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Adaptation: A Twin Concept in Literature and Translation

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Abstract

While volumes of works have been published on adaptation as a concept, little has been done on the issue of adaptation in literature and translation. Adaptation can, therefore, be defined generally as an action or a process of changing something or of being changed to suit a new situation. It is the act of changing something or changing an act to make it suitable for a new purpose or situation. The idea of adaptation is not limited to both literature and translation only but it can be extended to films and their contemporary features. In literature, adaptation serves as a technique of narration and it is applicable in all genres of literature. The concept is equally applicable in translation studies; it serves as a technique of translation which may be applied to isolated parts of the text in order to deal with specific differences between the language and culture of the source text and that of the target text. Adaptation ameliorates cultural narrative, by considering the cultural links between the source language and the target language in translation studies. This is going to show us that adaptation elucidates more on the cultures and how these can be adapted into a real sense of newness of ideas in another cultural cycle. It is further explicated that the concept can be employed as an interdisciplinary one which can be applied in anthropology, philosophy, cultural studies, history, sciences and in all fields of arts. Diverse examples of adaptation are explored in series of African literature, western literature and translation studies. The major objective of this is to examine how adaptation can be described as a twin concept in literature and translation. This study also attempts to explicate the areas of convergence and divergence in the concept and application of adaptation in literature and translation studies. In this study, we adopt descriptive, narrative and expository methods where we describe, narrate and reveal the necessary issues on adaptation as a technique in both literature and translation. In this study, we adopt Skopos theory, which is formulated by the German translator, Hans Vermeer in 1970's. The theory suggests that the mission and the purpose of translation are of paramount importance. The process of translation is determined by the function of the product. This function is specified by the addressee. This theory is one of the functionalist approaches whose aim is to dethrone the source text (ST). The word "Skopos" was from Greek, meaning purpose or aim. It is used as a technical term for the purpose of translation. The Skopos theory principally suggests that translations should focus on the target culture and language illustrating the source text, their effects on the reader, and the original author's purpose as decisive factors, rather than the effects and purposes of the source language. The study concludes that Adaptation makes the old literary work popular and marketable because it is a trend to the original work. Literary adaptation that is done rightly has more advantages than disadvantages. One of the common reasons a book or story is adapted is because the characters in that story are already well-known and this help the adapted one. Adaptation will remain relevant in all fields of arts as long as the concept of masterpiece is adapted into the current trends in literary and translation studies. The concept will continue to be significant all over the world because it exposes

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literary ideas to different audience. Adaptation is as old as the world and it cannot cease because of its pertinence in a changing world.

Mots clés

Application, Film, Études littéraires, Sens, Techniques

Résumé

Comme des volumes des études ont été publiés sur l'adaptation, peu a été fait sur la question de l'adaptation dans la littérature et la traduction. L'adaptation peut donc être définie de manière générale comme une action ou un processus consistant à changer quelque chose pour s'adapter à une nouvelle situation. Le concept s'applique à la littérature comme technique de narration. Dans les études de traduction ; il s'agit d'une technique de traduction qui peut être appliquée à des parties isolées du texte afin de traiter des différences spécifiques entre la langue et la culture du texte source et celle du texte cible. Divers exemples d'adaptation sont explorés dans les séries des littératures du monde et les études de traduction. Dans cette étude, nous adoptons des méthodes descriptives, narratives et explicatives. Également, nous adoptons la théorie de Skopos, qui a été formulée par Hans Vermeer (1970). Le mot « Skopos » vient du grec, signifiant un but. L'étude conclut que l'adaptation rend l'œuvre littéraire ancienne populaire et commercialisable car il s'agit d'une tendance à l'œuvre originale. L'adaptation restera pertinente dans tous les domaines des arts et les autres champs de connaissance.

1. Introduction

Adaptation can be employed in diverse fields of study particularly in literature and translation studies; this depicts that the concept is multidisciplinary in nature. Literary adaptation of literary source (a novel, a short story and a poem) can be recreated to another genre or medium, such as film, stage play or video game. It can also involve adapting the same literary work in the genre or medium, just for different purposes. On the other hand, it is a technique in translation studies. Adaptation is also known as a free translation; it is a procedure whereby a translator replaces a term with cultural connotations where those connotations are restricted to readers of the original language text, with a term with corresponding cultural connotations that would be familiar to readers of the translated text. Adaptation is one of the oldest and most debated techniques of writing in the creative enterprise. The issue of adaptation occurs in nearly all fields of studies but the approach to it differs in all ramifications. On literary adaptation, Jameson (1994:307-308) asserts:

> The *genre* of literary adaptations is as miscellaneous as the variety of works adapted to the screen. We include it here to stimulate reflection on the subtle art of translating literature to film, but also to propose that Literary Adaptations do have something in common-a quality of *expectation* ("Are they going to ruin my favourite novel or make me love it all the more?") that

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> can be more powerful than any generic presuppositions we bring to a new Western, horror film, or film noir. Indeed, it often transpires that, when one has read the book on which a film is based, one ought to see the film at least twice: the first time, to get one's curiosity about the adaptation out of the way; the second time, to see the movie in its own right.

Jameson sheds more light on the adaptation of literary work into film. In his view, he believes that a book needs to be read on which a film is based, the film needs to be seen at least twice in order to have the knowledge of adaptation.

Scholars have discussed the concept of adaptation in both literature and translation but, little has been done on its relationship between literature and translation. Diverse examples of adaptation are explored in series of African literature, western literature and translation studies to clarify the application of the concept. Most often, adaptation is not as popular in translation as applicable to literature; this makes it problematic in nature. At the level of Skopos theory of Hans Vermeer, can we establish the fact that adaptation can project the messages of the source text in the target text as proposed by the theory?

The Skopos theory rightly explicates the importance of "purpose" and "objective" in translation. Any translation is expected to be faithful to both the source text and the target text. This aspect of the study is interested in how adaptation can be traced to both literature and translation in relation with the adopted theory in this study. It is not possible to desociate the narratate technique and the translation technique from our chosen theory in this study. No matter the technique, the translator and the literature experts are expected to go in line with the purpose of translation to suit the target audience in question as suggested by Hans's Skopos theory of translation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of adaptation

In the field of translation, the term "adaptation" is one of the techniques or procedures of translation, it is different from the concept or form of adaptation in drama but it has the same approach. To adapt is about recopying the original work; in the view of Sager (1997:32):

> Adaptation is seen as a complex process that may involve translation techniques that could as well lead to the change in the content of the original. If we consider the source material for translation to consist of content, linguistic form and a purpose (a writer intention and a reader expectation) we now accept that beside the obligatory change of linguistic form, the other two elements can also undergo modifications in translation.

In a simple language, there are always changes in the content of the original work in adaptation. In essence, the major concept in the above definition is the issue of change

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and modification in translation, the same idea is buttressed by Bastin (1993:477), according to him "adaptation is the necessary and creative process of expressing a general meaning, in a given inter-linguistic speech act, trying to re-establish the communicational equilibrium that would have been disrupted by a simple translation operation." Moreover, adaptation in translation is closely in line with the culture of a society, this idea is supported by Gelavizh (2012): "Translation is not just a literary recasting of a work from one language to another, but is also an adaptation of one's culture's values and biases into another".

Therefore, translation seems to be one of the possible ways to unite all cultures in order to create cultural network and cultural globalisation. As earlier stated, the concept of adaptation is of course in two folds, the first one is based on the translation technique and form while the other one is a popular literary adaptation. Though, the two notions have to do with the recreation of ideas and equally recreation of the source text materials in a drama into a new one with similar content and substance.

From Bastin's view (1998:5) "adaptation may be understood as a set of translation operations which results in a text that is not accepted as a translation but is nevertheless recognised as representing a source text" Therefore, adaptation is described as a procedure which can be used whenever the context referred to in the original text does not exist in the culture of the target text, thereby necessitating some forms of re-creation. In drama, there is normally repetition of certain ideas in adaptation whereby the ideas of the original text can be the same and several occasions, there are some changes especially in the names of characters, drama intrigue, use of humour and flashback, customs etc. According to Salawu and Kolawole (2016:123) "adapting humour in African context using European languages attracts more attention due to the multiple translation problems involved".

This shows that adapting humour and other elements can lead to some translation tasks most especially while considering the African thoughts in European languages. It is possible to adapt the whole contents of the source text into the target language and it is equally impracticable to bring out the significant content in a text for adaptation. As Salawu and Kolawole portray this idea in their article, they brought out the adaptation of humour in some selected texts in African fiction of francophone origins which is an adaptation through some prominent aspects of the selected texts. All these are made to suit the demand of the target audience.

We propose the concept of cultural "translation" Translation as a trope to redefine adaptation studies was already suggested by Robert Stam in one of adaptation studies' most foundational and most cited essays, but it is usually forgotten when Stam's work is referenced, this is telling us that adaptation is more of cultural stances as rightly emphasised by Robert.

2.2 Skopos theory

Skopos theory is a theory formulated by the German translator HansVermeer in 1978. In this theory, the mission and the purpose of translation are of paramount

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importance. The process of translation is determined by the function of the product. This function is specified by the addressee. This theory is one of the functionalist approaches whose aim is to dethrone the source text (ST). The word "Skopos" was from Greek, meaning purpose or aim. It is used as the technical term for the purpose of the translation. The main idea of Skopos theory is that translators should hold to the target audience. Theory suggests that translations should focus on the target culture and language illustrating the source text, their effects on the reader, and the original author's purpose as decisive factors, rather than the effects and purposes of the source language.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research method

In this study, we adopt descriptive and narrative methods. We engage in the description and the narration of the relevant substances since the research is not empirical in nature. Different examples of adaptation are cited in both literature and translation for expository purpose.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Adaptation in Literature

Adaptation is a common phenomenon in literature. The major genres of literature such as poetry, prose and drama are often subjected to adaptation from time to time most especially in the new trend of studies. Concerning adaptation in drama, some of the adapted works are based on mythology, that is, an element of tradition, folklore, myth and legend, etc. Definitely, the concept of adaptation is more than changing the linguistic structures of the source text and any work of arts but changes can be made in some areas, such as cultural and religious stances. The above fact is supported by Vermeer's Skopos theory of translation as cited by Xiaoyan, D. (2012:5):

> Skopos theory defines translating as an intentional, interpersonal, partly verbal intercultural interaction based on a source text. Skopos theory has brought a new concept for the status of the source text and target text. An important advantage of this theory is that it allows the possibility of the same text being translated in different ways according to the purpose of the target text and the commission which is given to the translator.

This can tell us that the theory is target-audience oriented and, the translation is expected to be target-culture inclined. This is futher remarked in the theory that "a translation action is determined by its skopos; that is, "the end justifies the means" by Vermeer. Therefore, any adaptation that should be made must be audience friendly and must be faithful to the original message and its effects.

Experts in literature talk more about adaptation in terms of difference between cultures and overlook other factors as the readers envisaged, the medium of publication or

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the market need. It should be noted as well that the target of adaptation in literature is to make literary genres closer to the target language readers or audience by taking into consideration more than just linguistic factors but also factors related to the environment where the communication is envisaged to take place.

This is very important as suggested by the Skopos theory of translation that the main idea of Skopos theory is that translators should hold to the target audience. The Theory suggests that translations should focus on the target culture and language illustrating the source text, their effects on the reader, and the original author's purpose as decisive factors, rather than the effects and purposes of the source language. The purpose of adaptation is to adapt a work of arts successfully and rightly to project the linguistic and cultural effects of the target audience.

In literature, the issue of adaptation has become more and more in vogue most especially in this postmodern era, some literary texts of ages are now passing through the rudiment of adaptation to be able to suit the freshest readers and the audiences. In as much there is a level of cultural shift and climate change in all ramifications in humanities, there is also a need for change to what is in vogue in term of artistic works. According to Ade Ojo (1986:296):

> The first adapted African literary text from English into French was Tutola's quaint story. The Palm-Wine Drinkard (published in 1952) which won European admiration because of its negative qualities- its amorphous generic identity (which makes the work defy categorisation), its ungrammatical and unconversational English and its macabre pervading fantasy. The adaptation (and not the translation) in French of the text by Raymond Queneau (in 1953) was to show the francophone world an example of what the blacks were capable of doing or rather not doing well.

The Palm-Wine Drinkard and his Dead Palm-Wine Tapster in the Deads' Town (1952) was translated into French as *L'invrogne dans la Brousse* (1953), some portions of the original work were adapted to the target culture, language and audience as the translator was able to adapt to certain contents of the original text to suit the needs of his target audience.

This shows that nowadays, literature and translation experts are aware of the pertinence of adaptation in their artistic works since the rudiment of adaptation is based on the genres of literature as earlier explained. It is possible however, to adapt plays from novels, for instance: *Crime and Punishment* (2003), *Marilyn Cambell and Curt Columbus* adapted Dostoyevsky's classic novel into a ninety-minute, three-person play where each actor performed multiple roles. Furthermore, Charles Dickens' *Chrismas Story, A Christmas Carol*, which has around 20 films adapted to date. *All Shock up* to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night, Twist* to *Oliver Twist, West side story* to *Romeo and Juliet, I love because to Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, The Boys from Syracuse* to *A comedy*

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of Errors. Furthermore, the play, *Women of Owu* by Femi Osofisan, is a product of adaptation; it was adapted from *Trojan Women*. Likewise, *Othaeno* from *Otheno*, Hammed Yerima, and *Things fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe was adapted from a verse of a poem by W.B. Yeats *The Second Coming;* Ola Rotimi adapted his play from (*Oedipe Roi de Sophocle*) as *The gods are not to blame*, etc.

Furthermore, Keji Felix Faniran (2018) in the works of Asobele, The book, *J'Accuse, Three Nigerian Plays Adapted from French Novels* is a Nigerian cultural adaptation of three French novels, *Vérité* and *Thérèse Raquin* by Emile Zola and *Manon Lescaut* by Abbé Prévost. It is a two hundred and forty-six-page book that espouses the rich African traditional religion and cultural worldview of the Yoruba people.

> In ***Osannah to Orunmila,*** the religion believes in Orunmila (Ifa), the Yoruba god of truth and justice was espoused in the first drama. Structured into three acts and ten scenes, it reflects the classical French theatre of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. *A*s the author puts it, "this premiere attempt at adapting French novels for the Nigerian stage is an eloquent testimony to our belief in the notion of dialogue of cultures. That is, the Nigerian culture dialoguing with French culture on the Nigerian stage".

The Yoruba traditional culture of truth and belief in retributive justice as encapsulated in Yoruba traditional religion is well spelt out in the first two dramas: *Osannah to Orunmila* and *Rettella*. The author demonstrates one of the attributes of Orunmila (Ifa) as a revelator of truth. In what I call a "front flash" narrative style, Tunde dreams of the confession, the arrest and the punishment of the primary offender, Reverend Uche who thereafter walks in to the scene like a ghost confesses that Bishop Makosi sent him to kill Ayo for material gains. The attributes of orunmila serve as a narrative style in the adapted work.

In African literature, adaptation is very crucial because they allow a writer's story to be told in a new way and new trend. The above assertion is bitressed by the Vermeer's Skopos theory of translation with a view that translation can be presented in a diverse way but its socio-cultural missions are crucial. This means that more people are exposed to the story and can come to appreciate the original. Often, readers find a series of novels or short stories after seeing an adaptation, such as a film, television series, or play. The fundamental fact about adaptation is that both the writers and the audience do often appreciate the original versions of the literary works adapted. This shows that the original work is the masterpiece of the adapted one. For instance, no matter the popularity of the adapted artistic work, the original work remains. Some literary works, like the stories of the Brothers Grimm and classic novels like *A Christmas Carol*, are repetitively adapted.

They are so popular that producers and writers know that there is a market for new adaptations regularly; despite this, the original works still have the regards. Furthermore, short story can be adapted to film and recreates it for another. Most commonly it refers to

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a novel or short story that is made into a feature film. Some of the most famous examples are *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Godfather and Breakfast at Tiffany's*.

We have all seen a movie that we would call a *Loose Adaptation*, a film that keeps a few elements, features or some semblance of the premise of the text that it is based on, but then more or less does its own thing with them. An adaptation occurs when a literary work, such as a poem or novel, is made into a new genre, such as a film or musical. Furthermore, adaptation is a commonly known concept, According to Wikipedia:

> Adaptation might be seen as a special case of intertextuality or intermediality, which involves the practice of transcoding (changing the code or "language" used in a medium) as well as the assimilation of a work of art to other cultural, linguistic, semiotic, aesthetic or other norms. Recent approaches to the expanding field Adaptation Studies reflect these expansions of our perspective. Adaptation occurs as a special case of intertextual and intermedial exchange and the copy-paste culture of digital technologies has produced new intertextual forms engendered by emerging technologies-mashups, remixes, reboots, samplings, remodelings, transformations.

Adaptation is well pronounced in literature especially at the level of intertextuality, without mincing any word, it is culturally inclined and this will need to the expansion of perspective. Another example of adaptation can be found in: *The Great Gatsby* is commonly considered to be F. Scott Fitzgerald's best novel. It was published in 1925 and has been adapted several times. The most successful adaptation was in 2013 by director Baz Luhrmann. It included several well-known actors, contemporary music, and a large budget, allowing the recreation of Gatsby's wealth and parties.

Likewise, the popular literary work *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien published in 1954 by Allen and Uwin is adapted to *The fellowship of the rings* in 2001 and the literary work *Hobbit* is also adapted from the original work of Tolkien, it should be noted that all these are not popular as the original work. According to Johannes, F. (2016:234):

> Robert Stam's intervention into novel-to-film criticism "Beyond Fidelity" has been read primarily as targeting an evaluative assessment of whether an adaptation is faithful to its (single) original. Although this type of judgment often dominates public and occasionally journalistic discussions of particular adaptations.

This shows that the issue of adaptation in literature is beyond changes that are made but the issue if fidelity of paramount importance.

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4.2 Adaptation in Translation

Adaptation is a very important translation technique. It is necessary when something specific to one language culture is expressed in a totally different way that is familiar or appropriate to another language culture. It is a shift in cultural environnent. One of the techniques which is based on the transfer of cultural items is adaptation. That is the reason it is an indirect technique of translation. Translation is obviously unique in the choice of techniques ; for instance, Vinay, J.P. et Darbelnet, J. (1958) in *Stylistique Comparée du Français et de l'Anglais,* (Nouvelle Edition Revue et Corrigée), France Didier. They categorise the techniques of translation into two phases: direct and indirect technique. Adaptation falls into the category of an indirect technique of translation. It is an indirect technique because it cannot be used directly as applicable to borrowing (emprunt), literal translation (traduction littérale) and calque (le calque). The application of adaptation as an indirect technique of translation can be in of form words, phrases and sentences.

There are different translation techniques that can be used in the process of global adaptation such as transcription, of the original, additions, deletions, exoticism, added explanation, corrections, stuffing, embellishments, situational equivalence in the target language and localisation. All these techniques help the translator to be able to meet the final goal of the translation that is, make suitable recreation for its targeted readership at the end, adaptation is a means to re-establish the communication balance that can be disrupted by a traditional translation.

In the same manner, in Osofisan's *Once upon four robbers,* Osofisan adapts some portion of the Yoruba incantation:

Adisuuru gbèje!	Who lurks in patience to collect a pledge!
Atewo-ni-yagayaga-fi-gboore !	The yagayaga plant collects gifts with open palm
Apanisigbomode la apekú!	I name you
Odaramogbo la npe kòtò òkú:	Is called Odaramogbo
Apeja-pada-lónà-òrun-alákeji!	I called it roundly, to win a life back from the road to heaven! Etc. (p.73)

Medjigbodo's Translation :

Qui se cache patiemment pour obtenir un serment !
La plante yagayaga recueille des cadeaux la main ouverte
Quand tu appellles la mort par son nom, elle te promet une longue vie
Mort ! Ton nom est Apanisigbomogbe !
Mort ! Ton dépôt de cadavres s'appelle odaramogbo
Je le crie vivement, pour gagner ma rançon sur la mort brutale ! Etc. (p.94)

The above Yoruba incantation was adapted from the collection of ofó which was gathered by Olatunji (1977). Osofisan adapted the Yoruba incantation (ofò) and translated it into English for non-Yoruba users. At the footnote column, the translator affirms that

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the translation of the incantation is different from the original message which is used on stage, therefore, its adaptation reflects on the translation. This goes in line with the principle of Skopos theory which emphasises that the purpose of translating must be achieved to sactisfy both the target audience and the target message. The above fact is supported UK Essays (2018), Skopos reflects a general shift from predominantly linguistic and rather formal translation theories to a more functionally and socioculturally oriented concept of translation. For clarity seek, translation is expected to be sociocultural inm nature.

The translator could adapt the source language (SL) freely into the target language (TL), as Newmark (1988) says that "this is the freest form translation. It is used to translate literary works (comedies, poetry, short story, narrative, etc.). Therefore, adaptation as a technique of translation is apparently pertinent most especially in the translation of literary genres and other kinds of translation.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

With reference to the different examples of adaptation cited in this study, it can be concluded that adaptation is very important; it is obviously sine-qua-non in literature, translation studies and other fields of study. The concept of adaptation is currently the order of the day as a result of cultural variance and the quest for wider audience. Through adaptation, indigenous ideologies can be changed to foreign ideas and vice-versa. Writers recast the ancient ideas to suit the current trends. Therefore, adaptation is needed in the two concepts since the objectives of engaging in the artistic work are to be achieved as rightly suggested by Skopos theory of translation.

The issue is as well, pertinent in the comparative literature where it serves as a technique in translation studies and an inevitable concept in literature. The study concludes that adaptation will remain relevant in all fields of arts as long as the notion of masterpiece is adapted into the current trends in literary and translation studies. Adaptation makes the old literary work popular and marketable because it is a trend to the original work. Literary adaptation that is done rightly has more advantage than disadvantage. One of the common reasons a book or story is adapted is because the characters in that story are already well-known and this helps the adapted one.

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