



Remakes as translation: A case study of the Indian remake of the *Mind Your Language* series

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Abstract: Remakes have been a global phenomenon in the entertainment industry for a long time. Though language and translation are key components of a remake, research from the perspectives of language and audio-visual translation in the case of remakes has been petit. Aiming to fill the existing gaps in research, this paper examines the instantiations of remakes as instantiations of audio-visual translation and Adaptation Studies. It offers to comprehensively study remakes from the standpoint of audio-visual translation by drawing similarities and dissimilarities between them as a suitable theoretical issue within the ambit of Adaptation Studies. Specifically, it focuses on *Zabaan Sambhal Ke* the Indian remake of *Mind Your Language*, an internationally renowned sitcom remade into ten languages and eleven countries. In India, the Hindi remake of this British sitcom appeared in two phases with slight variations in the spelling of the title; *Zabaan Sambhalke* in 1993-94 having 54 episodes and *Zaban Sambhal Ke* in 1997-98 having 52 episodes. The IMDb ratings of 8.5 for the *Mind Your Language* series and 8.1 for the *Zaban Sambhal Ke* series point to interesting aspects about not only the popularity among the viewers but also the remaking i.e., audio-visual translation of the series. The English and Hindi versions of the sitcom selected for study in this paper have anchored their comic contents in language use, socio-cultural gaps and translation in a classroom representing linguistic and cultural diversities. The data for this paper comes from the episodes of both sitcoms. The main axes of discussions in this paper include points for grounding remakes in audio-visual translation, disciplinary comparison between audio-lingual translation and Adaptation Studies, instances of internationally acclaimed remakes of TV series and the linguistic and socio-cultural intricacies involved in the success or failure of the remake activities.

Keywords: remakes; sitcoms; audiovisual translation; adaptation; TV series.



1. Introduction

Remakes are an inevitable phenomenon in the entertainment industry. It is almost certain for successful programmes. Sometimes, even the unsuccessful ones become successful in their remake versions. Remakes are suitable for examination from the audio-visual translation and Adaptation Studies standpoint. Many remakes undertake themes based on horror, ghosts and chthonic creatures. The plot and characterization in some of them deal with themes relevant to science fiction (sci-fi) literature. Some of them deal with human values. Remakes of humorous dramas are uncommon because the translation of humorous aspects, which are often unique to a language or culture, poses serious challenges during the translation process. Given cultural adaptations and audiovisual aspects, remakes become a suitable theme for research within Adaptation Studies and audiovisual translation. In this context, the *Mind Your Language* series (MYL) has witnessed remakes in eleven countries out of which one remake is intralingual while the remaining ten remakes were interlingual. The Indian remake of the series is *Zaban Sambhal Ke* (ZSK). This paper aims to examine remakes as a topic relevant for study from the standpoint of Adaptation Studies and audiovisual translation. In what follows, this presents a review of relevant literature and discusses the key concepts. Then, it offers an analysis of remakes and various types of remakes. Further, it situates remakes within the purview of Adaptation Studies and audiovisual translation. Following that it offers a comparison between the source i.e., the MYL show and its Indian remake i.e., the ZSK show. Findings and discussion come next and are followed by the conclusion.

2. Reruns, intralingual remakes and transnational remakes

The term 'rerun' refers to the re-airing or repeat broadcast of a TV programme in part or in entirety. Reruns do not involve fresh episodes, reinterpretation, and recharacterization of the show. A programme's socio-cultural relevance and popularity play an important role in its rerun by the television channel. Reruns of shows contribute to establishing certain moral and ethical values intergenerationally and thereby play a contributory role in the thought process of society (Forrest & Koos, 2002; Looock & Verevis, 2012). The reruns of numerous TV programmes within the same network or across different networks point to the relevance of such programmes and their revenue generation potential. *The Office*, *Friends*, *The Big Bang Theory*, and *I Love Lucy* are some examples of reruns of internationally acclaimed TV programmes. In India, shows such as *Ramayan*, *Mahabharat*, *Shaktiman*, *Circus*, and *Dekh Bhai Dekh* have seen reruns on several counts and several networks. During the lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, people were confined to homes and the viewership of TV shows increased manifold. The reruns of some popular programmes created nostalgia among the viewers and contributed to the steep rise in viewership that year. In the era of internet TV and streaming platforms, the context of reruns has changed. Now, the viewers can watch a programme repeatedly and according to their timetable. Therefore, when a show becomes available on a streaming platform, its rerun on television does not remain profitable for the channels as viewers do not like to be bound to the timetable of the concerned channel. From the translation standpoint, reruns do not hold any significance because reruns do not signify any language or translation activity. Reruns do not involve any audio-visual translation or cultural



adaptation. Therefore, reruns in the context of translation and in the era of streaming platforms have become immaterial.

Contrary to reruns, remakes signify language and translation activity. Remakes involve alterations and adaptations in plot and characterization. When remakes are within the language, they are called intralingual remakes. When remakes involve language and culture change, they are called interlingual remakes. The most common form of remake is interlingual remake. Incorporation of new ideas, fresh representation, script updates, cultural adaptation, recontextualization and new interpretation are essential aspects of remakes. Concerning cultural adaptation, ethical values, nostalgic appeals and business potential, both reruns and remakes are on par with each other.

Transnational remakes are remaking that cross national boundaries. Transnational remakes can be intralingual or interlingual. When a show from one country is presented in another country without changing the language but by adapting to a variety of the same language, it is intralingual. For instance, British shows like *Mind Your Language* and *The Office* were remade for American viewers. In such cases, the shows in British English will be remade into American English. The instances of transnational remakes that are intralingual are mostly in pluricentric languages. Pluricentric languages (also known as polycentric) are spoken in more than two countries and have developed more than two standard forms. English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Russian, Bengali, Tamil, Hindi and Arabic are some examples of pluricentric languages. Remakes of shows in these polycentric languages can be transnational and at the same time, intralingual when both source and remake are in the same language for viewers in different countries. Intralingual transnational remakes are well-known but they do not signify language or translation and adaptation activities as much as interlingual remakes. Interlingual transnational remakes cross national and linguistic boundaries and have plots and characterizations that are extensively relevant for translation and Adaptation Studies. This paper focuses on a Hindi TV sitcom named *Zaban Sambhal Ke* which is the Indian remake of the English sitcom *Mind Your Language*. *Zaban Sambhal Ke* is a perfect example of a transnational interlingual remake.

Reruns and remakes are TV shows and films that viewers find relatable. Though reruns and remakes are not comparable in terms of translation, they command significant viewership and have market and production value. However, if reruns, dubbing, or subtitling were adequate to create the magic that makes people relate to the show, remakes would not have come into the context of audio-visual translation and Adaptation Studies. Consequently, the cross-fertilisation of linguistic uniqueness and cultural adaptation would have remained elusive in the cinematic field and entertainment industry. Therefore, the relevance of transnational interlingual remakes is on an upward trajectory.

The challenges involved in cultural adaptation vary strikingly between remakes within a language and transnational remakes. If the remake is within the language there is hardly any localization or alteration in the themes. The effort may be to reinvent the magic of the source TV show or upgrade its technology for relay or carry out a commercial activity based on the success of the source. Even for significant languages such as English, which have varieties spreading across different continents, the mainstay of remakes is the adjustment of accent and vocabulary. Such initiatives do not require major changes in the theme or cultures being depicted. However, for

transnational remakes involving different languages, one of the primary concerns is the cultural adaptation and localisation at the language level.

Remaking of TV shows involves numerous challenges that can be clubbed into the following balance groups: (a) Sociolinguistic balancing: This group includes balancing language, translation culture of the source & target, dealing with the nostalgia of the past and expectations of the present, and flowing between creativity and fidelity of the content. And, (b) non-sociolinguistic balancing: Managing the rights for remake & relay, navigating between old and new technology, casting in accordance with the script of the source show and target show etc. TV show remakes that exhibit perfect sociolinguistic and non-sociolinguistic balancing include *The Office*, *Sherlock*, *Fargo*, *Battlestar Galactica*, and *Queer Eye* just to name a few.

The remake of sitcoms is tricky because humour varies across cultures. Therefore, instances of wordplay, references, and cultural nuances may pose challenges for translation and may require metaphorization and symbolization. Therefore, well-executed adaptations contain universal humour or adapt jokes and deal with culture-specific items based on local sensibilities. In this context, understanding the impact of cultural differences on TV series adaptations is crucial. The adaptation of the show concerns the following: resonance with the audience's expectations through adept characterization, social norms, language use, historical issues, and political issues. In short, good remakes offer a harmonious blend of authenticity and adaptability. Remakes lacking in these aspects may fail, especially if objective comparisons cannot be drawn, originality is missing, and execution does not show creative adaptations. Some remakes that failed to hit the mark include the following: *Gossip Girl* (2021), *Gracepoint* (2014), *Skins* (2011) and *The Inbetweeners* (2012).

A point worth noting here is the cause-and-effect relationship between classics on the one hand and reruns and remakes on the other hand. A commonly-held viewpoint is that classics are worthy of reruns and remakes, however, it is also important to note as a perspective that reruns and remakes have a contributory role in TV shows becoming classics. The link shared between the making of classics and the making of reruns and remakes is relevant for research, it is beyond the scope of this paper.

Intertitles, also known as title cards, are texts that appear between scenes. Though they are not part of the scenes they are anchored to, they contribute to a smooth transition and the overall plot. The beginning of audio-video translation may be traced to the time when intertitles were used in silent films (Duman, 2022). Intertitles are occasionally seen in the shows concerned here.

Revoicing (referring to recording or inserting a new soundtrack), fandubbing (referring to dubbing created by fans), and fansubbing (referring to subtitles created by fans) are new versions of multimedia texts that have become such an integral part of digital life that they need to be discussed under the rubric of AVT (Loock & Verevis, 2012). These activities may be created by fans for humorous purposes and meme production, but they have emerged very strongly. Their development has moved from amateur or non-serious leisurely activity to serious professional services and economically productive enterprises.

Considering how some shows mitigate the challenges of creative reworks, cultural adaptation and audience satisfaction, a radical view can be considering some source shows of remakes the premakes. The contributory role of remakes in making classics also endorses this view. The term 'premakes' refers to the productions that occur beforehand and are known by their remakes. The

remakes make them known to the far-off viewers who do not know the language and culture of the source show. Occasionally, if attribution is missing, it will be challenging to know what the source was. In the case of ZSK, there is an open admission regarding the MYL as the source, and on several counts, the titles of the English and Hindi versions are repeated by the characters to point to that.

3. Audiovisual translation, adaptation studies and remakes

Though audiovisual translation (AVT) appeared late in translation theory and practice, it made quick strides and advanced with emerging technologies. It is seemingly a new field that involves multiple media and tremendous challenges. Today, the world is unimaginable without it. AVT has impacted all walks of life, however, its effect on the entertainment industry and education sector is noteworthy. Recognizing the big leaps in AVT research while Guillot (2018) considers the challenges facing AVT research as uncharted territories, Gambier and Pinto (2018) claims that present-day publications on AVT go far beyond discussing the uniqueness of the field and the intellectual thrill experienced in AVT activities. AVT refers to a wide range of activities such as dubbing, subtitling, remake and commentary. Manfredi (2018) argues that though AVT has attained disciplinary status in the 21st century, it needs to expand by adopting a cross-disciplinary approach. Examining AVT across languages and cultures from a cross-cultural viewpoint Guillot (2018) reports fansubbing (subtitling done by fans) and crowdsourcing activities that have caused exponential growth in the field. Kadri and Boughaba (2020) define AVT as an umbrella term for a range of phenomena such as multimedia translation, multimodal translation and screen translation and further classify AVT into categories such as dubbing, subtitling, audio description (also known as double dubbing), voice-over (also known as off-camera/off-stage commentary), subtitling for deaf and hard of hearing, partial dubbing (also known as half dubbing) and remake. This paper discusses remake as (an audiovisual) translation and substantiates its arguments on the basis of the remake of an English television sitcom into a Hindi television comedy. Díaz Cintas and Nikolić (2018) argue that the availability and affordability of digital technology have rendered human communication audiovisual like never before and that screens have become an inalienable part of life (Forrest & Koos, 2002). Therefore, audiovisual translation cannot stay out of the ambit of translation research for long. Several studies including Evans (2014), Gottlieb (1998), Mandiberg (2008) and Saad (2023) have treated remakes as translation for the fact that remakes involve the transfer of text from one language to another in a culturally appropriate manner.

Adaptation Studies refers to academic pursuits that deal with how written texts or visual content are transformed and reinterpreted in different media, such as sound or illustrations. For instance, consider a novel adapted into a movie or a story adapted from a movie. Adaptation Studies focuses on processes by which texts from one medium transform into another and remain culturally relevant. The discipline of Adaptation Studies shares an organic relationship with Translation Studies. Though this discipline merits an independent existence, it is often classified under the rubric of Translation Studies. The main themes discussed in Adaptation Studies include fidelity, cultural context, intertextuality and medium specificity. It is a creative and dynamic field that is inalienable from audiovisual translation. While both AVT and Adaptation Studies deal with the transfer of content across forms, they cannot be treated as identical. They differ in their focus, scope, methods,



goals and challenges. While AVT focuses on television shows and video games, Adaptation Studies focuses on cultural contexts. Audiovisual translation involves dubbing, subtitling, voice-over, captioning, etc, whereas Adaptation Studies involves analyses, processes, books and films. Audiovisual translation concerns language transfer in media, whereas Adaptation Studies explores content transformation across cultures and formats.

Intersemiotic translation is a distinct aspect of translation wherein a set of visual signs is translated into another set of verbal or vice versa. Intersemiotic translation is also referred to as transmutation, and it is the most significant component of Adaptation Studies. Instances of cross-medium communication such as adapting a novel into a play or an artwork into a story are suitable examples of intersemiotic translation. As a semiotic activity, it involves creative interrelations because a set of signs requires reinterpretation and reimagination in a new medium. The remaking of MYL into ZSK is as much an intersemiotic translation as it is an AVT or adaptation.

Focussing on film remake as cinematic translation, Saad (2023) focuses on reconstructing elements of the source from the standpoints of domestication and foreignization. The remake of moving pictures and television shows has been a common practice not only across languages and cultures but also across generations and times. It is natural for popular movies and television programmes to be remade into different languages and cultures for new audiences. On the contrary, remakes also tend to add to the popularity of films or shows. Labayen and Morán (2019) discuss film remakes in the context of manufacturing proximity and scrutinize the factors contributing to remakes' success, especially comic ones. Considering cinema and TV programmes, remake is an old exercise, and Evans (2018) considers it as old as the genre. However, the critical engagements on remakes have yet to feature prominently or adequately in published literature on Translation Studies. When audiovisual translation started making noticeable strides the focus rested mainly on componential aspects of remakes such as intertitles, dubbing and subtitling, but not on remakes per se. Saad (2023) offers interesting points concerning remakes and translation and also discusses the types of remakes that various scholars have identified in the context of film remakes.

The initial occurrence of remakes dates back to the 1896 movie *Partie d'écarté* (Duman, 2022; Evans, 2018). Examining remakes as translation and offering a history of remakes in the United States of America, Mandiberg (2008) engages with the critical issues of fidelity, fertility and localization and also summarises the responses to remakes in the twentieth century. Remakes have been subjected to strict and reductive scrutiny so much so that the source programmes (TV shows or films) were given higher value and their remakes or derivatives were condemned (Mandiberg, 2008). Ignoring the creative aspects of remakes, especially from the vantage point of cultural adaptation, some scholars have treated remakes as reproductions of an existing form. Leicht (2002) defines remakes as new versions of old films. Deviating from the reductive, dismissive and oversimplifying interpretation, some scholars point to the intricacies of remakes and locate remakes as a serious topic for research within Translation Studies. Worthy and Sheehan (2024) discuss textual interconnectivity and demonstrate the intricate relationship between creative writing and screen adaptations. Mazdon (2000) claimed that remakes can be a valid research topic in Translation Studies whereas Okayayuz (2017) terms the inclusion of remakes under Translation Studies as unnecessary interdisciplinarity. The criticism against the treatment of remakes from the lens of Translation Studies by Okayayuz (2017) is concerning because Translation Studies by the name itself is



interdisciplinary. Themes studies under the rubric of Comparative Literature, Adaptation Studies, Interpretation Studies, Culture Studies, Gender Studies etc. are organically linked to Translation Studies and are relevant by all means. Remakes are proper instances of translation as they deal with the transfer of meaning from one language to the other (Mandiberg, 2008). Among the published works, Evans (2018) offers interesting discussions on scholars who have contributed to a wide range of views on remakes as translation. The view that remakes manifest forms of translation that have linguistic and cultural adaptation also gets further strength in Evans (2014, 2018), Gambier (2003) and Chiaro (2009) as they offer valuable insights on remakes as translation. All remakes need not be interlingual or transnational (Evans, 2014). However, this paper focuses on interlingual and transnational remakes.

The technological developments in recent years have considerably changed the way humour is exchanged and paved the way for new avenues of audiovisual translation. In the context of the translation of audiovisual humorous content, Dore (2020) is a comprehensive study. The translation of humour and cross-cultural humour have always been discussed as challenging areas within translation studies. Audiovisual translation with humorous content emerged as sites of creative engagement. In this context, the translation of humorous television shows emerged in various forms and challenges. The remakes of the MYL show include the translation of humorous situations and entertaining texts. The form of translation poses the highest degree of challenges because the situation and texts are culturally rooted. If the remake fails to elicit laughter as a sitcom, it would be a translation failure in some sense. Humorous texts are difficult to translate because there are violations of the maxims of conversation and a play of pragmatic knowledge. Xiang et al. (2024) presents numerous instances from shows like *Friends* to illustrate the strong pragmatic relationship along this idea. Focussing on *Godless* (a TV series), Gómez Castro and Lobejón Santos (2024) examine the portrayal of women from the standpoint of gender representation and observe that the depiction of women has improved from the past but has a long way to go. The television show and its remakes are also in discussion here and have received criticism due to their portrayal of women characters.

The discussion concerning audiovisual translation often focussed on expressions like ‘dubbing countries’ (referring to countries that dubbed programmes for their population), subtitling countries (referring to countries that provided programmes of foreign origin with subtitles) and did not focus on developments taking place in the Asian countries such as India, Japan, Korea etc. In this context, the term ‘Korean Wave’, often abbreviated as ‘K-Wave’ and also known as ‘K-Craze’ refers to the international popularity of music, TV shows, films and cuisine of South Korea. Since the 1990s, South Korean TV programmes and popular culture started gaining patronage across the globe. In India also, Korean TV programmes have gained a lot of popularity among the youth. BTS Music and Korean TV dramas such as *First Love*, *Jewel in the Palace*, *Fireworks*, *Squid Game*, *SKY Castle*, *Pachinko* etcetera are commonly known productions. Kiaer et al. (2024) discuss K-Wave as a global cultural phenomenon and provide valuable insights into the diverse range of Korean productions that have gathered popularity across the globe. TV series such as *Kaisi Yeh Yaariaan*, *Duranga* and *A Legal Affair* are Indian remakes of Korean programmes *Boys Over Flowers*, *Flower of Evil* and *Suspicious Partner* respectively. Also, *The Archies* is a Hindi remake of *The Archie Show*, and *Galli Galli Sim Sim* is a Hindi adaptation of *Sesame Street*.



Researchers and critics suggested names for each decade based on the developments in television programmes, their success and popularity among audiences in the United States of America. The name 'The Golden Age of Television' kept reoccurring among these. The Golden Age of Television also known as 'Peak TV' or 'Prestige TV' mainly referred to such programmes that depicted high-quality production and won appreciation across different countries and cultures. TV shows during the turn of the 20th century qualify for the first, second and third wave of the golden age of television. The success of the MYL series in the United Kingdom and its remakes in India and several other countries point to something similar in effect. It would not be an overstatement to club this show and its remakes in the elite peak or Prestige TV category.

Rosewarne (2020) presents an interesting discussion on views expressed by critics and champions of remakes. Favouring remakes as translations, Evans (2018) offers three notable and self-explanatory points namely 'audience recognition', 'legal acknowledgement' and 'industrial process'. It is essential that the audience recognizes the show as a show of their language and culture, not as a show of some other language and culture. The audience should be able to identify with the characters and connect with the scenes depicted. They should be able to follow the remake without prior knowledge of the source programme. ZSK succeeds in doing that. The ZSK show is widely acknowledged as a remake or Indian version of MYL. In several episodes and on several occasions, the ZSK show uses the expression 'mind your language' perhaps to hint at the source which can be treated as an additional indirect acknowledgement. In terms of process and production, ZSK banked on new plot construction, distinct characterization, and telecast. Barring the idea of a programme based on a language classroom that has highly diverse adults as second language learners, ZSK has involved processes that qualify it as an innovative and industrious programme.

4. Remakes of Mind Your Language Series

In the early years of television, it is worth noting that television in itself was an extraordinary device that gained popularity across the globe. Those days fewer programmes were made. The popularity of television and shows telecast on television definitely contributed to the success of the MYL series. And, the popularity of MYL certainly contributed to the success of the ZSK show. MYL was made in several countries representing different languages. Considering these instances of remake in different countries as 'multiple-language versions' (a term suggested by Evans in 2018) will be wrong and misplaced. Multiple-language versions may refer to programmes relayed in several languages without changing the cast and plot. Though language is localised, not much cultural adaptation happens in the case of multiple language versions. Consider, for instance, a movie simultaneously relayed in several world languages or even several local languages. The distinguishing aspect of remakes is that besides localizing language, there is an ample amount of cultural adaption. Though the overall objective and projections remain unaltered, remakes appear as standalone entities. Contrary to this, a perspective for discussion is remake in the same language i.e. remake without translation or remake as intralingual translation. Therefore, the phenomenon of remakes merits an engaging discussion. Drawing from the above discussion, ZSK and others in different countries can be treated as remakes of the MYL series not multiple-language versions of it.



Since its start, the MYL show has been popular among viewers, and its potential as a suitable transnational remake has become well-known. Perhaps that is why the remakes of this television programme started very soon and were successfully released in eleven countries and ten languages, excluding the English version released in the United States of America. A comparative study of the remakes of MYL show is beyond the scope of this paper, yet the following table offers a list countries and languages in which the remakes of MYL show or MYL-inspired shows were relayed on television.

Table 1: Remakes of *Mind Your Language* series

Sl. No.	Remakes	Country	Language
1	Zaban Sambhal Ke	India	Hindi
2	Kelas International	Indonesia	Indonesian
3	Nihonjin no Shiranai Nihongo	Japan	Japanese
4	al-‘ilm nūr	Jordan	Arabic
5	Classmates	Kenya	Swahili
6	Cakap Melayu Lah	Malaysia	Malay
7	Klassi Għalina	Malta	Maltese
8a	Jami'ar Albarkawa	Nigeria	Hausa
8b	Second Chance	Nigeria	English
9	So Not Worth It	South Korea	Korean
10	Raja Kaduwa	Sri Lanka	Sinhala
11	What a Country	USA	English

Source: Author (2025)

The remake of MYL titled *What a Country* in the USA received a mixed response. The language and theme being identical the show was expected to do well, however, the audience response varied considerably. The humorous content appeared outdated and the show did not achieve the success that the MYL series had in Britain. The remake of MYL titled *Classmates* in Kenya received appreciation for adapting the themes and capturing the elements of humour in a way that the local audiences could relate to. It had a powerful impact on the entertainment industry of Kenya. In Indonesia, the remake of MYL as *Kelas International* performed well in terms of audience engagement and cast performance, however, critiques observed that the show could explore more themes based on language pedagogy and cultural adaptation. In Japan, the remake of MYL named *Nihonjin no Shiranai Nihongo* garnered mostly positive reception. In terms of cultural adaptation, audience reception, cast performance and educational value, the remake succeeded in going beyond entertainment as it helped the viewers understand the nuances of language learning and communication. The remake of MYL as *al-'ilm nūr* performed well in Jordan. The show garnered a



favourable view among critics and the audience found it relatable appreciating its content on the challenges of language learning. *Cakap Melayu Lah*, the Malay remake of MYL in Malaysia performed well with its relatable and humorous content that integrated with cultural elements. The viewers and critics found the show engaging and successful. In Nigeria, the remake of MYL was named *Second Chance* for the English remake and *Jami'ar Albarkawa* when the language in focus was Hausa. It appears that the remakes of MYL in various countries were not documented adequately and that is why reliable references to these remakes are not available.

The show was successful in presenting serious themes humorously. It could highlight the issues related to linguistic and cultural differences in multicultural classrooms. The MYL show was remade as *So Not Worth It* in Korean. The remake did well despite some critics pointing at overused and outdated jokes. A notable and relatable point in the Korean remake of MYL was the attention it gave to the mental health and experiences of foreigners in Korea. The Sri Lankan remake of the MYL series was named *Raja Kaduwa* and it appeared as a popular choice among the critics and viewers. Critics noted that the Sinhalese remake could adapt the humour of the MYL series and present it with a unique flavour.

From the above, it can be concluded that the MYL remakes were mostly successful in presenting humorous instances of miscommunication and the challenges of mitigating cultural differences while learning a new language as an adult. However, the focus of the present research is the Hindi remake of the MYL show, *Zaban Sambhal Ke* (ZSK). It is worth noting that the Hindi remake in India performed as well as its English source.

5. Situating ZSK show in adaptation studies and audiovisual translation

The enterprise of Adaptation Studies primarily focuses on converting a creative work from one medium or genre to another. The conversion of a novel into a film, a play into a TV series or a video game into a movie is suitable for study within the research scope of Adaptation Studies. The forms include literary adaptations, screen adaptations and cross-media adaptations. The main objective of Adaptation Studies is to understand how text is reinterpreted or the plot is re-depicted in new cultural settings and linguistic landscapes. The adaptation of classic novels and historical plays as films can be seen in popular cultures of all major world languages. Remakes are forms that qualify as literary and cultural adaptations and are suitable for analysis within Adaptation Studies.

Audiovisual translation (abbreviated as AVT) is a form of translation that deals with audiovisual content. The translation of Films, TV shows, documentaries, and video games involves the rendering of audiovisual content from one language into another. The most recognized forms of audiovisual translation include dubbing, subtitling and voice-over. Dubbing is a process through which the source's audio is replaced by the target language, whereas the video remains unaffected. Subtitling refers to adding text at the bottom of the screen that changes according to the dialogue. The presentation of subtitles is aligned with the flow of dialogue. Subtitles can be in the source language or several target languages. Voice-over is a form of translation that overlaps the original audio with a translated voice. The purpose of voice-over is to make the content accessible to diverse audiences, maintain cultural relevance and provide the viewers an opportunity to relate to the



programme's content. Voice-over necessitates the involvement of artists who are audible, but not visible in the programme.

The scope of AVT is beyond translating dialogues and providing subtitles as it necessitates the working of multiple media in harmony. Szarkowska and Jankowska (2024) discuss this by employing a pair of contrasting terms namely 'monosemiotic translation' (referring to translations involving a single channel) and 'polysemiolic translation' (referring to translations involving multiple channels). Gottlieb (1998) also uses a similar pair of contrasting expressions namely 'isosemiotic translation' and 'diasemiolic translation' to refer to translations involving single channels and multiple channels respectively. In the AI-induced rapidly evolving entertainment landscape, it is very likely that the broadcast of TV series will move from subtitling and dubbing to polysemiolic or diasemiolic translation indicating that the future of audiovisual translation is very promising (Szarkowska & Jankowska, 2024). According to Saad (2023), remakes can also be termed 'multimedia localization' because they involve the adaptation of multimedia content in linguistically and culturally relatable forms. In the case of audiovisual translation, the successful representation of stereotyped characters is a challenging task. To this goal, Renna (2021) is an interesting contribution offering a new framework based on redesigning characters and corpus study in audiovisual translation.

The enterprise of Adaptation Studies explores how adaptations in the form of sociocultural and linguistic transformations happened across media while audiovisual translation engages with the same in audiovisual content. Adaptation Studies may involve only text and no audio or video whereas audiovisual translation (as the name suggests) involves audiovisual aspects. Remakes of TV shows come within the ambit of Adaptation Studies and audiovisual translation. From the above discussion, it is easy to situate the ZSK show within the disciplinary purview of Adaptation Studies and audiovisual translation. Some internationally acclaimed remakes of TV shows that manifest an appreciable amount of adaptation include the following: *Battlestar Galactica* (1970s), *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* (1980s), *La Femme Nikita* (1990s), *V* (2000s), *Hawaii Five-0* (2010s), *Charlie's Angels* (2010s). The remake of MYL in India as ZSK is a suitable case for Adaptation Studies because it is not a remake of a sitcom from British English into Indian English. The case is not also comparable with image-to-image translation or frame-to-frame translation. Rather, there is a full-scale adaptation and location of the theme of the source show.

Leitch (2002) discusses remakes in the context of recreation of an earlier form intending that remakes ought to present a unique product and it is beyond a text-to-text comparison. Therefore, it is important to understand the sociocultural and creative aspects of remakes of audiovisual programmes, especially those that deal with humorous content. Remakes have socio-cultural implications, especially because they involve the translation of sociolinguistic aspects of society and culture. Remakes have a direct bearing on the sociology of translation because they deal with the translation of social and cultural artefacts. Until recently, the intricate links between sociology and translation were not well-researched. Tyulenev and Luo (2024) offers a collection of thirty-five chapters dealing with various dimensions of translation and sociology. The stereotyping of people representing languages and cultures different from the mainstream as exhibited in MYL and ZSK can be a theme for critical analysis from sociological standpoints. The communities represented and stereotyped may find their depictions in bad taste and may term both the series 'sadcoms' instead of sitcoms. The term 'sadcom' usually refers to such programmes that have tragic

ends and are comparable with tragic plays. In MYL and ZSK, it is evident that the characters do not evolve as much as the plot evolves. The performance of the characters, in this case, the students in the language classroom, improves only marginally and the purpose seemingly keeps failing. Also, success whenever achieved is either by wrongdoings or by mere coincidence. The condition of the protagonist also does not change much. Therefore, MYL and ZSK maybe termed ‘sadcoms’ in a non-restrictive sense of the word. However, the overall objective of both programmes was entertainment through language mishaps and that was judiciously achieved. Both shows dwelled on content from time-tested jokes blending creative language manipulation and hilarious socio-cultural situations. In doing so they also created content for future sitcoms.

6. Comparing MYL and ZSK shows

The comparison between a TV show and its remake may revolve around the various aspects of TV production. Such as the following:

1. Content and genre: Both MYL and ZSK offer humorous content and fall under the genre of sitcoms. The content in both shows flows in a way that each episode is a complete story and the overall storyline of the series keeps advancing.
2. Plot and storylines: The central plotlines and narrative arcs are common for both shows. Both shows have a classroom and a language teacher with students of diverse backgrounds.
3. Cast and characterization: The cast includes students who represent different cultural identities exhibited through their linguistic behaviour. The characterization in both shows is identical.
4. Tone and style: The tone in both shows is humourous and romantic and the style is conversational and pedagogic often indicating arguments and misunderstandings.
5. Culture and settings: The MYL series depicts an English culture and the setting is a school where the learners typically behave according to the diverse cultures they represent. The ZSK show depicts a Hindi culture and the setting is a school named National Institute of Languages (ironically abbreviated as NIL). Again, the learners in the ZSK show represent different cultures that contribute to the development of the plot.
6. Critical reception and impact: Both shows received wide appreciation and can be termed successful. Considering that ZSK is a remake of MYL the impact of MYL is on ZSK and not the other way around. The IMDb rating for the MYL series is 8.5 and the same for the ZSK show is 8.1. Both shows ran for years.
7. Legacy and influence: Both the ZSK series and the MYL series produced lasting impacts on the audience who identify with the characters and relate to the episodes. Both shows have plenty of conversations that are suitable for linguistic analysis. The MYL show as an internationally renowned sitcom had a lasting impact, for it was remade into twelve languages in as many countries.
8. Seasons and episodes: The MYL series ran for three seasons and had only 42 episodes whereas the ZSK show ran for only two seasons offering 106 episodes altogether.



Created by Vince Powell the MYL show screened only 42 episodes spread over four seasons. Directed by Rajiv Mehra, the ZSK show contained 106 episodes spread over two seasons. MYL was relayed from 1977 to 1985 while ZSK was relayed from 1993 to 1998.

9. Technical and social setting: Technology-wise, multiple-cameras were used in both shows, and both had episodes of similar length. The episodes of MYL show had intervals, but the episodes of the ZSK show did not have intervals.
10. Screening and rights: Barring information about international screenings attested references regarding the procurement of remaking rights are not available for the MYL series as well as the ZSK series.

Both shows have very interesting examples of punning riddles and ambiguous statements due to polysemy and homonymy of words. Both shows have episodes that depict incorrect translations. ZSK has numerous instances where the translation of the title *Mind Your Language* as *Zuban Sambhal Ke* can be seen. Both shows have an episode that shows the protagonist getting accidentally locked out of the house and both involve the entire cast reaching the police station due to miscommunication. Both MYL and ZSK deal with cultural nuances and present comic situations due to language mishaps and cultural aspects. Conflict and camaraderie among the students/learners on the basis of linguistic and cultural differences can be seen in both shows.

An episode of ZSK has the teaching of vowels and consonants of the Hindi language/Devanagari script by way of rhyme in rap style. Proverbs, idiomatic expressions, sayings and phrases serve as ingredients for humour and lessons in both MYL and ZSK. Translation exercises also serve as ingredients for humorous effects. In ZSK, the regional varieties of Hindi and comprehension difficulties among them were brought into an episode for humour as well as for making a political statement. Mismatches between the said and intended expressions, mismatches of proverbs/idioms and mismatches of metalanguage comparison are present in abundance in both shows. ZSK has an episode that depicts the presence of varieties of the language being taught whereas MYL does have the same.

The onset and conclusion are similar for both shows but with slight differences. In MYL, the launch is with music, whereas in ZSK, the beginning is with a song. The IMDb ratings are very much alike for both shows. In the MYL series, the walls of the classroom do not have any graffiti or illustration, whereas in ZSK, the walls of the classroom have letters of Hindi painted on them. In both shows, the dress style of the characters is typical of the culture they represent. However, the glamour quotient added through some characters' dresses is occasionally visible in both.

In both shows, there is no end to the misfortune, misery and problems of the protagonist and the language proficiency of the learners. Both shows try to depict the socio-political situations of the concerned country through satirical remarks and the use of irony for topics of general interest such as poverty, unemployment, crime, illiteracy etc. Both MYL and ZSK use/involve the latest technology to create a storyline and humorous effect. Both shows reflect on the latest global and national trends and have episodes based on content that reinstall human values/care and compassion.

Both shows have an engaging storyline and character development. In both tension is built momentarily and gets over by the end of the episode. There are no instances of cliffhangers, oversaturation, lack of closure, and frustration in the MYL show and the same is true for the ZSK

show. A notable point in the MYL and ZSK shows is that they anchor their points to a language classroom that has learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The linguistic diversity represented by the students in the language classroom in both MYL and ZSK has an interesting point related to the learning advantage for the speakers of cognate languages. The term cognate languages, in this context, refers to languages that have structure-related and vocabulary-related similarities. Both MYL and ZSK have characters who represent cognate languages as well as non-cognate languages and thereby both endorse the idea that speakers of cognate languages show higher learning potential due to shared properties between the language already known and the language to be learnt. The flip side of the learning advantage due to shared vocabulary and structures is the possibility of pseudo-cognates, also known as 'false friends.' There are numerous instances of cognates in the episodes of MYL and ZSK. Some instances of pseudo-cognates are also there. The depiction of an insidious linguistic phenomenon such as cognates in bilingual contexts is an important point. However, the translation or remake of that in equal measure is noteworthy. From an audiovisual translation perspective, this achievement makes the ZSK a remake as well as a distinct show at the same time.

The walls of the classroom in MYL do not have any text or graphics. However, the walls of the language classroom in ZSK have Devanagari characters and some images typifying the children's classrooms in Indian schools. Though the episodes do not deal with the texts and graphics of the walls, they contribute to the success of the ZSK show. In various episodes of both shows, the tutor starts using a non-standard variety, sometimes that of the learner, under a strong and trendy influence of the concerned variety.

Both MYL and ZSK shows have plenty of episodes highlighting the influence of the mother tongue on the language to be taught/learnt. In MYL the mother tongue influence is evident in errors committed by the characters learning English. The errors due to the mother tongue influence include incorrect pronunciation, wrong inflexion to words, incorrect agreement markers related to gender number and person, and overgeneralization of meanings. The ZSK show has successfully mapped the mother tongue influence among Hindi learners. The MYL show serves as a critical reminder to English language educators regarding the possible areas in which learners can commit errors due to their linguistic backgrounds. Paralleling MYL, the ZSK show serves as a lesson to Hindi educators regarding a variety of errors that the learners may commit due to factors like mother tongue influence.

The protagonist teaches language in both the MYL and ZSK due to his compelling financial situation. The protagonist does not like the salary and the job but does not have any alternative. In both shows, the school's principal is an unmarried lady who does not like to be addressed as Mrs and wants people to specify her spinsterhood with Miss when they are addressing her. In both, the principal is a miserly lady who is strict in her behaviour.

Both MYL and ZSK shows have some episodes that are thematically identical. For instance, consider the following:

1. An episode in which an infant makes a guest appearance and the language used to refer to the child creates hilarious misunderstandings in both.
2. Some episodes have the lead character getting locked outside the house or window.



3. An episode in which the protagonist resigns from the job of language teacher when an exciting job is offered only to be deceived and reinducted later.
4. An episode that has a foreigner speaking chaste English in the MYL show and chaste Hindi in the ZSK show and requesting the respective school administration to admit his cook who is a native speaker of the language not coherent in speech.
5. Numerous episodes show the influence of the learners' speech style on the teacher and other learners.
6. Numerous episodes show the surname of characters being misunderstood as a literal word or discussion revolving around the name/surname.
7. Oversimplification and overgeneralization of linguistic and cultural diversities are evident in both shows. The MYL show has a Sikh male from Punjab and a traditional housewife from Himachal to showcase the issues faced by Indians learning English. In ZSK, the linguistic and cultural diversities of South India have been portrayed through a female actress from Madras (renamed as Chennai).
8. Several episodes have the characters exhibit and encounter a wide array of teaching-learning challenges, especially due to the way human languages are.
9. The language and metalinguistic components serving as the cause of humour in both shows are suitable for the preparation of a handbook for language teachers.
10. Double entendres, idiomatic expressions, polysemous constructions, errors of inflection, agreement of gender number and person, proverbial usages, contextual mismatches, and literal translation have served as linguistic tools for both shows.

Based on the above comparison, it is understood that criticism and praise for both series are similar. This is to highlight the point that the adaptation and audiovisual translation of the MYL show has happened successfully in its remake as ZSK.

7. Findings and discussion

The discourse in translation has mostly revolved around the premise of 'translation as remake' (philosophically) whereas this paper reversed the discourse to pitch for the case of 'remakes as translation' (professionally). The case of remakes merits serious academic engagements within the realm of audio-visual translation and Adaptation Studies (Forrest & Koos, 2002). The term 'remakes' is used to refer to a wide range of phenomena (Forrest, 2002). MYL is a TV show that inspired remakes in twelve languages. ZSK as an Indian remake of MYL was highly successful.

A question that remains valid in the context of the ongoing discussion is as follows: Can instances of remake be called instances of audio-visual translation? If yes, how can remakes be contextualized in the ambit of audio-visual translation? The response to the first question is a simple yes intending that the instances of remakes, especially that of TV shows and films, are instances of audio-visual translation. The concept of remakes in the context of films and TV shows shares noticeable similarities with audiovisual translation, but they are not identical. Remakes refer to a global phenomenon that provides new versions of existing programmes such as films or TV shows. Usually, the remade programmes are interlingual i.e., produced in a new language and involve cultural



reinterpreting, localizing and adapting, with minor to major noticeable changes. However, remakes happen intralingually also. Sometimes remakes officially acknowledge the source through credit and attribution and sometimes they conceal the source depending upon various considerations. Audiovisual translation is a new nomenclature in the translation discourse and it refers to translation or aspects of translation that involve audiovisual audio-visual media. Dubbing, intertitles, voice-over, mimicry and subtitling may be clubbed under the rubric of audio-visual translation. In the context of localization and cultural adaptation, remakes involve considerable modification whereas the focus of audio-visual translation rests primarily on linguistic aspects.

The discussion on the remake of MYL into ZSK is special because it is a case of translation of humour. Khan (2021) offers a discussion on the linguistic aspects of humour engrained in the MYL series, however, there has been no research publication on the ZSK show so far. The challenges involved in translation increase manifold when the source text comprises instantiations of verbal humour, a form of humour that capitalises on anomalies in language and communication. At the surface, both MYL and ZSK deal with situational comedy but a deeper analysis reveals that both shows have numerous instantiations of verbal humour that are derived from (meta)language and (mis)communication including punning riddles, mispronunciation, accent, mistranslation, mismatch between said and intended, ambiguous sentences etc. The spontaneous hybridity of situational comedy and linguistic aspects renders both MYL and ZSK highly entertaining. It is interesting to note that the sociocultural stereotyping and glamourisation seen in the MYL series are translated in equal measure and evident in its Indian remake, the ZSK show. In MYL, the characters mainly represent languages of various countries and only occasionally some varieties of English. In ZSK, the language of the characters represents different countries as well as different states within India. Additionally, one character in the ZSK show does not represent a political state, rather she represents the profession of an air hostess. Considering the linguistic and cultural diversities represented by the characters, it would not be an exaggeration to say that in certain aspects, the ZSK show outperformed the source.

8. Conclusion

This paper set out to study remakes as instances of translation. Taking *Zabaan Sambhal Ke* (ZSK), an Indian remake of *Mind Your Language* (MYL) television show, this paper engaged with the idea of remakes as translation. First, it offered discussions on conceptual-theoretical aspects of remakes and their types and then offered a discussion on locating remakes under the enterprise of Adaptation Studies and audiovisual translation. Then it discussed the MYL show and its Indian remake as the ZSK series and presented a comparison between them. Based on the similarities in appreciation and criticism received by both the shows, the paper arrives at the conclusion that the ZSK show as a remake of the MYL show is a good translation intending that cultural adaptations have happened suitably. This paper engaged with the debates prevailing in Translation Studies regarding remake and audiovisual translation. It found out that remakes are definitely instances of translation and the ZSK show is not a duplicate copy or a facsimile of MYL; rather it is a creative and successful remake of the show. To arrive at this conclusion, the paper presented an organized comparison between the two shows. The comparison of MYL and ZSK in this paper did not intend



to identify a winner between the two, rather it tried to highlight the uniqueness with which both presented their plot and characters on a seemingly identical theme. Both shows were successful in creating an appreciable storyline and the audience was able to relate with the characters and the settings.

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