Hybridity in Theatre Translation: Surtitling *Pavla above the Precipice* for International Audiences[1]

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Abstract

In Slovenia, surtitles are increasingly used to facilitate access to the textual content of a play when it is performed for an international audience. The process of creating a translation in the format of surtitles is characterized by complexity and hybridity, as a translation of a theatre text, even when available, needs to be adapted for a different medium. This paper examines how English surtitles for the Slovenian play *Pavla nad prepadom / Pavla above the Precipice* were created by comparing four versions of the text of the performance.

Keywords: theatre translation, surtitles, hybrid translation, intersemiotic translation, intrasemiotic translation

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INTRODUCTION

Theatre surtitling challenges the traditional framework of translation. In terms of modality, it is a hybrid form of translation, where the written source text of the play is modified and spoken on the stage, while its written translation is adapted for captioning: the speech of the live performance on the stage is thus accompanied by a written translation displayed on a screen. Another level of the hybridity of surtitling is underlined by Griesel, who points out that surtitles are prepared in advance, but then displayed simultaneously with the live performance (120).

The hybrid nature of surtitling challenges our understanding of the author, source text, target text, audience and translator, i.e., key concepts in the field of translation studies, which are characterized by a great degree of fluidity in the case of surtitling. Surtitling does not fit the traditional models of translation: referring to Jakobson's (233) typology of translation, Chaume ("Is audiovisual translation" 88-92) explores how audiovisual translation practices combine elements of inter-lingual (between two languages), intralingual (within one language) and interse-miotic translation (between different kinds of signs).

In Slovenian theatres, the use of surtitles in live performances is becoming increasingly more common (for more details, see Ropoša 14), as it makes theatre productions accessible to wider audiences, including international audiences and hearing-impaired viewers. The Mladinsko Theatre was quick to adopt surtitling for its performances due to its frequent attendance at international festivals (see also Ropoša 15-17), where this type of audiovisual translation has become standard practice.

This paper examines the complexities of surtitling by focusing on the production of English surtitles for the Slovenian play *Pavla nad prepadom / Pavla above the Precipice*. Four versions of the text are analysed for this purpose: the text of the play in Slovenian, the stage version in Slovenian, the English translation and the English surtitles.

Specifically, the present paper addresses the following research question: How is the text of the play *Pavla nad prepadom / Pavla above the Precipice* modified in the different stages of creating English surtitles?

THE PRODUCTION OF *PAVLA NAD PREPADOM / PAVLA ABOVE THE PRECIPICE*[2]

Pavla above the Precipice is a production of the Mladinsko Theatre. The Mladinsko Theatre is called *Slovensko mladinsko gledališče* (literally, Slovenian Youth Theatre)

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2   The original Slovenian title of the play is *Pavla nad prepadom*, but as the English version of the title is used in English-language texts about the performance, the English translation of the title is used in the present paper.

in Slovenian. The theatre was established in 1955 in Ljubljana as a theatre for children and young audiences. According to the information on its official webpage, the 1980s represented a turning point for the theatre, which "took a new step and deliberately expanded its programme, in which it linked – and continues to link – political criticism and provocativeness with innovative performative procedures and fresh poetics, to attract the audiences of all ages" (Mladinsko Theatre).

The production of *Pavla above the Precipice* premiered on 5 December 2013 under the direction of Matjaž Pograjc, a prominent Slovenian theatre director who is well known for his particular style of physical theatre, as well as his innovative search for new approaches using hybrid theatre genres. The play was originally written by Andrej E. Skubic, award-winning Slovenian novelist and acclaimed literary translator, whose original writings and translations are renowned for his skillful mastery of a range of different sociolects (see Umer Kljun for more details). Skubic's translation *œuvre* includes theatre plays, and his own novel, *Fužinski blues* (*Fužine Blues* in English translation), has been staged by the Slovenian National Theatre Drama.

Skubic (6) reports that he was approached by Matjaž Pograjc in October 2012, and asked to write a play about a Slovenian mountain climber, either Pavla Jesih or Mira Marko Debelak, and Skubic eventually chose Jesih. Skubic (6) points out that he is not used to being commissioned to write and was unfamiliar with both women, as well as with the subject of mountain climbing, but was fascinated by their biographies. In an interview in *Dnevnik*, Skubic explained that he was familiar with Pograjc's technical ideas, including the climbing wall and the animation, as well as his poetics, in advance, and that he took those issues into account when writing the play (Krkoč Lasič). Thus Toporišič ("(Ne več)" 96) highlights *Pavla above the Precipice* as a case of close collaboration between the stage production and the theatre text, where the play was commissioned by the director who also explained his idea of the production, choreography, visual elements etc., to the author. Similarly, Pezdirc Bartol (361) describes Skubic's play *Pavla above the Precipice* as written based on documentary materials and Pograjc's staging concept.

The play focuses on the life of Pavla Jesih, a Slovenian mountain climber and the owner of the biggest chain of cinemas in Yugoslavia in the 1930s, addressing complex ethical and ideological issues. Encapsulating the main themes of the play, Pezdirc Bartol (362) singles out the biographical details, as well as insights into the social, political and cultural context, rivalry among mountain climbers and the image of an educated businesswoman trying to succeed in a man's world. Skubic (7) characterizes Jesih as a woman who ignored social barriers and could be friends with bishops and communists alike, and who supported the resistance movement during World War II. However, Jesih's downfall came after the end of World War II and the change of the political regime, when in line with the

communist views all the cinemas were nationalized, and Jesih herself was seen as a capitalist (see Toporišič "Predstava" 10) and was accused of having collaborated with the Nazi regime.

Tina Malič from the Mladinsko Theatre provided details on subsequent modifications of the text. The text of the play *Pavla above the Precipice* (henceforth SLO1) underwent the usual type of adaptations in the process of preparing the play for staging. This allowed the director, in collaboration with his cast and production crew, including the dramaturg and the language advisor, to develop his own interpretation of the play, and prepare the written text for spoken theatre (for more details on preparing a theatre text for speaking in Slovenian contexts, see Čebulj 76). The final version of the text used in staging (henceforth SLO2) was archived by the theatre; the stage version is the source text for translation. Because the Mladinsko Theatre is an active participant in numerous international festivals and regularly organizes performances catering to international audiences in Ljubljana, which is also evident from the Mladinsko Theatre webpage,[3] surtitles in different languages are produced for much of its repertoire (Ropoša 15-16, 21). In the case of *Pavla above the Precipice*, Skubic, the author of the text of the play and a renowned translator, was commissioned to produce an English translation of the performance (henceforth ENG1), which was used as the basis for surtitling (according to Ropoša (23) outsourcing the translation is standard practice at the Mladinsko Theatre). The source text for the English version was SLO2; the choice of the source text reflects an excellent awareness of the fact that translations of the original play are less helpful in surtitling (cf. Ladouceur 51). Tina Malič, a theatre surtitler working for the Mladinsko Theatre, used Skubic's English translation ENG1 to produce the English surtitles for the play. The surtitler consulted the translator where major changes were made. A few minor changes were made to the surtitles once the play was staged, and the third version of the surtitles is currently considered to be the final version (henceforth ENG2).

THEATRE SURTITLING

Mele Scorcia (181) identifies surtitling as the dominant form of language transfer in contemporary theatre, attributing this to the fact that surtitles are relatively unobtrusive as opposed to other types of mediations, such as summarizing translation or simultaneous interpretation. The potential of surtitles has been enhanced with the emergence of new technologies: as Oncins (43) points out "[r]apid technological developments have opened up new surtitling possibilities". According to Mele Scorcia (181) surtitles were initially introduced in the context of the opera

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3   See https://mladinsko.com/sl/dogodki/17/mladinsko-showcase/.

in the 1980s, but they have become a ubiquitous feature of both opera and theatre performances in a wide range of settings, including international festivals, major theatre and opera houses, to ensure accessibility to international audiences or visitors with hearing impairment.

Surtitling is a form of audiovisual translation, specifically, a form of captioning, one of two main macro modes of audiovisual translation according to Chaume ("Is audiovisual translation" 84). Captioning constitutes "the addition of text onto or next to the screen" in interlingual or intralingual translation ("Is audiovisual translation" 84), the other mode being revoicing, i.e., "the addition of a spoken voice in the same or in a different language" ("Is audiovisual translation" 84). Mele Scorcia (84) draws a parallel between subtitling and surtitling, pointing out that both audiovisual translation practices involve projecting on a screen a condensed translation, comprising one or two lines containing under 40 characters "at the same time as the source text is spoken". She claims that the similarities between the two audiovisual translation modalities, for instance the space and time constraints, result in similar strategies, including avoidance of repetition and long words, maintenance of semantic unity, search for simplicity and readability, or dismissal of literary translation strategies (Mele Scorcia 84).

However, surtitling differs from subtitling in one key aspect: surtitles are projected live on stage during the performance by the surtitler. Griesel (123) points out that spontaneous reaction required of the surtitler is similar to that arising in interpreting. Similarly, Mele Scorcia (84) also underlines this difference between theatre from film subtitling: whereas the film is pre-produced, the performance is unique and cannot be reproduced, which means that "unexpected changes can occur (e.g., actors improvising or forgetting lines, technical failures, an interactive audience)" making 'that' representation unique.

The multimodal nature of the performance has a profound impact on surtitling. As Mateo (135) underlines, surtitles "form part of a multisemiotic product, in which the verbal target text goes hand in hand with aural and visual elements which were originally created for the source text and are carried over to the target context with no alterations". Consequently, surtitles "can only be understood as one more element in the multisemiotic complex, their production is marked by the need for efficiency and for coherence and synchronization with all other elements" (Mateo 135-136).

Researchers focusing on surtitling have repeatedly drawn attention to a key difference between regular translation and surtitles; i.e., the fact that they do not constitute a freestanding text. Thus, for instance, Ladouceur (50) points out that "conventional translation exists autonomously from the source text, which allows the translator to modify considerably the contents or structure of the source text", whereas surtitles "must be closely linked to the source text, as the different

versions are present simultaneously on stage". Vera Konjović (119), a surtitler at the Belgrade international theatre festival Bitef, highlights a common misconception that surtitles constitute a complete text which simply needs to be broken down, reducing the practice to simply counting the number of characters, as she puts it, as if there is no "difference between the ear and the eye".

In the context of the opera surtitling, Virkkunen (93) raises the question of what the source text is in surtitling, pointing out how different the case of opera surtitles is from a novel, where the source text is very clearly defined. She questions the idea, found in the literature, that the dramatic text is the source text of the surtitles, arguing, based on her own experience as a surtitler, that the stage interpretation might be considered the source text instead. Although Virkkunen's work focuses on the opera, her observations about the differences between the text and the *mise en scène* clearly apply to the theatre stage as well.

METHOD

The method used in the present study was in-depth qualitative text analysis. Four versions of the text, outlined above, were compared in the analysis:
-   SLO1, the first version, is the original text of the play in Slovenian, written by Skubic, published in the journal *Sodobnost* in 2014 and available online at the Digital Library of Slovenia (Digitalna knjižnica Slovenije) - dLib.si.[4]
-   SLO2, the second version, is the Slovenian version used for staging the production. This version is a dynamic text, to which modifications are occasionally made whenever a change is made in the performance. There are a few minor differences between the final version analysed in this paper, SLO2, and the text used as the original for the English translation; these differences were ignored in the analysis, as they are irrelevant from the perspective of translation analysis. In a few cases, two versions of an expression are provided in SLO2 to reflect that the actor may choose one or the other for an individual performance.
-   ENG1, the third version, is the English translation of SLO2. The text was translated by Skubic; the purpose of commissioning the English translation was to obtain a text as the basis for creating English surtitles for the performance.
-   ENG2, the fourth version, comprises the surtitles created by the theatre surtitler; the surtitles are based on ENG1. The surtitles are also a dynamic text, to which minor modifications are occasionally made to follow the

4   See https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-MHBZ29XX?&language=eng.

changes in the performance. In a few instances, two versions of a surtitle are made in advance to enable the surtitler to choose on the spot the version that is spoken on the stage.

The four versions of the text were aligned in Excel to enable a direct comparison and were subsequently compared in terms of similarities and differences. All the changes were annotated systematically in terms of retentions, omissions, additions and alterations made to the text.[5]

In addition, the video of a live performance of *Pavla above the Precipice*, available on Vimeo,[6] was used in the analysis of surtitles when it was necessary to ascertain how the rhythm and pacing of the performance affected the content of the surtitles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The comparison of the four versions of the text reveals the adaptations and modifications that were made in each new version. The four versions differed considerably in terms of the overall length of the text. Table 1 below presents the number of words for each version.

Table 1: Number of Words in the Four Versions of the Play

Version	No. of words
SLO1	14,201
SLO2	6,463
ENG1	7,056
ENG2	6,129

Alterations made in each new version are outlined in the three sections below.

From the Slovenian Text of the Play (SLO1) to the Stage Version (SLO2)

The difference in length between SLO1 and SLO2 is quite noticeable: the total length of the text has been shortened by almost 65% (see Table 1). Although this is also partly due to a technical reason, i.e., the almost complete absence of stage

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5   The annotation scheme has not been included due to space constraints.

6   See https://vimeo.com/channels/mladinsko/113686131.

directions from SLO2 (where in SLO1 they amount to around 2,000 words), many parts of the original text of the play are also omitted from the stage version.

Differences between SLO1 and SLO2 are discernible at both the macro and micro levels. On the macro level, the number of scenes is reduced in the stage version SLO2: there are 21 scenes in SLO1 and 19 scenes in SLO2. Moreover, the order of some of the scenes and lines is changed in SLO2; this means that 17 sections of the text ranging from a single sentence to a whole scene were moved to a different place in the text. A very important change involves the introduction of new characters: while Pavla is presented as two characters in SLO1, young Pavla and old Pavla, she is staged as three characters appearing either alone or simultaneously on the stage in SLO2. Finally, in a few cases, individual lines are spoken by a different character in SLO2 than in SLO1.

On the micro level, individual lines are sometimes shortened or altered in different ways. The most frequent alterations can be found in Example 1.

(1) **SLO1**
ČOP: A si se razvadila, ko si imela tako na mehko postlano?
PAVLA: ***Kakor se vzame***. Nisem uživala, če to misliš. – Tega ne zastopim. Ko ***cunja*** sem. Taka še nisem bila.
ČOP: ***Daj, pridi gor.*** Imam tukaj zajtrk.

SLO2
ČOP: A si se razvadla, ko si mela tko na mehko postlan?
PAVLA: Nisem uživala, če to misliš. – Tega ne zastopim. Kot ***cuna*** sem. Taka še nisem bla.
ČOP: ***Pavla, nisi v formi.***
PAVLA: ***Ja, dobr, da si mi ti to povedal***.
ČOP: ***Dej, prid/zlez sem gor***. Mam tukej zajtrk. (***PAVLA skok do njega.***)

One of the most prominent shifts in SLO2 involves preparing the written text for speaking on the stage (see Čebulj 76). The choice of pronunciation is frequently shown in SLO2 by using an informal variant of a word as indicated by non-standard spelling, for instance *cuna* (SLO2) instead of *cunja* 'rag' (SLO1) in Example 1.

Other changes comprise minor omissions and additions to the dialogue. Thus, in Example 1, the line *Kakor se vzame* 'It depends on how you see it' from SLO1 is omitted in SLO2; while the lines ČOP: *Pavla, nisi v formi* – PAVLA: *Ja, dobr, da si mi ti to povedal.* 'ČOP: Pavla, you're out of shape. – PAVLA: Thanks for telling me that.' is added in SLO2.

As noted in the Method section, there are a few places where two different versions of the same line are given in SLO2 (where SLO1 only has one

version), where the actor may choose one or the other during a live performance as slight changes are introduced to the performance. The alternatives *Dej, prid/zlez sem gor* 'come on, come/climb up here' in Example 1 illustrate this type of option.

Finally, even though stage directions are generally omitted from SLO2, there are a few instances when they are retained or even are added. Thus in Example 1, *PAVLA skok do njega.* 'PAVLA jumps to him' is an example of such an addition.

From the Stage Version (SLO2) to the English Translation (ENG1)

The text of the English translation, ENG1, follows the stage version SLO2 quite closely. This is expected as ENG1 is the basis for the surtitles, which means that omissions, additions or alterations would be detrimental.

However, two interesting issues arise in translation into English, as evident from Example 2 below.

(2) **SLO2**
PAVLA: ***Mal prehitr je men tole.*** Ta Turn je ***zdej*** krušljiv kot ***Jalovc***, glej ga, vse dol pada, od zime odmrznjeno.
ČOP: Ja, pa sej si ga že preplezala! Kaj krušljiv? To je Triglav! Trden ko partija! Glej, ne mi reč, da te ne vleče. Ne mi … Stokrat sva ga preštudirala, stokrat. Glej, tamle je ena taka zajeda …
PAVLA: Poslušej, dejva se lotit pametno. Dejva premislit. Dejva se nekaj odločit, pa se potem tega držva. Obadva, stroprocentno.
ČOP: No, dejva.
PAVLA: Vreme. Glej, kakšno je: dežvat bo začel.
ČOP: (Dej no) V kakšnem smo mi plezal! Pa v kakšnem si ti gor bivakirala.

ENG1
PAVLA: This is too fast for me. This pillar is now crumbly like Jalovec, look at it, it's all crackling down, defrosted after winter.
ČOP: But you've crossed it already! Crumbly? It's Triglav! Solid as the Party! Look, don't tell me you're not tempted. Don't tell me … We've studied it a hundred times. Look, there's a notch there, to the left, right there next to those caverns.
PAVLA: Listen, let's do it smart. Let's think it over.
ČOP: All right, let's.

PAVLA: Let's decide, and then stick to it. Both of us, one hundred percent. The weather. Look: it's starting to rain.
ČOP: Come on. **We've** climbed in worse than that! **You've** bivvied up there in worse.

The first issue concerns the register, which reflects the different purposes of SLO2 and ENG1. The purpose of SLO2 is to serve as a detailed and accurate record of the text spoken on the stage, to be used as the starting point for potential later stagings of the play; therefore, every attempt is made to document the features of speech as closely as possible. Thus spelling indicating colloquial speech (for instance *zdej* and *Jalovc* instead of *zdaj* 'now' or *Jalovec*, the name of a mountain, from Example 2, first line), as well as other colloquialisms, typical only of spoken Slovenian, such as *Mal prehitr je men tole* 'this is a bit too fast for me' are used extensively in SLO2.

While neither SLO2 nor ENG1 are intended for publication and are not even meant to be read by the audience, the purpose of ENG1 is quite distinct from that of SLO2. ENG1 is the basis for the surtitles, i.e., text displayed on a screen for a limited period of time to be read by the audience during the performance, where elements of the spoken mode need to be reduced to improve comprehensibility. An important exception is the consistent preference for contracted forms in ENG1 (*We've, You've* in Example 2, last line); it should be noted that contracted forms are the preferred form in English surtitles (see Nolette 312).

The second issue is the translation of culture-specific elements. Such elements present a challenge to any translator, regardless of whether the source text is a novel, a play or a tourist text. This challenge is, of course, even greater when translating from a language of lesser diffusion into the global lingua franca. In the case of theatre performance translation, the options for rendering culture-specific elements in the target language are far more limited than elsewhere, as several important translation strategies, commonly used in translations of culture-specific elements, including descriptive translation, glossing, footnotes or extensive explicitation, cannot be used. Moreover, the translation decisions were also affected by the fact that ENG1 was commissioned to be used as the basis for the surtitles, where limitations of space are an important constraint. Thus some culture-specific elements are translated economically, using a borrowing. An instance of such a translation decision is the label *krjavelj* 'bumpkin' the term that Pavla uses in the original Slovenian text and in SLO2 to refer to her friend. This is a common noun converted from the proper name *Krjavelj*, a well-known character from the first Slovenian novel *Deseti brat* by Josip Jurčič, who is a bumpkin of a sort. In the English translation, it is retained as a borrowing, *krjavelj*.

Other culture-specific expressions are translated and somewhat explicitated, for instance the abbreviation *OF*, well-familiar to the Slovenian audience as the

acronym for *Osvobodilna fronta*, a clandestine resistance organization active during World War II, is translated as the *Liberation Front*. The Slovenian form of geographical names is generally retained without any additional explanation, for instance, *Vrata* (the name of a valley in the Julian Alps), *Triglav* (the highest mountain in Slovenia), etc. While this type of translation choice might indicate a preference for a foreignizing translation (in the sense of Venuti), it should be noted that in the context of preparing a text for interlingual surtitling, other factors must be taken into consideration. In addition to the space and time constraints of surtitles (Mele Scorcia 84) and their multisemiotic character (Mateo 135), the diversity of the audience (see Griesel 122) should be taken into account. For the performances of the Mladinsko Theatre surtitled in English, the audience may be quite diverse, ranging from native or non-native speakers of English completely unfamiliar with the source culture to native or non-native speakers of English familiar with the source culture or even source language, as well as native speakers of the source language fluent in English.

From the English Translation (ENG1) to the Surtitles (ENG2)

The final phase of the surtitling involved the creation of surtitles (ENG2) which were closely based on the English translation (ENG1). The majority of the surtitles for *Pavla above the Precipice* comprised one to two lines, and were timed according to the established spacing and standards (see Cintas 274-276[7]) and therefore comfortably readable. To achieve this, the surtitler had to adapt the English translation ENG1 in a number of ways.

In terms of the number of words, ENG2 is considerably (13%) shorter than ENG1 (see Table 1). This type of condensing is not unexpected; in fact, Griesel (124) mentions shortening the text by a third in preparing surtitles. An important reason for the reduced number of words is technical: names of the characters speaking individual lines are part of ENG1 but are omitted from ENG2.

Yet in spite of the fact that ENG2 is shorter than ENG1, this does not mean that all the lines were condensed in surtitles. A detailed analysis of ENG1 and ENG2 showed that out of 406 lines in ENG2, 254 (62%) remained unchanged. On the other hand, 137 lines (34%) were shorter in ENG2 than the parallel lines in ENG1, 15 (4%) were changed, while 4 lines were both shortened and changed, 5 lines (1.2%) contained some sort of an addition and 5 lines (1.2%) were completely omitted. It should be noted that text reduction in *Pavla above the Precipice*

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7   According to Cintas (274-276), standard exposure time for subtitles ranges from a minimum of one second (for very short single-line subtitles, e.g., a single word) to a maximum of 6 seconds for a full two-line, 80-character subtitle.

typically involved omission. Other adaptation techniques singled out by research into subtitling (Cintas and Remael 145; Nedergaard-Larsen 207), a different yet related form of captioning, such as condensing, summarizing, paraphrasing or reformulation, were rarely used.

Lines were shortened in different ways: in some cases, only a single word was left out, in other, much less frequent instances, the text of the line was reduced substantially (Example 3 illustrates this kind of a reduction). A comparison of the texts with the video of the performance reveals that single word omissions were more frequent when shorter lines are exchanged rapidly in the performance, while longer lines tended to be unchanged. The comparison with the video also shows that lines were shortened only when their rhythm and length exceeded the space available in the surtitles. This means that not all long lines were shortened. Rather than the length of the lines itself, it was the actors' pacing that dictated the need for adaptation.

(3) **ENG1**
PAVLA: ***You know what it's like?*** It's completely different now that the war is over. ***Now I see this rock face like –*** there's more room here.

ENG2
It's completely different now that the war is over. There's more room here.

Lines were made shorter by omitting similar types of elements. The first type of omission involves the names of the addressee in a direct address (cf. Nolette 311).

(4) **ENG1**
KHAM: ***Hey***, ***Pavlinka***! Why the long face?

ENG2
Why the long face?

Similarly, discourse markers, such as *hey*, *oh, well* and *so*, as illustrated by Examples 4 and 5, as well as longer elements with a pragmatic function comparable to that of discourse markers, such as *Come on!*, were frequently left out. Discourse markers have long been recognized as elements that tend to be omitted in audiovisual translation, where brevity is an imperative (see Chaume "Discourse markers" 843). Chaume ("Discourse markers" 855) suggests that translators of audiovisual texts perhaps "prefer to lose interpersonal meaning than semantic meaning".

(5) **ENG1**
So, how are you doing, Pavla?

ENG2
How are you doing, Pavla?

Taking into consideration the space and time constraints, it is not surprising that repetitions were regularly omitted (Example 6) (see also Mele Scorcia 183).

(6) **ENG1**
PAVLA: The highest you've been in the last four years is Šmarna Gora. — Look, you've climbed the Face a hundred times …
ČOP: *A hundred?* Two hundred times!

ENG2
The highest you've been in the last four years is Šmarna Gora. Look, you've climbed the Face a hundred times**.**
Two hundred times!

In the same way, there was a fairly systematic tendency to omit question tags, as well as profanities[8] and some types of adverbs (e.g., intensifiers). Example 7 illustrates the omission of all three categories.

(7) **ENG1**
MARUŠA: I just had to do it. You think it was *just* because you're so *bloody* persuasive? It's tough to force a frog into water, *isn't it*?

ENG2
I just had to do it. You think it was because you're so persuasive? It's tough to force a frog into water!

All of these types of omission are in accordance with the so-called "Gunta's Rules", i.e., a surtitling standard introduced by Gunta Dreifelds, a senior surtitler at the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto, outlined by Nolette (311-312), which specify an avoidance of redundancy. In fact, Nolette (311) identifies two key issues in surtitling raised by Dreifelds: "the objective of capturing the essence of the performance, and the ethos of condensation and economy".

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8   According to Cintas (278) profanities are perceived as more offensive in writing as opposed to speech; they therefore tend to be systematically deleted and downtoned in subtitling.

Finally, it should be noted that punctuation was simplified, as illustrated by the omission of the long dash in Example 6. This confirms the standard described by Nolette (312), specifically the section of "Gunta's Rules" which proposes that in surtitles "[t]he use of punctuation should be limited to a period followed by a single space; exclamation points and dashes are not to be included in titles."

Finally, in some cases the modifications involved replacing a word with its shorter synonym, to ensure that the number of characters did not exceed the standard. This was the case with Example 8, where *unfortunately* is replaced with *regrettably*.

> (8) **ENG1**
> SODNIK: ***Unfortunately***, Comrade Brenk is in Belgrade.
>
> **ENG2**
> ***Regrettably***, Comrade Brenk is in Belgrade.

In a very small number of instances, the surtitler, after consulting the translator, altered the translation strategy from ENG1. A notable example of such an alteration is the translation equivalent for *krjavelj* 'bumpkin', which was rendered as *krjavelj* in ENG1, but changed into *woodhead* in the surtitles (ENG2). It seems likely that the change from borrowing, i.e., using a word from the source language, to adaptation, i.e., replacing the culture-bound expression with a cultural equivalent in the target language (for a more detailed outline of translation techniques, see Molina, Hurtado Albir 509-510), reflects the need to make the text more easily accessible to an international audience unfamiliar with the source culture.

In spite of the general tendency to condense the text in ENG2, there were a few instances where a detail was added in the final version of surtitles. Ropoša (24) notes that additional information sometimes needs to be provided for international viewers unfamiliar with the cultural context of Slovenia, yet recognizes that such additions may be avoided because of the space constraints. In *Pavla above the Precipice*, explicitation can already be identified in ENG1. In ENG2, only a few minor additions can be found. In Example 9, the addition of the demonstrative pronoun "that" possibly reveals Pavla's annoyance with Brenk: whereas prosody reveals the speaker's negative attitude to the Slovenian-speaking audience, the English-speaking audience, relying on reading the surtitles, obtains this information from the additional word. Alternatively, what seems to be an addition to the text may simply reflect a slight change to the text of the performance: in the recorded version of the performance, which contains subtitles based on the first version of surtitles, the subtitle is simply *Brenk*, without the demonstrative pronoun, which is the same as the text uttered on the stage. As noted above, slight changes

were gradually introduced to the Slovenian text of the performance, which were closely followed by the surtitles; it therefore seems possible that this was one such instance.

(9) **ENG1**
PAVLA: Brenk.

ENG2
That Brenk.

To sum up, all types of modifications, including omission, addition and alteration, made in ENG2 were made to ensure an easier processing for an international audience unfamiliar with the source culture, whose attention is necessarily divided between the stage and the surtitles.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to explore the hybrid and complex nature of theatre surtitles, by focusing on the production of English surtitles for the performance of *Pavla above the Precipice*. Four versions of the text, the original text of the play, the stage version, the English translation and the English surtitles, were compared to investigate the modifications made in the process of creating the surtitles. The analysis showed that the first stage of the processes, the creation of the stage version (cf. Virkkunen 91-92), introduced content adaptations, intersemiotic adaptations, i.e., adapting the text for speaking (for instance by marking a certain pronunciation, cf. Čebulj 76) and considerable reductions. The second stage of the process, the interlingual translation from Slovenian into English, brought another round of intersemiotic shifts (adapting the written record of a spoken text for reading), as well as cultural adaptation. In the third and final stage of the process, the creation of surtitles, intralingual modifications entailed reducing the text according to the established norms of surtitling (cf. Nolette 311-312; Ropoša 21-25 for the practice in Slovenian theatres).

When the reasons for the changes made in the process of surtitling *Pavla above the Precipice* and their results were examined in more detail, several interesting observations emerged. Two conflicting tendencies shaped the text of the English surtitles: adaptation for international audiences, where explicitation is important to make culture-specific content accessible, and the space and time constraints of captioning, which entail reduction and condensation. *Pavla above the Precipice* is a play set in a very specific historical context, and surtitles have a crucial role in

providing access to the content for an audience not familiar with Slovenian culture or history. The intersemiotic shifts between the written and spoken modalities inevitably affect the text of the surtitles as well, as colloquial and non-standard elements are reduced to a minimum.

The present study is based on the analysis and comparison of different versions of the performance of *Pavla above the Precipice*; yet the results of the analysis raise a number of interesting issues that merit further attention. To gain insight into the process of surtitling, it is necessary to combine text analysis with process data. In-depth discourse-based interviews with the agents involved in creating and modifying the texts, i.e., the author/translator, the surtitler, and other agents, would shed light on the choice of writing, adaptation and translation strategies. In addition, by focusing on the attitudes and experiences of the audience, future research on the reception of the surtitles of *Pavla above the Precipice* might lead to a better understanding of the challenges associated with surtitling a performance in a peripheral language, such a Slovenian, in English for international audiences.

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Hibridnost v prevajanju za gledališče: nadnapisi *Pavle nad prepadom* za mednarodno občinstvo

V Sloveniji so nadnapisi vse pogosteje uporabljeni za omogočanje razumevanja vsebine besedila gledališke igre, ko je uprizorjena za mednarodno občinstvo. Proces ustvarjanja prevoda v obliki podnapisov zaznamujeta kompleksnost in hibridnost, saj je prevod gledališkega besedila, tudi kadar je dostopen, vedno treba prilagoditi za drugačen medij. Poleg tega hibridna narava nadnapisov postavlja pod vprašaj naše razumevanje konceptov avtorja, izvirnega besedila, ciljnega besedila, občinstva in prevajalca, torej ključnih pojmov prevodoslovja, ki so v tem primeru zaznamovani z izrazito fluidnim prehajanjem med kategorijami. Kljub temu da so nadnapisi v marsičem podobni televizijskim ali filmskim podnapisom, pa raziskave kažejo na nekatere njihove specifične značilnosti. V prispevku se posvečamo vprašanju, kako so bili ustvarjeni nadnapisi za slovensko gledališko delo *Pavla nad prepadom/Pavla above the Precipice*. V ta namen primerjamo štiri različice uprizorjenega besedila: izvirno slovensko dramo, ki jo je po naročilu Slovenskega mladinskega gledališča napisal Andrej E. Skubic, odrsko verzijo, ki je kot dinamično besedilo nastala na podlagi izvirne drame pri produkciji režiserja Matjaža Pograjca, angleški prevod odrske verzije, ki ga je prav tako pripravil Andrej E. Skubic, ter angleške nadnapise, ki so nastali na podlagi angleškega prevoda. Med različnimi verzijami se izkazujejo elementi

intrasemiotičnega in intersemiotičnega prevajanja, podrobna besedilna analiza na makro in mikro ravni pa je pokazala raznovrstne razlike, ki izhajajo tako iz različnih prevodnih procesov med posameznimi verzijami kot iz specifičnih lastnosti besedilnega tipa gledaliških nadnapisov.

Ključne besede: prevajanje za gledališče, nadnaslovi, hibridni prevod, intersemiotično prevajanje, intrasemiotično prevajanje