

# Adaptation in Cinema: From *A Moment to Remember* to *You're My Home*

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**Abstract.** Adaptation is a brand of translation studies. It is a freer kind of translation in which the translator is not required to translate every item on the source text. Instead of this, translator, in this case adapter, tries to transfer the gist of the source text into target culture. Adaptation is mostly used in multimedia translation. In this study, film adaptation is chosen to be examined. The case of the paper will be the Turkish adaptation of Korean film, *A Moment to Remember*. Adapted under the name of *You're My Home*, this film differs from the original in some aspects. These differences which originate from the cultural differences will be analyzed and discussed in details.

**Keyword:** Film Adaptation, Translation Studies, Korean Culture, *A Moment to Remember*, Turkish Culture, *You're My Home*.

## 1. Introduction

Adaptation can be defined as rewriting a source text in the target language within the framework of target culture norms. It is a recreation and reformation of source text. According to Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), adaptation tends to happen when “SL message is unknown in the TL culture”. Translator does not required to translate the source text word by word; on the other hand, there are a few restrictions that influence adaptation process and, thus, the adapter. These are *the knowledge and expectations of target reader*– or, in our case, target audience – *target language* which has its own rules and norms that are different from the source language and *the meaning and the purpose* of the both texts – source and target – (Bastin, 2008).

Adaptation divides into two types; local adaptation and global adaptation. While local adaptation can be defined as the adjustment of issues, which arise from the source text’s nature and target culture’s differentness, global translation deals with the factors besides the texts such as translator or agents. To be clear, local adaptation can be explained as cultural adjustment of source text into target culture without much changing of source text. Whereas, global adaptation is general translation of the source text while keeping the main purpose or message of the text and it is not translation of every aspect of the text (Bastin, 2008)

In the adaptation process, translator uses such strategies as appropriation, imitation, domestication and rewriting etc. To classify these strategies, Bastin suggests seven modes that are used in adaptation. These modes are *transcription of the original*, *omission*, *expansion*, *exoticism*, *updating*, *situational or cultural adequacy* and *creation*(2008). To briefly define them, *transcription of the original* is word-for-word translation of the original;*omission* is the elimination of the source text, while*expansion* is an addition to it. *Exoticism* is “rough equivalents” of culture specific swears, idioms, proverb, dialects etc. in the target culture and *updating* is renewing of some elements in the source text in accordance with the contemporary concepts.*Situational or cultural adequacy* means adapting the source text according to target culture norms and finally, *creation* is keeping only the message and gist of the source text (Bastin, 2008).

Adaptation has remained a controversial brand of translation studies through years. Since the time of Cicero and Horace (Bastin, 2008), adaptation is an applied strategy for the transfer of information from one culture to another. Over time, the “faithfulness” of adaptation started to be questioned. Some ideas such as adaptation as a betrayal to source text started to emerge whereas a group of people continued to defend the necessity of adaption for target culture reader. There are some scholars and thinkers who claimed that it is a

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text's "foreignness" that should be kept through translation (Berman, 1985); on the other side some declared that it is the target culture reader that should be the main concern of translator.

The main reason behind these polemics going around about the adaptation is the differences between source culture and target culture norms. To quote Toury (1978), translation is "a norm-governed activity". One person cannot be independent from the norms of one's society that s/he is living in and a translator is no exception. These socio-cultural norms affect translation and, in this case, adaptation.

In this study, adaptation within the concept of intersemiotic translation will be examined. Intersemiotic translation is a brand of translation studies, which involves the transfer between two semiotic systems. This transfer or, in other words, translation could happen in between a novel and a film, a novel and a novel with a different genre, a film and a film, which is in a different culture. In adaptation as an intersemiotic translation, a product of source culture is altered and appropriated according to target culture audience.

## **2. Films**

Under the light of all these information discussed above, this present study focuses on film adaptation as an intersemiotic translation. The case study will be carried out between Korean film, *A Moment to Remember* or in Korean *내머리속의지우개* and its Turkish adaptation, *You're My Home* or in Turkish *Evim Sensin*. The main aim of this study will be to show the difference between two cultures and its effects on this case of film adaptation. As products of cultures, films are influenced by socio-cultural norms. Created in different cultures, Korean and Turkish, two films have some differences as well as similarities. These differences and similarities will be discussed in details. Before discussing these features, a brief summary will be given about two films.

### **2.1. A moment to remember**

The first film, *A Moment to Remember* is a Korean movie released in 2004. It is about two lovers, their relationship and the Alzheimer disease, which tear them apart. The hero Chul-soo, portrayed by Jung Woo-sung, and heroine Su-jin, portrayed by Son Ye-jin meet accidentally and fall in love in a short time. Su-jin who had an affair with a married man before meeting Chul-soo, breaks Chul-soo walls that are built around his heart and saves him from loneliness. After some difficulties, the couple gets married and starts a happy, married life. But things drastically changes when Su-jin finds out that she has a curse named Alzheimer's disease. In the course of time, she starts to forget her memories one by one. Chul-soo stays with her all the time and never lets her go. Until one day, she walks out of everything and submits into a clinic by her own will. At the end of the film, Chul-soo somehow finds her and visits her. With the hope of bring back her memories, Chul-soo tries different kind of things but with no luck. One final effort works and they share one final happy memory together.

### **2.2. You're my home**

The second film is the Turkish adaptation of the same film named *You're My Home*. Revolving around the same plot, Turkish version follows the same course of story. In the adaptation, our hero and heroine's names are adapted into target culture, as well. The hero, İskender and heroine, Leyla fall in love and get married like the original. And Leyla learns the truth about her illness, Alzheimer's. They break apart but in the end they come together one last time.

Although the scenario is mainly about the same, there are some differences between the original and the adaptation because of their different cultures and audience. Within the framework of theoretical data above, these differences and the reasons behind them will be analyzed in details.

## **3. Analysis**

The first of cultural differences is in the food places and alcoholic drinks. In the original film, *A Moment to Remember*, our hero and heroine has a so-called accidental meeting (Fig.1) in a *pojangmacha* which is a small, tented street food stalls in Korea. Their relationship starts there by drinking *soju* (Fig.2), which is an alcoholic beverage native to Korea. It can be seen in the pictures (Fig.1 & Fig.2).



Fig. 1: The couple in *pojangmacha*.



Fig. 2: Drinking *soju*.

This scene is altered in the Turkish version and adjusted according to Turkish cultural context. The reason behind this is possibly that *pojangmacha* and *soju* are not familiar concepts in Turkish audience's minds. Instead of keeping these foreign culture's elements as same, these concepts are adjusted for target culture. This strategy can be categorized as *cultural adequacy*. *Cultural adequacy*, in the broad sense, can be explained as finding the equivalent words or concepts in target culture for source culture elements during the adaptation process. In the Turkish adaptation, *You're My Home*, hero and heroine have their coincidental meeting in an equivalent shabby place which has same cultural connotations as *pojangmacha*. It is a caravan, which is turned into a food stall. These caravan food stalls are very widespread in Turkey and they usually sell snacks and sandwiches (mostly meatball sandwiches) and they go to any place they want but usually locate in places near the sea. Caravan food stalls in Turkey perfectly match the concept of *pojangmacha* in Korea. The other cultural concept is the alcoholic beverage. *Soju* is not a familiar beverage to Turkish audience. There is an equivalent alcoholic drink known as *raki* or *raki*. It is a publicly known alcoholic drink, which is native to Turkey. In short, *raki* is the cultural equivalent concept of *soju*. In the pictures below, you can see the caravan food stall (Fig. 3) and our heroine while drinking *raki* (Fig. 4).



Fig. 3: Turkish couple in caravan food stall.



Fig. 4: Heroine drinking *raki*.

Second example is about ball games. In Korean film, the couple goes on a date to play baseball. Baseball is "one of the most popular" in the Korea (Wikipedia.com, 2014). Thus, in the original film, the couple goes to a baseball range. They play around by hitting the ball with a bat (Fig. 5). In one scene, Chul-soo teaches So-jin how to play baseball (Fig. 6) as seen in the pictures below.



Fig. 5: Playing baseball.



Fig. 6: Teaching baseball.

When we examine the target culture, baseball is not a popular sport in Turkey. It is a foreign concept to Turkish audience, it can only remind an American film in Turkish reader's minds. It is familiar in the American film context, meaning that Turkish audience usually see baseball in American films, not in the streets of Turkey. Bearing in the mind that adaptation is target culture-oriented method, in the Turkish

adaptation of the film, baseball is not used as a date place for the couple. Instead of it, billiards saloon used as a date venue (Fig. 7). Considering the fact that billiards are more popular sport than baseball, this might be the right choice. And again, it can be safe to say that it is the *cultural adequacy* mode of adaptation. Although billiards is not the most popular sport in Turkey, it is much more suitable choice for a date than other popular sports such as football – the most popular one in Turkey -, volleyball or basketball which are mostly team sports. The choice of the sport might be target culture oriented but the most scenes in the original kept as it is, like teaching how to play the game (Fig. 8), and this can be, in one respect, *transcription of the original* as a mode of adaptation.



Fig. 7: Playing billiards.



Fig. 8: Teaching how to play billiard.

The third instance is the culture-specific elements for fun. In the original Korean film, Chul-soo does a card trick in order to entertain So-jin (Fig. 9). It is a “bet the winning card” game. He, also, says rhyming, funny and melodic words that go with it and teaches So-jin the game (Fig. 10). A picture of this scene as a reminder is at the below.



Fig. 9: Playing the game of card trick.



Fig. 10: Showing the card trick.

Up to now, the adaptation followed the mode of *cultural adequacy* but in this scene, a new mode has chosen to follow. In the original film, the couple does this trick in order to have fun and laugh. So, in the adaptation, the same kind of funny thing should be selected to serve the same purpose. Interestingly, there is the same kind of card trick in Turkish culture. Named as “Bulkarayı, al parayı” which means “Find the black one, get the money”, this card trick is not unfamiliar in Turkish culture. This saying is, even, used in the translation of Turkish subtitles in the movie. Nevertheless this card trick is not adapted in Turkish film. The reason for this can be explained as such; this card trick is existed in Turkish culture for a long time. One can easily come across this trick in old Turkish movies but it is not quite popular in recent years. Perhaps, in order to not be old-fashioned, another kind of funny and entertaining thing is chosen. It is the imitation of a scene by a famous Turkish actress. In the Turkish adaptation, our heroine Leyla imitates Türkan Şoray (Pic.11 & Pic.12), one of the most famous and respected actresses in Turkey. In her film, Türkan Şoray plays a fisher girl who sings a folk song while selling her fish (*Karag özlüm*, 1970) and Leyla copies that scene and imitates her by singing the same song. She puts on a beanie to resemble Türkan Şoray in looks. We cannot label the mode adopted in here as *cultural adequacy* exactly, it would be more appropriate to name the mode as *creation*. *Creation* is keeping the main message and essence of the source text or source culture product and in the meanwhile creating a new text form, which is almost entirely independent from the original, and completely an outcome of target culture. It is safe to say that the mode of adaptation selected for this scene is *creation* since only the main message of the original – which is to entertain and amuse – has been preserved. The image of this scene (Fig. 11 & Fig. 12), in the adapted film is as follows.



Fig. 11: Laughing and having fun.

Fig. 12: Imitation and singing.

The fourth point that will be discussed is the place that our heroine is being taken care of. In the Korean film, the heroine So-jin checks into an institution to get treatment. Having been attended by a nurse (Fig. 13), she is being taken care of in the best way. We see this institution when Chul-soo visits her (Fig. 14). The images are at the below.



Fig. 13: So-jin and her nurse.



Fig. 14: Chul-soo visiting her.

This place has been changed in adaptation. Instead of an institution, the Turkish heroine has been taken care of in a private house by her family. The reason behind this decision may be the connotations of the institution in Turkish audience's minds. Entirely furnished in white, the institution in the Korean film strongly reminds the hospital. In addition to this, in Turkish culture, the kind of institutions in the original film reminds mostly senior's center which a negative connotation for Turkish audience. It is because children of old people mostly put their old parents in senior's center in order to get rid of them. So if Turkish heroine has been put into an institution, it may give the impression that her family wants to get rid of her. That is why she has been placed in a private home by her family (Fig. 15). This decision that has been given by considering target culture, leads us to the *cultural adequacy* mode, once more. She is visited by her husband Iskender in this home (Fig. 16) as seen in the pictures below.



Fig. 15: Her private room in the house.



Fig. 16: The visit of the husband.

The final example of differences between two films will be about the end of film. There is an addition to the original scenario in the Turkish adaptation and it can be classified as *addition* mode. In the end of Turkish film, the heroine dies dramatically (Pic.17). The most important motive of this can be to add more drama and tears to the film, because Turkish audience love dramas that make them cry. It is the biggest change and addition in the adaptation scenario. The images of this emotional scene (Fig. 17, 18) are below.

These examples are chosen specifically to determine the type of adaptation and to analyze the modes of adaptation in the adapted film. Since adaptation is target culture-oriented by nature, the changes in the adapted scenario are target culture-oriented, concerning Turkish audience and their expectations and

knowledge. It is detected that *cultural adequacy*, *creation* and *addition* are the modes of adaptation in the adapted scenario. Thus all the modes and strategies in the adaptation prove that Turkish film is a local adaptation.



Fig. 17-18: The death scene of heroine.

## 4. Conclusion

Adaptation is non-restricted brand of translation. Even though there are many debates ongoing about adaptation's "faithfulness", it is still widely used strategy among different areas. One of them is audiovisual industry. Adaptation is the mostly adapted method during the translation and transfer of film scenarios. In this study, the effects of different cultures on adaptation process are examined. Within the framework of adaptation and its theoretic basis, it is concluded that, in this case, local adaptation is the chosen type of adaptation. The fact that the mostly used mode of adaptation is *situational or cultural accuracy* in the Turkish film, in addition to it, *addition* and *creation* are used, also and all these modes justify the selected adaptation type as local adaptation. To conclude, scenarios of film adaptations usually undergo a socio-cultural adjustment process for the benefit and expectations of target culture audience.

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