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The effect of indirect translation on target texts: using Monique Eggermont's *De vegetariër* as a case study

Verstraete, Anke

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**The effect of indirect translation on target texts:
using Monique Eggermont's *De vegetariër* as a case study**

Anke Verstraete

MA Translation, Leiden University

MA Thesis

Susana Valdez

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Abstract

The goal of this thesis is to examine how much impact a mediating text can have on the target text and its positive or negative influence on relaying the source text by comparing an indirect translation to a direct translation. A section of the Korean novel *ch'aesikjuŭija* by Han Kang is used as a case study. I examined the impact of Deborah Smith's *The vegetarian* on Monique Eggermont's Dutch translation, which was produced through an indirect translation method. This was researched by comparing a section of Eggermont's *De vegetariër* with a translation I made myself directly from Korean into Dutch of the corresponding text in *ch'aesikjuŭija*. Through the analysis, I concluded that 75% of the assessed fragment showed distinct differences. These differences were divided up into subcategories, based on W.-D. Kim's (2018) classification of overt translation errors found in Smith's *The vegetarian*. Each indirect translation sentence containing variations compared to the corresponding direct translation sentence was labelled with one or more of these subdivisions. The majority of the dissimilarities were found to be syntactic (69%), followed by vocabulary differences (27%). Omission and addition accounted for 26% each and 7% of the studied text contained differences in the translation of culturally specific words and phrases. While some of these dissimilarities overall can be considered to have little to no impact on the narrative and/or reader experience, the large majority did introduce changes deemed of significant consequence. After comparing Eggermont's *De vegetariër* with Smith's *The vegetarian* I discovered that over 90% of the differences were introduced by Smith and not Eggermont, showcasing the high degree of influence the mediating text had on the target text.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Ask any native Dutch speaker whether they know the children's game 'Rood licht, groen licht' (literally 'Red light, green light') and they would most likely answer "No". However, then you start explaining the game as one where one person stands at the end of a field with everyone else at the other end. That this one person turns their back to the others, saying a certain phrase, while the others run to cross the field until the phrase ends and the one person turns around, bringing everyone to a stop. That game? To the Dutch it's probably known as 'Annemaria Koekoek', while in Dutch speaking Belgium it will be recognised as 'Eén, twee, drie, piano'. This game, which in some form or other is played all over the world, was featured in a South Korean (hereafter Korean) television series called *Squid Game*. In Korean this game is called '*Mugunghwa kkot*' [무궁화 꽃] (literally 'common hibiscus flower'). So how did the name 'Rood licht, groen licht' end up in the Dutch subtitles?

This case is a classic example of the consequences that indirect translation (ITr) can have on an end product. The reason for this alternate name can be traced back to the English subtitles made for the series, where the game is called 'Red light, green light', the way it is commonly referred to in North America. When *Squid Game* needed to be subtitled in over 30 different languages, Dutch included, the distribution company Netflix decided to not look for subtitlers who can translate Korean into other languages, but opted to search in their already established pool of English-Other Language translators (Visser, 2021).² As a result, instead of starting from the original Korean audio and/or transcription, these translators used the English subtitles as source text (ST), effectively using a 'pivot' or 'indirect' translation method. This is not a move unheard of in the subtitling industry, and is certainly more cost-effective and time-efficient than using direct translation (Pięta, 2019, p. 27). However, when using this approach there is a possibility of it having dire consequences, especially when the mediating text, in this case the English subtitles, is of subpar quality and/or uses a different translation strategy compared to the ultimate target language. The 'Rood

¹ All Korean terms are italicised and written in accordance with the McCune-Reischauer romanisation. Names of people however, are not in italics and are romanised according to how the persons themselves writes their name or the most common way the name is romanised. When there is no romanisation given for names, McCune-Reischauer is used. When entire sentences are romanised, they are not in italics.

² For some languages, machine translation, i.e. computer-generated translation, with little to no human interference or correction was used (Martínez, 2021).

licht, groen licht' example perfectly illustrates the difference between 'domesticating' and 'foreignizing' translation strategies. 'Domestication' and 'foreignization' are concepts popularised by Lawrence Venuti (Munday, 2016, p. 228). As a translation strategy 'domesticating' refers to the creation of a fluent translation in which many if not all foreign elements of the original text are neutralised, whereas 'foreignizing' strategies tend to preserve these foreign elements (Y. Kim, 2016, p. 40). In this *Squid Game* example, the English subtitler opted for a domesticating strategy, changing the name of the game '*Mugunghwa kkot*' into the one used commonly in North America, i.e. 'Red light, green light'. Had the Dutch subtitler taken a similar approach, the game would have been called 'Annemaria Koekoek' or 'Eén, twee, drie, piano'. However, Dutch translators tend to use more foreignizing strategies, often literally translating the source text (Van Haute, 2019, pp. 89–90).

Consequently, the game was literally translated from 'Red light, green light' into 'Rood licht, groen licht', clearly demonstrating they used the heavily domesticated English subtitles as the ST instead of the Korean audio and/or transcription. If they had used the latter and the Dutch subtitler employed a similar translation strategy, the game would have most likely been called 'Altheastruik' or 'Hibiscusbloem', which are more literal translations of '*Mugunghwa kkot*'. While the argument could be made that a small change in the name of a game is insignificant, a cascade of multiple small changes will gradually impact the quality of the end product, to the point where a translation of the original ST morphs into a translation of the mediating text.

Just like in the subtitling industry, ITr has long been present in the literary world. One of the most well-known examples is the Bible (Marín-Lacarta, 2017, p. 133). There are several reasons why ITr-approaches are used, the most obvious one being the lack of (sufficient) translators for certain language pairs. This is also the case for the Korean-Dutch language pair in which very few literary translators specialise (Muus, 2016). Most recently, the Korean-Dutch translator Mattho Mandersloot has boosted the availability of Dutch translations of Korean works – with Kim Ae-ran's *Mijn bonzende leven*, Jang Ryujin's *To the moon*, and Lee Young-do's *De dromenjagers* just to name a few, all published within the first quarter of 2025. In addition, he is training other translators via joint publications (Nederlands Letterenfonds, 2024). Examples of the latter include *Hello baby* by Kim Eui-kyung translated together with Francisca van Vark, and *Pottenbakken voor geluk* by Yeon Somin for which he

collaborated with David Pfaff. Nevertheless, having a multitude of Korean-Dutch literary translators at your disposal is a rather recent development, with most Korean books translated into Dutch before 2020 being done so with an ITr-method where the English translation was used as the mediating text. However, Korean culture and language are gaining more visibility each day through the recent international success of Korean films, dramas, and music, a phenomenon commonly referred to as 'The Korean Wave' or '*Hallyu*' (Jin, 2023, p. 1). Additionally, now that Korean author Han Kang has won the 2024 Nobel prize for literature, creating a surge in sales of her books as confirmed by her publisher in the Netherlands Nijgh & Van Ditmar (van der Graaf, 2024), it is to be expected that Korean literature in general will gain more people's attention as well, including that of Dutch speaking audiences.

The introduction of Korean-Dutch literary translators such as Mattho Mandersloot makes it likely that Korean-Dutch literary translation will take a similar route to the Chinese-Dutch language pair a few decades ago. In the Chinese-Dutch literary world, it took over ten years after Dutch publications of Chinese literature had risen to a significant number before direct translations (DTrs) gained more ground than ITrs (Heijns, 2009, pp. 282, 289). Hence, there is also a high chance that Mandersloot and his group of newly trained translators might not be able to keep up with this rising demand for Korean literature, tempting publishers into employing the ITr-method. However, how does this influence the end product? What happens to cultural references and language-related particularities? Is it common for ITr-approaches to produce an end product further removed from the original ST than DTr, similar to the *Squid Game* example stated above? Is the impact a mediating text has on the target text (TT) necessarily negative, i.e., does it harm and/or change the narrative and the reader's experience? Can the end product still be considered a translation from the original ST or is it solely a translation of the mediating text which might have already introduced several changes to the ST?

Using the guiding questions stated above, this thesis will attempt to answer the question how an ITr-approach influences the end product. Han Kang's 2007 novel *ch'aesikjuŭija* [채식주의자] and its 2015 Dutch translation *De vegetariër* made by Monique Eggermont, who employed an ITr-method using Deborah Smith's English translation *The vegetarian* as the mediating text, were chosen as a case study. The

differences between direct and indirect translation will be identified by comparing a portion of Eggermont's translation with my own version, which has been translated directly from Korean into Dutch³. It is expected that Eggermont's translation, while staying close to Smith's translation, will show many differences when compared with my own DTr and is further removed from the ST, erasing many if not all cultural and language-related intricacies which were included by Han Kang in the original *ch'aesikjuŭija*.

This thesis is built as follows. First, the necessary theoretical background on ITr as well as Korean literature in translation will be provided in chapter 2. This includes a small literature review in order to identify research gaps within scholarship surrounding these topics, together with a reasoning for the chosen case study. Then, in chapter 3, the employed methodology will be explained. Lastly, the analysis and results of the case study will be organised and discussed in chapter 4 with its conclusions presented in the final chapter, answering the research question of how translating a Korean novel into Dutch when using English as a mediating language influences the end product.

³ I have over six years of experience learning the Korean language. I have a BA in Korean Studies and have travelled to South Korea multiple times to study Korean and experience Korean culture firsthand.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Background

The theoretical background needed for this thesis consists of two main aspects: indirect translation (ITr) and Korean literature in translation. The section on ITr is structured as follows. After identifying what ITr is, a brief overview of past and current research trends concerning this topic is covered. Next, the effect ITr can have on a target text (TT) is explored through multiple angles, including mistranslation, grammar, addition and omission, and varying translation strategies. The second section, concerning Korean literature in translation, first provides a brief history of the translation of Korean texts. Then, past and current research trends are touched upon followed by an introduction to the materials used in the case study.

2.1 Indirect Translation

Defining ITr is far from straightforward due to the complexities related to this phenomenon. The concept is associated with a disorganised metalanguage, resulting in a variety of terms and meaning (Pym, 2011, p. 80 as seen in Pięta, 2019, p. 22). Aside from ITr, some terms currently used include, but are not limited to, pivot translation (mainly present when audiovisual and machine translation are discussed) and relay translation (mostly used in publications on interpreting and Chinese translation traditions) (Pięta, 2021, p. 113). Despite Rosa et al.'s (2017) efforts in identifying patterns in the terminology used when ITr is discussed within English-language scholarship, the term remains a vague one. In a broad sense ITr is understood to be a translation of a translation (Gambier, 2003, p. 57). This definition does not specify how many different languages need to be involved nor the medium. Using such a definition allows back-translations, where a translated document is translated back into the source language, or a television series based on a video game which is itself based on a book to also be considered as ITrs (Pięta, 2021, p. 113). Some scholars even argue that direct translation (DTr) does not actually exist as there is a degree of indirectness present in almost every translation (Maia et al., 2018 as seen in Pięta, 2017, p. 22). In this sense even my translation produced for this case study might not be considered direct due to the involvement of English in my translation process. As there are currently no Korean-Dutch dictionaries available, whenever I had to look up a Korean word I did not understand, I tended to

use a Korean-English dictionary (*Naver Korean-English Dictionary*, n.d.) together with a English-Dutch dictionary (*Van Dale EN-NL*, n.d.) to find a Dutch equivalent.⁴ Therefore, this thesis will use the more narrow sense of the term ITr, i.e. a translation via a third language (Pięta, 2021, p. 113). Following this classification, ITr is defined by needing two steps in the translation process: first, a translation from language A into language B is produced by one translator, which is then followed by a translation made by another translator from language B into language C. For example, in the case study presented in this thesis the Korean novel *ch'aesikjuŭija* was first translated into English by Deborah Smith. Then, this English version was used by Monique Eggermont to translate the book into Dutch.

2.1.1 Past and Present Research Trends

As previously mentioned, ITr is certainly not a new phenomenon. It has been used throughout history to facilitate communication and the transfer of ideas across different languages and cultures. A well-known example is the Bible. As original source text versions of this document are no longer available, all modern Bibles are based on translations of this source text (ST), such as the ones made in Greek and Latin (Marín-Lacarta, 2017, p. 133). Despite its long history, academic research on ITr is relatively young, with publications on the topic only seeing an increase since the beginning of the 21st century (Ivaska et al., 2023, p. 775). This is partly due to the negative connotation of the term. Throughout history, translations themselves have often been considered inferior to the original. Therefore one could ask the question what the point would be in producing and studying TTs created through an ITr-method as they would be seen as a poor copy of an already inferior text (St André, 2009, p. 230). These damaging views were further supported by a limited amount of (outdated) scholarly research focussing on the negative consequences of ITr. This provided traditional translation education with plenty of reasons to give precedence to direct translation (DTr), shunning ITr-practices.

⁴ A Korean language dictionary (*NAVER dictionary*, n.d.) as well as a Dutch dictionary (*Dikke Van Dale*, n.d.) were also used to verify whether the meaning of the Dutch term I had found was similar to the Korean one of the word.

However, the reality is that ITrs are still common across multiple languages and mediums and do not show any signs of diminishing in the foreseeable future. For example, within the audiovisual translation (AVT) industry, templates are often used to save time and effort when it comes to spotting and segmenting subtitles (Pięta, 2019, p. 27). As with the 'Rood licht, groen licht'-example presented in the introduction, when a film or tv series is not originally in English, these templates are often the English subtitles made for the video which are then used to produce subtitles in other languages (Pięta, 2021, p. 113). Even neural machine translation engines such as Google Translate make use of mediating languages when the available information for a specific language pair is insufficient (Pięta, 2021, p. 114).

More recent research trends seem to have embraced the presence of ITr, sparking studies not only on merely describing the phenomenon but on presenting the advantages ITr can offer (Pięta, 2021, p. 116). Aside from the aforementioned time-efficiency templates provide in AVT, other benefits ITr holds are aiding (semi-)peripheral languages and cultures with more exposure in this increasingly globalised world and reducing costs, as translating from and to (semi-)peripheral languages tends to be more expensive (Pięta, 2019, p. 27). Simultaneously, critical questions about best practices when translating from and/or to mediating texts as well as how technology comes into play, have been raised (Pięta, 2019, p. 29).

2.1.2 The effect of Indirect Translations on Target Texts

The issue of the effect ITr can have on a TT is one which has been debated since the beginning of ITr-related research. While there is considerable evidence of both unsuccessful and subpar DTrs as well as successful and well-regarded ITrs, the latter tends to bring an extra set of problems (Ringmar, 2007, pp. 9–10). The fundamental assumption is that the TT differs more from the ST than the mediating text does due to the alterations ITr supposedly inevitably introduces. As a result, there is an increased distance between the TT and original ST (Ringmar, 2007, p. 10). Key ways in which ITrs can influence TTs include, but are not limited to, mistranslations in the mediating text, differences in grammatical structure between the languages involved, additions and omissions introduced in the mediating text,

and the varying translation strategies between the mediating culture (MC) and target culture (TC).

2.1.2.1 Mistranslations

Errors or ambiguities in the mediating text are likely to be carried over to the TT, leading to inaccuracies in the TT's representation of the original ST (Ringmar, 2007, p. 11). In research presented by Park et al. (2015) using the case study of the Korean novel *ǒmmarŭl put'ak'ae* [엄마를 부탁해] by Kyung-Sook Shin, which was translated into Thai (*mae...huajai thi haipai*⁵ [แม่...หัวใจที่หายไป]) through English (*Please Look After Mom*), many mistranslations were uncovered. For example, the English translator misinterpreted *shimmanwǒn'gwǒnsup'yo tu chang* [십만원권수표 두 장] as 'two ten-thousand-one checks', while it should have been 'two 100,000 won checks'. The Thai translator, not knowing this was a mistake, translated this to *chekneungmuen won song bai* [เช็คหนึ่งหมื่นนอนสองใบ] (two ten-thousand-one checks), which is, despite being the correct translation from English, an incorrect translation when comparing it to the original ST (Park et al., 2015, p. 607). These types of mistakes tend to go unnoticed when ITr is involved, as when it is already difficult to find a translator who can translate directly, finding revisors who can read and understand the original ST is close to impossible. This means that most revisions will be done not through the ST, but the mediating text that might contain mistranslation errors.

2.1.2.2 Grammar

Aside from plain mistranslations, the grammatical structure of the mediating language (ML) can obscure distinctions present in the source language (SL) and potentially in the target language (TL). For example, the English pronoun "you" – used to address either one or several persons – can create misinterpretations when mediating between German and French, where there are distinct singular and plural

⁵ All Thai terms are italicised and written in accordance with the Royal Institute of Thailand's Romanization rules.

forms (Ringmar, 2007, p. 10). In the same vein, translation between highly honorific languages through languages with little honorific grammar structures, such as English, as a ML often presents problems. The aforementioned Thai translation of Kyung-Sook Shin's *ōmmarŭl put'ak'ae* not only contained mistranslations vocabulary-wise, but many errors related to pronouns and terms of address were identified as well. Korean and Thai are both highly honorific languages, which is conveyed through, for instance, a varying use of the pronoun "you", depending on a plethora of factors such as the type of relationship between people, differences in position on the social ladder as well as age. The Korean second-person pronoun *nŏ* [너] is used when speaking to someone of similar age or lower social status. For these types of situations, *thoe* [เธอ] is generally used in Thai. When addressing individuals of higher status than one's own, *tangshin* [당신] can be used in Korean and in Thai *khun* [คุณ] is the preferred term. In the indirect Thai translation of *ōmmarŭl put'ak'ae* multiple instances where *nŏ* was translated to *khun* and *tangshin* changed into *thoe* were discovered, thereby changing the honorific level used in these sentences (Park et al., 2015, p. 609). As with the earlier German-French example, the English "you" was once again lacking in conveying the proper information. Even when less honorific languages that still differentiate between formal and informal in certain cases, such as with the Dutch formal "u" and informal "jij" to indicate the singular second-person pronoun, are involved, only having "you" in the mediating text provides insufficient information. These errors alter the dynamics between characters, which hinders the author's message from reaching readers effectively.

In spite of these types of mistakes, ITrs have likewise been found to be more fluently and naturally written. Using Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) model, Hosseini (2021) evaluated two Persian translations of the Japanese novel *Kuroi Ame*⁶ [黒い雨] by Masuji Ibuse, one translated indirectly through the Russian translation and the other translated directly from Japanese. The comparison showed a distinction between the two versions in terms of what House describes as

⁶ All Japanese terms are italicised and written in following the Hepburn Romanization system. Names of people however, are not in italics and are romanised according to how the person themselves writes their name or the most common way the name is romanised. When there is no romanisation given for names, Hepburn Romanization is used.

“breaches of the target language system” (House, 2015, p. 33). This categorisation includes two types of cases, the first being instances of ungrammaticality, where the TT contains sentences which are grammatically incorrect. The second type are cases of dubious acceptability, i.e. words and sentences in the TT which are technically not wrong, but do feel awkward. Both of these are usually due to translating the ST too literally. Hosseini (2021) discovered that these types of errors, while few in number, were more prevalent in the DTr of *Kuroi Ame* (16), in comparison to the ITr (1) (p. 231). Hence, it is not unthinkable that readers unfamiliar with the original Japanese text, or to a larger extent the Japanese language and/or culture, would be inclined to prefer the indirect translation over the direct one (Hosseini, 2021, p. 232).

2.1.2.3 Additions and Omissions

When the source and target language and culture are far removed from one another, translators might employ strategies such as adding extra information to explain certain aspects of the story which might be unfamiliar to anyone with little or no knowledge of the language and/or culture the narrative originally took place in (Van Haute, 2019, p. 89). For example, a short mention of a person drinking at a bar in the Japanese district Shinjuku in Takashi Hiraide’s novel *neko no kyaku* [猫の客] was lengthened by the English translator with an explanation of Shinjuku as “one of the major entertainment districts in the city, its narrow labyrinthine alleys lined with numerous little drinking spots” (Hiraide, 2014, pp. 75–76). When this translation is then in turn used as a mediating text, this long explanation will most likely be copied or even expanded on in the TT, creating an even greater distance from the ST. Aside from additions, cultural adjustments or omissions made in the mediating text may be unnecessarily replicated in the TT as well. What might be a relevant adaptation for the mediating text’s audience could be irrelevant or even inappropriate for the TT’s intended readers (Ringmar, 2007, p. 11). Despite popular belief that when a text is translated, nothing is changed or left out, Anglophone translators tend to omit more than one might think, sometimes up to a quarter of the original text (Van Haute, 2019, p. 89). Motivations for not translating certain parts of a text include censorship, ethical reasons, and controversial topics, which are depended on culture and

language. Matters that are considered contentious by Anglophone readers might not be the same as the ones deemed problematic by readers from other cultures (Van Haute, 2019, p. 90). Therefore, a passage or sentence that was left out of an English translation might be included in other translations if they were made directly. However, when the English translation is used as mediating text, the TT translator has no way of knowing what was left out or added.

2.1.2.4 Varying Translation Strategies

Finally, differences in translation strategies can have a large impact. In general, ITrs tend to use (hyper)central languages as ML. Several studies have confirmed that as of late English has overtaken most other (hyper)central languages, such as French and German, as ML and often covers over half of indirect translations, whether it be in the world at large, Europe, or confined to one country or language pair (Allwood, 2021; Lindqvist, 2015; Marín-Lacarta, 2013; Pięta, 2012; Ringmar, 2015). The problem that arises here is that (hyper)central languages such as English tend to enforce their own literary traditions as well as culture in their translations, a process often referred to as 'domestication'. Venuti (1995) popularised the concepts of 'domestication' and 'foreignization' and while he considered these models as ethical attitudes towards a foreign text or culture, many view and use them as translation strategies. In this sense, domestication refers to a fluent translation in which many if not all foreign elements of the original text are neutralised. The opposite of domestication is foreignization, where the translation tends to be more 'literal', preserving foreign elements as they are and breaking away from the standard set by the target language and culture. On the one hand, these types of translations tend to be viewed as less fluent and more demanding of their audience. However, on the other hand, they are often culturally more accurate and maintain the uniqueness that characterises the literary traditions in which the text was originally written (Y. Kim, 2016, p. 40). While no translator fully employs either strategy in the entirety of their translation, there tends to be a dominating approach which not only depends on the translator but on the target language and culture as well. The aforementioned concerns of difference in grammar structure between languages as well as the tendency of adding or omitting information are often associated with more domesticating translation strategies.

As I've illustrated in the former paragraphs anglophone translation culture leans much more towards domesticating than foreignizing, which can present issues when such a domesticated English translation is used as mediating text. This is most clearly visible when ITr is used between languages and cultures more closely related to one another than the mediating language and culture. Once again taking the example of the Thai translation of *ǒmmarŭl put'ak'ae*, the English mediating text omitted or adjusted many aspects related to worldviews and traditional beliefs present in the Korean ST (Park et al., 2015, p. 614). Korean and Thai culture have overlapping concepts of certain types of rituals to be practiced during one's life. For example, when someone gets married in Korea the marital compatibility of the bride and groom is checked through a method called *kunghap* [궁합]. Even though the custom of checking *kunghap* has diminished over time, it is still a concept most Koreans are familiar with. Likewise, Thailand has a similar belief of checking one's compatibility before marriage called *duangsomphong* [ดวงสมพงษ์] or *duangsomphongnueakhu* [ดวงสมพงษ์เนื้อคู่]. However, this tradition being unfamiliar to the audience of the English translation, the English translator opted to instead use the, to the Anglophone reader more known, practice of checking one's horoscope. This in turn being an ritual Thai readers are unaccustomed with and not realising it was an adaptation of the Korean custom of checking marital compatibility similar to the Thai one, the Thai translator changed the term into the even more vague expression of 'destiny' (Park et al., 2015, p. 616).

Even when the original SL and eventual TL are just as far removed from one another as the ML is to the SL, the mere difference in translation culture between the MC and TC can have an influence on the TT. Peripheral and semi-peripheral languages have a tendency to employ more foreignizing strategies than domesticating ones. This means they will stay as close to the ST as possible. This can be exacerbated in the case of ITr as the TT translator might want to avoid even further distancing the text from the ST by rendering the mediating text as faithfully as possible (Špirk, 2014, p. 127). However, when this mediating text is already heavily adjusted, it is nearly impossible for the TT to not stray from the original ST, effectively turning the TT into a translation of the mediating text instead of the ST.

In conclusion, in spite of its long history, ITr is a relatively understudied subject within academia. Notwithstanding the recent surge in research pointing out the potential positive effects of ITr, they are predisposed to several potential problems. These have been discussed in general (Ringmar, 2007) as well as focussed on specific language pairs such as Chinese-Spanish (Marín-Lacarta, 2013), Korean-Thai (Park et al., 2015), and Japanese-Persian (Hosseini, 2021). Be that as it may, the Korean-Dutch language pair is as of yet unrepresented, and will be the focus of this thesis. This brings me to the next section, Korean literature in translation.

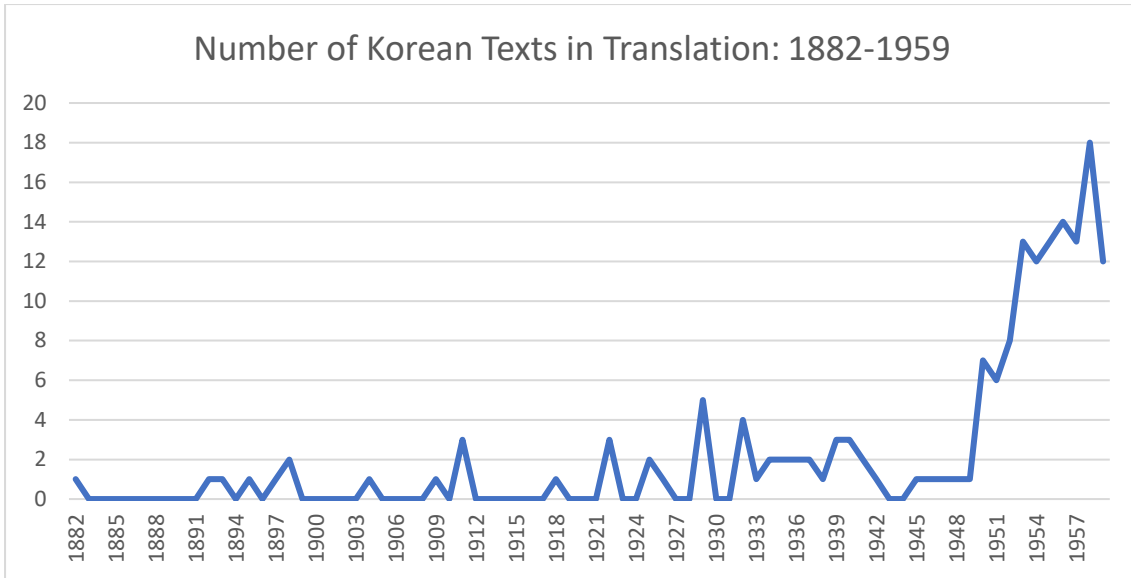
2.2 Korean Literature in Translation

Ever since the Japanese author Kawabata Yasunari won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1968, Korea has set its sights to achieving this feat as well (Halbert, 2024, p. 112). This has resulted in the active support and funding of translations of Korean literature by corporations and non-profit organisations, such as the Daesan Foundation, as well as the Korean government, in the hopes of attracting international attention (Levitt & Shim, 2022, p. 1). Since the turn of the century this support has slowly but surely bore fruit, gaining momentum in the second half of the 2010s, eventually leading, to the Korean writer Han Kang accepting the Nobel Prize in 2024. This accomplishment, while slightly unexpected even to those who had dedicated multiple resources into achieving it, was partly made possible through efforts spanning decades.

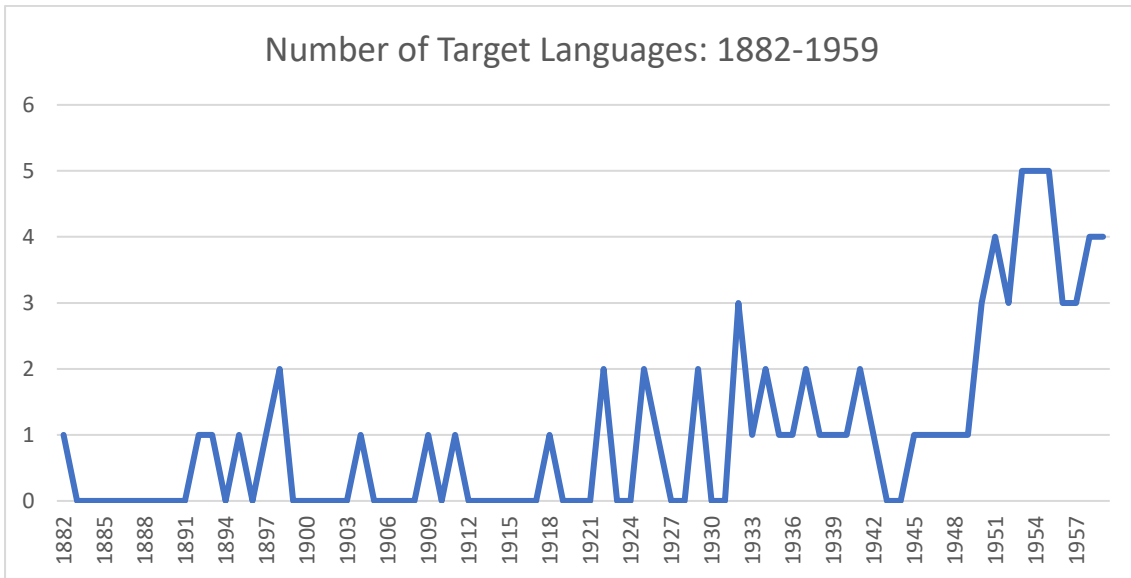
2.2.1 A Brief History

2.2.1.1 Before 1960

Korean texts began to gain the interest of translators during the late 1800, when Korea attentively opened its doors to the rest of the world, with a total of seven translations being produced between 1880 and 1900; two in English, two in French, one in German and two in Russian. Throughout the first half of the 20th century, translations were limited to these four languages with Japanese joining in 1929 and Chinese and Czech translations being produced since 1932 (Graph 2). The 1950s saw a noticeable increase in the number of translations, which went from an average of one translation per year to eleven (Graph 1).



Graph 1⁷: Korean texts in translation 1882-1959

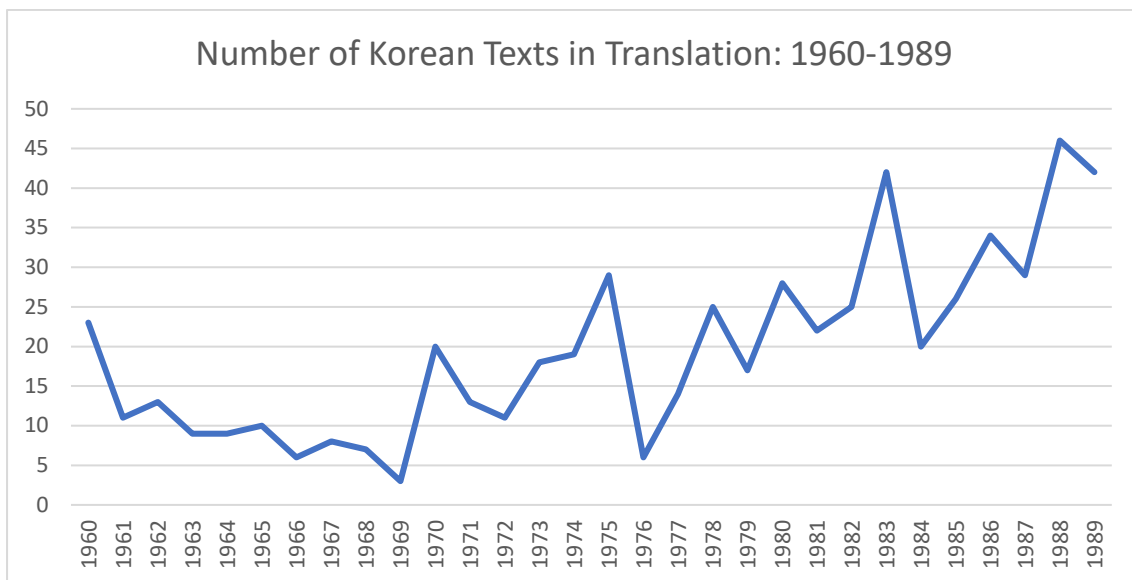


Graph 2: TLs 1882-1959

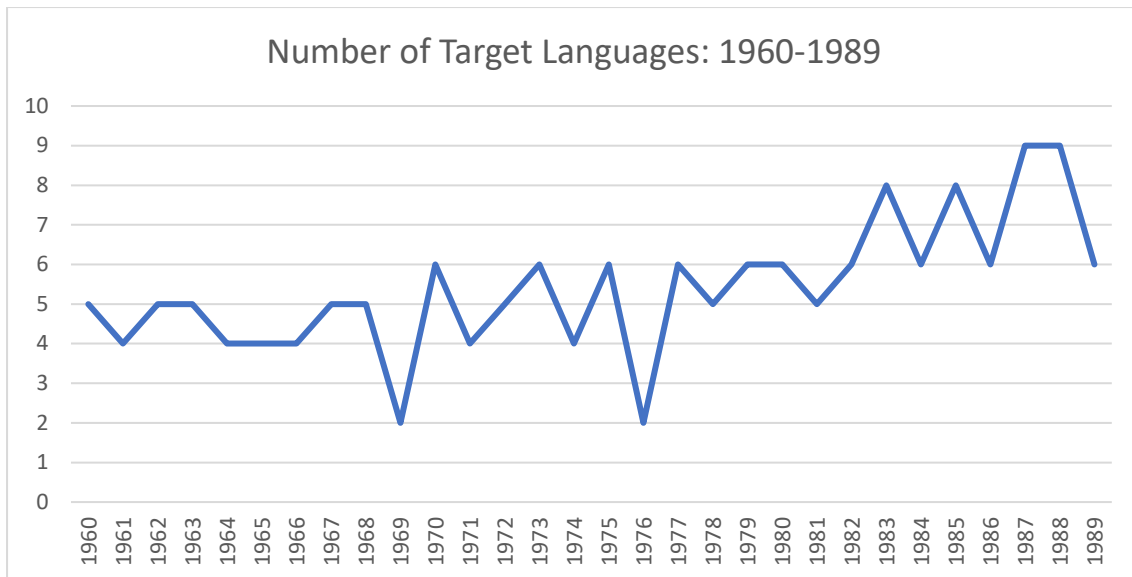
⁷ The numbers presented in this and the following graphs were gathered through the Digital Library of Korean Literature (accessed 23/05/2025) compiled by the Literature Translation Institute of Korea. It should be noted that, while extensive, this database is incomplete and contains mistakes such as works being included multiple times. As thoroughly analysing, completing and correcting this database was beyond the scope of this thesis, the presented numbers are the ones found in the database without being checked for errors. Therefore, this data should be considered from a generalised perspective, instead of a detailed one.

2.2.1.2 1960-1989

Throughout the next few decades the average amount of translations per year steadily increased from 10 in the 1960s to 17 in the 1970s to 31 in the 1980s (Graph 3). This was partly established through the additions of more TLs with Slovak and Norwegian joining in the 60s, Polish and Swedish translations being made starting from the 70s, and Spanish, Malay, and Portuguese being added in the 80s (Graph 4). However, this general increase was mostly due to the rapid growth of English and Japanese translations, which totalled in 197 and 145 respectively throughout this 30 year period, compared to the 8 and 14 translations produced the 30 years before that.



Graph 3: Korean texts in translation 1960-1989



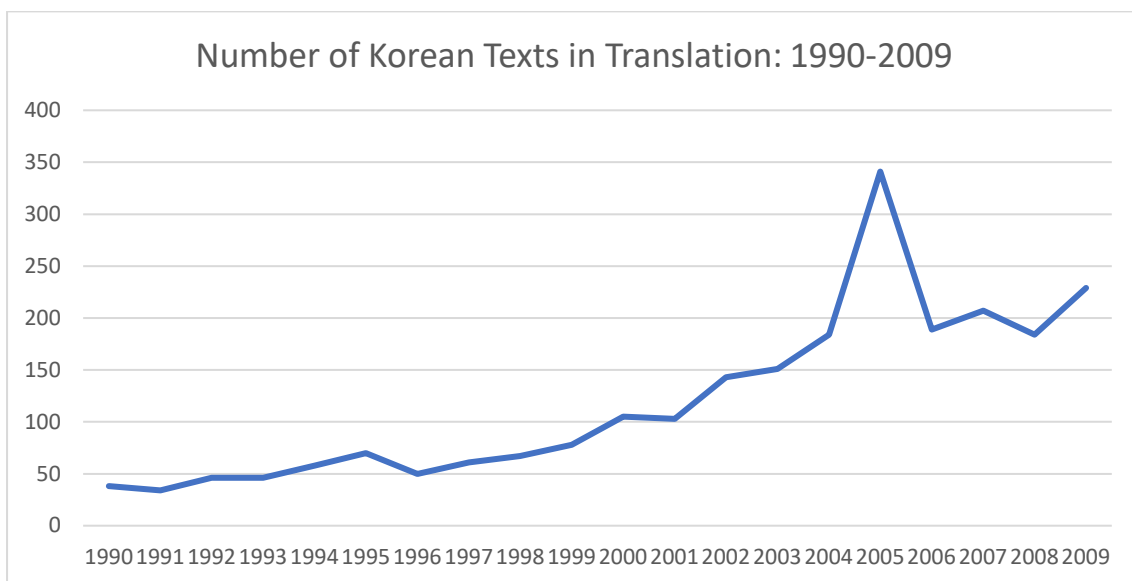
Graph 4: TLs 1960-1989

In spite of the large number of English translations, about half of these were produced by Korean publishing houses and were rarely distributed outside the country's borders, making it difficult to judge how much of this modern Korean literature was actively accepted by non-Korean readers (Yoo et al., 2023, pp. 14–15).

2.2.1.3 1990-2009

It was during the early 1990's that Korea noticed the power of entertainment and culture when Korean pop music and television dramas garnered success in neighbouring countries, marking the beginning of what we now know to be 'The Korean Wave' or '*Hallyu*' (Jin, 2023, pp. 17–18). This encouraged the Korean government and other private Korean organisations to capitalise on this success by actively supporting and funding culture-related industries (Jin, 2023, pp. 18–19). Despite Korean literature technically not being considered part of the this early *Hallyu*-stage, it did benefit from the attention culture-related industries gained throughout this period. 1993 marked the birth of the Daesan Foundation, supporting translations of Korean literature through awards. A few years later, in 1996, the Korean Literature Translation Fund, which would later be renamed to the Literature Translation Institute of Korea (LTI), was founded by the Korean government with the goal of sponsoring the translation and publication of Korean works through grants

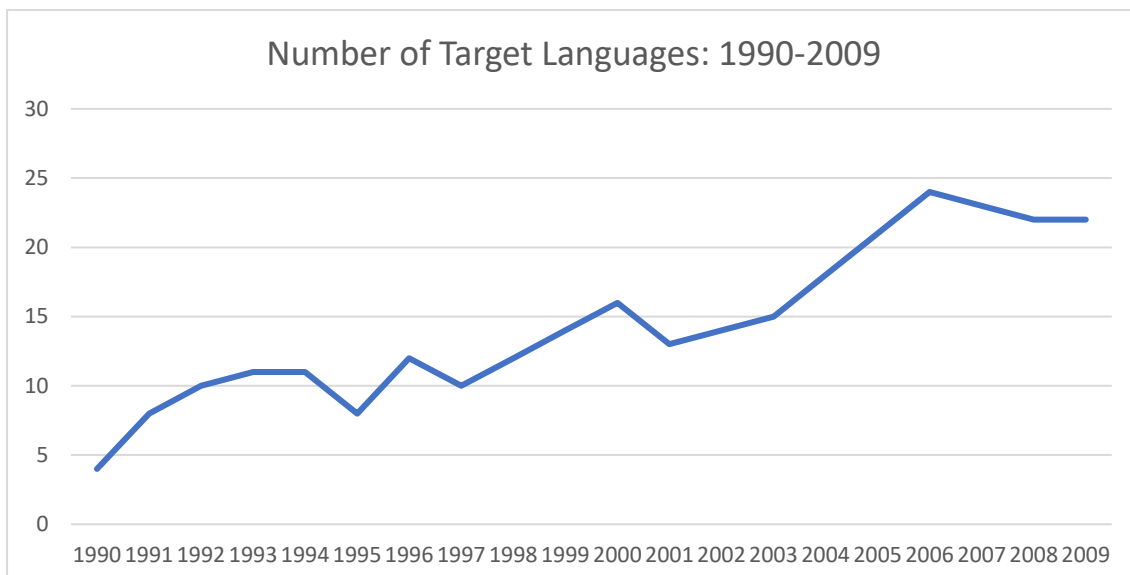
and programs (Jeong, 2015, p. 216). The average amount of translations per year more than tripled from 55 in the 1990s to 184 in the 2000s, partly thanks to the sponsoring of the LTI, which accounted for about 43 (30%) translations produced each year during this period (Graph 5 & Graph 6). Moreover, the addition of the TLs Esperanto, Italian, Vietnamese, Dutch, Mongolian, Urdu, Bulgarian, and Hindi in the 1990s as well as Hebrew, Greek, Romanian, Turkish, Thai, Hungarian, Croatian, Serbian, Arabic, Lithuanian, Basque, Ukrainian, Albanian, Indonesian, and Persian in the 2000s caused the average amount of TLs per year to steadily increase from 10 in the 90s to 19 in the 00s (Graph 7).



Graph 5: Korean texts in translation 1990-2009



Graph 6: Korean texts in translation sponsored by LTI 1996-2009



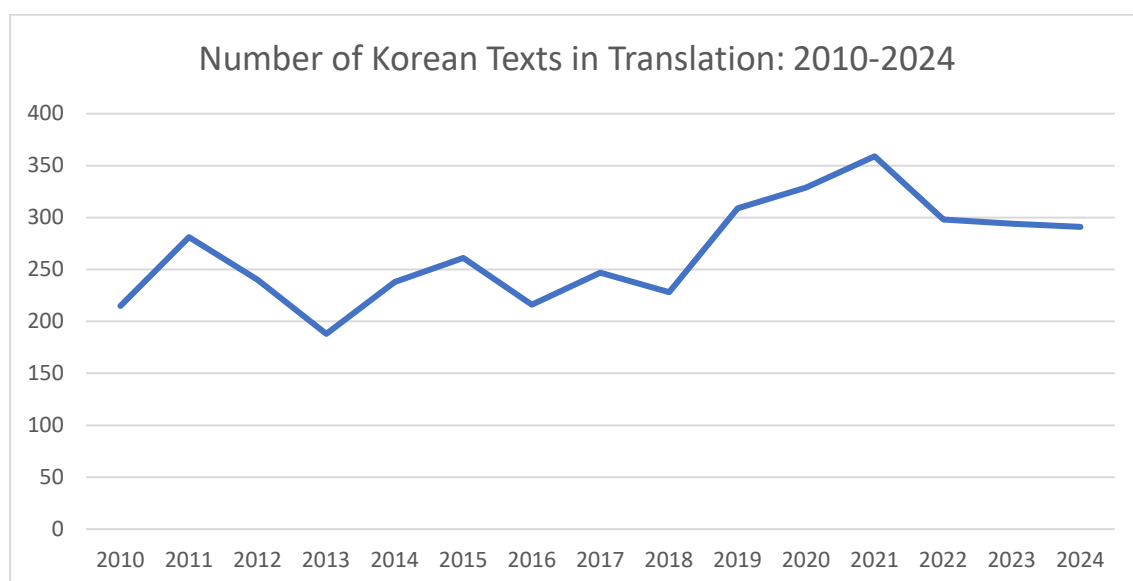
Graph 7: TLs 1990-2009

It should be noted that up until the 2000s many translations of Korean texts were made by native Koreans instead of native speakers of the TL, which is generally the case in the translation industry (King, 2020, p. 28). Translations produced by a team of two translators, one native Korean speaker and one native TL speaker, were also common (King, 2020, p. 26). According to Ross King (2020), this high presence of Korean natives translating into a non-native language, i.e. their L2, could be attributed to several factors, including the lack of support provided to institutions outside of Korea focussing on teaching high level Korean as well as translation of

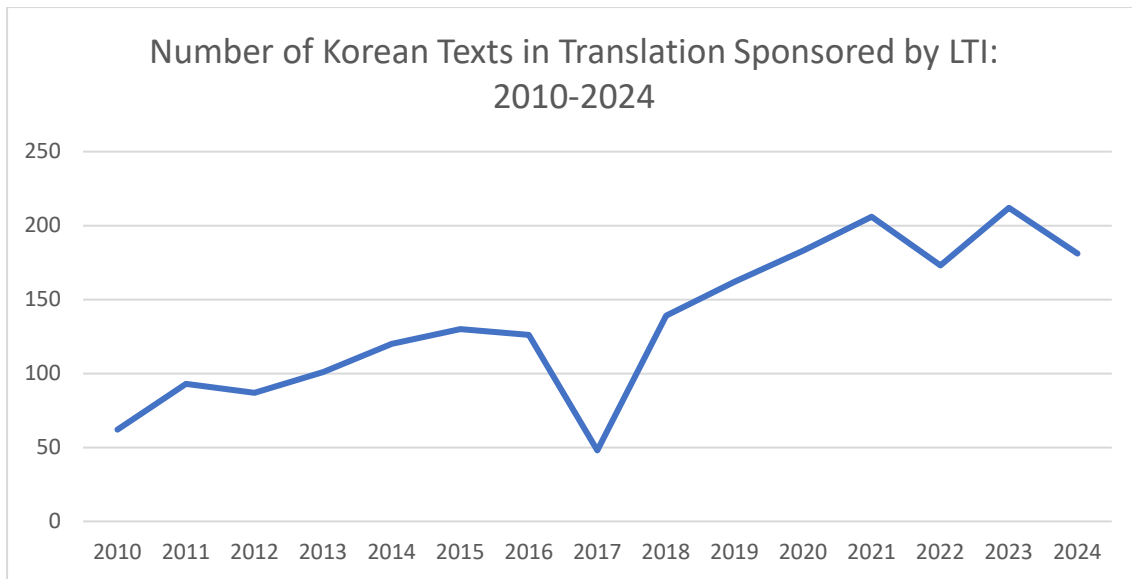
Korean texts specifically. Additionally, there seems to be a general belief in Korea that non-native speakers of the Korean language would simply never be able to understand Korean literature on a deeper level, making them, according to those supporting this believe, inadequate translators (King, 2020, p. 27). This ‘native speaker tyranny’, while lessened, has persisted into the 21st century.

2.2.1.4 2010-2024

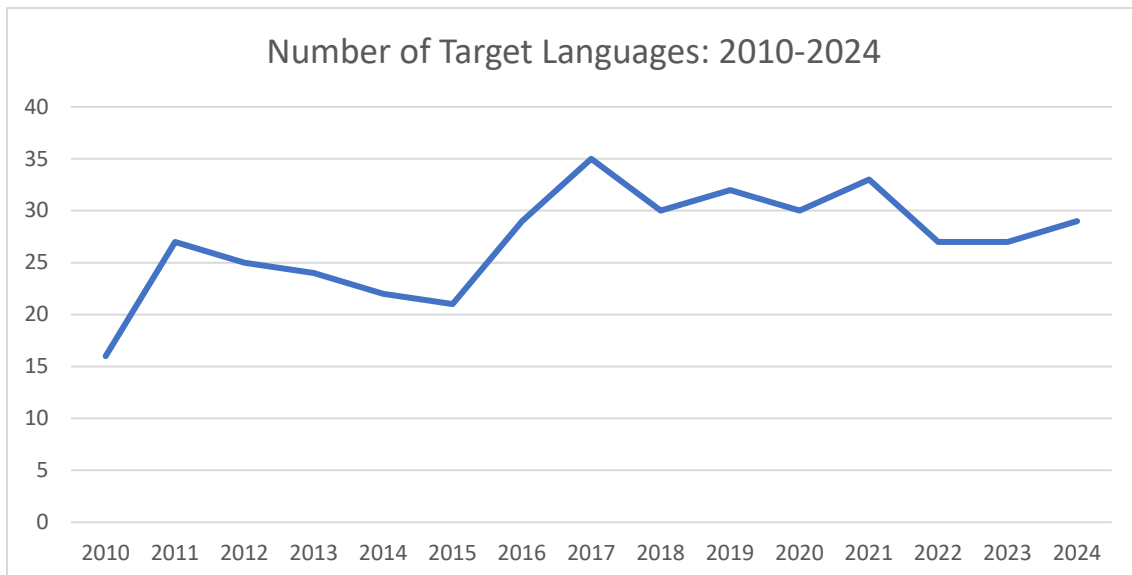
The accumulated efforts of the past decades to turn Korean literature into ‘world literature’ began to show apparent results in the 2010s. The first of these came with the success of Kyung-Sook Shin’s 2010 novel *ǒmmarŭl put’ak’ae*, which to this date has been translated in over 30 languages. This was followed by Han Kang’s 2007 novel *ch’aesikjuŭija* gaining the interest of an international audience through Deborah Smith’s 2015 English translation of the book. The average amount of translations per year continued to grow from 242 in the 2010s to 314 in the first half of the 2020s (Graph 8). This went hand in hand with increasing LTI support accounting for about 107 (44%) and 191 (61%) translations each year in the 10s and first half of the 20s respectively (Graph 9). 14 more TLs were added throughout this 15-year period – Estonian, Slovenian, Uzbek, Finnish, Azerbaijani, Sinhala, Bengali, Catalan, Danish, Georgian, Icelandic, Amharic, Bosnian, and Galician – aiding in increasing the average amount of TLs per year to 27 (Graph 10).



Graph 8: Korean texts in translation 2010-2024



Graph 9: Korean texts in translation sponsored by LTI 2010-2024

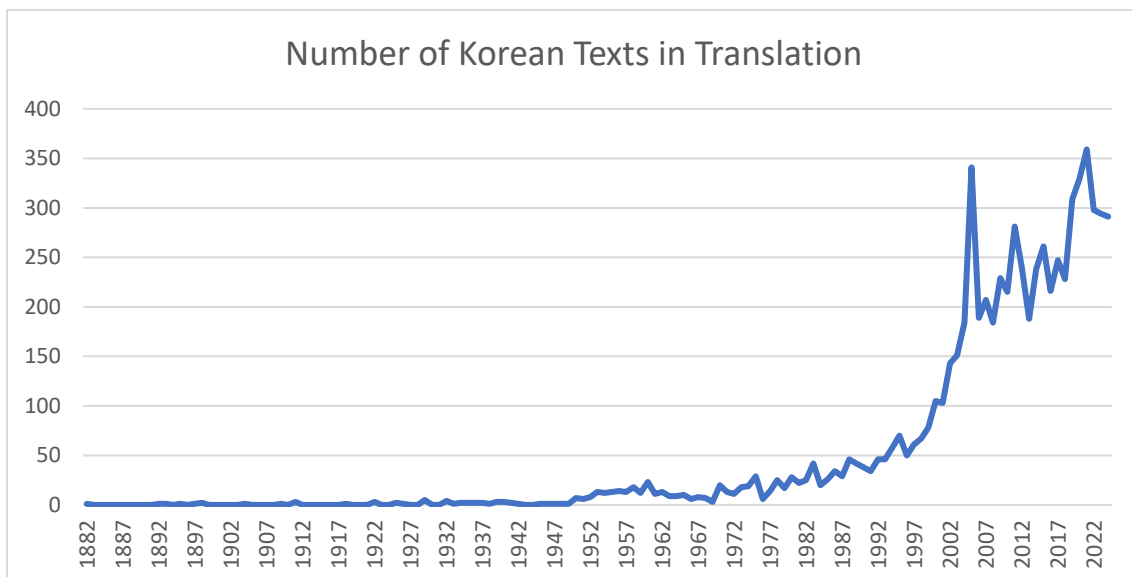


Graph 10: TLs 2010-2024

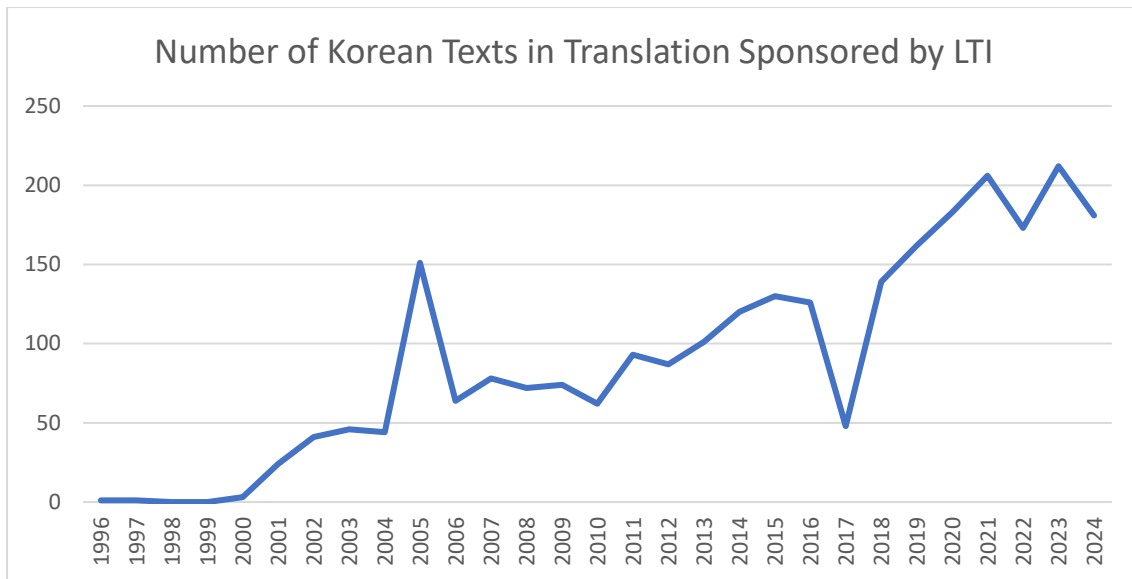
Since the turn of the century, critics and scholars studying Korean literature in translation (who are often translators themselves) seem to have caught up on the importance of (near)-native understanding of the TL. This has caused a shift to a preference in bilingual translators with Korean heritage, i.e. first or second generation Korean diaspora (Lee-Lenfield, 2024, pp. 1–3). Additionally, many of the current Korean language literary translators are relatively young and come from much more diverse backgrounds compared to those of the previous century. Where previously translations were produced by predominantly male professors of Korean

or Caucasian decent, nowadays people of various genders and ethnic backgrounds, oftentimes having received no formal education on the traditional Korean literary canon, are also participating. This, in turn, has resulted in a more diverse selection of what works are deemed worthy of translation (Halbert, 2024, pp. 133–134).

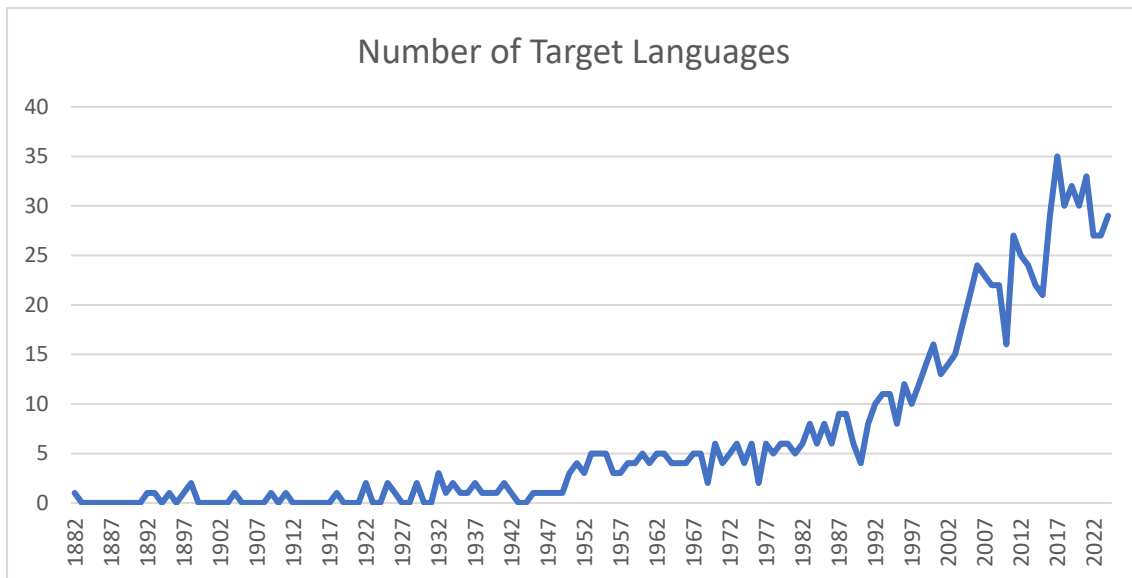
Hitherto over 7000 translations of Korean works have been produced in more than 50 different languages. English takes the lead with most translations (1400), followed by Japanese (1298), Chinese (1178), French (642), and German (529). According to the 2024 Annual Report published by the LTI, the institute up to now has sponsored 2210 translations in 44 languages (Literature Translation Institute of Korea, 2025, p. 2).



Graph 11: Korean texts in translation 1882-2024



Graph 12: Korean texts in translation sponsored by LTI 1996-2024



Graph 13: TLs 1882-2024

2.2.2 Research on Korean Literature in Translation

Due to the Koreans' desire to globalise Korean literature, its translation has been a popular topic amongst Korean scholars for decades. Multiple aspects have already been discussed in academic research, including globalisation (Jeong, 2015; S. K. Kim, 1999), the acceptance and circulation of Korean literature outside of Korea (Choi, 2017), and translation approaches and perspectives (J. Lee, 2018a). Additionally, multiple attempts at creating a bibliography or database of Korean

literature in translation to facilitate research have been made, with the most extensive and up to date one being the database first compiled by the LTI and Yonsei University in 2004. This became the foundation of the “Translated Books” catalogue which can be found on the Digital Library of Korean Literature website. Despite the fact that this archive contains some errors, it is frequently updated to include new/newly found translations of Korean texts. Therefore, it is adequate enough for those needing a general overview in order to identify the scale of Korean literature in translation.

English-language research surrounding the translation of Korean literature, while certainly present, is rather scarce compared to those written in Korean. The majority of these cover similar topics as the Korean papers, focussing on the distribution of Korean literature worldwide (S.-E. Cho, 2015) and translation strategies (Oh et al., 2016).

Most research, disregarding the language it is published in, tends to focus solely on translations into English, occasionally covering other central languages such as French or German. The many additional languages Korean literature has been translated into are rarely considered. Even analyses of databases either focus on one (central) language or on translations supported by institutions such as the LTI. Additionally, the existence of indirect translations of Korean literature is hardly ever mentioned.

Despite Koreans’ support of translation, with the intention of reaching international audiences, there seems to be a tendency to criticise it, especially when the translator has no Korean heritage. While this type of criticism is no new development (King, 2020, p. 28), it skyrocketed in the second half of the 2010s due to the popularity of the ‘controversial’ English translation of Han Kang’s *ch’aesikjuŭija* by Deborah Smith. Within three years of *The vegetarian*’s publication, it became the subject of no less than 16 Korean academic papers, most, if not all, of them regarding the translation unfavourably (H. Lee, 2018, p. 189).

2.2.3 *ch'aesikjuŭija* – *The vegetarian* – *De vegetariër*

When the English translation of the Korean novel *ch'aesikjuŭija* by Han Kang was published in 2015, it took the world by storm. The translator, Deborah Smith, was immediately praised for her “subtle translation” (Pascal, 2015), and how “[s]he inhabits the prose’s terrible serenity and glacial horror — the translator’s hand never overwhelms or underperforms. Both lithe and sharp, syntax and diction never become mechanical and obtuse the way bad translations often render something ‘foreign.’” (Khakpour, 2016). All this praise accumulated in the novel being awarded the Man Booker International prize in May 2016 accompanied by the words “Deborah Smith’s perfectly judged translation matches its uncanny blend of beauty and horror at every turn” spoken by Boyd Tonkin, chair of the award’s judges (Flood, 2016). The joy of winning such an important international prize naturally led to compliments being awarded to Smith’s translation in Korea as well, calling it “a good example to use as a textbook for those studying translation⁸” (Pak, 2016).

Recognising the potential of *The vegetarian* even before its official English-language publication on 1st January 2015, the Dutch publisher Nijgh & Van Ditmar immediately ordered a Dutch translation of the book in the same year. However, at the time, practically no Korean-Dutch literary translators existed, this being an unusual language pair. Therefore, Nijgh & Van Ditmar instead opted to employ an ITr-method, using the first edition of the English translation of the book made by Deborah Smith as the mediating text and giving it to Monique Eggermont, an English-Dutch literary translator with over two decades of experience under her belt (Muus, 2016). At first glance, with the amount of critical acclaim Smith’s translation was receiving, this seemed to have been the right call. However, when the excitement of winning the Man Booker International prize died down, Korean translators and translation study scholars alike finally sat down to actually compare and review Deborah Smith’s *The vegetarian* and Han Kang’s *ch'aesikjuŭija* (I. Lee, 2017, p. 174). Starting from the second half of 2016, several academic papers and newspaper articles have appeared, pointing out how the once applauded translation in fact exhibited various issues.

⁸ Own translation of *pŏnyŏkŭl kongbuanŭn saramdŭri t'eksŭt'ŭbukŭro sayonghaedo choŭl mobŏm* [번역을 공부하는 사람들이 텍스트북으로 사용해도 좋을 모범]

First and foremost, *The vegetarian* was critiqued for being too domesticated, losing the unique characteristics that make it Korean (Y. Kim, 2016, p. 50) and leading to a very different version of the book compared to the original (K. S. Lee, 2016, p. 307). In the Anglophone translation culture, domesticating strategies prevail, often leading to reader-centred and functionalist approaches when translating. This mentality is clearly shared by Smith, evidently stated in her following words:

In my opinion – and this is an opinion shared by the vast majority of Anglophone translators, i.e. those who translate into English and also, crucially, are based in the Anglophone world – ‘faithfulness’ is an outmoded, misleading and unhelpful concept when it comes to translation. The single thing my editor advised me to do when I was working on *The Vegetarian* was “take more liberties!” and I was incredibly lucky to be working with an author, Han Kang, who believes that translation can be as much of an art as creative writing – though of course, they’re not the same. You have to try and capture as much as possible of the original in terms of rhythm, register etc, but what you’re ultimately being faithful to is the artistry and quality of the original. If you’re translating a great work of Korean literature, then your translation has to be a great work of English literature, and there’s no use quibbling over syntax if that’s only going to be hindrance. The translation which is most ‘faithful’ to the original in terms of word choice, syntax etc is highly unlikely to be sufficiently ‘faithful’ to the experience of its original reading public – i.e. the experience of reading great literature. English and Korean are just too far apart for that. (Montgomery, 2014).

In other words, Smith views translating as ‘creatively rewriting’ a story with the aim of faithfully replicating the literary impression and effect the original has on its readers. Even if this means adding, omitting, paraphrasing, or adjusting elements of the story such as syntax and paragraph structure. Therefore, according to Smith, an English translation should not read as a translation but as a piece of English literature. In terms of readability directed at an Anglophone audience, Smith certainly achieved this goal, as evidenced by the heaps of praise her translation received in the early days. However, when it comes to attaining a similar effect *ch'aesikjuŭija* has on

Korean readers, it seems she might have failed. In a study focussing on reader response to Han Kang's *ch'aesikjuŭija* and Deborah Smith's *The vegetarian* it was discovered that certain relationships between characters were interpreted differently by Korean readers versus English readers (J. Lee, 2018b, p. 178). However, the same study also revealed that translating too close to the ST can likewise have the undesirable effect of changing readers' understanding of the story (J. Lee, 2018b, p. 179). This demonstrates the difficult balance between staying as close to the ST as possible while maintaining readability and the desired interpretation of a text, which translators grapple with every day. Even Smith, who prioritised the latter by sacrificing the former, did not fully achieve her goal.

In the Korean translation climate, there is a strong tendency to respect the ST. In other words, Korean translators lean much more towards foreignization, sometimes even to the detriment of the readability of the TT. It is therefore not unnatural for Korean scholars to shun the domesticated approach used by Smith. Nonetheless, considering the fact that translation is only possible with the existence of a ST, there seems to be a natural ethical requirement to respect the ST, at minimum to a certain degree. Smith's translation has been criticised for distorting and damaging the original too much, where separation from the ST does not happen 'inevitably' in order to maintain the feeling of the ST, but occurs 'habitually' at the convenience of the ST without any specific standards (I. Lee, 2017, pp. 190–191).

Domestication aside, upon closer examination it was found that Deborah Smith's *The vegetarian* was rife with mistranslations that could not be simply written off as taking a 'creative' or 'liberal' translation approach (J.-R. Cho, 2017; D.-J. Kim, 2016; W.-D. Kim, 2018; I. Lee, 2017). One research paper presented at a conference at Ewha Women's University in Korea stated that even solely in the first section of the book the amount of mistranslation was found to be over 10% (H. Kim, 2016). While mistranslations can be considered an inevitable part of the translation process, in Smith's case, the amount seems to be far more than what can be expected of a professional translator (I. Lee, 2017, pp. 192–193). In fact, it has even been stated that Smith's domesticating approach, which is characterized by a seemingly excessive use of omission, might have partly been motivated by her lack of knowledge of the Korean language (W.-D. Kim, 2018, p. 72).

There are multiple instances where Smith seems to have been confused about the meaning of certain words, often mistaking them for similar sounding words or even interpreting them as their exact opposite. Smith even missteps translating some of the most basic Korean vocabulary as shown in the example below.

munt'ökŭl nŏmja p'arŭl twiro ppödö choyonghi munŭl tadatta. [문턱을

넘자 팔을 뒤로 뺀어 조용히 문을 닫았다.] (78; own emphasis)

As she entered the room she stretched out **her foot** and calmly pushed the door to. (77; own emphasis)

Here the word for arm (*p'al* 팔) is confused for foot (*pal* 발)⁹. While a seemingly small slip-up, it is not an isolated occurrence and it does alter the image created in this scene and several others, possibly changing readers' responses to the story. Other vocabulary mistakes seem to stem from a mix-up between homonyms, when two words are written the same but have different meanings. Examples include the translation of *kyönggi* [경기(驚氣)] (convulsions) as “game” (*kyönggi* [경기(競技)])¹⁰, and *pit* [빛] (colour) as “light” (*pit* [빛])¹¹.

Aside from inaccuracies when translating certain words, Smith seems to grapple with correctly interpreting certain Korean grammar structures, especially when it comes to identifying the omitted subject (J.-R. Cho, 2017, pp. 14–16). The Korean language characterises itself with grammar structures far removed from English grammar, containing many suffixes and endings and a tendency to leave out the subject of a sentence more often than not when these are the first- or second-person. Naturally, in English the subject cannot simply be excluded, tasking Korean-English translators with correctly inferring this from context when translating. Smith, with her apparently lacking command of the Korean language, repeatedly failed this challenge during the time she worked on *The vegetarian*, as can be seen in the example below.

⁹ Example taken from (W.-D. Kim, 2018, p. 68)

¹⁰ Example taken from (I. Lee, 2017, p. 193)

¹¹ Example taken from (W.-D. Kim, 2018, p. 70)

*mach'i naengjanggoga innŭn charie nae nune an poinŭn sarami -hokŭn
kwishinirado- pŏt'igo innŭn kŏt kat'atta. [마치 냉장고가 있는 자리에 내
눈에 안 보이는 사람이 -혹은 귀신이라도- 버티고 있는 것 같았다.] (58)*

Her face was turned away from me, and she was standing there so unnaturally still it was almost as if she were some kind of ghost, silently standing its ground. (57)

Smith translated the above sentence with the female character 'she' as the subject of the sentence, as if 'she' were a ghost. However, in the ST it is implied that 'she', who is standing in front of the refrigerator, is not the ghost, but it seems like 'she' is looking at the refrigerator as if a ghost is standing in the same spot as the fridge¹².

Smith's *The vegetarian* counts plenty more errors such as the ones described above when compared to the ST. Therefore, when her translation is used as a mediating text for an ITr, these inaccuracies are likely to be reproduced in subsequent translations with no way of correcting them unless one also looks at the original ST. As mentioned before, in the case of the Dutch version of *ch'aesikjuŭija*, the translator, Monique Eggermont, had no knowledge of the Korean language, hence had no idea when mistranslations had occurred in Smith's *The vegetarian*. As a matter of fact, the editions of *The vegetarian* which have been published since 2018 contain amendments, effectively admitting the presence of mistakes in the previous version of Smith's translation. Eggermont's *De vegetariër*, however, has not been updated since its first translation, meaning that if any mistranslations were carried over into the Dutch version, they are still present in editions currently being printed.

¹² Example taken from (I. Lee, 2017, pp. 193–194)

Chapter 3. Methodology

Ch'aesikjuŭija by Han Kang was first published as a novel in Korea in October 2007 by Changbi Publishers. The book consists of three short stories: *ch'aesikjuŭija*, *monggobanjŏm* [몽고반점], and *namu pulkkot* [나무 불꽃]. For this case study only the first 14 pages of the first story were taken into consideration due to time constraints as well as a limited number of words allowed for this thesis.

Ch'aesikjuŭija tells the story of a woman who one day, after having a nightmare, chooses to become a vegetarian, a decision which has shocking consequences for her personal life and that of her family members.

Ch'aesikjuŭija was selected as a case study for this thesis due to its controversial English translation, which formed the basis of the Dutch version. This allows for a detailed study on how a translation can be affected by a mediating text when indirect translation (ITr) is involved. As previously mentioned, the English translation added, omitted and paraphrased many aspects of the story while also containing mistranslations. By comparing my self-produced direct Dutch translation of the first 14 pages of *ch'aesikjuŭija* to Eggermont's indirectly produced version, the consequences of using ITr can be analysed.

The versions of the novel used in this case study are as follows. For the Korean source text (ST) the first edition of *ch'aesikjuŭija: han kang changp'yŏn sosŏl* is used. The fifteenth edition, printed in 2024, of *De vegetariër*, translated from English by Monique Eggermont in 2015, is the Dutch version applied in this analysis. Deborah Smith's *The vegetarian*, which was utilised as mediating text by Eggermont and is employed in the current case study, is the first edition printed in the UK in 2015.

3.1 Categorisation

"How do we know when a translation is good?" This valid question has prompted scholars and critics alike to develop multiple models to evaluate the quality of translations. One of the most well-known and used methods in this regard is Juliana House's Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) model. In this model House distinguishes two main categories of translation errors: covert and overt. Covert translation errors are seen as mismatches between the ST and target text (TT) in

terms of functionality, while overt translation errors are deemed to be non-functional discrepancies. The latter can be divided up into further subcategories: (1) not translated; (2) slight change in meaning; (3) significant change in meaning; (4) distortion of meaning; (5) breach of the source-language system; (6) creative translation; and (7) cultural filtering (W.-D. Kim, 2018, p. 67). In his assessment of the quality of Deborah Smith's *The vegetarian* as a translation, W.-D. Kim (2018) rephrased these overt errors in terms of type of mistranslation rather than its severity. He created a categorisation system consisting of five subdivisions: (1) vocabulary errors; (2) homonymy errors; (3) undertranslation and overtranslation; (4) errors made on the syntactic level; and (5) words or phrases charged with culturally specific features (W.-D. Kim, 2018, p. 67). As the aim of my case study is not to evaluate the quality of the official Dutch translation of *ch'aesikjuŭija*, but rather to examine the effect Smith's *The vegetarian* has had on this translation, I have slightly adjusted W.-D. Kim's classifications to fit these needs. Therefore, the following labels are used in the analysis: (1) omission; (2) addition; (3) vocabulary differences; (4) syntactic differences; and (5) differences in the translation of culturally specific words or phrases.

The label 'omission' was given whenever a word, phrase or sentence which I had translated in my direct translation (DTr) was missing in Eggermont's version.

The opposite, i.e. when Eggermont added a word, phrase or sentence where I had not, was coded as 'addition'.

I have defined 'vocabulary differences' as instances where Eggermont and I used visibly different words to translate the same passage. These differences were grouped into 'interpretation', 'possible mistranslations', and 'other'. The first category contained the type of variation where despite Eggermont and I using different words, these were closely related to one another, suggesting that the variation might be due to a slight divergence in interpretation of the ST rather than a conscious decision to change the choice of words. The second subsection contained more noticeable discrepancies where Eggermont's version seems to contain translations of not the word used in the ST, but oftentimes those of similarly sounding Korean words with different meanings. The final category included differences on word level which were too dissimilar to be considered interpretation differences, but also did not seem to be rooted in possible mistranslations.

The 'syntactic differences' were those where Eggermont's translation and my version diverged in terms of grammar. This category was divided into five sub-categories. The first, 'sentence division and order', focusses on Eggermont and I using altered approaches when splitting and combining sentences as well as changing the order of subsections within sentences. The second, 'subject', concentrates on Eggermont and I using a different grammatical subject in certain sentences. The third, 'tense', was used to label cases where Eggermont and I translated the same sentence using different grammatical tenses. The fourth, 'interpretation', is similar to the 'interpretation' sub-category in the 'vocabulary differences', but focused on grammar instead of words. The fifth subsection, 'other', contains the remaining obvious differences on a syntactic level which did not fit into the other categories. The final label, 'differences in the translation of culturally specific words or phrases', was used whenever Eggermont and I used different approaches in translating Korean culture for a Dutch audience. When Eggermont deleted a culturally charged word or phrase which I had kept in my translation, it was marked as 'omission', and when Eggermont's version added extra explanations where I had not, they were regarded as 'addition'. The instances where Eggermont and I both translated a culturally specific word or phrase, but used different vocabulary or grammar, they were categorised as 'vocabulary differences' and 'syntactic differences' respectively.

3.2 Workflow

There are multiple ways to research ITrs in literature. Marín-Lacarta (2017) suggests translation comparisons and interviews as the main methodologies, the former of which will be applied in this thesis. Comparing a TT with its corresponding mediating text and ST allows us to identify the effects the ITr-method can have on a TT (Marín-Lacarta, 2017, p. 142). This influence is even more apparent when two TTs, one made using a mediating text and one directly translated from the ST, are put side by side.

The analysis presented in this thesis consisted of several steps. First, I read all three short stories presented in *ch'aesikjuŭija: han kang changp'yŏn sosŏl* in order to acquire a full understanding of the novel as a whole, the characters and the themes central to the story. I deliberately stayed away as much as possible from both the

English and the Dutch translations with the intention of not being influenced by them before making my own translation.¹³ Following this read-through, I translated the first five 'parts', i.e. the first 14 pages, of the titular story into Dutch¹⁴, sharing them with a small group of proofreaders for feedback. This group consisted of four people, all Dutch native speakers¹⁵, with two of them not knowing any Korean and the other two having acquired (near) native proficiency of the language, one of whom has lived and worked in Korea for the past five years as a translator, albeit in the business world rather than the literary one. After gathering feedback, I revised my translation and added it to an Excel file already containing the corresponding parts of the Han Kang's Korean ST as well as Eggermonts Dutch Translation. I singled out each sentence so that its content in all three texts more or less matched, putting them next to one another to form one 'line'. Having both Dutch versions side by side allowed me to more clearly identify the differences between them, and I labelled each line with none, one, or multiple of the aforementioned categorisations. Both a qualitative and a quantitative analysis were made, displaying the overall frequency of each category as well as a judgement of the impact of each difference between my version and Eggermont's. Following this analysis, the corresponding parts of Deborah Smith's *The vegetarian* were added to the document in order to assess whether or not the differences between my translation and Eggermont's were the result of using Smith's translation as a mediating text.

¹³ Logically, as I was doing research for this thesis at the same time as reading *ch'aesikjuŭija* it was impossible to not come across the occasional English or Dutch translation. Nevertheless, I did not pick up either translation after starting on my own, leaving the translations I had encountered as fragmented pieces rather than a full story.

¹⁴ As I myself am originally from Belgium, I considered translating into Belgian Dutch, i.e. Flemish. However, for the purpose of this thesis, where I would be comparing my translation with one made by someone from the Netherlands, I eventually opted to take a more neutral approach, not using any Flemish but also not purposefully using words only used in the Netherlands.

¹⁵ Two are from Belgium and two are from the Netherlands.

Chapter 4. Results and Discussion

The results of the analysis are discussed as follows. First, the results of a surface level analysis will be presented, followed by a more in-depth analysis. The discussion of the in-depth analysis is organised according to the categories which were used to label the differences between my translation and Eggermont's. For each category the sub-categories are described together with examples, followed by a presentation of how much of these differences can be attributed to the mediating text.

4.1 Surface Level Analysis

A total of 242 ST sentences were translated, amounting to roughly 22% of the first story. My translation of this part counts 250 sentences. The Korean language allows for much longer sentences than Dutch, forcing me to split up certain phrases lest they be too long. Therefore, the fact that my version counts eight more sentences than the source text (ST) is not unusual. However, Eggermont's translation only counts 229 sentences, the same as Smith's version. This, together with the almost identical use of punctuation, already showcases the fact that Eggermont most likely stayed as close to the mediating text as possible. Therefore, any omissions, additions, and 'free' translation introduced by Smith in her version of *ch'aesikjuŭija* are expected to re-occur in Eggermont's *De vegetariër*. Further analysis will prove these assumptions to be true or not.

A second surface-level observation is the clear difference in the presentation of the story. *ch'aesikjuŭija* does not make use of distinct chapters. Instead the story is divided up into 'parts' separated by several blank lines and a small flower-shaped symbol (Figure 1). Conversely, the Dutch version makes this partition obvious to a lesser extent, only breaking up the 'parts' with one blank line and no small symbols as indicator (Figure 2). This might affect the experience of the reader as the less noticeable 'cuts' could prompt them to finish the whole story in one sitting. Be that as it may, the reasoning behind the decision to present *De vegetariër* this way is unclear. It might have been influenced by the UK edition, as Smith's version only contains a star-like symbol as partition before or after a dream sequence, separating other parts of the story with a few blank lines (Figure 3 & Figure 4). Still, the English

translation shows more evident ‘parts’ than the Dutch version. As my translation is not printed, this is not something I can directly compare in this thesis’ indirect translation (ITr) versus direct translation (DTr) analysis. Nonetheless, I would personally opt for a clearer distinction between the ‘parts’ akin to the original ST to allow the audience to breathe while reading this heavy story. However, it should be noted that these types of decisions are often editorial rather than being made by the translator. Even then, editorial decisions can also be influenced by mediating texts, especially if the publishing house is not in possession of an original ST copy. In the case of *De vegetariër*, it is unclear whether or not Nijgh & Van Ditmar possessed a Korean copy prior to the publication of the Dutch translation and who or what influenced the visual aspects of the novel.

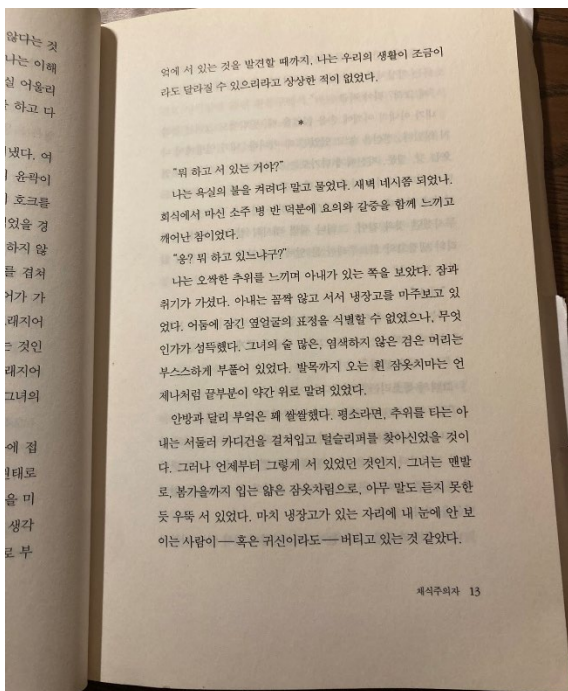


Figure 1: Han Kang's *채식주의자* 'part' division

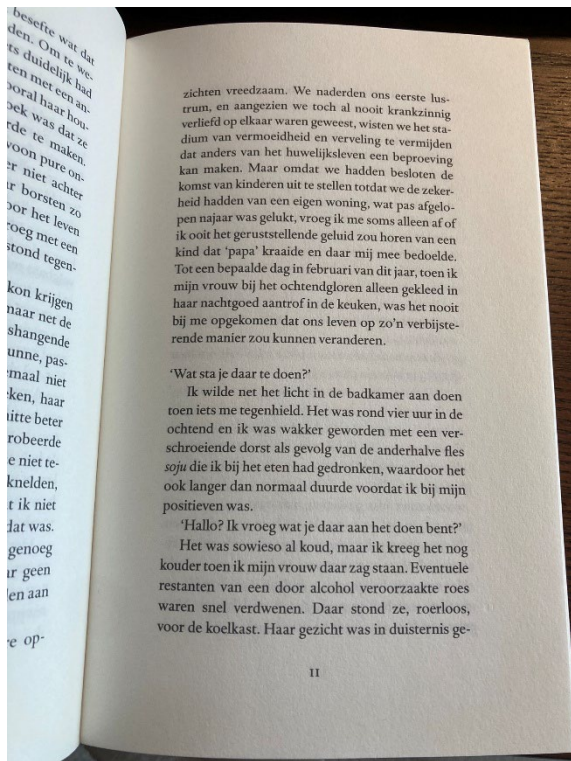


Figure 2: Monique Eggermont's *De vegetariër* 'part' division

remotely concerned. I tried reproaching her, lecturing her to layer up with a vest instead of a bra in that sultry heat. She tried to justify herself by saying that she couldn't stand wearing a bra because of the way it squeezed her breasts, and that I'd never worn one myself so I couldn't understand how constricting it felt. Nevertheless, considering I knew for a fact that there were plenty of other women who, unlike her, didn't have anything particularly against bras, I began to have doubts about this hypersensitivity of hers.

In all other respects, the course of our married life ran smoothly. We were approaching the five-year mark, and since we were never madly in love to begin with we were able to avoid falling into that stage of weariness and boredom that can otherwise turn married life into a trial. The only thing was, because we'd decided to put off trying for children until we'd managed to secure a place of our own, which had only happened last autumn, I sometimes wondered whether I would ever get to hear the reassuring sound of a child gurgling 'dada', and meaning me. Until a certain day last February, when I came across my wife standing in the kitchen at day-break in just her nightclothes, I had never considered the possibility that our life together might undergo such an appalling change.

"What are you doing standing there?"

I'd been about to switch on the bathroom light when I was brought up short. It was around four in the morning, and I'd woken up with a raging thirst from the bottle and a half of soju I'd had with dinner, which also meant I was taking longer to come to my senses than usual.

Figure 3: Deborah Smith's The vegetarian 'part' division

been a single day where I'd got off before midnight), and steeled myself for a confrontation.

Dark woods. No people. The sharp-pointed leaves on the trees, my torn feet. This place, almost remembered, but I'm lost now. Frightened. Cold. Across the frozen ravine, a red barn-like building. Straw matting flapping limp across the door. Roll it up and I'm inside, it's inside. A long bamboo stick strung with great blood-red gashes of meat, blood still dripping down. Try to push past but the meat, there's no end to the meat, and no exit. Blood in my mouth, blood-soaked clothes sucked onto my skin.

Somehow a way out. Running, running through the valley, then suddenly the woods open out. Trees thick with leaves, spring-time's green light. Families picnicking, little children running about, and that smell, that delicious smell. Almost painfully vivid. The babbling stream, people spreading out rush mats to sit on, snacking on kimbab. Barbecuing meat, the sounds of singing and happy laughter.

But the fear. My clothes still wet with blood. Hide, hide behind the trees. Crouch down, don't let anybody see. My bloody hands. My bloody mouth. In that barn, what had I done? Pushed that red raw mass into my mouth, felt it squish against my gums, the roof of my mouth, slick with crimson blood.

Chewing on something that felt so real, but couldn't have been, it couldn't. My face, the look in my eyes . . . my face, undoubtedly, but never seen before. Or no, not mine, but so familiar . . . nothing makes sense. Familiar and yet not . . . that vivid, strange, horribly uncanny feeling.

*

Figure 4: Deborah Smith's *The vegetarian* 'part' division dream sequence

Taking a closer look at the differences observed between my translation and Eggermont's it was found that 193 lines of the 257 analysed contained notable dissimilarities, amounting to 75%, a much higher proportion than first anticipated. Each sentence was labelled with one or more divergences, resulting in the following number presented in Table 1.

Difference	Absolute amount in number of lines	Relative amount in %
Omission	50	26
Addition	50	26
Vocabulary	53	27
Syntax	134	69
Culture	13	7

Table 1: Differences between the DTr and ITr

4.2 Omissions

In total, compared to the DTr, 50 lines displayed omissions in the ITr. These omissions were further subcategorised as follows (Table 2): word-level omissions, phrase-level omissions, and sentence omissions. Some sentences displayed both word and phrase-level omissions.

Type of omission	Absolute frequency in number of lines	Relative frequency in %
Word	30	60
Phrase	18	36
Sentence	4	8

Table 2: Omissions in the ITr compared to the DTr

4.2.1 Word-level Omissions

In most cases only a few words which I had translated were not present in the official Dutch translation of *ch'aesikjuŭija*. The majority of these were of little consequence to the actual story and were most likely left out to increase readability. Some examples are shown below.

taptap'aesö, pŭraejjögä **kasŭmŭl choyösö** kyöndil su öptago anaenŭn pyönmyönghaetta. [답답해서, 브래지어가 가슴을 조여서 견딜 수 없다고 아내는 변명했다.] (Kang, 36; own emphasis)

Ik kan niet tegen beha's omdat het versmorend is, omdat ze mijn borsten vastsnoeren , verantwoordde mijn vrouw zich. (Verstraete, 38; own emphasis)	She tried to justify herself by saying that she couldn't stand wearing a bra because of the way it squeezed her breasts [...] (Smith, 39; own emphasis)
	Ze probeerde zich te rechtvaardigen door te zeggen dat ze niet tegen beha's kon omdat die haar borsten beknelden [...] (Eggermont, 39; own emphasis)

Here, the wife gives two reasons for her dislike towards wearing a bra: “taptap'aesö” [답답해서] (because it's suffocating) and “kasümül choyösö” [가슴을 조여서] (because it restricts her chest). As these are very similar to one another, it would be a natural choice to combine them into only one reason to avoid repetition. However, by saying the same thing twice, using different words, the fact that she does not like to wear a bra is emphasised, something which is now missing from Eggermont's translation. When also considering the mediating text, it can be seen that this choice to not translate the repetition was first made by Smith in her English translation of the sentence, trickling down to Eggermont's *De vegetariër*.

puökk'üi naengjanggo ap'e anaega issötta. [부엌의 냉장고 앞에 아내가 있었다.]

(Kang, 94; own emphasis)

<p>Daar in de keuken, voor de koelkast, was mijn vrouw. (Verstraete, 97; own emphasis)</p>	<p>My wife was in front of the fridge. (Smith, 92)</p>
	<p>Mijn vrouw zat voor de koelkast. (Eggermont, 92)</p>

The example above shows how I specified that the wife was in the kitchen (“Daar in de keuken”; There in the kitchen) while Smith, and consequently Eggermont, did not, only stating that she was in front of the fridge. Considering how refrigerators are usually located in the kitchen, providing this detail could be considered redundant.

Despite these types of omissions having most likely been introduced to increase readability, there seems to be no concrete reasoning behind some other omissions. Moreover, they can have an impact on the way readers interpret the story and its characters. Let us look at some examples.

amado **irül hagöna** ch'aekül ingnün moyangüro[...] [아마도 일을 하거나 책을 읽는 모양으로...] (Kang, 21; own emphasis)

Waarschijnlijk werkte ze of zat ze te lezen[...] (Verstraete, 23; own emphasis)	More than likely she would spend the time reading[...] (Smith, 23)
	De kans was groot dat ze dan zat te lezen[...] (Eggermont, 23)

In this example, the husband describes what he thinks his wife does when she is alone in her room, “irül hagöna ch'aekül ingnün moyangüro” [일을 하거나 책을 읽는 모양으로] (working or reading a book). In the previous sentences it has already been established that the wife works from home, therefore it would not be unusual for the husband to assume that she is either working or relaxing, which in her case is reading a book. In Eggermont’s translation, prompted by the mediating text, the ‘working part’ is left out for no apparent reason, as its inclusion would hardly disrupt the flow of the sentence. While this is a seemingly small omission, it might give readers the idea that the wife hardly works and is fully dependent on her husband’s pay cheque, which is not the case.

Another example of the possible effect omissions can have, is shown below.

nanün honja öduun puökk'e nama künyöüi **hün** twinmosübül samk'in pangmunül paraboatta. [나는 혼자 어두운 부엌에 남아 그녀의 **흰** 뒷모습을 삼킨 방문을 바라보았다.] (Kang, 79; own emphasis)

Alleen achterblijvend in de donkere keuken staarde ik naar de deur die haar witte verschijning had opgeslokt. (Verstraete, 81; own emphasis)	I was left alone in the dark kitchen, looking helplessly on as her retreating figure was swallowed up through the door. (Smith, 78)
	Daar stond ik, alleen gelaten in de donkere keuken, hulpeloos toekijkend

hoe haar gestalte achter de deur werd
opgeslokt. (Eggermont, 78)

ipko ittön hinoshi ont'ong p'ie chöjössö. [입고 있던 흥웃이 온통 피에 젖었어.]

(Kang, 161; own emphasis)

<i>De witte kleren die ik aanhad, helemaal doordrenkt met bloed.</i> (Verstraete, 168; own emphasis)	<i>Blood in my mouth, blood-soaked clothes sucked onto my skin.</i> (Smith, 157)
	<i>Bloed in mijn mond, bloeddoorweekte kleren vastgezogen op mijn huid.</i> (Eggermont, 157)

One of the most visually striking images created in the first few pages of *ch'aesikjuŭija* is of the wife dressed in white. This is the way she is described when her husband finds her in the kitchen at four in the morning as well as in the dream sequence. This white outfit symbolises purity, which is why the image of her white clothes having turned red because of all the blood in the dream sequence is so shocking – it represents how, in her mind, eating meat has corrupted her. Therefore, on the night she decides to become ‘pure’ again by turning vegetarian, she is described as wearing white clothing. The mention of her white outfit appears three times throughout the analysed section of the ST, likewise appearing three times in my direct translation. However, Eggermont’s *De vegetariër* refers to it only once, omitting it for seemingly no reason in the two example sentences above. Consequently, the entire imagery and symbolism associated with the white clothes in both the ST and my translation is no longer present in Eggermont’s version. When considering the mediating text, this omission was once again introduced in Smith’s *The vegetarian* and subsequently also present in the indirect translation.

4.2.2 Phrase-level Omissions

When the omissions were more than just a few words and in fact included entire parts of sentences, I labelled them as ‘phrase-level omissions’. These were present

in a total of 18 lines. As with some word-level omissions, some of these were most likely introduced to increase readability, such as in the example below.

p'yöngsoramyoñ, **ch'uwirül t'anün anaenün** södullö k'adigönül kölch'yöipko t'ölsüllip'örül ch'ajashinössül köshida. [평소라면, 추위를 타는 아내는 서둘러 카디건을 걸쳐입고 털슬리퍼를 찾아신었을 것이다.] (Kang, 56; own emphasis)

<p>Normaal gezien zou mijn vrouw, die niet goed tegen de kou kan, snel een cardigan hebben aangetrokken en op zoek zijn gegaan naar haar wollen pantoffels. (Verstraete, 57; own emphasis)</p>	<p>On such a night, my wife would ordinarily have hurriedly slipped on a cardigan and searched for her towelling slippers. (Smith, 55)</p>
	<p>Normaal gesproken zou mijn vrouw tijdens zo'n nacht snel een vest aangeschoten hebben en haar badstof slippers hebben gezocht. (Eggermont, 55)</p>

In this sentence, the ST describes the wife as someone who gets cold easily (“ch'uwirül t'anün anae” [추위를 타는 아내]), which I literally translated (“mijn vrouw, die niet goed tegen de kou kan”). Eggermont’s and Smith’s versions do not contain this specific description. Nonetheless, as the ST also includes a reference to how ‘usually the wife would quickly put on a cardigan’ with the word “p'yöngsoramyoñ” [평소라면] (usually), which both myself (“Normaal gezien”; usually) and Eggermont (“Normaal gesproken”; usually) translated, the description of the wife getting cold easily could be considered unnecessary as this fact is implied at the beginning of the sentence.

However, compared to most word-level omissions, the phrase-level omissions did tend to have a bigger impact on the imagery and themes of the story, as seen in the following examples.

künyöüi sut manün, yömsaek'aji anün kömün mörinün pusüsühage pup'urö issötta. palmokkkaji onün hüin chamotch'imanün **önjenach'öröm kkütpubuni yakkan wiro mallyö issötta**. [그녀의 술 많은, 염색하지 않은 검은 머리는 부스스하게 부풀어 있었다. 발목까지 오는 흰 잠옷치마는 언제나처럼 끝부분이 약간 위로 말려 있었다.] (Kang, 53-54; own emphasis)

<p>Haar grote bos niet-gekleurd zwart haar was ongekamd en warrig. De zoom van de witte, tot haar enkels reikende rok van haar nachtjapon krulde zoals altijd een beetje naar boven. (Verstraete, 54-55; own emphasis)</p>	<p>Her thick, naturally black hair was fluffed up, dishevelled, and she was wearing her usual white ankle-length nightdress. (Smith, 54)</p>
	<p>Haar dikke, van nature zwarte haar stond alle kanten op en ze droeg haar witte enkellange nachthemd. (Eggermont, 54)</p>

First of all, in this instance, Eggermont, following Smith, combined the two ST sentences into one, resulting in the reader spending less time on the description of the wife. Secondly, half of the second sentence present in *ch'aesikjuŭija* is left out in *De vegetariër*, causing the description of the wife to be less detailed. In this case, this harms the imagery of the scene as the longer explanation of how the wife looks combines the familiar – the hem of her nightgown slightly curling upwards as always (“önjenach'öröm kkütpubuni yakkan wiro mallyö issötta” [언제나처럼 끝부분이 약간 위로 말려 있었다]) – with the unfamiliar – her hair being unkempt and dishevelled (“mörinün pusüsühage pup'urö issötta” [머리는 부스스하게 부풀어 있었다]) giving an eeriness to the situation. This disturbing atmosphere is less palpable in Eggermont's translation due to the less detailed depiction of the scene.

kön'ganghage orae sal saenggaküro, allerügini at'op'ini hanün ch'ejirül pakkuryögo, hokün hwan'gyöngül pohoharyögo saramdürün ch'aeshikchuŭijaga

toenda. [건강하게 오래 살 생각으로, 알레르기니 아토피니 하는 체질을 바꾸려고, 혹은 환경을 보호하려고 사람들은 채식주의자가 된다.] (Kang, 221; own emphasis)

<p>Mensen worden vegetariër omdat ze denken dan langer en gezonder te leven, om hun aanleg voor allergieën of atopie te veranderen of om het klimaat te beschermen. (Verstraete, 227; own emphasis)</p>	<p>People turn vegetarian for all sorts of reasons: to try and alter their genetic predisposition towards certain allergies, for example, or else because it's seen as more environmentally friendly not to eat meat. (Smith, 213)</p>
	<p>Mensen worden vegetariër om allerlei redenen: bijvoorbeeld om te proberen hun erfelijke aanleg voor het ontwikkelen van bepaalde allergieën geen kans te geven, of omdat een dieet zonder vlees als milieuvriendelijk wordt beschouwd. (Eggermont, 213)</p>

When the narrator of the story, the husband, compiles a list of reasons he believes people turn vegetarian, one of these reasons is missing in Smith's and Eggermont's translations, i.e. "kõn'ganghage orae sal saenggaküro" [건강하게 오래 살 생각으로] (with the thought of living a long and healthy life). The argument could be made that, with the sentence where this is stated already being rather long, it was left out to improve readability. Be that as it may, as this particular reason is one of the central themes of the novel, leaving it out does more harm than good.

4.2.3 Sentence Omissions

The third type of omissions in the analysed section of the novel is the omission of entire sentences, which amounted to four in total. While once again the argument could be made that these sentences were left out to improve readability, they are, in fact, sentences that allow for a better flow of the story in the ST. The sentences removed in Eggermont's *De vegetariër* are presented below.

Kang	Verstraete
kyõrhonhan twi anaenũn chibesõ aye pũraejjørũl põtko chinaetta. [결혼한 뒤 아내는 집에서 아예 브래지어를 벗고 지냈다.] (32)	Nadat we getrouwd waren, deed mijn vrouw thuis zo goed als altijd haar beha uit. (34)
anbanggwa talli puõkk'ũn kkwa ssalssarhaetta. [안방과 달리 부엌은 꽤 쌀쌀했다.] (55)	In tegenstelling tot de slaapkamer was de keuken best frisjes. (56)
hõtkan padak, p'iungdõngie pich'in nae nuni põntchõkyõssõ. [헛간 바닥, 피웅덩이에 비친 내 눈이 번쩍였어.] (177)	<i>In een plas bloed op de grond van de schuur glansden mijn heldere ogen.</i> (184)
kyõrhonhan twi iryõire mandũrõnaenũn yõridũlto kũrõltõt'aetta. [결혼한 뒤 일요일에 만들어내는 요리들도 그렇듯했다.] (228)	Het eten dat ze sinds we getrouwd waren elke zondag maakte, liet ook niets te klagen over. (237)

Both the first and last of these left-out sentences indicate that what was said before, concerned the relationship between the husband and wife before they were married, while what is mentioned afterwards, happened after their marriage. By leaving out these connectors, the timeline in Eggermont's translation becomes less clear. The same applies to the third sentence that was excluded. In the ST, this sentence aids in communicating that the narrator, the wife in this instance, describes her appearance by looking at her reflection. This is once again left more ambiguous in Eggermont's version, making it seem like the wife is describing herself from an all-knowing narrator perspective, taking away the personal and intimate feeling this section of the book should have. Finally, the second omitted sentence, while of less

consequence than the other excluded sentences, still impacts the imagery of the story to some degree. In the section of the narrative where the husband finds his wife in the kitchen at four in the morning, the ST mentions in several ways how cold it is, aiding in creating a chilling and unnerving atmosphere. Despite Eggermont alluding to the cold multiple times in her translation, this one sentence was left out. All four of the sentences omitted in the indirect translation were also left out in the mediating text.

4.2.4 The influence of Smith's *The vegetarian*

When comparing Eggermont's translation with Smith's *The vegetarian* it becomes clear that most omissions in Eggermont's work were most likely instigated by Smith's translation. This was true for all but five cases, equalling to 96% of all lines containing omissions most likely being influenced by the mediating text (Table 3). The five cases that were probably introduced by Eggermont herself were primarily word-level omission with little to no impact to the story and were most likely made to increase readability, such as the example below.

*The babbling stream, people spreading out rush mats **to sit on**, snacking on kimbap.* (Smith, 163; own emphasis)

Het kabbelende beekje, mensen die rieten matjes uitspreiden en kimbap eten.
(Eggermont, 163)

The remaining majority of words, phrases and sentences left out of *De vegetariër* reveals how Eggermont, with no knowledge of the Korean language nor access to the original ST (Muus, 2016), was most likely unaware of any omission Smith made in her translation of *ch'aesikjuŭija*.

Omission due to mediating text?	Absolute frequency in number of lines	Relative frequency in %
Yes	48	96
No	5	10

Table 3: Amount of omissions influenced by the mediating text

4.3 Additions

Of the analysed section 49 ITr-lines were found to contain additions compared to the DTr. As with the omissions, these supplementations could be further divided up into word-level additions, phrase-level additions, and sentence-level additions. The total amount of each type of addition can be seen in Table 4.

Type of addition	Absolute frequency in number of lines	Relative frequency in %
Word	23	46
Phrase	28	56
Sentence	1	2

Table 4: Additions in the ITr compared to the DTr

4.3.1 Word-level Additions

The majority of word-level additions seem to be adjectives meant to enhance the emotions of the scene and characters. Some examples are presented below.

künyöüi moksorinün ttorö't'aetta. [그녀의 목소리는 또렷했다.] (Kang, 73)

Haar stem was helder. (Verstraete, 75)	Her voice was surprisingly clear. (Smith, 72; own emphasis)
	Haar stem was verrassend helder. (Eggermont, 72; own emphasis)

anaenün mach'i chashinüi sönt'aegi isöngjögigo t'adangan köshiranün tüt
ch'agünch'agün tap'aetta. [아내는 마치 자신의 선택이 이성적이고 타당한 것이라는
듯 차근차근 답했다.] (Kang, 212)

	Her reply was so methodical, it was as if she thought that this ridiculous
--	---

[...]antwoordde mijn vrouw op een rustige manier alsof haar keuze redelijk en gegrond was. (Verstraete, 218)

decision of hers was something completely rational and appropriate. (Smith, 204; own emphasis)

Haar antwoord klonk heel weloverwogen, alsof ze dat **bespottelijke** besluit van haar volkomen redelijk en gepast vond. (Eggermont, 204; own emphasis)

While this generally does make the reading experience more pleasant to a Dutch readership, one should consider other implications. First, as these emotions are not mentioned in the ST, it is entirely up to the translator to interpret them. However, there is a possibility these interpretations are wrong, especially if the translator has no opportunity to discuss them with the original author. Secondly, maybe the ST author left out mentions of these emotions on purpose, allowing the readers themselves to make their own interpretations. Moreover, this could be a predetermined stylistic choice, either in line with the literary traditions of the source culture (SC) or simply the way the author prefers to tell their stories. In these instances, these types of additions could potentially erase the author's and/or their literary tradition's voice, turning it into the translator's and their literary tradition's voice instead. Whether or not this is a good thing has been a point of debate for centuries and forms the foundation of domesticating and foreignizing strategies (Venuti, 1995).

Another surprising addition was found in the form of taboo words. Usually, taboo words, such as curse words, are omitted, euphemised, substituted, borrowed or generalised in translation. Adding taboo words while translating is a rare occurrence (Sukur & Fadzil, 2025). However, such an addition was found in Eggermont's *De vegetariër*, as seen in the example below.

“mwö hanün köya, chigüm!” [“뭐 하는 거야, 지금!”] (Kang, 104)

‘Wat ben je nu weer aan het doen!’
(Verstraete, 108)

‘What **the hell** are you up to now?’ I
shouted. (Smith, 103; own emphasis)

‘Wat ben je **verdomme** van plan?’ riep
ik. (Eggermont, 103; own emphasis)

While the Korean phrase “mwö hanün köya, chigüm!” [뭐 하는 거야, 지금!; What are you doing now!] is certainly not the most polite way to ask someone what they are doing, it does not make use of any curse words. However, Eggermont included the word “verdomme” (damned), which upon closer examination seems to have come from Smith’s decision to emphasise the word “what” with “the hell”. Despite cursing being kept to a minimum in the story in general, the husband does use the low-level curse word (*to*)*daech’e* [(도)대체], meaning ‘what/how/why on earth’, multiple times. In these instances, Eggermont used “in vredesnaam”. This type of cursing is often considered less taboo than saying “verdomme”. Therefore, for the husband to suddenly switch to a more aggressive curse word could be considered a breach of character, as this does not occur in the original ST.

4.3.2 Phrase-level Additions

Similar to the phrase-level omissions, phrase-level additions appear to have a bigger impact on the reader’s experience. Extending sentences in such a degree can greatly change the way a character is presented, for example. This is most clearly visible in the characterisation of the husband when he describes the first time he met his wife.

k’üjjido chakchido anün k’i, kilchido tchalchido anün tanbalmöri, kakchiri irönan
norüsürümhan p’ibu, oekköp’ul nune yakkan t’wiönaon kwangdaeppeyö,
kaesöngissö poinün kösül turyöwöhanün tüt’an much’aesaegüi otch’arim. kajang
tansunhan tijainüi kömün kudurül shin’go künyönün naega kidarinün t’eibüllo
tagawatta. pparüjjido, nürijido, himitchido, kanyalp’üjjido anün körmgöriro. [크지도

작지도 않은 키, 길지도 짧지도 않은 단발머리, 각질이 일어난 노르스름한 피부,
 외꺼풀 눈에 약간 튀어나온 광대뼈, 개성있어 보이는 것을 두려워하는 듯한
 무채색의 옷차림. 가장 단순한 디자인의 검은 구두를 신고 그녀는 내가 기다리는
 테이블로 다가왔다. 빠르지도, 느리지도, 힘있지도, 가냘프지도 않은 걸음걸이로.]

(Kang, 3-5)

Groot noch klein, een lang noch kort geknipte bob, een gelige schilferende huid, licht uitstekende jukbeenderen onder ogen met enkelvoudige oogleden, en een outfit zo grijs alsof ze bang was ook maar iets van haar persoonlijkheid boven te laten komen. Met de meest simpel uitziende zwarte schoenen aan haar voeten benaderde ze de tafel waar ik zat te wachten. Noch snel, noch traag, met ferme noch weke pas.

(Verstraete, 3-5)

Middling height; bobbed hair neither long nor short; jaundiced, sickly-looking skin; somewhat prominent cheekbones; her timid sallow aspect **told me all I needed to know**. As she came up to the table where I was waiting, **I couldn't help but notice her shoes - the plainest black shoes imaginable. And that walk of hers** - neither fast nor slow, striding nor mincing. (Smith, 3-5; own emphasis)

Gemiddelde lengte; recht afgeknipt haar, niet lang en niet kort; een gelige, ongezonde teint; jukbeenderen die een beetje uitstaken; haar schuwe, vale voorkomen **zei me genoeg**. Toen ze naar het tafeltje liep waaraan ik zat te wachten, **konden haar schoenen me niet ontgaan - lelijker schoenen zijn niet voor te stellen. En die manier van lopen** - niet snel en niet langzaam, geen grote stappen maar ook geen trippelpasjes. (Eggermont, 3-5; own emphasis)

Here, the additions present in Eggemont's *De vegetariër*, most of which seem to have been influenced by the mediating text, make it seem like the husband not only looks down on his wife the first time he meets her, but is in fact disgusted by her. These types of emotions are not present at all in Kang's *ch'aesikjuŭija*, a feature I tried to replicate in my own direct translation. In fact, this section is written rather straightforward and to the point, showing indifference rather than disgust on the husband's part. Starting from the first glimpse readers get from the husband, it is made very clear that he is not supposed to be a likeable character. Perhaps in *De vegetariër* the translator felt the need to state this more plainly by changing the indifference of the husband towards his wife into disgust. Then again, this does undermine the husband's character arc of him going from being indifferent towards his wife to getting more and more disgusted by her as the story progresses.

This need to clarify aspects of the story is present in the majority of phrase-level additions, almost making it feel as if the translator did not trust the reader enough to make their own interpretation based on the implications made throughout the novel. Let us take a look at the following examples.

örin shijörenün naboda tusesal örin chomuraegidürül könürigo tanimyö
kolmoktaejang norüsül haetko[...] [어린 시절에는 나보다 두세살 어린 조무래기들을
거느리고 다니며 골목대장 노릇을 했고[...]] (Kang, 11)

<p>Als jongeling was ik de leider van een bende snotapen die een jaar of twee-drie jonger waren dan ik[...] (Verstraete, 11)</p>	<p>At school I chose to boss around those who were two or three years my junior, and with whom I could act the ringleader, rather than take my chances with those my own age[...] (Smith, 11; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Op school koos ik ervoor op te trekken met leerlingen die een jaar of twee jonger waren en bij wie ik haantje-de-voorste kon spelen, in plaats van de confrontatie aan te gaan met</p>

leerlingen van mijn eigen leeftijd[...]

(Eggermont, 11; own emphasis)

In terms of the characterisation of the husband, it is implied he is essentially a coward by stating he used to hang out with younger children he could boss around thanks to his older age. In Eggermont's translation, this insinuation is spelled out by adding "in plaats van de confrontatie aan te gaan met leerlingen van mijn eigen leeftijd" (instead of confronting students my own age). This was once again an addition first made by Smith, which was then replicated by Eggermont.

saebŷök neshitchŷm toeöna. hoeshigesö mashin soju pyöng pan tökpune yoüwa kalchŷngŷl hamkke nükkigo kkaeönan ch'amiötta. [새벽 네시쯤 되었다. 회식에서 마신 소주 병 반 덕분에 요의와 갈증을 함께 느끼고 깨어난 참이었다.] (Kang, 45-

46)

<p>Het was ongeveer vier uur 's nachts. Door de anderhalve fles <i>soju</i> die ik tijdens het bedrijfsetentje gedronken had, was ik wakker geworden van de dorst en met een blaas die op springen stond. (Verstraete, 46-47)</p>	<p>It was around four in the morning, and I'd woken up with a raging thirst from the bottle and a half of soju I'd had with dinner, which also meant I was taking longer to come to my senses than usual. (Smith, 47; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Het was rond vier uur in de ochtend en ik was wakker geworden met een verschroeiende dorst als gevolg van de anderhalve fles <i>soju</i> die ik bij het eten had gedronken, waardoor het ook langer dan normaal duurde voordat ik bij mijn positieven was. (Eggermont, 47; own emphasis)</p>

The example above describes the husband waking up at four in the morning due to being thirsty and having to pee. These symptoms are associated with the fact that he

drank too much *soju* at dinner with his colleagues. Here, the narrative implies that at the point of waking up the husband is still rather sleepy and hungover. Once again, this might not have been deemed sufficiently obvious, most likely resulting in the addition of “which also meant I was taking longer to come to my senses than usual” by Smith, which Eggermont translated into Dutch. The argument could be made that as Dutch and Anglophone readers might not know that *soju* is an alcoholic beverage common in Korea, this could be clarified by the aforementioned addition.

4.3.3 Sentence-level Additions

Of all additions, only one whole sentence was added in Eggermont’s *De vegetariër* compared to my own translation (and the ST).

“mwǒ hanŭn köya, chigŭm!” nanŭn mach'imnae isǒngŭl ilk'o kohamŭl chillötta. [“뭐 하는 거야, 지금!” 나는 마침내 이성을 잃고 고통을 질렀다.] (Kang, 104-105)

<p>‘Wat ben je nu weer aan het doen!’ Ik slaakte een kreet alsof ik mijn verstand had verloren. (Verstraete, 108-109)</p>	<p>Eventually I lost control. ‘What the hell are you up to now?’ I shouted. (Smith, 102-103; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Ten slotte kon ik me niet meer inhouden. ‘Wat ben je verdomme van plan?’ riep ik. (Eggermont, 102-103; own emphasis)</p>

This was once again an addition first introduced by Smith which she most likely added to make up for mostly omitting the sentence after the husband screams. This could also be consider a syntactic difference, viewing it as the order of the sentences being switched around. Nonetheless, “Ten slotte kon ik me niet meer inhouden” (Eventually, I couldn’t hold it in anymore) and “Ik slaakte een kreet alsof ik mijn verstand verloren had” (I cried out as if having lost my mind) are two sentences distinct enough to not be considered as diverging interpretations of the same phrase.

Therefore, I categorised these as a sentence-level addition and a phrase-level omission.

4.3.4 The influence of Smith's *The vegetarian*

Similar to the omissions, all but one of Eggermont's additions were most likely influenced by Smith's translation of *ch'aesikjuŭija* (Table 5).

As she came up to the table where I was waiting, I couldn't help but notice her shoes - the plainest black shoes imaginable. (Smith, 4)

Toen ze naar het tafeltje liep waaraan ik zat te wachten, konden haar schoenen me niet ontgaan - **lelijker schoenen zijn niet voor te stellen**. (Eggermont, 4)

The sentence above, taken from the first time the husband meets the wife, displays a diverging interpretation by Eggermont of Smith's translation of the ST. While Smith did add the "I couldn't help but notice her shoes", which was subsequently added in Eggermont's translation, the description of the shoes being "the plainest black shoes imaginable" is actually in line with the ST. It seems that Eggermont interpreted this as the husband thinking the shoes are ugly, which is why she omitted the actual description of the shoes and replaced it with "lelijker schoenen zijn niet voor te stellen" (uglier shoes are unimaginable). This addition adds an extra layer of disgust on the husband's part in a scene where he should be indifferent.

Aside from this one example, all other supplementations present in *De vegetariër* are practically word-by-word translations of the ones Smith introduced, once more indicating how close Eggermont stayed to the mediating text when translating. This does not line up with Dollerup's (2000) hypothesis which states that translators might take more liberties when translating from a mediating text than they would with the original ST. It is believed that this could be due to the target text (TT) translator's lack of trust in the translator who provided the mediating text (Dollerup, 2000, p. 23). However, other research (Ringmar, 2007; Špirk, 2014) indicates this might not always be the case. In fact, in his study on Czech literature produced in Portugal through French, Špirk suggests the opposite, i.e. the ultimate TT tends to be a faithful

rendition of the mediating text (2014, 127). Therefore, any changes made in the mediating text will subsequently be made in the TT. Despite Špirk focussing on different languages, the status of the languages and the ones used in this case study are similar, with the source and ultimate target languages being (semi)-peripheral and the mediating language being central.

Addition due to mediating text?	Absolute frequency in number of lines	Relative frequency in %
Yes	50	100
No	1	2

Table 5: Amount of additions influenced by the mediating text

4.4 Vocabulary Differences

When it comes to differences in vocabulary it can be difficult to judge what caused the dissimilarity. It could simply be a contrast in word preference between translators. The translators could have interpreted their STs in another way, resulting in diverging translations. Or, and this is by far the most impactful, actual mistranslation could have taken place. When comparing Eggermont's translation with the DTr, I made an effort to only label vocabulary differences when these stood out and were most likely due to contrasting interpretations or definite mistranslations. Through this analysis 54 lines containing vocabulary differences were found. These were further classified into interpretation differences, possible mistranslations, and other differences (Table 6).

Type of vocabulary difference	Absolute frequency in number of lines	Relative frequency in %
Interpretation	22	42
Possible mistranslation	17	32
Other	15	28

Table 6: Vocabulary differences between the DTr and ITr

4.4.1 Interpretation Differences

In general, interpretation differences showed to be of little consequence to the overall story. Some examples are shown below.

ch'arari tut'umhan p'aedürül nõn pŕaejiörül hago tanyöttamyõn **ch'in'gudŕege** poil ttae nae ch'emyõni sõssül kõshida. [차라리 두툼한 패드를 넣은 브라지어를 하고 다녔다면 **친구들에게** 보일 때 내 체면이 섰을 것이다.] (Kang, 31; own emphasis)

<p>Dan had ik nog liever dat ze beha's met dikke padding zou dragen; dan zou ik tenminste geen gezichtsverlies lijden in het bijzijn van mijn vrienden. (Verstraete, 33; own emphasis)</p>	<p>I would have preferred her to go around wearing one that was thickly padded, so that I could save face in front of my acquaintances. (Smith, 35; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Ik had liever gehad dat ze er een droeg met een stevige vulling, zodat ik niet voor gek stond tegenover mijn kennissen. (Eggermont, 35; own emphasis)</p>

tajin saenggakkwa muryõsŕo miri chaewõ hyanggŕt'ago **talk'omhage** t'wigin samgyõpsal. [다진 생각과 물엿으로 미리 재워 향긋하고 **달콤하게** 튀긴 삼겹살.] (Kang, 229; own emphasis)

<p>Aromatische en zoete gefrituurde varkensbuikspek, op voorhand gemarineerd met fijngehakte gember en maissiroop. (Verstraete, 239; own emphasis)</p>	<p>Her fragrant, caramelised deep-fried belly pork was achieved by marinating the meat in minced ginger and glutinous starch syrup. (Smith, 219; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Ze frituurde kruidig, gekaramelliseerd buikspek door het vlees eerst te marineren in fijngehakte gember en</p>

rijstmoutstroop. (Eggermont, 219; own emphasis)

In the first example, despite the words “vrienden” (friends) and “kennissen” (acquaintances) technically having different meanings, in this context both can be used as the word is simply there to indicate people someone knows. Likewise, the second example shows how I opted to translate “talk'omhage” [달콤하게] (sweetly) into “zoete” (sweet) while Eggermont chose the word “gekaramelliseerd” (caramelised), which is a literal translation of the mediating text. Once again, even though the two words strictly don't hold the same meaning, in this case this difference is negligible.

4.4.2 Possible Mistranslations

Regardless of the fact that one can never be certain whether or not discrepancies are due to actual mistranslations or are purely varying interpretations, in some cases, the differences are rather obvious, especially if they are repeated. Even though my own translation might also contain mistranslations I have overlooked, several errors that could not be credited to interpretation differences were discovered in Eggermont's *De vegetariër*.

4.4.2.1 Repeated Mistranslations

During the analysis, it became clear that every now and then a pattern could be discovered in the vocabulary differences. When compared to the original ST, these patterns confirmed how certain words were repeatedly mistranslated in Eggermont's *De vegetariër*.

mushihada [무시하다] (to disregard, to neglect)

kūnyōnūn taman **mushihaessūl** ppunida. kakkūm kūnyōga shimyadūramae
yōlchunghae issūl ttae, naega kwigahanūn kich'ōkūl tūtko issūmyōnsō

mushihaettön kötkwa kach'i. [그녀는 다만 **무시했을** 뿐이다. 가끔 그녀가 심야드라마에 열중해 있을 때, 내가 귀가하는 기척을 듣고 있으면서 **무시했던** 것과 같이.] (Kang, 66-67; own emphasis)

<p>Ze had het gewoon genegeerd. Net zoals ze me soms negeert wanneer ze helemaal opgaat in een nachtvertoning van een televisieserie en ze me hoort thuiskomen. (Verstraete, 68-69; own emphasis)</p>	<p>She was the one standing there completely unresponsive, as though lost in her own world. It was like those rare occasions when, absorbed in a late-night TV drama, she'd failed to notice me arriving home. (Smith, 65-66; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Zij was degene die daar stond zonder een enkele reactie, alsof ze verloren was in haar eigen wereld. Het was net als die paar keer dat ze, verdiept in een tv-film, niet had gemerkt dat ik thuiskwam. (Eggermont, 65-66; own emphasis)</p>

öjetpamgwa ttokkach'i naüi chonjaerül **mushihamyö** künyönün kyesok'aesö kogi kkurömidürül ssüregibongt'ue nöötta. [어젯밤과 똑같이 나의 존재를 **무시하며** 그녀는 계속해서 고기 꾸러미들을 쓰레기봉투에 넣었다.] (Kang, 106; own emphasis)

<p>Net als gisterennacht negeerde ze mijn aanwezigheid en bleef ze de vleesproducten in de vuilniszak deponeren. (Verstraete, 110; own emphasis)</p>	<p>She kept on putting the parcels of meat into the rubbish bags, seemingly no more aware of my existence than she had been last night. (Smith, 104; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Ze bleef de pakketjes met vlees in de vuilniszakken stoppen, zich schijnbaar net zo min bewust van mijn bestaan als afgelopen nacht. (Eggermont, 104; own emphasis)</p>

In the examples above, I opted to translate the Korean word *mushihada* [무시하다] (to disregard) as ‘negeren’ (to ignore) while Eggermont used ‘verloren zijn in haar eigen wereld’ (lost in her own world), ‘niet merken’ (not noticing) and ‘zich niet bewust zijn van’ (not being aware of), which could all be considered meaning something along the lines of ‘not noticing’. Interpreting *mushihada* [무시하다] this way seems to have come from the mediating text, where Smith used several ways to describe the act of ‘not noticing’; ‘as if lost in her own world’, ‘failed to notice’, and ‘seemingly no more aware’. These words create a very different image as ‘to not notice’ can be considered rather passive and not entirely the subject’s fault, while ‘to ignore’ is a very deliberate choice of the subject to consciously not pay any heed to something/someone. The ST’s use of the word *mushihada* [무시하다] clearly shows the latter is at play here, creating the image of the subject, in this case the wife, as someone stubborn who will not be distracted from anything she is focused on. By using words adjacent in meaning to ‘to not notice’, Eggermont’s and Smith’s image of the wife leans closer to someone not necessarily stubborn but rather simply lost in her own world. As the wife’s stubbornness forms the backbone of *ch’aesikjuŭija*, this change harms one of the central themes this story originally tried to convey. Additionally, the fact that Eggermont and Smith used three different ways to translate *mushihada* [무시하다] also destroys the intended repetition. Han Kang is a seasoned poet and storyteller who uses words and phrases in a very deliberate way (Athenaeum Boekhandel, 2024). The fact that she chose to use the word *mushihada* [무시하다] three times in such close proximity to one another while she could have just as easily used synonyms or rephrase the sentences in question, shows how this repetition is intentional. It creates a rhythm and flow to the story. In fact, intentional repetitions are frequent in the entire novel, as will be shown in later examples. Similar to the case of *mushihada* [무시하다], Eggermont’s and Smith’s translations more often than not erases these characteristics of Kang’s writing style.

anbang [안방] (main room)

[...]naega **anbangesö** naonün köt[...] [[...]내가 **안방**에서 나오는 것[...]] (Kang, 65; own emphasis)

Het feit dat ik de slaapkamer uit was gekomen[...] (Verstraete, 67; own emphasis)	[...]I had been fully conscious of everything I had done since emerging from the living room , asking her what she was doing, and moving towards her. (Smith, 64; own emphasis)
	[...]ik was me volledig bewust van alles wat ik had gedaan sinds ik uit de woonkamer was gekomen[...] (Eggermont, 64; own emphasis)

künyönün naegesö momül tollyö, muni yölyö innün **anbangül** hyanghae ch'önch'önhi körögatta. [그녀는 나에게서 몸을 돌려, 문이 열려 있는 **안방**을 향해 천천히 걸어갔다.] (Kang, 77; own emphasis)

Ze draaide zich naar mij toe en liep rustig naar de open deur van de slaapkamer . (Verstraete, 79; own emphasis)	She turned so that her body was facing me, then slowly walked off through the open door into the living room . (Smith, 76; own emphasis)
	Ze keerde me de rug toe en liep toen langzaam weg, door de deuropening van de woonkamer in. (Eggermont, 76; own emphasis)

anbangüro toragassül ttae, anaega ungk'ürigo nuwö innün tchogesönün amurön sorido tülliji anatta. [**안방**으로 돌아갔을 때, 아내가 웅크리고 누워 있는 쪽에서는 아무런 소리도 들리지 않았다.] (Kang, 84; own emphasis)

Toen ik terugging naar de slaapkamer kwam er geen enkel geluid van de kant	When I went back into the living room my wife was lying down, her legs curled up to her chest, the silence so weighted
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waar mijn vrouw opgekruld lag.
(Verstraete, 86; own emphasis)

I might as well have been alone in the
room. (Smith, 83; own emphasis)

Toen ik weer in **de woonkamer** kwam,
lag mijn vrouw met haar knieën
opgetrokken tot haar borst, en de stilte
was zo zwaar dat ik net zo goed alleen
in de kamer had kunnen zijn.
(Eggermont, 83; own emphasis)

Another example of an error in Eggermont's *De vegetariër*, which was most likely instigated by the mediating text, is the translation of “anbang” [안방] (main room) to “woonkamer” (living room). While this is a possible translation of the word, here it should be interpreted as “slaapkamer” (bedroom). The first two times *anbang* [안방] is used in the ST ‘woonkamer’ could be considered to be the correct translation. However, the third time it appears it is very clear through context that this should be ‘slaapkamer’ as it is described that the wife is in bed. Using the word ‘woonkamer’ here might confuse readers into thinking that the wife has decided to not sleep in the bed but on the sofa instead.

p'al [팔] (arm)

munt'ökül nömja **p'arül** twiro ppödö choyonghi munül tadatta. [문턱을 넘자 팔을
뒤로 뺀어 조용히 문을 닫았다.] (Kang, 78; own emphasis)

Zodra ze over de drempel was, strekte
ze haar **arm** uit naar achter en sloot
stilletjes de deur. (Verstraete, 80; own
emphasis)

As she entered the room she stretched
out her **foot** and calmly pushed the door
to. (Smith, 77; own emphasis)

Toen ze daar binnen was, stak ze haar
voet uit en duwde daarmee rustig de
deur dicht. (Eggermont, 77; own
emphasis)

ppyojuk'an ip'i todŭn namudŭrŭl hech'inŭrago ōlgure, p'are sangch'ōga nassŏ.

[뽀죽한 잎이 돋은 나무들을 헤치느라고 얼굴에, 팔에 상처가 났어.] (Kang, 152;

own emphasis)

<p><i>Scherpe bladeren krasten langs mijn gezicht en armen terwijl ik me een weg baande door de rijzige bomen.</i></p>	<p><i>The sharp-pointed leaves on the trees, my torn feet.</i> (Smith, 148; own emphasis)</p>
<p>(Verstraete, 159; own emphasis)</p>	<p><i>De puntige bladeren aan de bomen, mijn kapotte voeten.</i> (Eggermont, 148; own emphasis)</p>

The example above shows how the word *p'al* [팔] (arm) was confused with *pal* [발] (foot), not once, but twice in the analysed section of Eggermont's translation, which was once again a literal translation the words 'foot' and 'feet' used in Smith's *The vegetarian*. This seemingly small mistake creates different images in *De vegetariër* than those intended by Kang. The first example is taken from the scene where the husband finds his wife in the kitchen at four o'clock in the morning. This scene is characterised by the dichotomy of the familiar and unfamiliar, creating an eeriness to the situation. The wife's final action in this scene, i.e. closing the door, should be part of the familiar aspects which have started to obtain a disturbing connotation due to the circumstances. By changing the body part used to close the door, this familiar image that was created by using the arm in the ST has become unfamiliar due to the use of the foot in the TT, altering the final impression of the entire scene.

The second instance where 'voeten' (feet) was used instead of 'armen' (arms) might even have resulted in both an omission and the syntactic difference in this sentence as well. The scene describes the wife running through a forest. The trees in this forest have sharp-pointed leaves that are causing wounds all over her face and arms. If one imagines these trees to have relatively low branches which the wife has to push through, this is entirely possible. However, if 'arms' is instead interpreted as 'feet', the connection between the sharp-pointed leaves and the wounds seems less

plausible. This might be the reason for a) the omission of ‘face’¹⁶ and b) the leaves and wounds no longer being connected to one another¹⁷ in Eggermont’s *De vegetariër*.

k'ödarat'a [커다랗다] (to be huge, to be enormous)

[...] k'ödaran ujok tu tchak[...] [[...]커다란 우족 두 짝[...] (Kang, 102; own emphasis)	
[...] twee gigantische rundspoten[...] (Verstraete, 105; own emphasis)	[...] two sides of black beef shin[...] (Smith, 100; own emphasis)
	[...] twee zwarte -runderschenkels[...] (Eggermont, 100; own emphasis)
pusürökkörinün sorirül naemyö anaenün k'ödaran ssüregibongt'ue kügöttürül hanassik chuwidamnün chungjötta. [부스럭거리는 소리를 내며 아내는 커다란 쓰레기봉투에 그것들을 하나씩 주위담는 중이었다.] (Kang, 103; own emphasis)	
Met een ritselend geluid was mijn vrouw bezig dit alles één voor één te verzamelen in een grote vuilniszak. (Verstraete, 107; own emphasis)	There was a rustling sound; my wife was busy putting the things around her one by one into black rubbish bags. (Smith, 101; own emphasis)
	Er klonk geritsel; mijn vrouw was bezig de spullen die om haar heen lagen stuk voor stuk in zwarte vuilniszakken te stoppen. (Eggermont, 101; own emphasis)

¹⁶ Wounds on the feet are thought to be caused by the ground, i.e. a rough surface. However, this does not cause wounds to the face. If the translator was convinced that *p'al* [팔] meant ‘feet’ instead of ‘arms’, they might have been puzzled by the inclusion of ‘face’ as well, giving them a reason to simply omit the word to avoid further confusion.

¹⁷ In the ST, the grammar structure *-(ü)nürago* [-(으)나라고] is used. This grammar indicates there is a connection between the two actions/situations mentioned before and after this grammar. If the translator was convinced that *p'al* [팔] meant ‘feet’, this connection denoting that the wounds are caused by the sharp leaves on the trees, might not have made any sense to them, leading to the deletion of this connection. There is also a possibility that the translator did not understand this grammar and therefore did not include it in their translation.

A less impactful, yet noticeable, mistake can be found in the mistranslation of *k'ödarat'a* [커다랗다] in *De vegetariër* and *The vegetarian*. In the official Dutch and English translations this word seems to have been mixed-up with a similar sounding word *kömda* [검다], which means black. When I first encountered this divergence during my analysis, I simply thought this was either an interpretation difference or could even be an omission of the word. However, when I encountered the same dissimilarity in the following sentence, it became clear that this was more likely to be a mistranslation.

4.4.2.2 Other Mistranslations

Other vocabulary differences possibly caused by mistranslations have resulted in varying degrees of influence on the story overall which might affect the readers' experience. When comparing Eggermont's and Smith's translations with my own and the ST, many of these mistranslations seem to have been introduced in the English translation and might have been caused by a mix-up of words, such as the aforementioned *p'al* [팔] vs *pal* [발] and *k'ödarat'a* [커다랗다] vs *kömda* [검다] examples. Some more examples are displayed below.

*öröbut'ün kyegokürhana könnösö, hötkan kat'ün **palgün** könmurül palgyönhaessö.*

[얼어붙은 계곡을하나 건너서, 헛간 같은 **반듯** 건물을 발견했어.] (Kang, 156; own

emphasis)

<p><i>Al lopend door een bevroren vallei vond ik een lichtgekleurd gebouw, een soort schuur.</i> (Verstraete, 163; own emphasis)</p>	<p><i>Across the frozen ravine, a red barn-like building.</i> (Smith, 152; own emphasis)</p>
	<p><i>Aan de andere kant van het bevroren ravijn een rood gebouw, een soort schuur.</i> (Eggermont, 152; own emphasis)</p>

In the first example, the word *palgŭn* [밝은] (light, bright) might have been confused with *ppalgan* [빨간] (crimson) or *pulgŭn* 붉은 (red), resulting in the building suddenly obtaining a different colour.

kapchagi sup'i hwanhaejigo, pomnarŭi namudŭri ch'orokpich'ŭro ugŏjyŏssŏ.
 [갑자기 숲이 환해지고, 봄날의 나무들이 **체렙빛**으로 우거졌어.] (Kang, 164; own emphasis)

<p><i>Plotseling werd het bos lichter en voorjaarsbomen vergroenden.</i> (Verstraete, 172; own emphasis)</p>	<p><i>Trees thick with leaves, springtime's green light.</i> (Smith, 160; own emphasis)</p>
	<p><i>Bomen vol bladeren, het groene voorjaarslicht.</i> (Eggermont, 160; own emphasis)</p>

This second example seems to include a possible mistake originating from the fact that the word *pit* [빛] has multiple meanings in Korean. On the one hand, it can refer to 'light', but on the other hand, it connotes 'colour'. In this sentence, the latter is the most plausible interpretation, especially as the word *pit* [빛] is combined with *ch'orok* [초록], meaning green.

4.4.3 Other Differences

A few other vocabulary differences which could not be attributed to diverging interpretations or possible mistranslations were also found. These could be categorized as more 'free' translations which are technically not wrong but can potentially change the reader's experience. The examples below display how these types of translations can possibly alter an author's writing style.

ödume chamgin **yöböl**gurüi p'yojöngül shikpyörhal su öpsössüna, muöshin'gaga sömttük'aetta. [어둠에 잠긴 **옆얼굴**의 표정을 식별할 수 없었으나, 무엇인가가

섬뜩했다.] (Kang, 52; own emphasis)

<p>Het feit dat ik de uitdrukking op haar in duisternis gehulde profiel niet kon uitmaken, deed me huiveren. (Verstraete, 53; own emphasis)</p>	<p>Her face was submerged in the darkness so I couldn't make out her expression, but the potential options all filled me with fear. (Smith, 53; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Haar gezicht was in duisternis gehuld, dus ik kon niet zien hoe ze keek, maar alle mogelijkheden vervulden me met angst. (Eggermont, 53; own emphasis)</p>

Aside from the fact that the example above contains multiple differences, including addition and sentence order, I would like to focus on the difference in translation of *yöböl*gul [옆얼굴]. Eggermont, following Smith, used the word “gezicht” (face), and I “profiel” (profile). *yöböl*gul [옆얼굴] is not a commonly used Korean word which literally means ‘the side of the face’. The sequence where this example sentence is taken from is the one where the husband finds his wife in the kitchen at four in the morning. Taking a closer look at the ST, this entire scene deploys words such as *yöböl*gul [옆얼굴], *yömmosŭp* [옆모습] (side appearance) and *twinmosŭp* [뒷모습] (appearance from behind) when describing the wife from the point of view of the husband. These words are used deliberately to indicate how, quite literally, the husband and wife don’t see eye to eye. In the example above, I tried retaining this sentiment and the almost awkward use of the uncommon *yöböl*gul [옆얼굴] by translating it as “profiel”. While Eggermont’s translation of “gezicht” can be considered correct all the same, this word contains less of the feeling the ST word evokes.

hajiman nan musŏwössŏ. ajik nae ose p'iga mudŏ issössŏ. amudo nal poji mot'an sai namu twie unḡk'ŭryŏ sumössŏ. nae sone p'iga mudŏ issössŏ. nae ibe p'iga mudŏ issössŏ. [하지만 난 무서웠어. 아직 내 옷에 핏— 목엔 입엔. 아무도 날 보지 못한 사이 나무 뒤에 웅크려 숨었어. 내 손에 핏— 목엔 입엔. 내 입에 핏— 목엔 입엔.] (Kang, 170-174; own emphasis)

<p><i>Maar ik was bang. Er kleefde nog steeds bloed aan mijn kleren. Ik kroop gehurkt achter een boom toen niemand mij kon zien. Er kleefde bloed aan mijn handen. Er kleefde bloed aan mijn mond. (Verstraete, 177-181; own emphasis)</i></p>	<p>But the fear. My clothes still wet with blood. Hide, hide behind the trees. Crouch down, don't let anybody see. My bloody hands. My bloody mouth. (Smith, 165-170; own emphasis)</p>
	<p><i>Maar de angst. Mijn kleren nog nat van het bloed. Verstop je, verstop je achter de bomen. Kruip weg, laat niemand je zien. Mijn bebloede handen. Mijn bebloede mond. (Eggermont, 165-170; own emphasis)</i></p>

Once again, the example above contains multiple differences such as sentence division and tense. Aside from those, the sequence contains an intended repetition not entirely conveyed in Eggermont's translation, which once again seems to have been influenced by the mediating text. The phrase "p'iga mudŏ issössŏ" [피가 묻어 있었어] (blood was stuck) appears three times in the ST, which prompted me to also translate it using the same words three times. Eggermont's version only contains one repetition ("bebloede"; bloody), using very different phrasing the first time the repeated words are presented ("nog nat van het bloed"; still wet with blood). While the sentence "Mijn kleren nog nat van het bloed" (My clothes are still wet with blood) is admittedly an idiomatic way to translate "ajik nae ose p'iga mudŏ issössŏ" [아직 내 옷에 피가 묻어 있었어; blood was still stuck to my clothes), by using this phrasing Smith, and subsequently Eggermont, lose the opportunity to include all intended repetitions, potentially disturbing the intended rhythm of the sequence as well.

4.4.4 The influence of Smith's *The vegetarian*

The argument could be made that most of the vocabulary differences found between the DTr and ITr are relatively insignificant as they, in general, do not impact the story to a high degree. However, the amount of possible mistranslations seems to be much higher than what is expected to be present in a professionally made and published translation (W.-D. Kim, 2018, p. 65). When comparing Eggermont's work with Smith's it becomes clear that most vocabulary differences, including the possible mistranslations, were directly transferred from *The vegetarian* to *De vegetariër* (Table 7). This is in line with Park et al.'s (2015) findings on the mistranslations in *Please look after mom* making it's way into the Thai translation of *ömmarül put'ak'ae*.

Vocabulary differences due to mediating text?	Absolute frequency in number of lines	Relative frequency in %
Yes	50	94
No	6	11

Table 7: Vocabulary differences influenced by the mediating text

Even though the majority of vocabulary differences between my direct translation and Eggermont's indirect one can be traced back to the mediating text, a few seem to have been introduced by Eggermont herself.

It was like those rare occasions when, absorbed in **a late-night TV drama**, she'd failed to notice me arriving home. (Smith, 66; own emphasis)

Het was net als die paar keer dat ze, verdiept in **een tv-film**, niet had gemerkt dat ik thuiskwam. (Eggermont, 66; own emphasis)

In the example above, Eggermont translated "a late-night TV drama", which to Smith's credit is in line with the Korean ST, to "een tv-film" (a tv-film). It is unclear why she changed 'drama' to 'film' and omitted the fact that this showing was late at night.

She **balanced** rice and soybean paste on a lettuce leaf, then bundled the wrap into her mouth and chewed it slowly. (Smith, 225; own emphasis)

Ze **legde gelijke hoeveelheden** rijst en sojabonenpaté op een slablad, propte het bundeltje in haar mond en kauwde langzaam. (Eggermont, 225; own emphasis)

Other vocabulary differences assumed to not be directly influenced by Smith's *The vegetarian* might have been caused by an interpretation mistake made by Eggermont. In the above example, this was perhaps fuelled by the fact that Eggermont was unfamiliar with Korean culture and culinary traditions. Smith's choice of the more poetic "balanced" instead of a more straightforward 'placed' or even 'gathered' must have made Eggermont assume that this word choice conveyed the fact that the ingredients gathered on the lettuce leaf had to be in balance, i.e. in equal amounts. However, usually, in this specific case, there is more rice than soybean paste involved, hence they are not added in equal amounts. Despite this vocabulary difference between my translation ("vouwde"; folded) and Eggermont's not being as directly influenced by Smith's translation as most of the other vocabulary differences, one could argue that if Smith had opted for a more straightforward word, this difference might not have occurred. This, once again, shows the large impact of the mediating text on the TT in ITrs.

4.5 Syntactic Differences

Similar to the vocabulary differences, deciphering whether or not syntactic differences are caused by varying writing preferences between translators or by further underlying reasons can be a complex task. Through the analysis, some patterns were discovered, allowing me to create a list of sentences with obvious differences between my translation and Eggermont's that are most likely not attributed to us simply being two different people. Within the analysed section 134 lines containing syntactic differences were discovered, which were subdivided into the following categories: sentence division and order, subject, tense, interpretation, and other (Table 8).

Type of syntactic difference	Absolute frequency in number of lines	Relative frequency in %
Sentence division and order	88	66
Subject	10	7
Tense	18	13
Interpretation	27	20
Other	23	17

Table 8: Syntactic differences between the DTr and ITr

4.5.1 Sentence Order

The bulk of syntactic differences between my translation and Eggermont's can be attributed to diverging sentence divisions and orders. Most of these were characterised by a slightly different approach in splitting or combining sentences and others shifted the order of parts of sentences within a sentence. Some examples are shown below.

amado irül hagöna ch'aekül ingnün moyangüro -anaeüi ch'wimira hal manhan kösün kikköt ch'aek ikki chöngdoyönnünde, kü ch'aektüriran taebubun p'yojirül yöröbogido shirül mank'üm ttabunhae poinün köttüriötta- kkinittaeeman munül yölgo nawa maröpshi ümshikül mandürötta. [아마도 일을 하거나 책을 읽는 모양으로 -아내의 취미라 할 만한 것은 기껏 책 읽기 정도였는데, 그 책들이란 대부분 표지를 열어보기도 싫을 만큼 따분해 보이는 것들이었다- 끼니때에만 문을 열고 나와 말없이 음식을 만들었다.] (Kang, 21)

<p>Waarschijnlijk werkte ze of zat ze te lezen – het lezen van zoveel mogelijk boeken was de zogenaamde hobby van mijn vrouw, maar de meeste van die boeken zagen er zo saai uit dat ik ze</p>	<p>More than likely she would spend the time reading, which was practically her only hobby. For some unfathomable reason, reading was something she was able to really immerse herself in -</p>
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zelfs niet wilde openslaan – en pas wanneer het etenstijd was opende ze de deur, verliet ze zonder een woord te zeggen haar kamer en maakte ze het eten klaar. (Verstraete, 23)

reading books that looked so dull I couldn't even bring myself to so much as take a look inside the covers. Only at mealtimes would she open the door and silently emerge to prepare the food.
(Smith, 23-25)

De kans was groot dat ze dan zat te lezen, wat vrijwel haar enige hobby was. Om de een of andere onnavolgbare reden was lezen iets waar ze zich helemaal in kon storten - boeken die er zo saai uitzagen dat ik me er niet eens toe kon zetten ze in te kijken. Pas tegen etenstijd deed ze de deur open en kwam ze zwijgend tevoorschijn om een maaltijd klaar te maken. (Eggermont, 23-25)

küröna önjebut'ö kürök'e sö issöttön köshinji, künyönün maenballo, pomgaülkkaji imnün yalbün chamotch'arimüro, **amu malto tütchi mot'an tüt uttuk sö issötta.**
[그러나 언제부터 그렇게 서 있었던 것인지, 그녀는 맨발로, 봄가을까지 입는 얇은 잠옷차림으로, **아무 말도 듣지 못한 듯 우뚝 서 있었다.**] (Kang, 57; own emphasis)

Maar ik had geen idee hoe lang ze hier al stond, blootsvoets, in de nachtjapon die ze normaal draagt in de lente en de herfst, **schijnbaar zonder een woord te horen, stokstijf stil.** (Verstraete, 58; own emphasis)

How long might she have been standing there like that - barefoot, in thin summer nightwear, **ramrod straight as though perfectly oblivious to my repeated interrogation?** (Smith, 56; own emphasis)

Hoelang stond ze daar al - blootsvoets, in dat dunne zomernachthemd, **stofstijf, alsof mijn herhaalde vragen totaal niet tot haar waren**

doorgedrongen? (Eggermont, 56; own emphasis)

*örinaidüri ugülgörigo, mashinnün naemsaega nassö. **sumanün kajoktüri sop'ungjungjössö.*** [어린이들이 우글거리고, 맛있는 냄새가 났어. **숨마웃** —정득일 **센품줍일업앤.**] (Kang, 165-166; own emphasis)

<p><i>Het krioelde van de kleine kinderen en een heerlijke geur zweefde door de lucht. Ontelbare gezinnen waren aan het picknicken.</i> (Verstraete, 172-173; own emphasis)</p>	<p>Families picnicking, little children running about and that smell, that delicious smell. (Smith, 161; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Gezinnen die picknicken, kleine kinderen die rondrennen en die geur, die heerlijke geur. (Eggermont, 161; own emphasis)</p>

Within the analysed section, these altered sentence divisions and orders were predominantly of little consequence to the narrative and were most likely introduced to increase readability. Nevertheless, in some cases, this harmed Kang’s writing style as seen in the following examples.

nanün shikt'agüijaesö iröna naengdongshil munül yörötta. **t'öng piö issötta.** misutkaruwa koch'utkaru, öllin p'utkoch'u, tajin manül hanbongjiga türö issül ppuniötta. [나는 식탁의자에서 일어나 냉동실 문을 열었다. **텅 비어 있었다.** 미숫가루와 고춧가루, 얼린 풋고추, 다진 마늘 한봉지가 들어 있을 뿐이었다.] (Kang, 189-191; own emphasis)

<p>Ik stond op van de eettafel en opende de deur van de diepvries. Helemaal leeg. Er zat enkel nog graanpoeder, chilipoeder, bevroren groene chilipepers</p>	<p>I got up from my chair and opened the freezer. It was practically empty - nothing but miso powder, chilli powder, frozen fresh chillies, and a pack of</p>
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en een zakje fijngehakte knoflook in.
(Verstraete, 196-198; own emphasis)

minced garlic. (Smith, 184-185; own emphasis)

Ik kwam van mijn stoel en deed de vrieskist open. **Hij was praktisch leeg** - alleen misopoeder, chilipoeder, bevroren pepertjes en een pak fijngehakte knoflook. (Eggermont, 184-185; own emphasis)

In the example above, the ST and my translation both consist of three sentences, the second of which is much shorter than the others. This was done deliberately in order to create a certain rhythm in the sequence as well as to make the second sentence stand out. However, Eggermont, following Smith's reordering of the sentences, combined the second and third sentence, losing the intended rhythm and emphasis placed on the middle sentence.

ttütpakkiötta. künyöege chöt'orok igijögigo chemöttaeroiin kusögi issöttani.
chörök'e piisöngjöggin yöjayöttani. [뜻밖이었다. 그녀에게 저토록 이기적이고
제멋대로인 구석이 있었다니. 저렇게 비이성적인 여자였다니.] (Kang, 205-207;
own emphasis)

Dat had ik niet verwacht. **Dat ze zo'n** egoïstische en onbeleefde kant had.
Dat ze zo'n onberekenbare vrouw was.
(Verstraete, 213-214; own emphasis)

The very idea that there should be this other side to her, one where she selfishly did as she pleased, was astonishing. Who would have thought she could be so unreasonable? (Smith, 198-199)

Het idee alleen al dat ze nog een andere kant had, die alleen deed wat ze zelf wilde, was verbijsterend. Wie had gedacht dat ze zo onredelijk kon zijn?
(Eggermont, 198-199)

In this instance, Smith redivided three sentences into two while also taking a more ‘free’ translation approach, resulting in Eggermont doing the same. This has led to the loss of the repeated *-tani* [-다니], which is a grammar construction used to express certain emotions, including, in this case, surprise or disbelief. I tried replicating this recurrence by starting my sentences with the same few words. Since Smith, and therefore Eggermont, redivided this section, they were no longer able to retain this repetition.

4.5.2 Interpretation

Throughout the part used for the case study some differences in interpretation which affected entire sentences or even sequences were found. Despite there being no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ in these instances, some interpretation differences did lead to dissimilar reading experiences.

“choesonghamnida. chibane küp'an iri saenggyösö..... chöngmal
choesonghamnida. ch'oedaehan södullö toch'ak'agetsümnida. animnida, kot kal su
itsümnida. **chogümman**..... animnida, küröshimyön andoemnida. **chogümman**
kidaryö chushipshio. chöngmal choesonghamnida. ye, türil malssümi
öpsümnida.....” [“죄송합니다. 집안에 급한 일이 생겨서..... 정말 죄송합니다.
최대한 서둘러 도착하겠습니다. 아닙니다, 곧 갈 수 있습니다. **조금만**..... 아닙니다,
그러시면 안됩니다. **조금만** 기다려 주십시오. 정말 죄송합니다. 예, 드릴 말씀이
없습니다.....”] (Kang, 120-129; own emphasis)

<p>‘Het spijt me. Er is thuis plots iets gebeurd... Het spijt me echt. Ik ben er zo snel mogelijk. Nee, ik vertrek zometeen. Wacht alstublieft... Nee, u heeft helemaal gelijk. Doe dat alstublieft niet.</p>	<p>‘I'm sorry. Something's come up, an urgent family matter, so ...I'm very sorry. I'll be there as quickly as possible. No, I'm going to leave right now. It's just ...no, I couldn't possibly have you do that. Please wait just a little longer. I'm</p>
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Wacht alstublieft nog heel even. Het spijt me echt. Nee, dit zou inderdaad niet mogen gebeuren...’ (Verstraete, 122-132; own emphasis)

very sorry. Yes, I really can't talk right now ...’ (Smith, 118-127; own emphasis)

‘Sorry. Er is iets voorgevallen, een dringende huiselijke aangelegenheid, dus... het spijt me heel erg. Ik kom zo snel mogelijk. Nee, ik vertrek nu meteen. **Ik heb alleen...** nee, dat kan ik je onmogelijk laten doen. **Wacht alsjeblieft** nog heel even. Het spijt me vreselijk. Ja, ik kan nu echt niets zeggen...’ (Eggermont, 118-127; own emphasis)

The above sequence displays the phone conversation the husband has with a client when he is late to their appointment. First of all, in the ST the husband uses highly honorific speech patterns when talking to the person on the phone, indicated by the use of sentence endings such as *-(sũ)pnida* [-(스)브니다] and *-(ũ)shipshio* [-(으)십시오]. This can also be inferred from the context as the husband profusely apologises, revealing the other person to be either his boss or someone else he has to answer to, in this case his client. Therefore, I opted to use the more formal version of “you” in my translation, i.e. “u”. However, Eggermont makes use of the more informal “you”, i.e. “jij”, disrupting the difference in social standing between the husband and his client. This was most likely caused by the inadequate information the English pronoun “you” provides (Ringmar, 2007, p. 10) discussed previously in chapter 2.

Moreover, twice the husband starts his sentence with *chogŭmman* [조금만]. The first time he is cut off by his client, while the second time he finishes what he wanted to say. I indicated this by starting both sentences with the same two words, “Wacht alstublieft” (Please wait). Yet, in Eggermont’s *De vegetariër* this repetition has been deleted as she starts these sentences differently, which is also the case in the mediating text. This might have been caused by Smith not realising the connection

between the two sentences indicated by a more literal translation of the first *chogŭmman* [조금만], which is more difficult to interpret as a standalone word, compared to when it is placed in a sentence as in the second time it appears.

nanŭn **morŭgo issŏtta**. chŏ yŏjae taehaesŏ, amugŏtto **morŭgo issŏtta**. kapchagi kŭrŏn saenggagi tŭrŏtta. [나는 **모르고 있었다**. 저 여자에 대해서, 아무것도 **모르고 있었다**. 갑자기 그런 생각이 들었다.] (Kang, 237-239; own emphasis)

<p>Ik wist niets. Ik wist helemaal niets over deze vrouw. Die gedachte kwam plots in mij op. (Verstraete, 246-248; own emphasis)</p>	<p>I just couldn't understand her. Only then did I realize: I really didn't have a clue when it came to this woman. (Smith, 226-227)</p>
	<p>Ik begreep haar gewoon niet. Pas toen drong tot me door: ik had geen idee wat er in het hoofd van die vrouw omging. (Eggermont, 226-227)</p>

Another example of deleted repetition due to possible interpretation differences is displayed in the sentences above. Regardless of the fact that the sentences “Ik wist helemaal niets over deze vrouw.” (I knew absolutely nothing about this woman.) and “ik had geen idee wat er in het hoofd van die vrouw omging” (I had no idea what transpired in this woman’s head) are quite similar in meaning, Eggermont’s choice of the latter, informed by Smith’s translation of the sentence, disrupts the rhythm which is present in the ST through the repeated use of “*morŭgo issŏtta*” [모르고 있었다] ((I didn’t know)).

An alternative instance of interpretation difference can be seen in the final two sentences the husband says before leaving the house in a rush to get to his appointment.

“mich'yŏtkun. wanjŏnhi mashi kassŏ.” [“미쳤군. 완전히 맛이 갔어.”] (Kang, 138-

'**Ze** is gek geworden. Helemaal de weg kwijt.' (Verstraete, 143-144; own emphasis)

'**You're** insane! **You've** completely lost it.' (Smith, 135-136; own emphasis)

'**Je** bent krankzinnig! **Je** bent niet goed bij je hoofd.' (Eggermont, 135-136; own emphasis)

In this case, Eggermont, through the mediating text, and I interpreted the subject of the sentence differently. As previously mentioned, in the Korean language subjects and objects of sentences can be left out, but this is not the case in Dutch or English. Therefore, when translating these types of Korean sentences into Dutch or English, the subject or object has to be deduced from context. In most cases, as long as the translator has a good enough grasp of the Korean language, this is relatively straightforward. In spite of this, there are instances where one could get confused or even multiple interpretations are technically possible. The sequence above is an example of the latter. Smith, and therefore Eggermont, interpreted these sentences being said directly to the wife, thus using a second-person subject, while I read them as a form of 'self-talk' and so used a third-person subject¹⁸.

4.5.3 Subject

While in some cases different interpretations of the subject can be considered as such, other times it is relatively obvious how the sentence should be read. When comparing Eggermont's translation with my own, many instances of varying understandings of the subject were identified. In fact, the number was so high, I started to doubt my own interpretations. However, after re-analysing the ST and eliciting the help of one of my proofreaders, I confirmed that aside from the occasional ambiguous case, my interpretations were more likely to be correct. Despite the fact that a difference in interpretation does not always have dire

¹⁸ My reasoning behind this understanding was guided by the sentence ending *-kun* [-군] in "mich'yötkun" ["미쳤군"]. This ending is used when the speaker realises something. While this could technically be used when talking to someone, this grammar is more often than not utilised when speaking to oneself.

consequences to a story, in *De vegetariër* most of them did to a certain degree. Some examples are shown below.

naega namuraja, **kŭnyŏnŭn** tchinŭn tŭt'an tŏwie chokkirŭl kyŏpch'yŏimnŭn kŏsŭro pŭraejjŏrŭl taeshinhaetta. [내가 나무라자, 그녀는 찌는 듯한 더위에 조끼를 겹쳐입는 것으로 브래지어를 대신했다.] (Kang, 35; own emphasis)

<p>Telkens ik haar berispte, droeg ze in de drukkende hitte een vest in plaats van een beha. (Verstraete, 37; own emphasis)</p>	<p>I tried reproaching her, lecturing her to layer up with a vest instead of a bra in that sultry heat. (Smith, 38; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Ik probeerde haar erop aan te spreken, haar voor te houden dat ze in de verzengende hitte beter een hemdje kon dragen dan een beha. (Eggermont, 38; own emphasis)</p>

In the example above, Eggermont’s translation indicates that the narrator, i.e. the husband who does not like the fact that his wife refuses to wear a bra even in summer, aside from showing his displeasure also offers a solution to wearing a bra. Yet, the ST sentence contains two subjects, *naega* [내가] (I, i.e. the husband) for the first part of the sentence and *kŭnyŏnŭn* [그녀는] (she, i.e. the wife) for the second part. Additionally, the connecting grammar between the two parts *-cha(maja)* [-자(마자)] (as soon as) indicates that the second part is a reaction to the first part. Hence, the entire sentence should be interpreted as “I” showing his displeasure and in reaction to this “she” wears a vest instead of a bra. The husband does not suggest that the wife wear a vest, in fact he would rather have her wear an actual bra. It is the wife who comes with the solution of wearing a vest, even in the heat of summer. This small change in subject introduced by Smith, which has trickled down to Eggermont’s translation, undermines the characterisation of the husband, turning

him from a man who does not care about the discomfort his wife feels when she wears a bra, to someone who tries to understand and even offers alternatives.

Aside from characterisation, continuity and the flow of the narrative can be harmed by a misinterpretation of subject as well, as shown in the examples below.

chöngshinül nok'o issöttön ke anira, naega anbangesö naonün köt, chilmun, chashinege tagaonün kötkkaji modu üishik'ago issöttön köshida. künyönün taman mushihaessül ppunida. [정신을 놓고 있었던 게 아니라, 내가 안방에서 나오는 것, 질문, 자신에게 다가오는 것까지 모두 의식하고 있었던 것이다. 그녀는 다만 무시했을 뿐이다.] (Kang, 65-66)

<p>Het was niet dat ze niet besepte wat er gebeurde. Het feit dat ik de slaapkamer uit was gekomen, de vragen, zelfs mijn benadering tot haar, ze was er zich allemaal van bewust. Ze had het gewoon genegeerd. (Verstraete, 66-68; own emphasis)</p>	<p>I had no doubt that I was in my right mind and all this was really happening; I had been fully conscious of everything I had done since emerging from the living room, asking her what she was doing, and moving towards her. She was the one standing there completely unresponsive, as though lost in her own world. (Smith, 64-65; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Ik twijfelde er niet aan dat ik bij mijn volle verstand was en dat dit allemaal echt gebeurde; ik was me volledig bewust van alles wat ik had gedaan sinds ik uit de woonkamer was gekomen, aan haar had gevraagd wat ze aan het doen was en op haar was afgelopen. Zij was degene die daar stond zonder een enkele reactie, alsof ze verloren was in haar eigen wereld. (Eggermont, 64-65; own emphasis)</p>

Here, despite being omitted, the subject of the first sentence can be inferred to be the wife. She is the one who is aware of everything described in the sentence, which makes it logical in the following sentence that despite being aware, she ignores it. However, in Eggermont's *De vegetariër*, the subject of the first sentence has been changed to the narrator, i.e. the husband, thus the switch to the wife being the subject of the second sentence feels rather forced. This might also be the reason why Eggermont's second sentence is much longer than mine, as more information had to be added in order to make this shift less abrupt. Analysing the mediating text once again reveals how these changes were initially introduced by Smith rather than Eggermont herself.

naega uduk'öni söso chik'yöbogo innün kösül aranggot'aji anün ch'ae, asagasak sorirül naeö oraettongan kimch'ittaerül ssibötta. [내가 우두커니 서서 지켜보고 있는 것을 아랑곳하지 않은 채, 아삭아삭 소리를 내어 오랫동안 김치대를 씹었다.] (Kang,

242)

<p>Zonder zich aan te trekken hoe ik haar met een wezenloze blik aan stond te staren, kauwde ze een lange tijd op een knerpend stukje kimchi. (Verstraete, 250; own emphasis)</p>	<p>I sat in silence, steadfastly uninterested in this poor excuse for a meal, crunching on kimchi for what felt like an age. (Smith, 229; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Ik bleef in stilte zonder belangstelling voor het armzalige maal op de kimchi kauwen, wat voor mijn gevoel wel een eeuw duurde. (Eggermont, 229; own emphasis)</p>

In the example above, the change of subject introduced in the mediating text and carried over in the TT disrupts the continuity of the story. In fact, this entire sentence contradicts the previous events in the scene. First, even though the husband begins the scene seated at the dining table, he quickly gets up and walks to the freezer. For the remaining duration of the conversation with his wife, there is no indication of him moving from this spot. It can therefore be assumed he is still standing close to the

freezer. Therefore, the fact that in the sentence above, which is the closing sentence of the scene, it is suggested in the ITr that he is suddenly seated back at the table harms the continuity of this section. Second, throughout the scene no indication is made of the husband actually eating. The only one eating is the wife. Nonetheless, in the example above Eggermont's translation hints that he has been eating with the words "Ik bleef [...] kauwen" (I kept [...] chewing). Both of these contradictions are not present in my translation due to having the wife as the subject. Since during the scene multiple sentences refer to the wife sitting at the dining table and eating, her continuing these actions in the final sentence make more sense.

4.5.4 Tense

My translation and Eggermont's differed from time to time in terms of tense. This was primarily the case in the dream sequence. While I opted to write this part mostly in the past tense, as it is written in the ST, Eggermont's dream sequence, influenced by Smith's translation, is described in the present tense, as can be seen in the example sentence below.

*kküt'öpshi kogittöngöridürül hech'igo naagatchiman pandaetchok ch'ulgunün
nat'anaji anassö.* [끝없이 고깃덩어리들을 헤치고 킁킁킁지만 반대쪽 출구는

킁킁킁줌 악암앤.] (Kang, 160; own emphasis)

<p><i>Ik bleef me een weg banen door de klompen vlees maar er kwam aan de andere kant maar geen uitgang in zicht.</i></p>	<p>Try to push past but the meat, there's no end to the meat, and no exit. (Smith, 156; own emphasis)</p>
<p>(Verstraete, 167; own emphasis)</p>	<p>Probeer langs het vlees te komen, maar er komt geen einde aan het vlees en er is geen uitgang. (Eggermont, 156; own emphasis)</p>

It is unclear as to why the tense of the dream sequence has been adjusted. One possible explanation might be to create a bigger contrast between the dream

sequences and the other parts of the story. The Korean ST manages this feat by changing its speech level. The majority of the story is written in what is called ‘*haerach’e*’ [해라체] or ‘plain style’. This speech level is generally used in impersonal writings such as novels. However, the dream sequences are written in ‘*haech’e*’ [해체], a very intimate and informal speech level used between close friends and family. This gives the dream sequences a more personal feeling, bringing the reader closer to the narrator, in this case the wife. As the English and Dutch language does not possess these types of speech levels, it is impossible to recreate this shift in the exact same way. However, by changing the tense from past to present a similar feel of standing closer to the character and events can be achieved.

4.5.5 Other

Other differences most likely caused by varying interpretations of grammar structures were also discovered. Some of them only impacted parts of sentences, while others changed the phrase to such a degree that it presented more differences than similarities. Let us look at some examples.

k’üjido chakchido anŭn k’i, kilchido tchalchido anŭn tanbalmöri[...] [크지도

작지도 않은 키, 길지도 짧지도 않은 단발머리[...] (Kang, 3; own emphasis)

<p>Groot noch klein, een lang noch kort geknipte bob[...] (Verstraete, 3; own emphasis)</p>	<p>Middling height; bobbed hair neither long nor short[...] (Smith, 3; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Gemiddelde lengte; recht afgeknipt haar, niet lang en niet kort[...] (Eggermont, 3; own emphasis)</p>

Since the argument could be made that describing someone as “groot noch klein” (tall nor short) or of “gemiddelde lengte” (average height) is in essence the same, this difference could not be categorised as an interpretation difference. Yet, a small

change such as this one could still impact the reader’s experience. In this case, Eggermont’s and Smith’s translations erase part of Kang’s writing style and rhythm, specifically in the intended repetition of “k’ŭjido chakchido anŭn k’i, kilchido tchalchido anŭn tanbalmŏri” [크지도 작지도 않은 키, 길지도 짧지도 않은 단발머리] (height that is big nor small, a bob cut that is long nor short).

[...]ellibeit’ŏga kkoktaegich’unge **mŏmulgo innŭn kŏsŭl** hwaginhago samch’ŭng kyedanŭl ttwiŏnaeryŏgatta. [...]엘리베이터가 꼭대기층에 **머물고 있는 것을** 확인하고 삼층 계단을 뛰어내려갔다.] (Kang, 141; own emphasis)

<p>[...]omdat ik zag dat de lift nog op de bovenste verdieping was, rende ik de drie verdiepingen via de trap naar beneden. (Verstraete, 146; own emphasis)</p>	<p>I checked whether the lift was going to go all the way up to the top floor, and then dashed down three flights of stairs. (Smith, 138; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Ik controleerde of de lift helemaal tot aan de bovenste verdieping ging en holde toen drie trappen af. (Eggermont, 138; own emphasis)</p>

In this example, I translated the ST sentence in such a way that the elevator is already at the top floor, while Eggermont suggests it is in the process of going up to the top floor. In spite of both situations triggering the same action, i.e. using the stairs instead, there is a sense of oddity to Eggermont’s translation, which was once again influenced by the mediating text. When waiting for an elevator, the floor(s) it is going to are not indicated, only the floor it is currently on. Therefore, how would the narrator know that the elevator would be going all the way to the top floor? While most people would not notice this continuity error, it does add to the already large amount of (small) mistakes throughout the story.

sarŭl ppaegettanŭn kŏtto anigo, pyŏngŭl koch’iryŏnŭn kŏtto anigo, musŭn kwishine ssŭin kŏtto anigo, **angmong hanbŏn kkgugonŭn shiksŭpkwanŭl pakkudani.**

[살을 빼겠다는 것도 아니고, 병을 고치려는 것도 아니고, 무슨 귀신에 씌는 것도 아니고, **악몽 한번 꾸고는 식습관을 바꾸다니.**] (Kang, 223; own emphasis)

<p>Het was ook niet om te vermageren, ook niet om een ziekte te bestrijden, en ook niet omdat ze bezeten werd door één of andere geest. Slechts één nare droom was voldoende om haar eetgewoontes te veranderen. (Verstraete, 231-232; own emphasis)</p>	<p>As far as I was concerned, the only reasonable grounds for altering one's eating habits were the desire to lose weight, an attempt to alleviate certain physical ailments, being possessed by an evil spirit, or having your sleep disturbed by indigestion. (Smith, 215; own emphasis)</p>
	<p>Wat mij betrof, waren de enige redelijke motieven om je eetgewoonten te veranderen de wens om af te vallen, een poging bepaalde lichamelijke klachten te verlichten, demonische bezetenheid of slaapproblemen als gevolg van een slechte spijsvertering. (Eggermont, 215; own emphasis)</p>

In Eggermont's *De vegetariër*, the sentence above displays an actual misinterpretation as well as an erasure of writing style, prompted by the mediating text. In terms of misinterpretation, in the ST and my direct translation the narrator, i.e. the husband, only lists three reasons which he can imagine motivating someone into becoming vegetarian but do applying to his wife. However, Smith and Eggermont list four. This could be seen as an addition, but upon closer examination it was discovered that the final part of the sentence, where the actual to the husband unfathomable reason his wife turned vegetarian is described, has been interpreted as a fourth reason the husband could understand. Moreover, this reason was changed from "een nare droom" (a bad dream) to "slaapproblemen als gevolg van een slechte spijsvertering" (trouble sleeping due to indigestion). Additionally, both the mediating text and ITr omitted the intentional repetition used in the ST, *-(ǔ)n/nǔn*

kötto anigo [-(으)ㄴ/는 것도 아니고] (also not), which emphasise how the first three reasons are not applicable to the wife, while the fourth is.

ipko ittön hinoshi ont'ong p'ie chöjössö. [입걸 입더 흰옷이 온통 피에 젖었어.]

(Kang, 161; own emphasis)

<p><i>De witte kleren die ik aanhad, helemaal doordrenkt met bloed.</i> (Verstreete, 169; own emphasis)</p>	<p><i>Blood in my mouth, blood-soaked clothes sucked onto my skin.</i> (Smith, 157; own emphasis)</p>
	<p><i>Bloed in mijn mond, bloeddoorweekte kleren vastgezogen op mijn huid.</i> (Eggermont, 157; own emphasis)</p>

This example displays a misunderstanding of *ipko* [입고]. As a noun *ip* [입] means ‘mouth’ and if one would like to say ‘mouth and (something else)’, *hago* [하고] would be added to *ip* [입], *ip'ago* [입하고]. However, *ip* [입] is also the stem of the verb *ipta* [입다] meaning ‘to put on clothes’. Together with the grammatical construction *-ko ittön* [-고 있던], the verb is conjugated to the past perfect tense, becoming ‘(the clothes) I had put on’, i.e. ‘(the clothes) I was wearing’. In other words, in this particular sentence, *ip* [입] should not be interpreted as ‘mouth’, as has happened in the mediating text and therefore also Eggermont’s *De vegetariër*, but as the stem of *ipta* [입다] (to put on clothes), as seen in my translation.

4.5.6 The influence of Smith’s *The vegetarian*

Once again, after placing Eggermont’s translation next to Smith’s *The vegetarian* an overwhelming amount of the lines indicated as syntactic differences were almost literal translations from Smith’s version. Only for seven instances the argument that the difference is introduced by Eggermont can be made (Table 9).

Syntactic difference due to mediating text?	Absolute frequency in number of lines	Relative frequency in %
Yes	129	96
No	7	5

Table 9: Syntactic differences influenced by the mediating text

Across the frozen ravine, a red barn-like building. (Smith, 152; own emphasis)

Aan de andere kant van het bevroren ravijn een rood gebouw, een soort schuur.

(Eggermont, 152; own emphasis)

The example above displays a confusion on Eggermont's part between the prepositional use of the word 'across' and when it is utilised as an adverb. In all fairness, the dream sequence this sentence is a part of is rather ambiguous overall, both in the Korean ST and Smith's interpretation. Thus, the possibility for confusions like these to happen is considerable. Be that as it may, some other instances where Eggermont's translation diverged from Smith's in terms of syntax cannot be written away as mere misunderstandings. Some examples are shown below.

She turned so that her body was facing me, then slowly walked off through the open door into the living room. (Smith, 76; own emphasis)

Ze keerde me de rug toe en liep toen langzaam weg, door de deuropening van de woonkamer in. (Eggermont, 76; own emphasis)

*Running, running through the valley, **then suddenly the woods open out.*** (Smith, 159; own emphasis)

*Rennen, rennen door de vallei, **dan ineens doemt het bos voor me op.***

(Eggermont, 159; own emphasis)

4.6 Differences in the Translation of Culturally Specific Words or Phrases

One of the most difficult aspects of literary translation is often considered to be the transference of culture. How does one go about explaining the SC present in a novel without disrupting its flow? There are several routes that can be taken, some of which also appear in both my and Eggermont's translation of *ch'aesikjuŭija*. While we employed similar approaches in some cases, there were also thirteen lines where our paths diverged. I have labelled these using the same subcategories of the overall differences we have discussed so far: omission, addition, vocabulary differences, and syntactic differences (Table 10).

Type of difference in translation of culturally specific words or phrases	Absolute frequency in number of lines	Relative frequency in %
Omission	2	15
Addition	5	38
Vocabulary	6	46
Syntax	3	23

Table 10: Differences in the translation of culturally specific words or phrases between the DTr and ITr

4.6.1 Omissions

Within the analysed section of the story omission of a culturally specific word or phrase only took place twice.

k'ŭjjido chakchido anŭn k'i, kilchido tchalchido anŭn tanbalmŏri, kakchiri irŏnan norŭsŭrŭmhan p'ibu, **oekkŏp'ul nune** yakkan t'wiŏnaon kwangdaeppeyŏ, kaesŏngissŏ poinŭn kŏsŭl turyŏwŏhanŭn tŭt'an much'aesaegŭi otch'arim. [크지도 작지도 않은 키, 길지도 짧지도 않은 단발머리, 각질이 일어난 노르스름한 피부,

외꺼풀 눈에 약간 튀어나온 광대뼈, 개성있어 보이는 것을 두려워하는 듯한

무채색의 옷차림.] (Kang, 3; own emphasis)

<p>Groot noch klein, een lang noch kort geknipte bob, een gelige schilferende huid, licht uitstekende jukbeenderen onder ogen met enkelvoudige oogleden, en een outfit zo grijs alsof ze bang was ook maar iets van haar persoonlijkheid boven te laten komen. (Verstraete, 3; own emphasis)</p>	<p>Middling height; bobbed hair neither long nor short; jaundiced, sickly-looking skin; somewhat prominent cheekbones; her timid sallow aspect told me all I needed to know. (Smith, 3)</p> <hr/> <p>Gemiddelde lengte; recht afgeknipt haar, niet lang en niet kort; een gelige, ongezonde teint; jukbeenderen die een beetje uitstaken; haar schuwe, vale voorkomen zei me genoeg. (Eggermont, 3)</p>
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The first omission can be found in the description of the wife when the husband meets her for the first time. The omission initially left out in Smith’s translation and therefore also not present in Eggermont’s is the description of the eyes being single-lidded. Since this is not considered ‘normal’ to both Anglophone and Dutch speaking audiences, most of whom have double-lidded eyelids, Smith might have left this phrase out to ensure that the readers would see the wife as someone with no special features as the entire sequence is supposed to show how absolutely normal the wife is. Be that as it may, leaving this out erases part of the Korean culture where having double-lidded eyelids is seen as special and beautiful to the point where many Koreans turn to plastic surgery in order to obtain them.

syabŭsyabŭyong soegogirŭl hoch'uwa **chukyŏm**, ch'amgirŭmŭro kanhago ch'apssalgarurŭl aptwiro ip'in twi kuwŏ mach'i ttŏgina chŏn kattŏn kŭnyŏmanŭi t'ŭkpyŏlshik. [샤브샤브용 쇠고기를 후추와 **죽염**, 참기름으로 간하고 찹쌀가루를

앞뒤로 입힌 뒤 구워 마치 떡이나 전 같던 그녀만의 특별식.] (Kang, 230; own emphasis)

Haar eigen specialiteit die leek op *tteok* of *jeon* gemaakt van rundsvlees voor shabu shabu besprenkeld met peper, **bamboezout** en sesamolie, die ze afbakte na ze rondom rond bedekt te hebben met kleefrijstmeel. (Verstraete, 240; own emphasis)

Her signature dish had been wafer-thin slices of beef seasoned with black pepper and sesame oil, then coated with sticky rice powder as generously as you would with rice cakes or pancakes, and dipped in bubbling shabu-shabu broth. (Smith, 220)

Ze blonk uit met een schotel van flinterdunnen stukjes rundvlees, op smaak gebracht met zwarte peper en sesamolie, daarna bedekt met een flinke laag plakkerig rijstmeel, zoals je rijstkoekjes of pannenkoeken maakt, en gedoopt in borrelende shabu-shabu-bouillon. (Eggermont, 220)

Food plays a central role in the narrative and multiple references to certain types of foods are made. With Korean cuisine being fairly unknown in English and Dutch speaking countries, especially at the time Smith and Eggermont translated *ch'aesikjuŭija*, it is not unthinkable that food-related words and phrases underwent some transformations, including simply omitting them. To both Smith's and Eggermont's credit, this omitting-tactic was employed only once and could even be considered an omission to increase the readability of an already long sentence.

4.6.2 Addition

Another strategy of bridging the gap between cultures is by adding extra information. In the ITr, inspired by the mediating text, this approach was used five times where the DTr did not. Some examples are shown below.

myötshigan chöne naega syawörül haessümüro, küttae muri t'win süllip'öga ajik
ch'agapke chöjö issötta. [몇시간 전에 내가 샤워를 했으므로, 그때 물이 튼

슬리퍼가 아직 차갑게 젖어 있었다.] (Kang, 82)

Ik had een paar uur eerder gedoucht en de badkamerslippers waren nog steeds koud en nat van het toen opgespatte water. (Verstraete, 84)	I'd showered only a few hours ago, so my plastic shower slippers were still cold and damp. (Smith, 81; own emphasis)
	Ik had een paar uur geleden gedoucht, dus mijn plastic badslippers waren nog koud en vochtig. (Eggermont, 81; own emphasis)

In Korea a specific set of slippers is to be used only in the bathroom. When one uses the bathroom they should change from the slippers worn in the rest of the house, that are often made of wool or towelling, to a set of plastic slippers – as these are water resistant – at the bathroom threshold. Since Anglophone and Dutch readers might associate the word ‘slipper’ solely with the first described variant, unaware of the Korean custom of having a specific set of bathroom slippers made from a different fabric, the assumption can be made that Smith added the word “plastic”, which Eggermont translated as well, in the example above to avoid confusion.

künyönün pulp'ane öñch'in kalbirül iksuk'an somssiro twijibötko, hansone
chipkerül, tarün hansone k'ün kawirül tülgo ssükssük challanaenün p'umi
tümjik'aetta. [그녀는 불판에 얹힌 갈비를 익숙한 솜씨로 뒤집었고, 한손에 집게를,

다른 한손에 큰 가위를 들고 쓱쓱 잘라내는 품이 듬직했다.] (Kang, 227)

Ze draaide ribbetjes op de grill om met de kundigheid van een expert, met een tang in de ene hand en een grote schaar in de andere knipte ze autoritair	Tongs in one hand and a large pair of scissors in the other, she'd flipped rib meat in a sizzling pan whilst snipping it into bite-sized pieces , her movements
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de grote stukken vlees door zonder enige moeite. (Verstraete, 236)

deft and practised. (Smith, 218; own emphasis)

Met een tang in de ene en een grote schaar in de andere hand had ze een ribstuk in een sissende pan omgedraaid terwijl ze het met soepele, geoefende bewegingen **in hapklare stukjes** knipte. (Eggermont, 218; own emphasis)

This example displays some additional information of a Korean food-related custom in Smith's and subsequently Eggermont's translation of the sentence. As Koreans use chopsticks to eat with most of the time, they tend to cut their food in bite-sized pieces, often using a set of big scissors to do so, while preparing it. Anyone familiar with this custom will therefore immediately understand the image described in the sentence above solely with the words "scissors" and "to cut". However, as previously mentioned, there is a high probability that Anglophone and Dutch readers have never encountered such a situation. Consequently, Eggermont and Smith clarified this aspect of Korean culture by adding "in hapklare stukjes" (in bite-sized pieces).

4.6.3 Vocabulary Differences

Aside from leaving out culturally specific words or adding some extra information to explain them, one can also try to actually translate them or simply leave them as they are. Diverging approaches between Eggermont and myself have led to six lines with differences on word-level when it comes to culture related aspects, including the following examples.

t'öng piö issötta. **misutkaruwa** koch'utkaru, öllin p'utkoch'u, tajin manül hanbongjiga türö issül ppuniötta. [텃 비어 있었다. **미숫가루**와 고춧가루, 얼린 풋고추, 다진 마늘 한봉지가 들어 있을 뿐이었다.] (Kang, 190-191; own emphasis)

Helemaal leeg. Er zat enkel nog **graanpoeder**, chilipoeder, bevroren groene chilipepers en een zakje fijngehakte knoflook in. (Verstraete, 197-198; own emphasis)

It was practically empty - nothing but **miso powder**, chilli powder, frozen fresh chillies, and a pack of minced garlic. (Smith, 185; own emphasis)

Hij was praktisch leeg - alleen **misopoeder**, chilipoeder, bevroren pepertjes en een pak fijgehakte knoflook. (Eggermont, 185; own emphasis)

The example above shows how I translated *misutkaru* [미숫가루] into “graanpoeder” (grain powder), while Eggermont opted for “misopoeder” (miso powder) as this is the way Smith described the ingredient in her translation. Despite Eggermont and Smith seemingly staying very close to the Korean with ‘*misu*’ [미수] being translated to “miso” and ‘*karu*’ [가루] meaning ‘powder’ to “poeder” (powder), the word “misopoeder” (miso powder) actually refers to a type of Japanese seasoning with fermented soybeans as its main ingredient. The Korean *misutkaru* [미숫가루], however, is made from grains such as rice, which is why I opted for the translation of “graanpoeder” (grain powder).

kulgŭn kamjarŭl ssŏrŏnŏŭn **taktorit'angŭn** ōttaettŏn'ga. [굵은 감자를 썰어넣은

닭도리탕은 어땀던가.] (Kang, 232; own emphasis)

Om nog maar te zwijgen over haar huisgemaakte **dakdoritang** met grote stukken aardappel, groenten en gekookte kip, en nog veel meer. (Verstraete, 241; own emphasis)

There had also been a thick **chicken and duck soup** with large chunks of potato, and a spicy broth packed full of tender clams and mussels[...] (Smith, 222; own emphasis)

Er was ook goedgevulde **kippen- en eendensoep** geweest met grote

stukken aardappel, en een kruidige
bouillon stampvol zachte clams en
mosselen[...] (Eggermont, 222; own
emphasis)

In most cases, when it came to the names of specific Korean dishes, I chose to leave the Korean term, occasionally adding some extra information as can be seen in the example above with the dish *taktorit'ang* [닭도리탕]. In contrast, Smith, whom Eggermont trusted in providing correct translations for dishes she was unfamiliar with, tended to translate the names by splitting them and translating each section separately, similarly to the “misopoeder” translation discussed previously. In this case the word was most likely split up as ‘*tak*’ [닭], ‘*tori*’ [도리], and ‘*t'ang*’ [탕]. *tak* [닭] meaning ‘chicken’ and *t'ang* [탕] referring to a type of soup allows for a translation such as “kippensoep” (chicken soup). However, the etymology of *tori* [도리] is uncertain, some claiming it stems from the Japanese term *tori* [と り] (bird) and others stating the word is purely Korean and refers to a specific cooking and/or cutting method (S. Kim, 2015). This discussion aside, in *De vegetarian*, and subsequently *De vegetariër*, the term seems to have been confused for the similar sounding word *ori* [오리] which means duck, thus resulting in the Dutch translation of “kippen- en eendensoep” (chicken and duck soup). However, anyone familiar with *taktorit'ang* [닭도리탕] knows there is no duck in this dish whatsoever, making this another mistranslation in *De vegetariër*.

4.6.4 Syntactic Differences

In some cases varying methods in trying to bring one culture to another can result in entirely different sentences. Within the analysed section of my and Eggermont's translations of *ch'aesikjuŭija* three lines where this occurred have been found.

“ye, tūril malssūmi öpsūmnida.....” [“예, 드릴 말씀이 없습니다.....”] (Kang, 129)

‘Nee, dit zou inderdaad niet mogen gebeuren...’ (Verstraete, 134)	‘Yes, I really can't talk right now ...’ (Smith, 127)
	‘Ja, ik kan nu echt niets zeggen...’ (Eggermont, 127)

The Korean sentence above is typically used when apologising for making a mistake, mostly in a business setting. Literally translated this sentence means “Yes, I don’t have anything to say”. It is used to show agreement of everything the person scolding you is saying by essentially expressing you have nothing to add. As a literal translation of this statement is not commonly used in Dutch, I opted to slightly change it whilst keeping the level of agreement that forms the foundation of this sentence, resulting in “Nee, dit zou inderdaad niet mogen gebeuren...” (No, this should indeed not happen...). Contrastingly, Eggermont, influenced by the mediating text, used a more literal translation, “Ja, ik kan nu echt niets zeggen...” (Yes, I really cannot say anything right now...), losing the underlying meaning of the statement.

köjöktaegirül kötko tūrögan sun'gan pwassö. [거적때기를 걷고 들어간 순간 봤어.]

(Kang, 157)

<i>Toen ik over de stromat binnenliep, zag ik het.</i> (Verstraete, 165)	<i>Straw matting flapping limp across the door. Roll it up and I'm inside, it's inside.</i> (Smith, 153-154)
	<i>Stromat flappert slap voor de ingang. Oprollen en ik ben binnen, het is binnen.</i> (Eggermont, 153-154)

Here, in *De vegetariër* a misunderstanding of the word *köjöktaegi* [거적때기] (straw mat) seems to have occurred due to the mediating text, which has resulted in a dissimilar sentence when comparing it with my own direct translation. Even though Eggermont and I used the exact same word to translate *köjöktaegi* [거적때기], i.e.

“stromat”, the position of this straw mat, and therefore the actions related to it, are vastly different. In Korea this type of straw mat is usually spread on the ground or a dirt floor to provide extra sturdiness. Therefore, in the Korean ST the verb *kötta* [걷다] (to walk) is used in combination with this word. However, in *De vegetariër* the straw mat has been interpreted as hanging in front of the entrance as a type of door. This interpretation has resulted in two very different verbs being used with the straw mat, “flappert” (flapping) and “oprollen” (roll up), creating an alternate image from the ST.

4.6.5 The Influence of Smith's *The vegetarian*

The entirety of the culturally specific terms and phrases translated differently in Eggermont's translation compared to my own were directly translated from Smith *The vegetarian* (Table 11). While admittedly the additions introduced by Smith are quite helpful and subtle and even one of the omissions can be considered inconsequential, the fact that the vocabulary and syntactic differences are mostly due to incorrect interpretation by Smith, which are subsequently present in Eggermont's translation, reveals another danger of using an ITr-method. Since Eggermont was unacquainted with Korean culture, she was also unaware of any misinterpreted culturally specific words or phrases on Smith's part, which in fact has lowered the quality of *De vegetariër* due to no fault of Eggermont's own.

Difference in translation of culturally specific word or phrase due to mediating text?	Absolute frequency in number of lines	Relative frequency in %
Yes	13	100
No	0	0

Table 11: Differences in the translation of culturally specific words or phrases influenced by the mediating text

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Despite often being looked down upon, indirect translation (ITr) is very much part of the translation world. A recent surge in scholarship surrounding this phenomenon has pointed out not only the negative consequences ITr can have, but also the positive effects of this approach. Be that as it may, it is undeniable that ITr will have some kind of influence on the ultimate target text (TT). The goal of this thesis was to examine how much impact a mediating text can have on the TT and its positive or negative influence on relaying the source text (ST), by comparing an ITr to a direct translation (DTr). A section of the Korean novel *ch'aesikjuŭija* by Han Kang was used as a case study.

When the Dutch publishing house Nijgh & Van Ditmar discovered *ch'aesikjuŭija* through Deborah Smith's English translation of the novel, they ordered a Dutch translation to be made. However, at that time, practically no Korean-Dutch literary translators were active, forcing the publisher to opt for an ITr-approach. They asked Monique Eggermont, an English-Dutch literary translator, to translate *ch'aesikjuŭija* using Deborah Smith's English translation. In this thesis' case study, I examined the impact of Smith's *The vegetarian* on Eggermont's translation. This was researched by comparing a section of Eggermont's *De vegetariër* with a translation I made myself directly from Korean into Dutch of the corresponding text in *ch'aesikjuŭija*. Considering the controversy surrounding Smith's translation of *ch'aesikjuŭija*, which some view as an inept translation and even consider it to be an entirely different story from the original (J.-R. Cho, 2017; D.-J. Kim, 2016; W.-D. Kim, 2018; Y. Kim, 2016; I. Lee, 2017; K. S. Lee, 2016), a high degree of dissimilarities was expected.

Before the actual analysis a few high-level observations could be made. First, it was found that Eggermont's ITr was not only shorter than both my self-produced DTr and the original ST, but consisted of the exact same number of lines as Smith's translation. In combination with the largely similar punctuation, this indicates that Eggermont did not take many liberties in terms of sentence division and order, staying rather close to the mediating text, which is in line with observations made by Špirk (2014). This was also confirmed through further analysis. Another observation came in the diverging ways the story itself is printed, especially when it comes to the division of 'parts'. Even though my translation is not printed I would opt for a clearer

partition similar to the ST, which is different from Eggermont's *De vegetariër* where the division are almost unnoticeable.

Through the analysis, it was found that 75% of the assessed fragment showed distinct differences. These were divided up into subcategories, based on W.-D. Kim's (2018) classification of overt translation errors found in Smith's *The vegetarian*. Each ITr sentence containing variations compared to the corresponding DTr sentence was labelled with one or more of these subdivisions. The majority of the dissimilarities was found to be syntactic (69%), followed by vocabulary differences (27%). Omission and addition accounted for 26% each and 7% of the studied text contained differences in the translation of culturally specific words and phrases.

The analysis was expanded through another layer of classification within each of these subcategories to get a better understanding of how these differences could potentially impact the story overall and/or the reader's experience. Omission and addition consisted of words (61% and 46%, respectively), phrases (35% and 56%), and sentences (8% and 2%). In most cases, word-level omissions were found to be of little consequence to the story and were most likely introduced to increase readability. However, instances where these seemingly small omissions caused detrimental consequences, such as potential character misinterpretations by readers and the loss of symbolism, were also found. Word-level additions often consisted of adjectives introduced to heighten emotions. Despite this allowing for a more pleasant and familiar reading experience for Dutch audiences, these minor additions possibly undermine Kang's writing style, which is often straightforward and emotionless. Phrase-level additions and omissions were even more influential. While a few of these types of omissions could be considered inconsequential, most of them affected the narrative and/or reading experience. Furthermore, phrase-level additions often undermined characterisation and took away subtleties and implications presented for the reader to read between the lines. Finally, sentence-level omissions and additions tended to harm the stories continuity, making the timeline of the narrative less clear to readers and sometimes even changing it.

Vocabulary differences were further divided into interpretation differences (42%), possible mistranslations (32%), and other (28%). Even though diverging vocabulary interpretations were the most frequently encountered differences in this category,

they were mostly insignificant in terms of influencing the story and reader experiences. Nonetheless, this does not make up for the high number of possible mistranslations and other differences that impacted these aspects considerably and were detrimental to the quality of the TT. Possible mistranslations were found to have influenced characterisation and continuity, while other differences erased intended repetitions and specific word choices which embody Kang's writing style.

The syntactic differences mostly involved diverging sentence divisions and order (66%) followed by interpretation differences (20%), other (17%), different tense (13%), and possible misinterpretations of the subject (7%). Similar to the vocabulary differences, the main bulk of the syntactic differences, i.e. diverging sentence divisions and order, was largely inconsequential. However, some cases were found to disturb the rhythm and flow present in Kang's ST through the omission of, once again, intended repetition and also emphasis created by varying sentence length. Comparable consequences were found in the interpretation differences as well as in the 'other' category. A change in tense was mostly noticeable in the dream sequence where it might have been introduced to bring the reader closer to the narrator, a feature that was accomplished in the ST through the use of a more informal speech level. As the Dutch language does not have the same plethora of speech levels as Korean, this tense change was a good attempt to replicate the feeling of a change in speech level. However, this does bear some consequences on the continuity front, making it more difficult for readers to follow the intended timeline. This was also one of the effects of possible misinterpretations of the subject. With the Korean language allowing the omission of subjects and objects when these are supposedly obvious through context, there is a possibility of interpreting them incorrectly while translating. This seems to have happened in Eggermont's *De vegetariër* a few times – all of them instigated by Smith – leading to differences in characterisation aside from the aforementioned disruption of continuity.

Last but not least, diverging translations of culturally specific words and phrases consisted of the categories vocabulary differences (46%), addition (38%), syntactic differences (23%), and omission (15%). Of the two omissions found in this classification, one of them was of little consequence while the other erased some part of the Korean culture imbedded in the book surrounding beauty standards. While this is not the main focus of the novel and therefore one could argue that this

is also an insignificant omission, it should at least be noted that this type of cultural erasure has taken place. In terms of the culturally-motivated additions introduced by Smith and replicated by Eggermont, these actually aided in bridging the cultural gaps between Korea and Dutch speaking countries without disrupting the narrative too much. Unfortunately, they do not make up for the vocabulary and syntactic differences that are mostly rooted in a clear misunderstanding of Korean culture on Smith's part, evident in the mistranslation of, for example, food-related terms. Since Eggermont had no knowledge of the Korean culture or language, she was fully reliant on Smith's translation and had no way of knowing whenever mistakes such as these were made, causing her to repeat these same mistakes in her translation.

While some of the discussed dissimilarities overall can be considered to have little to no impact on the narrative and/or the reader's experience, the large majority in fact did introduce changes deemed of significant consequence. After comparing Eggermont's *De vegetariër* with Smith's *The vegetarian* it was discovered that over 90% of the differences were introduced by Smith and not Eggermont. Eggermont's translation could actually be reasoned to be a good one as she managed to stay extremely close to Smith's *The vegetarian* while maintaining a highly readable Dutch text, a trend visible in other language pairs as well (Ringmar, 2007, p. 11; Špirk, 2014). However, due to the many alterations in Smith's translation of *ch'aesikjuŭija*, Eggermont's *De vegetariër* cannot be considered a close rendering of the original ST. Entire character arcs as well as many characteristics of Kang's writing style have been erased or altered in the official Dutch translation of *ch'aesikjuŭija*. The root cause seems to be the combination of Smith's very 'liberal' translation style motivated by her more reader-friendly, pro-domestication beliefs and Eggermont's little knowledge of the Korean language and culture, making her therefore completely dependent on the mediating text. Additionally, in line with Ringmar's (2007) and Park et al.'s (2015) observations, some (mis)interpretations of the mediating text made by Eggermont as well as a few other omissions and additions she introduced in her translation have caused *De vegetariër* to be even more disconnected from the original ST than the already far-removed mediating text.

Even though the ITr-method allowed Dutch language readers to access *ch'aesikjuŭija* at a time when Korean literature was only just gaining international recognition, it is also due to this approach that Eggermont's translation cannot be

considered an actual interpretation of the ST. This is evidenced by the many differences observed between my DTr and Eggermont's ITr of the same text and their possible detrimental effect on the story and/or the reader's experience.

This thesis is limited by the fact that only a portion of one book and one language pair could be examined. Further studies involving more texts could shed more light on both the various effects of ITr on the introduction of unfamiliar cultures and languages to a wider public. Further research on whether a more literally translated mediating text, or at least one made with a more foreignizing mindset, would aid in the creation of a TT more similar to a DTr of the same text and if the differences still present would have similar damaging consequences as the ones found in *De vegetariër* could help us in understanding what the best course of action would be in case an ITr-approach is, for whatever reason, used.

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