this scene, Min-Jup reveals to his colleague Sun-Ki that Eun-Chan is a girl. First, he simply says she is a girl and then, when Sun-Ki remains skeptical, Min-Jup accentuates his point by calling Eun-Chan their *noona*.

Table 19.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Min-Jup	Ko Eun-Chan... is a girl.	Go Eun-Chan... is a girl.
Sun-Ki	What?	What?
Min-Jup	A girl...	Girl.
	She is!	I'm serious. She's our noona*. (*Older sister)

The fansubbers clearly sought for authenticity when they decided to retain the term. As mentioned before, this is the first occurrence of this honorific and the fansubbers evidently felt that their audience might not be familiar with the honorific. They therefore added the explanation where they explain what the honorific means. The fansubbers have not done so with the other age-related term occurring in this drama, including the ones discussed in this paper. They may have believed that in the other cases the context made the meaning clear and the audience did not need an explanation, while in this case the context does not. The professional subtitlers, on the other hand, have decided to omit the term. This reduces the subtitles while the intention of the original utterance remains clear: Min-Jup is adamant about Eun-Chan being a girl.

In episode nine, Eun-Chan asks Han-Gyul, who unlike Min-Jup is still unaware that she is a girl, if it was Yoo-Joo he had a crush on years ago. Yoo-Joo already knows that Eun-Chan is a girl and has allowed her to call her *unni* (Table 23) and so Eun-Chan almost slips up. This slip up gives the audience some insight on how Eun-Chan is struggling to continuously pretend to be a boy.

Table 20.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Eun-Chan	Was it Yoo-Joo?	Yoo Ju noona?

The fansubbers have perhaps therefore chosen to retain the honorific – to give the English audience the opportunity to notice the slip up as well. Also, the audience is aware of what the

honorific means, as it was specifically explained in the subtitles in the previous fragment. Thus, it makes sense to the amateur subtitlers to retain the honorific just as they did the previous times.

The professional subtitlers, on the other hand, omitted the honorific. As the honorific is attached to Yoo-Joo's name, it is clear who is meant even when *noona* is omitted. Yet, this omission may lead to the audience feeling as if they were cheated out of information. Eun-Chan clearly states Yoo-Joo's name, but she stumbles on *noona*. This results in the honorific being clearly enunciated and thus being quite noticeable to the audience. Since the audience will only see Yoo-Joo's name in the subtitles and not the word attached to it, they might feel as if they are missing out on important information.

Another fragment where the audience also might have felt cheated out of information can be found in Table 21 below. At the end of episode twelve, when everyone knows about Eun-Chan being a girl, Min-Jup cannot contain his excitement and calls out to Eun-Chan that Han-Gyul (here referred to as Mr. Choi and Manager) arrived. Since everyone knows she is a girl, he can call her *noona* without consequences and he does so repeatedly.

Table 21.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Min-Jup	Mr. Choi is here! Mr. Choi is here!	Noona, Manager's here. Noona! Manager's here, Manager's here. Noona, Manager's here.

None of the *noonas* have been retained by the professional subbers, nor have they chosen to substitute it for Eun-Chan's name to make clear who is meant with *noona*. Instead, the professionals have chosen to reduce the ST to two simple phrases. This omission of the honorific fails to communicate to the audience that Min-Jup now openly addresses Eun-Chan as a girl as previously – when not all the employees knew – he called her *hyung*. However,

since this information does not truly add anything to the storyline it can easily be left out without consequence. And while the professional subtitlers may have omitted too much of the original, the amateur subtitlers have retained perhaps a bit too much. The fansubbers evidently elected to remain as true as possible to the ST and the result is somewhat lengthy and messy subtitles.

### 3.2.5 Multiple Honorifics

There are a few instances where different honorifics have been used in quick succession. While this may occur in any drama, it is especially apparent and can play an important role in this drama because of Eun-Chan who is a girl pretending to be a boy. I have selected two fragments, which can be found in the tables below, where the characters contrast certain honorifics with each other as a joke, to make a point or simply because they are confused.

In the following fragment, Min-Jup, who is aware that Eun-Chan is a girl, calls her *noonim*. *Noonim* is a contraction of the honorific *noona* and the suffix *-nim* (님). *Noonim* is a more formal version of the *noona*. The suffix *-nim* can be attached the honorific *hyung* as well, as can be seen in Table 22. A person might add the suffix to the honorific to show extra respect to the person being addressed. Min-Jup often calls Eun-Chan *noonim* or *hyungnim* since he is both scared of her and respects her. However, as mentioned before, he is having some trouble with the fact that she is a girl pretending to be a boy and he makes mistakes when addressing her.

Table 22.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Min-Jup	Sis, our boss keeps on...	You know our manager to you, Noo-nim...
Eun-Chan	Hey!	Hey!
Min-Jup	Bro, he keeps on watching you.	I meant he keeps looking at you,

		hyung-nim. From wherever.
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In this scene, taking place in episode six, they are at the coffee shop. Eun-Chan wants to keep her real gender a secret from the rest of the employees. Thus, when Min-Jup calls her *noonim*, which is only used to refer to girls and women, she admonishes him. Min-Jup subsequently corrects himself and calls her *hyungnim*. When the fansubbers retained both honorifics they leave intact the contrast between *noonim* and *hyungnim*. However, the audience would need to know what both of these terms mean, otherwise this exchange does not make sense. The fansubbers have taken a risk retaining these terms. The honorifics such as *oppa*, *noona* and *hyung* might have been familiar to the audience, but these extra formal versions might not have been.

The professional translators, on the other hand, substituted the honorifics. The translations ‘sis’ and ‘bro’ create a clear contrast, especially because both were placed at the beginning of the sentence. While *hyungnim* was not originally placed there, the professional subtitlers evidently chose to place ‘bro’ at the beginning of the sentence to underline the contrast between the two terms. The terms are, however, somewhat informal, considering the fact that these honorifics are a more formal version of the original *noona* and *hyung*. This formality is not conveyed with ‘bro’ and ‘sis’. Thus, it might seem to the audience that Min-Jup is trying to be friendly. Yet, this is not the case. Instead, Min-Jup is being protective of Eun-Chan. That is the reason why he calls her *noonim* (and then *hyungnim*). He is not being nice, but more subservient. For example, gang members also call their boss *hyungnim*. This difference that the suffix makes has disappeared in the professional subtitles.

The following fragment was also taken from episode six. Yoo-Joo as found out that Eun-Chan is a girl. After they have talked, of which a fragment can also be found in Table 3, Eun-Chan asks Yoo-Joo if she can call her *unni*. It is proper in Korea to ask for permission to call someone *unni* or any of the other age-related honorifics discussed in this chapter. They



might even say no. Yoo-Joo does not, however, and jokes that it is better than to be called *noona*, implying that, as she is pretending to be a boy, Eun-Chan might call her *noona* instead.

Table 23.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Eun-Chan	Hey... Can I call you Yoo-Joo?	By the way, is it okay for me to call you "unni"?
Yoo-Joo	Why not?	For sure better to hear that than "noona"

The amateur subtitlers have, again, chosen to retain both honorifics, placing them at the end of the sentences, which creates a clear contrast between both honorifics. The fansubbers, however, have elected to substitute *unni* for Yoo-Joo's name and omitted *noona*. This is a nice solution. Calling someone by their first name also implies some familiarity with a person, just as *unni* does. Before, Eun-Chan called her by her surname. Switching to her first name suggests that they have gotten closer. The translation of Yoo-Joo's response is colloquial language and sounds natural. The ST is also reduced considerably.

### 3.3 Conclusion to *Coffee Prince*

Overall, the amateur subtitlers of *Coffee Prince* chose to retain most of the honorifics, while the professional subtitlers chose to retain none of them. Instead, the professionals elected to apply the various other translation procedures available to them. It depended on the context whether a honorific was omitted or, for example, substituted. The fansubbers were less guided by context, but more by their search for authenticity. For example, sometimes the honorifics could have been left out without influencing the meaning of the ST, but the fansubbers left them in anyways. Nonetheless, there were also exceptions where the honorifics were not

retained and the fansubbers chose a different translation procedure, for example in Table 10, Table 15 and Table 16.

However, both the professional and the amateur subtitlers omitted the honorifics when they functioned as the subject in the sentence, for example in Table 18 where *unni* is omitted in both subtitles, or in Table 6 where *oppa* is left out of the subtitles by both the amateur and professional subtitlers. Yet, even taking into account these exceptions, it is clear that the fansubbers adopted translation procedures with which they stayed closer to the original text. While this might lead to them alienating the audience that is unfamiliar with these extra-linguistic entities, I suspect that most of the audience that knows how to find fansubbed K-drama is also somewhat familiar with these honorifics. I also suspect that the fansubbers know this and therefore elect to retain most honorifics.

### 3.4 Analysis of *Reply 1997*

#### 3.4.1 *Oppa*

In Korea, there is a large music industry catered to teenagers. Boybands and girl groups are being produced and marketed constantly by large companies. This culture came into existence at the end of the nineties, the decade in which most of the storyline of *Reply 1997* takes place. The main character, Si-Won, and her girlfriends are all fans of the Korean boyband H.O.T. and they call the members *oppa*. Calling these idol members of a boyband *oppa* is, when you are a girl, common in Korea and many foreign fans have adopted this terminology as well. In Table 24 below, Yoo-Jung, Si-Won's best friend, calls to idols "Kang-Min *oppa*" and "Kangta *oppa*" and in Table 25, Si-Won herself loudly screams "*Oppa* kissed it!". However, the honorifics are omitted in both the amateur and professional subtitles.

Table 24.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Yoo-Jung	I still can't decide which one I	What a dilemma.

	should watch. Kang-Min is having a concert on “Star in my heart”. And Kangta is having a concert on “Starry Night” radio.	Kang-Min is having a concert on “Star in my Heart.” Kangta is having a concert on “Starry Night” radio.
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Table 25.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateurs subtitles
Si-Won	He kissed the doll! I can’t believe it! Did you guys see?	He kissed it! He kissed it! Did you guys see?

These fragments take place in episode one and these specific scenes show the audience the first signs of Yoo-Jung’s and Si-Won’s being such fans. Them being such ‘fangirls’ is a recurring theme throughout the show and while Yoo-Jung and Si-Won continuously refer to their idols as *oppa*, none of these honorifics are retained by either the amateur or the professional subtitlers. Instead, all of them have been omitted. This might give the audience the feeling that they are being cheated out of information. For example, when the girls are literally screaming *oppa* on the top of their lungs, but no subtitles appear, those who are unfamiliar with the term do not understand what is happening exactly at that moment. Substituting the honorific for a name might solve some of the expected misunderstandings. However, a name would not convey a similar meaning as *oppa* does. A Korean would immediately realise and understand from the use of *oppa* that the girls are fans, something which a name would not convey.

The second fragment is taken from episode seven. At the reunion dinner in 2012, Si-Won asks Tae-Woong to get her sweater. She does not use Tae-Woong’s name, but calls him *oppa* instead. Since the whole idea behind *Reply 1997* is to speculate who ended up with who in the future, Si-Won calling Tae-Woong *oppa* leaves open the option that they are one of the

future couples. However, Yoo-Jung quickly admonishes Si-Won that she shouldn't call him *oppa*, the reply to which you can find in Table 26 below.

Table 26.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Si-Won	Tae-Woong, can you bring my cardigan?	Can you bring my sweater?
Tae-Woong	Okay, got it.	Yes.
Yoo-Jung	Are you still calling him that?	Are you still calling him like that?
Si-Won	Then should I call him Mr. Yoon?	Should I call him Mr. Yoon?
	I'll call him whatever I want.	I'll call him what I want.

The professional subtitlers substituted *oppa* for Tae-Woong's name. They subsequently use this name again when Si-Won asks if she should call him 'Mr Yoon' instead (Yoon being Tae-Woong's first name). The contrast between the surname and the first name conveys the – apparently inappropriate – familiarity that Si-Won takes when calling Tae-Woong *oppa*. It appears as if the fansubbers tried to accomplish the same. However, they made the mistake to omit the first *oppa* entirely. Since Yoo-Jung asks Si-Won 'are you still calling him that' the fansubbers' omission can lead to some confusion as there is no referent for 'that'. Also, the contrast between the use of the first name and the surname is missing due to the initial omission. If the fansubbers had substituted *oppa* with Tae-Woong's instead, their translation would have made more sense than it does now.

In the following fragment, taken from episode four, Song-Joo, Si-Won's late sister, asks Tae-Woong to marry her. The phrase 'marry to me' [sic] is said in English, but the first time she adds the Korean *oppa* to it: *oppa*, marry to me [sic].

Table 27.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Song -Joo	Tae-woong, marry to me.	Marry to me!
	Marry to me, you don't get it?	Marry to me! It means let's get

	It means let's get married.	married!
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Song-Joo calls Tae-Woong *oppa* because he is her boyfriend. However, the honorific can be left out and the audience would still understand their relationship from the context. The fansubbers have thus chosen to omit *oppa* entirely. The professional subtitlers, on the other hand, substituted it for Tae-Woong's name, just as with the previous fragment. I suspect in this case that they added it so that the audience would not feel as if they were cheated out of information. This might happen when *oppa* is left out, but now something took it place and the audience will feel that *oppa* has a meaning that the subtitlers took into account.

Four episodes later, in the eighth episode, Si-Won, who is the younger sister of the late Song-Joo, calls Tae-Woong *oppa*. There are a few parallels between this scene and the scene discussed above, such as Tae-Woong helping both girls with their finals. However, the most obvious parallel is the language used by the girls: both Song-Joo and Si-Won call Tae-Woong *oppa*; years apart both girls ask Tae-Woong the exact same question: *oppa*, will you marry me?

Table 28.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Tae-Woong	Take it. This tea is good for your eyes.	Take this. This tea is good for concentration.
Si-Won	Did you make it yourself?	Did you make it yourself?
Tae-Woong	What do you think?	Who else?
Si-Won	Can't we get married? Marry me!	Can't we get married? Marry me!
Tae-Woong	What? You're still a baby.	I don't want to. You're still a baby.

This scene is the start of the love story between Tae-Woong and Si-Won. The love story is introduced and emphasised by the parallels between the scene where his past girlfriends asks him to marry her and the scene where his future girlfriend asks him to marry her. The honorific is not retained by either subtitlers. Instead, both the professional and

amateur subtitlers omitted the *oppa*. The amateur subtitlers were consistent in this manner. With the previous fragment they also elected to omit the honorific. However, the professional subtitlers were not as consistent. While they substituted the honorific with Tae-Woong's name in the previous example, they omitted the honorific entirely in this fragment. This inconsistency may unfortunately weaken the parallels between the two scenes and the dramatic effect that they might have had.

The last fragment of this section is taken from episode twelve. Sung-Jae, one of the main characters, finds out that Si-Won is younger than he is. In response he says that she should call him *oppa*; her response is a glare. This scene actually illustrates the fact that the honorific *oppa*, and all honorifics in general, is not commonly used in this drama. Even when it would actually be appropriate and expected Si-Won refuses to call someone older than her *oppa*. This is also the reason why the section in this drama contains fewer examples of honorifics and their translations. This does not make it less interesting, however, as the translation in Table 29 below shows.

Table 29.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Sung-Jae	I didn't know you're a year younger than me. You should address me differentially.	I didn't know you were a year younger than me. You should call me your brother.

As mentioned before, Sung-Jae says 'you should call me *oppa*'. However, neither the professional, nor the amateur subtitlers retained the honorific. Instead, the professional subtitlers elected for a generalisation of the honorific. Addressing someone differentially can happen in many ways in Korean, including by calling someone *oppa*. This translation therefore addresses one of the main aspects of the honorifics, which is respect. By addressing someone differentially, one means to show someone respect. This aspect is missing in the

translation of the amateur subtitlers when they chose to substitute *oppa* with ‘brother’. The term ‘brother’ implies more of a familiarity, something which has nothing to do with the one-year age difference. If they would have substituted the honorific with, for example, ‘big brother’ this aspect of ‘respect’ would have been conveyed better than with the actual substitution.

### 3.4.2 *Hyung*

The honorific *hyung* does not occur often during the drama. As mentioned before, while they differ in age, Yun-Jae and his friends – both male and female – call each other by name instead of using honorifics. The only times *hyung* is used is to address and to refer to biological brothers. Thus, throughout the drama, Yun-Jae calls his older brother by his title as *hyung*, as is considered proper in Korean culture. The first time when Yun-Jae calls Tae-Woong *hyung* can be found in Table 30 below. This scene takes place at the end of the first episode. Throughout the first episode the audience only knows Yun-Jae as a student and Tae-Woong as his teacher. However, this scene, where Yun-Jae yells ‘*hyung* doesn’t even know!’ immediately reveals the true nature of their relationship – they are brothers. At least, this is what anyone with knowledge of the honorific would know.

Table 30.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Yun-Jae	It is a question mark, not an exclamation mark!	It's not an exclamation mark! It's an exclamation mark!
Tae-Woong	What?	Wh..What?
Yun-Jae	It should be a question mark! You don't even know?	This has an exclamation mark! You don't even know?

Apparently, both the professional and amateur subtitlers assumed at least most of their audience would not know, since the term was substituted with ‘you’. This translation completely fails to convey the original meaning of *hyung* and ignores the purpose of the scene,

which is to reveal to the audience the relationship between the two. Substituting *hyung* with ‘bro’ or ‘brother’ would have been a better choice. However, almost every instance where *hyung* occurs throughout the drama, the honorific is omitted from the subtitles, both by the professional and amateur subtitlers. Unfortunately, in some scenes, such as the one in Table 30, a honorific such as *hyung* conveys important information or plays an important part in creating dramatic suspense.

### 3.4.3 *Unni*

The honorific *unni* was rarely used throughout the series. I therefore included only two examples, which can be found in the tables below. The first example is taken from episode fifteen. The adult Si-Won is a screenwriter for a talk show. In this scene a fellow screenwriter asks the host of a show if she had planned to wear her current outfit earlier on. The screenwriter calls the host *unni*. This shows that the two are close. However, their relationship adds nothing to the plot of the drama. I suspect that this is the reason why both the amateur and the professional subbers elected to omit *unni*. No important information to the plot is left out by omitting the honorific.

Table 31.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Screenwriter	Did your prepare this earlier?	What, are you done changing?
Host	This is my chance. I'll seduce him in 10 minutes.	This is my chance. I'll seduce him in ten minutes. Bet on it.

The second example is taken from episode eleven. Hak-Chan, one of Si-Won's friends, opens a door that apparently leads to Si-Won's late sister's bedroom. The sister is first referred to as Si-Won's *unni* and Hak-Chan responds with ‘I didn't know she had an *unni*’.

Table 32.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Yoo-Jung	No, that is Si-Won's sister's	Oh no, that is the room of Shi Won's



	room.	sister.
Hak-Chan	I didn't know she had a sister.	I didn't know she had a sister.

The amateur and professional subtitlers have substituted *unni* with 'sister' both times. In this case, *unni* refers to this familial bond, not to the bond friends have or colleagues. It therefore seems logical that the subtitlers chose to translate it as 'sister' instead of retaining the term.

This case is similar to the one in *Coffee Prince*, where 'Eun-Sae's *unni*' was also substituted with 'sister' by both the professional and the amateur subbers. In both cases, the translation wholly conveys the original meaning of the original material.

#### 3.4.4 *Noona*

Just as with the other honorifics, the final honorific *noona* is also barely used throughout the drama and when it is used it refers to a biological sister, or as in the example below, to multiple biological sisters.

Table 33.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Joon-Hee	I'm having dinner with my family tomorrow.	I have dinner with my family tomorrow.
Sung-Jae	All my sisters are coming. All? How many do you have?	All of my sisters are coming. All of them? How many sisters do you have?
Joon-Hee	Eight.	Eight.
Sung-Jae	How about you go and get to know more sisters?	What, like the Amazons?

In episode eight, Sung-Jae tries to convince Joon-Hee to join him for karaoke the day after. Joon-Hee tells Sun-Jae that he cannot come, since he is having dinner with his whole family, including all of his *noonas*. Sung-Jae asks him how many *noonas* Joon-Hee has and upon hearing that there are eight he is somewhat taken aback. In all cases the plural of *noona*

has been substituted with ‘sisters’, both by the amateur and the professional subtitlers. Since the honorifics refer to biological sister of a boy or a man, such a translation conveys precisely the original meaning of the honorifics. Just as with *unni* in Table 32, a substitution like this a logical translation.

Later on in the same episode, Sung-Jae managed to convince Joon-Hee to skip family dinner and join him for karaoke instead. Sung-Jae leaves Joon-Hee in the *noraebang* (노래방), the karaoke room, to look for girls who are alone in their *noraebang*. Sung-Jae manages to befriend two women and call Joon-Hee over to join them. It turns out that one of the women is in fact Joon-Hee’s sisters, who thus finds out Joon-Hee’s real reason for skipping the family dinner.

Table 34.

Character	Professional subtitles	Amateur subtitles
Sung-Jae	Joon-Hee, say hi. This is...	Joon Hee! This is...
Joon-Hee	My sister.	My sister.
Sung-Jae	She wouldn’t be a brother of course. Later, she’ll become your girlfriend and then your wife.	Obviously she wouldn't be a brother. It's okay. She's only a few years older than you!
Joon-Hee	She’s my sister. My sixth older sister.	She's my sister! My sixth older sister.

When Joon-Hee says ‘my *noona*’ (translated by both subtitlers as ‘my sister’) Sung-Jae does not immediately understand that he means his biological sister. Instead, he actually thinks that Joon-Hee fell in love at first sight and immediately started calling the woman *noona*. As *noona* can be used by men or boys to refer to their girlfriends if the girlfriends are older, this conclusion is possible – if somewhat farfetched. However, this example shows the ambiguity these honorifics sometimes incur, since they do not always refer to brother and sister, but also to friends and boy/girlfriends.

Unfortunately, the English language does not contain such an ambiguous term. Instead, both the professional and amateur subtitlers elected to substitute the term with ‘sister’. This takes away the ambiguity. However, both subtitlers tried to compensate for this by changing Sung-Jae’s original response somewhat. Instead of ‘of course she is your *noona*’ their translation of ‘she would not be a brother’ offsets the Joon-Hee’s use of the word ‘sister’. The amateur subtitlers apparently decided to leave it at that. Yet, the professionals continued this idea instead of emphasising the age difference, they play on the idea of her being Joon-Hee’s (future) girlfriend. In this case, straying from the ST leaves the audience in proper suspense, while authenticity slightly ruins the comical moment.

### **3.5 Conclusion to *Reply 1997***

*Reply 1997* contains fewer instances of honorifics than *Coffee Prince*. While this left me with less material to analyse, a clear trend in translation procedures was evident as none of the honorifics were retained by either the professional or the amateur subtitlers. Instead, they both made use of the various other translation procedures available to them. While none of the honorifics were retained, there was a difference in what other translation procedures the subtitlers chose to apply.

Overall, when amateur subtitlers elected to omit a honorific entirely, the professional subtitlers chose to substitute the term with a name. In Table 26, for example, *oppa* is substituted with Tae-Woong by the professional subtitlers while the fansubbers omitted the honorific. However, when an honorific referred to biological family, such as *unni* referring to a biological older sister, both the amateur and the professional subtitlers chose to substitute the honorific. In Table 33, for example, *noona* is substituted by the subbers. However, as the example in Table 33 shows, not all these substitutions leave intact the original intentions of

the writers and producers of the drama. Substitutions such as these weaken the suspense of the drama, even when there are so few honorifics in it.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate whether the conclusions drawn on fansubbing based on anime-related research also applies to the fansubbing of Korean drama. The focus of this thesis lay on the difference between amateur and professional subtitlers concerning their foreignizing and domesticizing strategies respectively. According to the research discussed in chapter one, anime fansubbers took the matter into their own hands to provide a more ‘authentic’ experience of Japanese anime, which resulted in a foreignizing style. The professional subtitlers, on the other hand, were bound by standards set by the industry. These standards included localizing “anime through editing, changing characters’ names, adopting non-literary translation and dubbing. In so doing, the publishers attempt to increase anime’s universal appeal and help it access consumers of broader age ranges (particularly children) and thus maximize their profit” (Lee, 2011, p. 1135). These standards led to a more domesticizing style of subtitling.

Yet, all these conclusions have been based on research done mostly on the fansubbing of anime and, as mentioned before, the purpose of this thesis was to investigate whether the conclusions drawn on fansubbing based on anime-related research also apply to the fansubbing of Korean drama. I suspected that this was actually the case; fansubbers of Korean drama would be more foreignizing when subtitling, while the professional subbers elect a more domesticizing style. To test whether this hypothesis was true I analysed the professional and amateur subtitles of two Korean dramas, one called *The First Shop of Coffee Prince* and another called *Reply 1997*. I looked at the different translation procedures the subtitlers applied when encountering so-called extra-linguistic entities, namely Korean age-related titles *hyung*, *oppa*, *noona*, and *unni*. The translation procedures were placed on a scale; some procedures were more foreignizing, such as retentions, while others were more domesticizing, such as omission.

Finally, after discussing over thirty translations of the age-related titles, it can be concluded that there is indeed a difference in translation procedures and strategies between the amateur and professional subtitlers. However, there is also a considerable difference in translation procedures between the amateur subtitles of *Coffee Prince* and *Reply 1997*. The discrepancy is so substantial that I will first discuss the overall difference between the amateur and professional subtitles of *Coffee Prince* followed by a separate discussion of *Reply 1997*, after which I will finally compare the two.

Overall, the amateurs subtitles of *Coffee Prince* differed in many aspects with that of the professional subtitles, including the length of the subtitles. Most importantly, the subtitles contained more foreignizations than the professional subs, including foreignizations of the age-related honorifics that are the focus of this thesis. The honorifics *hyung*, *oppa*, *noona* and *unni* were often retained even when other translation procedures, such as omission, would have been an acceptable alternative. For example, in Table 4 omitting a few of the honorifics would not have had an impact on the meaning of the original utterance. I suspect that the fansubbers were less guided by context, but more by their search for authenticity, just as Dwyer and Lee have claimed.

However, while most of the honorifics were retained by the fansubbers, not all of them were retained. There were a few exceptions, for example, in Table 16, when *unni* refers to a biological sister the honorific is substituted with ‘sister’. In some cases this led to inconsistencies, for example, *unni* was also translated as ‘older sister’ in Table 15. Another exception were the honorifics that functioned as the subjects of sentences: for example, in Table 18, where *unni* is omitted in both subtitles, or in Table 6, where *oppa* is left out of the subtitles by both the amateur and professional subtitlers.

Despite these exceptions, the fansubbers chose overall for more foreignizing translation procedures. Only the number of retentions clearly shows that the fansubbers stayed close to the original text. This might lead to them alienating the audience that is unfamiliar with these extra-linguistic entities. Yet, I suspect that the fansubbers assume that most of the audience which knows how to find a fansubbed K-drama also has some knowledge of Korean honorifics. I believe that this might be the reason why they elect to retain most honorifics.

The professional subtitlers, on the other hand, retained none of the honorifics. Instead, they elected to apply the various other translation procedures available to them. It partially depended on the context whether a honorific was omitted or, for example, substituted. However, I suspect that the professional subtitlers actually actively sought to apply other translation procedures than retention. It appears as if the professional subtitlers wanted to avoid any mention of the honorifics and their related terminology. For example, in Table 5 most of the ST was not translated by the professional subtitlers so as to avoid the honorific *oppa* and any related terminology. Overall, the professional subtitlers clearly chose certain translation procedures with a domesticizing style in mind.

Thus, it seems that with *Coffee Prince* Dwyer and the other translation scholars mentioned in chapter 1 were correct in assuming that amateur subtitlers were more foreignizing and professional subtitlers more domesticizing in their approach. However, from the analysis of *Reply 1997* the opposite seems true. In the subtitles of *Reply 1997* none of the honorifics were retained by either the professional or the amateur subtitlers. Instead, they both made use of the various other translation procedures available to them. Interestingly enough, the amateur subtitlers often opted for the substitution of a honorific while amateur subtitlers elected to omit a honorific entirely. In Table 26, for example, *oppa* is substituted with ‘Tae-Woong’ by the professional subtitlers, while the fansubbers omitted the honorific. Thus, the fansubbers are slightly more domesticizing than their professional counterparts. Nevertheless,

the difference is small and it can be said that the fansubbers of *Reply 1997* clearly chose a more domesticizing approach to subtitling the drama than the fansubbers of *Coffee Prince*. This contradicts my earlier statement that Dwyer and the other translation scholars mentioned in chapter 1 were correct in assuming that amateur subtitlers were more foreignizing and professional subtitlers more domesticizing in their approach. While this is true for the fansubbers of *Coffee Prince*, it clearly does not hold true for the fansubbers of *Reply 1997*.

There are several possible reasons for this discrepancy. Firstly, the difference may lie with the fansubbers themselves. The fansubs were retrieved from two very different sources. The fansubbers of *Coffee Prince* are most likely not the ones who subtitled *Reply 1997*. As mentioned before, I chose to analyse two separate dramas to avoid drawing conclusions based on the style of a single fansubber or fansubbing group. I had not suspected, however, that there would have been such a difference between the two fansub groups. As mentioned before, fansubbing communities have reached a “semi-professional level of specialization and organization” (Dwyer, 2012, p. 228) and, as pointed out by Hye-Kyung Lee, “the work involved, such as copying, translating, editing, encoding, distributing and managing, is spread between voluntary participants who are closely connected via online communications” (2011, p. 1137). Each fansub group might have had a moderator or someone else who made the final call on whether their approach to translating honorifics such as *hyung* would be more foreignizing or domesticizing. It is possible that the fansubbers of *Reply 1997* were an exception to the overall approach of other fansubbers.

However, I suspect that this is not necessarily the case. Instead, I believe that the five year difference between the two dramas is the reason for the discrepancy. *Coffee Prince* was first aired in 2007. Unfortunately, it is unclear when the fan-made subtitles were made, but I assume that the episodes were almost immediately subbed after they aired. The drama *Reply 1997* first aired in 2012 and the episodes were fansubbed soon after they aired. Thus, there is



a gap of five years between the fansubbed versions. In those five years, ViKi was launched and competitors soon followed, including dramafever.com, the site from which the fansubs of *Reply 1997* were retrieved. These sites stream Korean drama fansubbed by groups of fansubbers. These fansubbers make use of free software to subtitle the episodes, but perhaps most importantly, the fansubbers are becoming increasingly professionalised through these sites. There are segments, monitors and second-readers who form a community where they discuss certain translation problems.

Thus, the “semi-professional level of specialization and organization” that Dwyer talks about has become practically professional (2012, p. 228) and this may have influenced the translation strategies involved in fansubbing. Increasing professionalization may have led to an increase of domesticizing translation procedures among fansubbers who like themselves to professional subtitlers and – either unconsciously or consciously – adopt the industries validated standards.

Furthermore, streaming sites such as these do not only stream K-drama, but also Bollywood, anime and many other genres. To appeal to an audience who might not initially searched for K-drama, domesticizing strategies may be applied to avoid alienating them and to keep them on the sites. This leads to more income through advertisements and here the line between amateur and professional subtitlers is crossed. Fansubbers active on ViKi and similar sites are not paid for their services nor have they received any professional training. While this makes them fansubbers, their subtitles still provide income for ViKi itself. This grey area between professionalism and amateurism may thus also be the cause of the more domesticized subtitles.

The fansubbers of *Reply 1997* have avoided “strange localisms” – such as the honorifics that were the focus of this thesis – and instead focussed on “smooth communication” to appeal to the masses (Gottlieb, 2009, 25). This may have been the specific

style of the fansub group involved in subtitling this drama, yet, it may also have been result of an increasing professionalization of fansubbing supported by streaming sites such as dramafever.com. It has become clear that more varied research is needed to establish if the fansubbers of *Reply 1997* were an exception to the overall approach of other fansubbers or that the fansubbers of *Coffee Prince* were in fact the ones who were the anomaly.

Fan-made subtitles of K-dramas over the past decade should be compared with each other, but fansubs of streaming sites such as ViKi should be compared with those produced by independent fansub groups. Perhaps the results of this thesis will tie in with the results of further research or perhaps the difference between the fansubs of *Coffee Prince* and *Reply 1997* was simply an exception to the rule. Nevertheless, this thesis has shown that fansubbing is an interesting area for further research and it cannot yet be said with certainty that the conclusions drawn from anime-related research apply to other genres as well.

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