

2025, Vol. 6(2), 371-386
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<https://dergi.bilgi.edu.tr/index.php/reflektif>
DOI: 10.47613/reflektif.2025.221
Article type: Research Article

Received: 18.04.2025
Accepted: 16.06.2025
Published Online: 21.07.2025

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Identity Status: Complicated! Netflix Türkiye, Glocalization and Advertising

Kimlik Durumu: Karışık! Netflix Türkiye, Küreyerelleşme ve Reklam

Abstract

This paper examines the localization strategies employed by Netflix with a focus on the case of Netflix Türkiye and its local advertising campaigns. Through a textual analysis of the paratexts associated with Netflix Türkiye, this study posits that the local advertising initiatives of Netflix effectively encapsulate the principles of glocalization, as they navigate the intersection of global, local, and national contexts. The marketing success of Netflix is based on its use of glocalization as an international business strategy. By implementing strategic adaptations in its advertising campaigns and commodifying local culture, Netflix Türkiye contributes to the reproduction of locality and the reinvention of the glocal identity of the paratexts and the Netflix brand. An analysis of the online advertisements produced by Netflix Türkiye yields significant insights into how a global corporation leverages glocalization to expand its market share and gain an economic advantage in the streaming service industry.

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Öz

Bu makale Netflix Türkiye'nin yerel reklam kampanyalarına odaklanarak Netflix tarafından kullanılan yerelleştirme stratejilerini incelemektedir. Netflix Türkiye ile ilişkili yanmetinlerin analizi yoluyla, Netflix'in yerel reklamlarının küresel, yerel ve ulusal bağlamların kesişiminde gezinirken küyerelleşme ilkelerini etkili bir şekilde kullandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Netflix'in pazarlamadaki başarısı, küyerelleşmeyi uluslararası bir işletme stratejisi olarak kullanmasına dayanmaktadır. Netflix, reklam çalışmalarındaki stratejik uyarlamalar yerelliğin yeniden üretilmesine ve Netflix markasının küyerel kimliğinin inşa edilmesine önemli ölçüde katkıda bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmadaki Netflix Türkiye tarafından üretilen çevrimiçi reklamların analizi, küresel bir şirketin pazar payını genişletmek ve yayıncılık sektöründe ekonomik bir avantaj elde etmek için küyerelleşmeden nasıl yararlandığını tartışmaktadır.

Keywords

Netflix, Glocalization, Localization, Advertising, Türkiye

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Netflix, Küyerelleşme, Yerellik, Reklam, Türkiye

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Introduction

The digitalization of television, the advent of over-the-top (OTT) media services, and video-on-demand (VOD) platforms have significantly transformed advertising practices, especially in national markets. The subscription-based video-on-demand (SVOD) services that encompass platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Apple TV have brought about a profound shift in the local advertising industry. Among all streaming platforms, Netflix has distinguished itself from others as a global corporation, achieving a unique combination of localization (Kaptan, 2023).

Netflix, a national DVD rental company that transformed into a global streaming corporation, has become a leader in streaming services. According to Lobato and Lotz (2020), “Netflix imagines and constructs itself as ‘global’ in a manner different from previous video services” (p. 133). However, Netflix is also one of the vanguards that grasped the significance of the digital distribution of national TV content to the global markets. Concurrently, Netflix’s localization strategies became prominent on a global scale in 2012 when Netflix launched local media content, which was branded as “Netflix originals.” In 2017, Netflix began to broadcast international TV content worldwide in 190 countries (Minaya & Sharma, 2016). As of December 31, 2023, the service boasted 260.28 million subscribers globally (Durani, 2024). Netflix has 24 regional offices outside the US and across the world (e.g., Indonesia, Poland, Argentina). Türkiye was one of these companies that Netflix initiated as its local branch.

In this article, I investigate the globalization strategies of Netflix, with a particular emphasis on the case of Netflix Türkiye and its national advertising campaigns and adaptations. Commercials, including trailers, serve as important media paratexts that provide opportunities for global corporations to implement localization strategies. Netflix has gained a notable edge over its competitors due to its localization strategies in producing and distributing local TV series and films (Kaptan, 2023). I argue that Netflix’s local advertising efforts effectively capture the essence of globalization by positioning itself at the crossroads of the global and the national. Through strategic adaptations in advertising, Netflix plays a significant role in the production of locality and the reinvention of the glocal identity of the Netflix brand. An analysis of Netflix Türkiye’s advertisements offers valuable insights into how a global corporation instrumentalizes a glocal brand identity that can be leveraged for economic gain. Netflix’s local advertising campaigns in Türkiye, for instance, “Let them watch with subtitles now! (Şimdi onlar alt yazılı izlesin!)” aims not only to suit the local taste for marketing purposes but also to hail national identities by promoting linguistic and cultural supremacy of the Turkish nation and endorsing the peculiarity of the country by producing locally relevant content through adaptations (Kaptan, 2023, p. 183).

In this article, I examine locally produced paratexts of *Stranger Things* (2016-2025) and *Bright* (2017)¹, to illustrate the hybrid brand identity of Netflix Türkiye. Released in 2017, these advertisements were disseminated during a time frame in which the platform had

not yet commenced the production of original local content in Türkiye (2018) and before the establishment of a local office in Istanbul (2021). Consequently, they may be regarded as the initial examples of the glocalization policy of Netflix, which facilitated a transition towards the glocalization approach of Netflix Türkiye.

As a qualitative methodology, textual analysis can be used to examine content in media and popular culture, including advertising (Fürsich 2018). Textual analysis comprehends the underlying meaning and cultural assumptions inherent in a text within a particular historical and cultural context. However, the goal of textual analysis is not to find one “true” interpretation—in contrast to traditional hermeneutic approaches to text exegesis—but to explain the variety of possible meanings inscribed in the text (Fürsich, 2018). It can be “presented as a systematic approach to understanding the meaning of an advertising text. The method has three steps: identification of textual elements (the parts or literary attributes), construction of meaning (the whole, a sum of parts), and deconstruction (the unsaid assumptions that challenge singular meaning)” (Stern, 1996, p. 61). In 2017, Netflix broadcast eight local commercials targeting audiences in Türkiye (Gülmez, 2019). After watching these eight commercials via YouTube, I chose two paratexts, one is an adaptation from the original U.S. trailer and the other is a local production. First, I describe denotative meanings in the ads by focusing on language, images, music, lexicon, style, and objects in the text. After identifying textual elements, in the second stage, I analyze connotative meanings of the characters (e.g., Barış Manço, orcs, police officers, etc.), words (e.g., lyrics, dialogues, etc.), music (e.g., Thriller, Dönence), and visuals (images from the original *Stranger Things* trailer and Orcs are among us (Orklar Aramızda) ad) that construct the cultural significance of the paratexts.

In the next section, first, I explore the concept of locality and glocalization. Secondly, focusing on the case of Netflix Türkiye, I investigate the glocalization strategies of Netflix’s local branch and its positionality in Turkish cultural politics. Thirdly, I scrutinize localized advertising campaigns of Netflix Türkiye, focusing on the paratext of *Stranger Things* (2nd season) and *Bright*’s local advertising adaptation “Orcs are among us” (Orklar Aramızda). In the final section, I concluded that the corporation’s localization strategies, particularly manifested through paratexts, play a pivotal role in the production of locality, in which these strategies serve to commodify and package local identity, thereby contributing to the commodification of the Turkish national culture. Here, Turkish culture has emerged as a significant local resource utilized by Netflix for marketing purposes and promoting its brand.

Locality and Glocalization

In his book *Modernity at Large*, Appadurai (1996) questions whether or not the locality has lost its importance in the schemes of global cultural flows in which the nation-states are in a global crisis due to transnationalization. Appadurai (1996) defines locality as a “complex phenomenological quality, constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy,

the technologies of interactivity, and the relativity of contexts” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 178). As evident in his definition, locality is closely connected with information communication technologies and virtual and spatial contexts. With the advent of globalization and information and communication technologies, even though local uniqueness has diminished due to global appeal and de-localized media products have thrived, international companies leverage localization to garner the interest of national audiences and increase their profit. Kesirli Unur (2020) notes that “format adaptation contributes to [ongoing practices of culture industries] by the localization of original programs in several locations without their core being damaged permanently. In this way, what has been created is a sustainable television environment in which demands are met, diversity is preserved, programs are easily accessed, and television economics are connected on a global scale” (p. 2). The use of [local] cultural values is crucial for the success of advertisements and is at the core of the advertising message (Kaptan & Öksüz, 2015, p. 201) as a localization strategy. Intriguingly, Appadurai (1996) describes globalization as “a deeply historical, uneven, and even *localizing* process” (p. 17). Robertson suggests, globalization involves the blending of universal and particular elements, with the global and local intersecting in complex ways (Roudometof, 2016). Roudometof (2016) notes that in Robertson’s work, globalization is not an external force separate from the local; instead, the local is always shaped by and in response to global influences (p. 392). To understand the complexities of the global and the local, Robertson (1992) and Ritzer (2003) developed a new concept, *glocalization*.

Glocalization can be considered a dynamic interplay between global and local forces, particularly in the context of media, production processes, consumption, and cultural exchange. The process involves not only the dissemination of global norms and products but also their modification to align with specific local needs and expectations, allowing for both global reach and local relevance.

Ritzer (2003) criticizes Robertson’s view, which promotes glocalization, a form of globalization that overlooks capitalism’s negative impacts. However, neither Robertson nor Ritzer can fully capture the dynamic complexity of local contexts. In this paper, in order to analyze Netflix Türkiye advertisements, this study adopts Iwabuchi’s (2007) conception of glocalization, which emphasizes the adaptation of global products to local contexts rather than enforcing cultural uniformity (Iwabuchi, 2002). Glocalization is understood here as a dialectical interaction between global cultural industries and local agents, wherein global elements are reinterpreted within specific socio-cultural frameworks. Unlike earlier globalization theories centered on cultural homogenization, glocalization highlights the strategic negotiation between maintaining recognizable cultural aesthetics and modifying content to appeal to diverse (trans)national audiences.

Glocalization Strategies: Netflix Türkiye as a Cultural Agent

In today's global economy, glocalization is a widely used international business strategy. Multinational companies utilize different business policies to accommodate local markets and cultures by tailoring their products, marketing approaches, or services. The notable glocalization strategies include (1) product adaptation, (2) alignment with legal regulations and laws, (3) cultural sensitivity and local relevance, (4) formation of local partnerships and alliances, and (5) customization of marketing communication. When entering the television market in Türkiye, Netflix has employed customization of marketing and communication strategies.

Netflix launched in Türkiye in 2016 to stream acclaimed international series and films. Later, the growing Turkish television industry and global interest in Turkish dramas caught Netflix's attention. The company started producing original Turkish series in 2018. The first Turkish TV series on Netflix, *The Protector (Hakan: Muhafiz, 2018-2020)*, was followed by *Rise of Empires: Ottoman (2020-2022)* and *The Gift (Atiye, 2019-2021)*. Although Netflix's library varies significantly based on the location of the audiences, as of April 2025, there are 80 Turkish movies and series on Netflix (List of Turkish movies and TV series, 2025), most of which were produced in Türkiye as Netflix originals.

As of 2024, with its 2.6 million subscribers (World Population Review, 2024), Netflix still dominates the national streaming market in Türkiye. Because of its popularity in Türkiye, Netflix was on the radar of the government. In 2019, the AKP government enacted a new law to regulate and control the production and distribution of media content originating from global corporations, including Netflix. According to the "Regulation on the Presentation of Radio, Television and On-Demand Broadcasts via the Internet", the regulatory authority responsible for overseeing radio and television broadcasting, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) will be able to supervise and control the content of all channels, including digital platforms such as Netflix. RTÜK could remove unlawful content or block access to content. With the regulation, RTÜK was granted jurisdiction over all online content within the country, encompassing streaming platforms. The implementation of this regulation has rendered streaming services susceptible to investigations and censorship, the suspension of broadcasting, and the revocation of broadcasting licenses (Ünker, 2020). The regulation also requires that platforms "hand over personal information about their customers if and when the government makes a request, although the exact parameters of what can be requested are not clarified in the law" (Soylu, 2019). This legislation mandated that international media platforms operating in Türkiye acquire a government-issued license and establish local subsidiaries. In his 2020 speech for the AKP delegates, President Erdoğan declared that Türkiye could prevent Netflix's activities if the company could not follow the guidelines of the law, including opening a local office in the country (Kaptan, 2023). In 2021, Netflix opened a local branch in Türkiye. The alignment with local law and legal regulations is one of the glocalization strat-

egies employed by multinational companies. Thus, the legislative change fortified Netflix's hybrid brand identity with the establishment of Netflix Türkiye.

Lobato (2019) argues that digital streaming corporations, including Netflix, have impacted national markets, allegedly reshaped national cultures, and evaded national regulations. Verifying Lobato, the Turkish TV and film industry experienced the Netflix impact in the early years (Kaptan, 2024). The substantial financial investment and exceptional quality of Netflix productions have revitalized the Turkish television industry. Professionals within the industry are anticipated to generate high-caliber, creative television series by developing content that is not available on traditional broadcasting platforms (Özbek, 2022). Netflix followed the global standards of the TV industry, such as the runtime of episodes. Put differently, Netflix's original Turkish television series comply with the established global production standards and meet the benchmark of internationally distributed television series, particularly concerning factors such as duration and episode count (Kaptan, 2024). Netflix Türkiye derives its glocal identity not from localized production practices such as long episodes and lengthy seasons, but from the content of movies and TV series. By depicting political and socio-cultural controversies such as religion, the political history of minorities, and ethnic violence in Turkish society, Netflix Türkiye not only presented contested topics on national TV screens but also became a catalyst for and facilitator of stigmatized topics. With the unprecedented success of *Ethos (Bir Baskadır)* and *The Club (Kulüp)*, Netflix Türkiye opened a space for public debate on historically contentious issues.

The advent of Netflix in Türkiye led to a swift and substantial expansion of the national television industry, shaping the viewing preferences of Turkish audiences (Kaptan, 2024). Audiences in Türkiye prefer streaming services over linear television for multiple reasons. First, due to their international content, Turkish audiences choose to consume Netflix dramas and movies (Bağcı, 2022). Along with "bringing important Turkish productions (mainly popular TV series and mainstream movies) to the world" (Vitrinel & Ildır, 2021, p. 1), Netflix plays a pivotal role in offering international movies and dramas to Turkish audiences to satisfy their global appetite. Second, Türkiye's small streaming audience has grown to a wider demographic, as streaming services provide a convenient and enjoyable viewing experience with shorter episodes and minimal advertising interruptions (Ildır, 2024). Third, young audiences favor streaming services because they consider that streaming services have fewer regulations compared to broadcast television (Bağcı, 2022, p. 260). Netflix Türkiye's original Netflix products (e.g. *Ethos*, *The Club*) reinforce the idea that streaming services are free from censorship and state control. According to Congar (2020), the censorship imposed on Netflix in Türkiye has caused many users to react on social media. Therefore, the perception of audiences regarding a censorship-free Netflix could have changed in recent years.

In addition to the above-mentioned factors, the accomplishment of Netflix in local markets can be attributed to its glocalization strategies and emotionally appealing local advertising campaigns. Netflix Türkiye's marketing campaign and advertising adaptations "captured the

nationalist imagination in [the country], instrumentalized nationalism, and proclaimed the achievement of the Turkish television industry as a global content exporter as the success of the Turkish nation to claim a national brand identity and to capture cultural intimacy with national audiences” (Kaptan, 2023, p. 183). Through localization, paratexts produced by Netflix Türkiye “serve to make the foreign shows relatable, evoke a sentiment of nostalgia and create a sense of belonging” (Kiran, 2023, p. 361).

Michael Jackson vs. Barış Manço: A national music idol meets a global media corporation

Released as a Netflix original in 2016, the most popular sci-fi series *Stranger Things* tells the story of a group of young teenagers who observe paranormal and clandestine government operations and attempt to uncover mysteries in their small town in rural Indiana in the 1980s. In the original trailer, Netflix used Michael Jackson’s *Thriller* as the soundtrack along with various conversations from the TV series. *Thriller* was released in 1982 and created a global craze. The music video was shot in a mini-movie format. According to Hebblethwaite (2013), “the 13-minute film that resulted changed the music video forever, becoming less a promo clip than a cultural phenomenon” (para. 1).

The success of *Thriller* led Jackson to his transformation into a dominant figure in global pop culture and solidified his worldwide reputation as the “king of pop” (Griffin, 2010). The 1980s were regarded as a period during which a significant correlation between globalization and Americanization was recognized. Featherstone (1995) interprets globalization as “the relentless modernizing force of American cultural imperialism” (p. 87). In this context, *Thriller* and Jackson signify the globalization of American popular art and culture around the world.

To advertise the second season of *Stranger Things* in Türkiye, the local branch of Netflix launched an advertising campaign by localizing its trailer. As Kiran (2023) states, *Stranger Things* stands out from others [other TV shows] in terms of the number of paratexts (five in total) produced to promote the second and third seasons (p. 362). Genette (1997) defines paratext as any resources and materials that surround and expand a text to expose and secure its existence, reception, and consumption.

Netflix Türkiye, which broadcasts two different commercials for the second season of the TV series, illustrates the localization of paratexts to appeal to national audiences. The first localized trailer of *Stranger Things*, released in 2017, used a familiar song as a soundtrack instead of Jackson’s *Thriller*. *Dönence*, one of the most popular songs of Barış Manço—a Turkish rock and pop singer, composer, and TV personality—was immediately recognized by Turkish audiences. The second commercial featured investigative journalist Saadetdin Teksoy and humorously depicted him exploring the extraordinary events in the TV series. Netflix Türkiye’s media paratexts in which Netflix’s foreign productions and Turkish originals are

promoted by the creative use of local elements and culture-specific references (Kiran, 2023). In the next section, by focusing on the first commercial, I demonstrate how Netflix Türkiye alleges a glocal brand identity by tailoring its localization strategies for Turkish audiences and commodifying local elements to compete in the global streaming industry.

It can be immediately recognized that the Turkish trailer is shorter than the global trailer of *Stranger Things*. Netflix Türkiye excluded some scenes in the original trailer, including the Halloween celebrations, which overlap with the release of the American TV series in October. According to Kiran (2023), besides downplaying the celebration references, the local paratext retains only the Netflix logo as the intertitle, excluding others related to Halloween. This choice to implement cultural filtering arguably showcases Netflix Turkey's perception of Halloween as a tradition potentially irrelevant to a broader Turkish audience (Kiran, 2023, p. 370).

In addition to visual elements, adapting audio and linguistic content—a widely used strategy for adaptations—brings content closer to the audience in a particular region or country. In the trailer, Netflix Türkiye has chosen to omit all English dialogue rather than providing subtitles or dubbing. Therefore, the paratext heavily relies on, first, the visuals from the American TV series and, second, the Turkish lyrics of Manço's song. By replacing the conversations in English with Turkish lyrics, the promotional video, which targets Turkish audiences, becomes a hybrid text by defying a certain national identity. Consequently, rather than oral text derived from the original trailer, the scenes and images, as well as the background music, came to the forefront in the localized commercial. The lyrics suit the thriller story of *Stranger Things*:

Gün çoktan döndü buralarda	The sun has already left this place
Ve ben simsiyah bir gecenin koynunda.	And I am waiting all alone in the
yapayalnız beklıyorum.	bosom of a pitch-black night
Duyuyorum, görüyorum	I hear, I see
Bir gün gelecek dönence biliyorum	I know, one day dönence will come
	[back]
Simsiyah gecenin koynundayım,	I am at the bosom of a dark night
yapayalnız	All alone
Uzaklarda bir yerlerde güneşler doğuyor	Somewhere, far far away, suns are rising
Biliyorum!	I know!
Dönence.	Dönence

The term “dönence” encompasses various meanings. Geographically, it refers to the tropics, specifically the latitudes of the equator. However, Manço also uses it in a metaphorical sense to mean the cycle of change or hope. Thus, it can symbolize the transition between

day and night or a turning point for a change. Due to its inherent ambiguity, both interpretations of *döñence*² can be valid in the song.

Like Jackson's *Thriller*, Manço's *Döñence* album was released in the early 1980s. Replacing a global star's song with a popular song of a beloved national star is a deliberate move as a manifestation of Netflix's local marketing strategy. Manço is an excellent choice, as he epitomizes the concept of glocalization. His educational background, personal identity, and musical compositions signify reifications of hybridity in terms of glocalization. Manço attended a prestigious high school (Galatasaray High School) in Istanbul based on the French educational system, where French was the primary language of instruction. Following his graduation, he studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Belgium. Accordingly, he is fluent in French, English, and Turkish. After completing high school, he moved to Europe and traveled across various countries with a music band. As a declaration of his glocal identity, he has become a star in the East and is recognized in the West. Indisputably, he was a legendary music idol in Türkiye, yet in the 1990s, he gained recognition and became famous in Japan (TRT World, 2021). In addition to receiving various awards in Türkiye, he received the International Culture and Peace Award (1991), Peace Prize (1991), and Min-Of Foundation High Medal of Honor (1995) in Japan, the Order of the Knight of Leopold II in Belgium, and the Order of the Knight of Literature and Art in France. He was also awarded the State Order of Turkmenistan and Turkmen citizenship.

After the passing of Manço in 1999, TRT World, the Turkish public broadcaster in English, published a commemorative tribute to Manço by reinforcing his glocal identity. According to TRT World, "When asked where he [Barış Manço] was from, he would frequently respond by saying 'from the world'. [However], forging national unity and a sense of identity were tasks he considered worthwhile endeavors" (TRT World, 2021). Manço himself brings up this dialectical tension between the global and the local in his artistic work. In a famous Manço song, "Where are you from, bro?" (Hemserim memleket nire?), the song's leitmotif revolves around a frequently asked question in Turkish culture, "Where are you from?" (Nerelisin?). In the lyrics written in dialogue, Manço's answer reiterates his hybrid identity while critiquing parochial regionalism: "This world is my hometown." Utilizing Manço's public persona and instrumentalizing his hybrid identity, Netflix Türkiye illustrates the cultural politics of producing the local. Leveraging Manço's identity as a symbol of glocalization, Netflix Türkiye establishes itself as a glocal brand and strives to foster an emotional connection and closeness with the national audience relying on a popular music icon.

Similar to his identity, as a referent, Manço's songs are considered glocal music products as he adeptly synthesized rock and Western music with Turkish folk and traditional Anatolian melodies. Coşkun Keskin and Akyıldız (2021) emphasize the glocal nature of Manço's work by stating, "he has made an important contribution to the transfer of culture by taking the essence of his art from his people and presenting it in contemporary forms" (p. 158). By

featuring *Dönence*, one of the most well-known songs of one of the most beloved popular music singers, Netflix tackles Turkish popular culture and localizes its product through synchronization of an 1980s Turkish song and an 1980s American story. As an audial element of the sign system, the background music is foregrounded in the local context. Hence, *Dönence* becomes the signified for the locality of Netflix in interchangeability with other signs. In doing so, the local song becomes an intermediary object that is attached to the consumption value of Netflix. Using a popular Turkish song in a paratext stipulates the transference of meaning from global to glocal and constitutes a glocal identity for the Netflix brand. Turkish lyrics and the hybrid music of *Dönence*, which replace conversations in English and Michael Jackson's famous song *Thriller*, signify the voice of a global Turkish singer who represents the Turkish people. The paratext juxtaposes Turkish identity with global American culture in the referent system of advertising.

Signifying locality as a social class

In 2017, Netflix Türkiye produced another paratext for *Bright* (2017), a Netflix original film. *Bright*, a science fiction cop drama, depicts an alternate universe in which orcs, humans, dragons, elves, fairies, and other mythic creatures live together. The movie tells the story of two police officers—a human and an orc—and their partnership to protect a sacred relic. *Bright*, “the most expensive film produced to date [2017] by the American streaming media company Netflix, exemplifies the micro-genrefication of American film within the emerging digital ecosystem of platform cinema” (Ramirez, 2019, p. 125). Referencing Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy through intertextuality, orcs have been characterized negatively as a violent and unsophisticated subaltern race. Ramirez (2019) states that in the movie,

[orcs] are shown wearing baggy sports jerseys and baseball caps and drinking alcohol in run-down neighborhoods, are transparently coded as Los Angeles' new African Americans and Latinx—an oppressed, vaguely menacing, predominantly working class and poor race that is in a constant struggle against the LAPD [Los Angeles Police Department] (p. 131-132).

To localize the story, Netflix Türkiye overwrites the racial category of the US trailer by replacing it with the social class identity in the Turkish adaptation. Unlike the *Stranger Things* trailer, the “Orcs are among us” (Orklar aramızda) advertising campaign heavily relies on visual representations of lower-class culture. The paratext depicts orcs as a car mechanic, a barber (in the Turkish trailer), and a police officer in a scene from the original movie. The strong visuals, interspersed with different images, demonstrate the social and cultural activities of the working class, such as playing backgammon or watching a soccer game publicly in a modest coffeehouse (kahvehane) mimicking a coffeehouse in ghettos (mahalle kahvesi), or making graffiti on rundown buildings. Pierre Bourdieu (2010) states that, as well as economic

status, social class is related to art, sports, and cultural activities; thus, social class identities are constructed through the use and consumption of these activities. In the paratext, the poster in the barber shop and the Orkgücüspor banner in the rear window of the car denote the support for the local soccer team of the Orcs. Bourdieu (1978) considers soccer a popular sport among the working class as opposed to other sports such as tennis, equestrianism, golf, or sailing, which are associated with the upper classes or the bourgeoisie. Thus, in the advertisement, soccer consistently represents the working-class identity of the Orcs. Other signifiers also contribute to this denotation, such as spinning a secondhand cheap national brand car (Tofaş), reminiscing about military service while grilling kokoreç (a traditional street food), and socializing in a shabby underground nightclub. These signifiers collectively encourage the audience to associate a particular social class with the Orcs and draw parallels to connote working-class habits and practices. A local orc barber's rejection of an elf customer's request for an orc-style buzz cut ("It doesn't suit you. You are an elf, an elf" (Ork tıraşı size olmaz, siz elfsiniz, elf) also solidifies the boundaries between social classes, powerful and powerless, and subaltern and dominant.

Another central signification in the paratext is the portrayal of the police. As a representation of the tension between poor neighborhoods and the police department, the "Orcs are among us" ad utilizes various references to the police. The paratext depicts police cars patrolling amid the dilapidated buildings of a shanty town, which is a direct reference to *Bright* as well as the social class of the Orcs. Meanwhile, the light bars (flashing lights on the police vehicles) cast reflections upon both the façade of the run-down buildings and the faces of the poor, both orcs and humans, as police sirens resonate through the streets. According to Ramirez (2019), *Bright* is "an allegory of contemporary struggles between oppressed races and Los Angeles Police Department" and "a symptomatic of a post-Black Lives Matter movement in US political and cultural history in which narratives of racial diversification can no longer redeem the police as an institution" (p. 125). In the Turkish adaptation of the trailer, the social class and race clash into a hybrid identity, signifying a social and structural hierarchy among lower social classes in Türkiye regarding their ethnic identity. Since orcs are considered lesser than humans, they can represent marginalized and stigmatized minority groups in society such as Roma people (gypsies) and Kurds. According to Gökçen and Öney (2008), "Although the Roma in Türkiye openly express their pride in being 'Turkish', and despite their support for [Turkish] nationalism, they face high levels of discrimination. The general perception of Roma in society places them at the bottom of the social hierarchy" (p. 129). In the 1980s and 1990s, due to enforced migration, Kurdish ghettos began to form, especially in the metropolitan cities. The rise of Kurdish and Turkish nationalism, in turn, has increased the tension between the ethnicities. In a 2011 study, Duman and Alacahan (2011) examined the perception of first-classness among ethnic groups in Türkiye. They conclude that considering Turks as a first-class ethnic group either is based on Turkish nationalism (for a small faction) or emerges as an expression of a socio-economic evaluation. The survey research and in-depth interviews

conducted in the field revealed that some participants think the concept of “first-class” [ethnic group] is based on economic preeminence rather than ethnic grounds, as they point out that particular groups benefit more from financial resources and state-provided opportunities.

According to McAllister and Galarza (2023), “advertising, like many forms of popular culture, has a history of stigmatizing representations of groups that are typically vulnerable and marginalized by such representations, including by race, gender, and class” (p. 41). McAllister and Galarza (2020) argue that:

In advertising, the working class can be used to connote a variety of meanings that are celebratory or derogatory as ways to enhance specific meanings of brands: the contrast of the service class to the well-to-do, masculinity, disgusting or degraded bodies, and more specific intersectional meanings when the working class is combined with such identity markers as gender and ethnicity (See chapter abstract on the website).

Netflix Türkiye’s decision to use the lower-class culture to localize its paratext is a significant marketing decision. The locality of the lower social class (e.g., the quarter culture (*mahalle kültürü*) and traditional cultural practices or working class) signifies not only everyday representations of the lower classes but also connotes the authenticity of the nation as opposed to upper- and middle classes that can be considered more cosmopolitan and less authentic. Hence, Netflix Türkiye produces a glocal text that hails the hybrid identities of local audiences while creating a perception of the corporation’s glocal culture.

Conclusion

As pointed out by Kaptan and Öksüz (2015), “While advertising their products, multinational companies have to make strategic decisions between standardization and adaptation” (p. 209). Kesirli Unur (2020) emphasizes that “the knowledge that the audiences and critics bring to interpreting the programs could significantly contribute to the localization process of adapted contents” (p. 4). In media adaptations, cultural signs and values from the source text are substituted with local and national representations and symbols.

In this article, I discussed paratexts produced by Netflix Türkiye and analyzed their implications and argued that the marketing success of Netflix is based on its use of glocalization as an international business strategy. As a multinational corporation with a distinctive emphasis on localization strategies and possessing the largest subscriber base among streaming services, Netflix has emerged as the preeminent leader of digital platforms both nationally and globally. Among video-on-demand platforms, Netflix continues to be a global and national participant in the local television industries to date (Lobato and Lotz, 2020). The platform’s capacity to produce and disseminate content that resonates with diverse national and international audiences and its pivotal role in facilitating public debates have fundamentally transformed the dynamics of the television and advertising industry, reinforcing its role

as a cultural agent in Türkiye. Netflix effectively utilizes glocalization strategies that include adapting products, adhering to legal regulations, maintaining cultural sensitivity, ensuring local relevance, and customizing marketing communications. Initially, the product adaptation is evident in the local productions of Netflix's regional office, such as Netflix's Turkish originals. Netflix Türkiye's localization strategies play a pivotal role in the increased global popularity of TV dramas (Kaptan, 2024). Second, the platform remains politically restrained and complies with the rules and regulations of state institutions and the policies of the Turkish state. Third, as part of its glocalization strategy, the corporation's collaboration with national Turkish production companies and advertising agencies has led to the production and distribution of numerous Turkish TV series that have gained popularity both domestically and internationally. Fourth and fifth, local relevance and the customization of marketing communication appear in the production of glocal media texts, including localized advertisements. While Netflix Türkiye aims to expand its national market share, it invests in the production of paratexts for marketing both local and global media products. These paratexts function on two foci. Netflix Türkiye commercials launched for a global TV series or an international movie invite Turkish viewers to adopt a glocal identity by watching global media. Concurrently, localized ads inscribe the cultural identity of audiences and hail them as constituents of the Turkish nation. As a result, these commercials play a crucial role in both expressing a global identity that resonates with worldwide consumers while evoking local/national identity by utilizing Turkish culture and commodifying cultural codes and traditions. Netflix's corporate strategy—customizing its brand for domestic culture and national requirements—strengthens the relationship between its brand identity and the country by connecting the brand to local culture. Put differently, Turkish culture has become one of the local resources that Netflix uses for marketing and promoting its brand. The global strategy of Netflix is to employ different discourses to address the national markets. Through adaptations, the company locates its brand in the global market and creates glocal advertising campaigns for domestic audiences. By utilizing signifiers of locality in its ads, Netflix aims to produce a sense of belonging to national culture and contribute to the production of locality. The localization strategies of the corporation, particularly through paratexts, serve to commodify and package local culture, thereby commercializing the national identity of the countries where Netflix's products are sold. By emphasizing hybridity, Netflix endeavors to establish a glocal corporate identity that aligns with the characteristics of a specific nation, while also embedding and promoting local culture for marketing objectives within that particular country.

The reliance on textual analysis in this study makes it difficult to grasp whether the Turkish market is accorded a particular significance in terms of Netflix's global advertising and marketing strategies. To understand the glocalization strategies of Netflix from a broader perspective, future research should investigate the geographical and procedural implementation of these strategies in other countries. Involving advertising practitioners and Netflix Türkiye employees, further research could focus on the nature of communication and workflow

between headquarters and the local office, and the role of advertising agencies in creating glocalization strategies for the global streaming services.

- 1 Not every localization effort by Netflix succeeded. A localized ad for Black Mirror featuring Esra Erol (2018), a host from a daytime matchmaking show, faced strong backlash from consumers, illustrating that the same localization strategy can yield varying results. I greatly appreciate the reviewer's comment for highlighting this important observation.
- 2 In Turkish dönence stands for tropic; however, Manço uses English or Latin "tropicus" which borrowed from Greek trepō or tropikōs that refers to "turn" or "change." I would like to thank Dr. Burcu Karahan for her help for the translation of the word.

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