

İstanbul Üniversitesi Çeviribilim Dergisi Istanbul University Journal of Translation Studies

Research Article | Araştırma Makalesi

Open Access | Açık Erişim

Characterization-Driven Remake Shifts in the Turkish Remakes of British Dramas

İngiliz Dizilerinin Türk Televizyonundaki Yeniden Çevrimlerinde Karakter Tasarımı
Temelli Kaymalar



Mehmet Erguvan¹ 

¹ Yeditepe Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Çeviribilim Bölümü, 26 Ağustos Mevki Kayışdağı Cad., Kayışdağı, Ataşehir, İstanbul

Abstract

Television established itself as the dominant medium and gatekeeper of the public sphere during the second half of the 20th century. Marcus Wohlsen (2014) and Amanda D. Lotz (2007) highlight its evolution into the post-network era, in which television continues to hold its status as a central cultural form. Providing an overview of television drama flows, this study centers on Turkish drama remakes as its primary case, exploring (i) the source television markets of Turkish drama remakes produced between 2001 and 2024; (ii) diverse factors (re)shaping Turkish remake producers' selection of source cultures; and (iii) the remake process from a comparative textual perspective. Framing the analysis broadly through the lens of media flows, the focus is primarily on the comparatively minor role of British television dramas as source material for Turkish drama remakes. To explore the relatively minor role of British dramas as sources, Katerina Perdiki's (2016) systemic approach to adaptation shifts will be employed to conduct a comparative textual analysis of the British originals and their Turkish remakes. The study seeks to highlight the significant transformations in characterization observed in Turkish remakes of British dramas, particularly pointing to the heightened dramatic effect and sanitized representations introduced during the remake process.

Öz

Televizyon, 20. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında, kamusal alanda etkili bir mecra olup eşik bekçisi rolünü üstlenmiştir. Marcus Wohlsen (2014) ve Amanda D. Lotz (2007) televizyonun Post Televizyon çağına evrildiğini ileri sürse de televizyon hâlâ temel kültürel form olarak varlığını sürdürür. Genel itibarıyla televizyon dizisi dolaşımına odaklanan bir çerçevede sunan bu araştırma, Türkiye'deki yeniden çevrim dizileri başat inceleme alanı olarak sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Bu çalışmada irdelenen konular şu şekildedir: (i) Türkiye'de 2001 ve 2024 yılları arasında üretilen yeniden çevrimlerin kaynak televizyon pazarları; (ii) yeniden çevrim dizilerin kaynak kültür seçimlerini şekillendiren unsurlar ve (iii) yeniden çevrim sürecine dair karşılaştırmalı metinsel analiz. Bu çalışma, genel hatlarıyla medyadaki dolaşım kavramıyla çerçevelenirken, bilhassa İngiliz televizyon dizilerinin Türk televizyonlarındaki yeniden çevrimlere kaynak metin olarak kullanılma sıklığının görece düşük olmasına odaklanır. Bu bağlamda, İngiliz dizilerinin Türk televizyonlarındaki yeniden çevrimlere kaynak olarak daha az tercih edilmenin gerekçelerini irdelemek üzere, Katerina Perdiki'nin (2016) uyarlama kaymalarını incelemek için geliştirdiği sistematik yaklaşımdan faydalanılacak olup İngiliz menşei kaynak metinler ile Türk televizyonundaki yeniden çevrimlerin karşılaştırmalı metinsel analizi gerçekleştirilecektir. Bu araştırma İngiliz dizilerinin Türkiye'deki yeniden çevrimlerinde görülen karakterizasyon farklılıklarına dikkat çekmiştir; ayrıca söz konusu farklılıklar gerçekleşirken yeniden çevrim sürecinde dramatik etkinin artırıldığı ve yeniden tasarlanan karakterlerin toplumsal normlara daha uygun temsillere dönüştürüldüğü neticesine varılmıştır.

Keywords

British dramas · characterization · remakes · remake shifts · television drama flows



Citation | Atıf: Erguvan, M. (2025). Characterization-driven remake shifts in the Turkish remakes of british dramas. *İstanbul Üniversitesi Çeviribilim Dergisi-Istanbul University Journal of Translation Studies*, (22), 148-160. <https://doi.org/10.26650/iujts.2025.1699230>

 This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. 

 2025. Erguvan, M.

 Corresponding author | Sorumlu Yazar: Mehmet Erguvan mehmet.erguvan@yeditepe.edu.tr



Anahtar Kelimeler karakterizasyon · İngiliz dizileri · televizyon dizisi dolaşımı · yeniden çevrimler · yeniden çevrimlerde kaymalar

Extended Summary

The extensive airtime dedicated to the genre of *dizi* in Turkish television and the audience's strong enthusiasm for them have driven the continuous demand for fresh drama formats and the remaking of existing ones. As a result, the practice of acquiring foreign drama formats and producing remakes has become both a necessity and a defining feature of the Turkish television industry. Since the early 2000s, more than 120 Turkish television drama remakes have appeared, primarily sourced from South Korean, American, and British dramas. South Korean dramas account for approximately 40% of these remakes, American dramas for 30%, while British dramas represent only 7.5% of the total. The relatively minor role of British television as a source material raises questions about the underlying reasons for its limited influence.

Within this content, this study examines the dynamics of remake flows in Turkish television, with a particular focus on British dramas as the source material for Turkish remakes. Specifically, it explores (i) the source television markets of Turkish drama remakes, (ii) the factors influencing Turkish producers' selection of source cultures, and (iii) the remake process through comparative textual analysis. The primary theoretical framework employed is based on the concept of media flow, supplemented by Katerina Perdikaki's (2016) systemic approach to adaptation shifts. Methodologically, the study integrates comparative textual analysis with Perdikaki's framework, identifying modulation, modification, and mutation as key strategies used in the process of remaking Turkish remakes based on British dramas. These shifts not only enable Turkish producers to remake British content for domestic audiences but also display significant divergences between the source dramas and their remakes.

Comparative textual analysis of selected British dramas and their Turkish remakes reveals significant patterns of transformation, particularly in characterization. One key finding of this study is the heightened dramatic effect observed in Turkish remakes. British dramas often feature restrained emotions and subtle interpersonal conflicts, whereas their Turkish counterparts amplify emotional expressions, introduce additional conflicts, and extend narrative arcs to align with the local television industry's preference for long-format episodes. For instance, in *The Split* and its Turkish remake *Evlilik Hakkında Her Şey*, the female protagonist's characterization is notably altered to emphasize stronger family-centered values, increased dramatic tension in familial relationships, and heightened emotional responses to conflict. Similarly, *Bizim Hikâye*, the Turkish remake of *Shameless*, significantly sanitizes the protagonist's depiction, omitting aspects related to casual relationships, nightlife, and morally ambiguous behavior, which are central to the British original. A major transformation also occurs in gender representations. Turkish remakes tend to reinforce traditional gender roles, particularly in portrayals of masculinity and femininity. British male characters, often depicted with complexity, flaws, and evolving traits, are reinterpreted in Turkish remakes as more protective, dominant, and emotionally expressive figures. For instance, in *Prisoners' Wives* and its Turkish counterpart *Görüş Günü Kadınları*, the male police officer's protective nature is intensified, transforming a professional relationship into a melodramatic romantic arc. Further differences emerge in the treatment of humor, social critique, and religious themes. These remake shifts are significantly intertwined with the characterization of Turkish remakes. British dramas often use satire, irony, and nuanced social critique to shape complex, multi-dimensional characters, whereas their Turkish remakes tend to omit or soften these elements, leading to more straightforward and morally unambiguous portrayals. Similarly, religious themes, which in British dramas like *The Split* and *Happy Valley* serve as a backdrop for humor or critical reflection, are either downplayed or reinterpreted in Turkish remakes to align with more conservative portrayals of faith, further influencing character development.

All in all, the findings indicate that British dramas hold a relatively small place in Turkish television remakes due to the need for dramatic remake shifts in characterization. These shifts may pose challenges for Turkish viewers in connecting with the characters and fully engaging with the remakes, as both the characters and narrative styles diverge significantly from their original sources. The dramatic shifts lead to a remaking process that distances the remakes even further from the primary conflicts and storylines of their source material.

Introduction

Theoretical perspectives in translation studies addressing the hierarchical flow of translations focus on how text movement between cultures is primarily influenced by factors such as power imbalances, cultural prestige, and linguistic superiority. As a key framework, Itamar Even-Zohar's (1990) polysystem theory views literature as a dynamic system where texts translated from central cultures often influence—if not dictate—norms, styles, and genres adopted in peripheral cultures. This perspective posits that translation flows reflect a hierarchy, where central cultures act as the leading exporters of literary works, genres and conventions. Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere's (1990) approaches, grounded in power and ideology, reveal how translation sustains cultural hierarchies by including, modifying, or excluding texts according to ideological and political motivations, often prioritizing dominant cultures. In addition, Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems Theory (2004), applied to translation studies, divides the world into core, semi-periphery, and periphery cultures. Within his framework, core cultures, like the US and UK, dominate translation activities, with their works extensively translated, whereas peripheral cultures encounter difficulties in exporting their texts.

In this context, it seems essential to highlight Gisèle Sapiro's (2010) attempts to elaborate on the significant variations in translation rates across different languages. Sapiro seeks answers to the questions of "[h]ow can one account for the uneven flows of book translations between various language groups?" and "how can one explain the varying role of translations within different language groups?" (Heilbron, 1999, p.432). Similarly, Johan Heilbron (1999) conducted some of the most acclaimed research on the traffic of translations, extending the scope of studies by incorporating economic factors—an often-overlooked aspect in Translation Studies. Heilbron and Sapiro illuminate the functional and long-term logics of circulation within the international space of translation exchange. This framework, initially applied to the flow of book translations, offers valuable insights when considering the transnational circulation of television programs. Much like translated books, television shows traverse linguistic and cultural boundaries and are influenced by economic factors and market strategies. Heilbron's perspective is instrumental in identifying television dramas as market-driven commodities, with distinct characteristics in their remake, distribution, and reception across borders.

The exploration of media flows, serving as the central framework for this research, began in the 1960s and early 1970s, coinciding with the emergence of cultural and media imperialism perspectives focused on the worldwide influence of US media (Lozano and Hernández Lomelí, 2020, p.382). The world media flow study conducted by Nordenstreng and Varis in 1975 highlights a significant disparity in the proportion of local, regional, and US television content in various Latin American nations. Their findings show that, on average, 52 percent of all television programs were imports, most of which came from the US¹ (1975, p.52). However, over recent decades, television's dual nature—rooted in national cultures yet shaped by profit-driven imperatives that extend beyond borders—has propelled both local and global cultural production. In this regard, Straubhaar (1991) contended that world television flows had undergone a qualitative transformation in media relations: "Although the United States still dominates world media sales and flows, national and regional cultural industries are consolidating a relatively more interdependent position in the world television market" (1991, p.56). This shift has led to a situation where "audiences are seeking greater cultural relevance or proximity from both national and regional television programs" in response to the evolving industry landscape (p.56).

¹In the follow-up study published in 1985, Varis and Nordenstreng confirmed the dominance of US programming in Latin America, with US content accounting for over a third of the total programming time and 77 percent of all imported material. According to Varis (1985), the trends identified in 1973 persisted in 1983, with a continuing one-way flow of content from the major exporting countries to the rest of the world.

Exploring television exports and imports, Jeanette Steemers's (2004) *Selling Television: British Television in the Global Marketplace* elucidated the distribution practices of the British television industry, ranking second only to the United States in television exports across key markets. In 2012, two significant publications emerged directly addressing the reciprocal relationship between the US and UK: Michele Hilmes's (2012) *Network Nations*, which chronicles the history of transatlantic exchange between the two nations from the 1920s to the 1970s, and Elke Weissmann's (2012) *Transnational Television Drama: Special Relations and Mutual Influence between the US and UK*. Weissmann's work spans the 1970s to the present, analyzing cultural differences in importation, UK programs' impact on US broadcasters, transnational audience engagement online, and the rise of co-production. Overall, scholars delved into the international television trade from a transnational perspective, scrutinizing pivotal transaction hubs such as MIPCOM (Marché International des Programmes de Communication) in Cannes, where global TV properties are negotiated among buyers and sellers worldwide. Others explored how practices shaped during periods of intense nationalism adapted to accommodate new transnational imperatives, such as co-production, and investigated how broadcasters integrated transnational content into domestic contexts.

This study engages with remakes as a growing area of inquiry in translation studies, examining them through a translation-oriented lens. The material for this research consists of Turkish remakes of British dramas, analyzed through Katerina Perdikaki's (2016) systemic approach, particularly her tools for categorizing adaptation shifts. The focus is on characterization, as this research argues that the perceived lack of interest in British dramas as sources for Turkish remakes is largely a result of the distinct character-construction conventions. As such, the analysis mainly explores how British characters are re-framed for Turkish audiences.

Dynamics of Television Dramas in the UK, US and Türkiye

This section of the research initially aims to revisit the key milestones in the development of television as a medium in the US, UK and Türkiye, with a stronger focus on television dramas and remakes. Television broadcasting, first introduced in the US, became the central medium and primary gatekeeper to the public sphere in American media during the latter half of the 20th century (Moreno Esparza, 2020). In today's context, amid globalization-driven alterations, it remains a significant source of shared experiences for people of varied backgrounds. While evolving into the Post-Network Era (Lotz, 2007), television has persisted as the dominant cultural form, shaped by both national cultures and profit motives over recent decades, driving content production locally and globally. American television programming history unfolds in three distinct epochs. In the early days of American television-TVI, termed "the network era"- there was a dedication, noted by the producer of NBC's Television Playhouse, to bring the essence of Broadway to the screen (Bigsby, 2013). During the 1950s, 90 percent of broadcasts were live. Like radio, programs were initially overseen not by networks but by sponsors, who were equally focused on enhancing their image and aligning themselves with high-quality programming while ensuring the exclusion of controversial content. Nevertheless, drama remained central to the Big Three networks—NBC, CBS, and ABC (Bigsby, 2013). However, the 1980s witnessed transformative shifts catalyzed by the emergence of remote controls, VCRs, and an expanded array of channel choices, fundamentally reshaping industry dynamics and viewer engagement paradigms. HBO initiated another significant shift when it began broadcasting in November 1972. Just three years later, HBO gained access to a communication satellite and launched its satellite cable service, quickly followed by others (Bigsby, 2013). Subsequently, the post-network era, known as TVIII, is marked by a dramatic increase in digital platforms. Embedded within each epoch lies a purported golden age of television, synonymous with the epitome of "quality" programming. Robert J. Thompson (1996) discerns quality TV of the TVII era as characterized by "thoughtful dramatic treatments of contemporary issues, striking visual styles, complex

literary dialog, and sophisticated comedy" (p.98). The third golden age, once more intimately entwined with quality TV serial dramas, witnessed an evolution in the defining attributes of quality, now predominantly cultivated by cable (and more recently, streaming) channels rather than the traditional Big Three networks.

Britain's reputation for exceptional television dramas was bolstered by the international success of prestigious ITV series like *Brideshead Revisited* and *Jewel in the Crown* in the 1980s, as these programs provided an esteemed *quality*² alternative in the global marketplace, contrasting with popular American serial melodramas like *Dallas* and *Dynasty* (Steemers, 2005). In the late 1990s, Britain's status as a leader in television was questioned as the Labour government became concerned about the growing trade gap with the United States (DCMS, 1999a). Furthermore, characterizing British drama as dull, mechanical, and samey, former Channel 4 Chief Executive Mark Thompson contrasted it with the ambitious, complex, and modern American dramas like *Six Feet Under* or *24* (Steemers, 2005). The report issued by the Department of Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) also highlighted Britain's poor international performance, criticizing British drama for being too dark, slow, unattractive, and gritty, with distasteful characters and storylines that reinforced negative perceptions of Britain (1999a). The blame was placed on a regulatory culture prioritizing domestic audiences, resulting in the production of the "wrong" type of television for international markets. To reverse this situation, the report recommended adopting a more commercial production model focusing on globally appealing series and TV movies. However, according to the follow-up report by the government's Creative Industries Task Force (CITF), modifying programs to increase exports was unrealistic since British programming, funded domestically, had to prioritize serving British audiences who favored "gritty" or "realistic" drama (DCMS, 1999b).

Compared to American and British television, which launched regular broadcasting almost thirty years earlier, Turkish television entered the scene much later. During its early stages, Turkish television supplemented its programming with content from other national networks, primarily from the US with a smaller amount also coming from the UK. Volkan Yücel's (2014) comprehensive study—the first of its kind to survey television series aired on Turkish networks up to 2009—reveals a stark contrast in the dominance of imported television series over domestically produced ones on the first and state-led Turkish channel TRT from 1968 to 1990.³ The 1980s saw the impact of neoliberal policies on Türkiye, resulting in privatization and market-driven dynamics, enabling the rise of private channels in the 1990s (Gencel Bek, 2010; Kongar, 2013). This shift featured commercial interests in broadcasting, shaping drama production around viewer preferences (Tanrıöver, 2012). The first decade of commercial television (1990-1999) reveals a significant decline in imported series, indicating their waning importance. Nonetheless, imported series, particularly US-dubbed ones, persisted in shaping Turkish viewers' tastes and viewing habits (Öztürkmen, 2018), thereby fueling the demand for local series production.⁴ Particularly from the mid-2000s onwards, Turkish dramas gained international acclaim, with 200 being exported to other countries (Şentürk, 2018), and major transformations in that era have shifted Turkish television from a consumer to a producer of content (Devran, Orujova & Saltık, 2018), resulting in the substantial expansion of Turkish production companies in global markets (Öztürkmen, 2018). The 2000s also witnessed the emergence of another form of audiovisual translation

²Their *quality* attributes included literary adaptation, top-tier British acting talent, and high production values indicative of substantial budgets. They also frequently depicted a distinct image of England and Englishness, concentrating on maintaining and promoting literary and cultural traditions, often at the expense of addressing current societal problems (O'Regan, 2000).

³Yücel (2014) reported that translations accounted for 426 entries, nearly twice the number of domestic productions. This means that, in the initial two decades since the inception of Turkish television, the medium was predominantly shaped by non-national identities and imagination.

⁴This successful integration has nurtured a domestic demand for dramas, solidifying their place in the Turkish television repertoire, marked by a surge of domestically produced series that dominated prime-time slots on mainstream networks in the early 2000s (Devran, Gökşun and İhtiyar, 2018).

(AVT) in Turkish television: intra-medial transcultural remaking⁵, which has gained significant traction since then. Even though Türkiye's television series repertoire, established over at least 30 years, is diverse and extensive, comprising both imported and domestic productions, remakes have typically joined the Turkish repertoire.

My corpus of television drama remakes shows that there are over one hundred twenty Turkish drama remakes from the early 2000s onwards. An analysis of the source cultures for all Turkish drama remakes reveals that British dramas hold the third position, following South Korean and American series. This indicates the importance of British dramas within the repertoire of Turkish remakes. However, compared to South Korean and American dramas, British dramas contribute significantly less as sources for Turkish remakes. Among all source cultures, South Korean dramas constitute approximately 40% of the sources, with American dramas ranking second at around 30%. British dramas, on the other hand, account for only 7.5% of all Turkish drama remakes.

Table 1

List of British Dramas and their Turkish Remakes

British drama	British network	Turkish remake	Turkish network	Legal status ⁶
<i>Yes Minister</i> (1980-1984)	BBC One	<i>Sayın Bakanım</i> (2004-05)	ATV	Acknowledged
<i>Prisoners' Wives</i> (2012-13)	BBC One	<i>Görüş Günü Kadınları</i> (2013)	STAR TV	Unacknowledged
<i>Shameless</i> (2004-13)	Channel 4	<i>Bizim Hikâye</i> (2017-19)	FOX TV	Acknowledged
<i>Doctor Foster</i> (2015-17)	BBC One	<i>Sadakatsiz</i> (2020-22)	Kanal D	Acknowledged
<i>Liar</i> (2017-20)	ITV	<i>Yalancı</i> (2021)	Show TV	Acknowledged
<i>Mistresses</i> (2008-10)	BBC One	<i>Yalancılar ve Mumları</i> (2021)	FOX TV	Acknowledged
<i>The Split</i> (2018-20)	BBC One	<i>Evlilik Hakkında Her Şey</i> (2021)	FOX TV	Acknowledged
<i>Happy Valley</i> (2014-23)	BBC One	<i>Son Nefesime Kadar</i> (2022)	FOX TV	Acknowledged

Source: Author's own elaboration

Regarding the source cultures contributing to Turkish television remakes, two major influences have emerged—the US and South Korea—alongside several minor source cultures, including British, Japanese, Australian, Italian, Danish, Spanish, Canadian, and Argentine. The influence of US television dramas as the foundational material for Turkish remakes is undeniable. The sustained dominance of US dramas in the Turkish television repertoire can be linked to global trends in the television industry. As Nordenstreng and Varis (1974) identified, global television content historically flowed predominantly from the dominant industries to the less dominant ones. However, contemporary television markets are more characterized by counterflows, signaling a shift from this earlier dynamic. Despite this, the enduring influence of the US television market is evident in the high proportion of US-based remakes within Türkiye's recent tradition of remaking. This phenomenon reflects the lingering impact of US television on Turkish programming, driven by global market trends and evolving translational practices. Initially introduced to the Turkish market through dubbing and subtitling, US television dramas have later emerged in the form of remakes, reflecting the

⁵For research on remakes from a Translation Studies perspective, see also Erguvan (2023, 2022) and Sancaktaroğlu-Bozkurt & Okyayuz (2021).

⁶I found that numerous television remakes are made without any licensing or payment to the copyright holders, and the term "unacknowledged" is used to describe these cultural products (Erguvan, 2022).

range of audiovisual translation modes. Beyond global and market-driven factors, the historical relationship between Turkish and US television also underpins this trend. Since the inception of Turkish television, the US market has played a foundational role, with dubbed US dramas shaping Turkish television consumption patterns and influencing its programming repertoire. This historical legacy, coupled with sectoral developments, explains why US television dramas continue to occupy a significant place in the Turkish television industry.

The growing preference for Turkish remakes of South Korean dramas over US-based ones is rooted in specific reasons. In the past decade, South Korean cultural products, particularly television dramas, have also found a significant audience in Türkiye (Duraner, Tunalı, and Işıklar-Koçak, 2017). This growing interest has fostered enthusiasm not only for South Korean dramas but also for K-pop music, films, fashion, cosmetics and lifestyle. South Korea's strategic focus on exporting pop culture and entertainment has accelerated this process, supported by a robust television industry that nurtures creativity in mass media entertainment. Technological advancements have played a critical role in the dissemination of South Korean cultural products, providing cyberspace as a hub for communication, sociability, and cultural exchange (Lévy, 2005). Turkish fans, emerging as active cultural agents, have leveraged media platforms to build online communities that distribute and promote South Korean content. The influx of South Korean dramas into Türkiye began in 2005 with the broadcast of *Emperor of the Sea* and *All In* on TRT, following an agreement between Arirang TV and TRT (Oh and Chae, 2013). Over time, the popularity of these dramas has also resulted in a growing number of Turkish television remakes, surpassing thirty since 2013. The rise of South Korean remakes in Türkiye can be attributed to both global trends and cultural proximity. Turkish viewers perceive South Korean dramas as emotionally resonant, culturally familiar, and realistic, aligning with their sensibilities and expectations. Unlike many American dramas that emphasize sexual content, South Korean dramas mostly focus on pure, idealized love, further enhancing their appeal in the Turkish context. This alignment allows South Korean dramas to connect deeply with Turkish audiences, providing a strong foundation for their remake into the Turkish television repertoire.

Following the US and South Korea, British dramas constitute the third most significant source culture for Turkish television remakes. While their contribution is noteworthy, the disparity in the volume of remakes derived from American and South Korean dramas compared to British dramas is remarkably large. As highlighted earlier, British dramas constitute a modest 7.5% of the total remakes. Examining the limited impact of British dramas on Turkish remakes requires a comparative textual analysis of selected sources and their remakes.

Conceptual and Methodological Framework

In this study, television flow serves as the lens for investigating the remake flows and remaking process of dramas within the Turkish context. While Global North-to-South media flows were historically seen as promoting Western values and US hegemony (Dorfman & Mattelart, 1975), current trends indicate a different narrative. The rise of culturally proximate content preferences has coexisted with “contra-flows” (Iwabuchi, 2006) in transcultural television exchanges, especially during the era of streaming, which has significantly shaped global viewership experiences. With the dominance of streaming platforms, it is increasingly evident that global viewership experiences are shaped more by transnational than national interpretative repertoires (Kuipers, 2011). The previous part of the paper focused on examining and broadly discussing the flow of dramas from diverse cultures into the Turkish context as remakes. The following discussion investigates Turkish remakes of British dramas, providing narrative-related explanations for their constrained remaking in Türkiye.

Using Perdikaki's (2016) systemic approach, with a focus on her adaptation shift categorization tools, the present analysis explores characterization⁷, suggesting that contrasting character-construction norms may underpin the lack of interest in British dramas as a basis for Turkish remakes. In the model proposed by Perdikaki, characterization represents an adaptation shift categorized under the descriptive/comparative component, which caters for the systematic classification of adaptation shifts. The model also explains these shifts by referencing contextual factors related to production and reception, forming the interpretive component of the framework. Modulation, in this model, describes shifts in the emphasis or de-emphasis of characterization aspects from the source text in the remake. Modification addresses major alterations in characterization and narrative units, while mutation pertains to the addition or removal of these units (Perdikaki, 2016). More precisely, modulation in the characterization has two types, i.e., amplification or simplification. Modification shifts, including dramatization, objectification, or sensualization, suggest that character aspects may undergo these changes in the adaptation or remake, while mutation refers to the addition or excision of characters from the adaptation/remake.

Findings and Discussion

The first British drama remade for Turkish television was *Yes Minister*, a political satire sitcom set in the office of a UK government minister. One fundamental shift between *Yes Minister* (1980-1984) and *Sayın Bakanım* (2004-2005) is initially evident in the scheduling, including variations in the number of seasons and average episode length between the source show and its remake. In response to scheduling demands in Türkiye, episodes of *Yes Minister*, originally 25 minutes long without commercials, were extended to approximately sixty minutes to align with the television landscape of that time. In terms of content, both shows are deemed highly realistic, albeit exaggerated for comedic effect, with episodes often tracing back to real-life events for inspiration. In the Turkish remake, additional characters were introduced to extend the episodes, which exemplifies a mutation shift, referring to either the absence or addition of certain elements from the source text. Buket, a character embodying the "dumb blonde" stereotype, is absent in the original *Yes Minister*. Throughout the Turkish remake, however, Buket is repeatedly the focus of sexual jokes in every episode. Notably, in a predominantly male cast, sexual-themed jokes between the minister and the undersecretary are prevalent, unlike in the source show. The inclusion of a character representing the stereotype of the "dumb blonde" and the use of jokes centered around this character, leading to the sensualization and objectification of women, stand out as a remarkable shift from the source drama.

A similar example of modification in the form of sensualization and objectification in the Turkish remake occurs during the portrayal of a veteran Turkish politician caught by the media while allegedly dating a woman from his son's house, and later giving a statement "we were watering the flowers," (*Sayın Bakanım*, S1/E2), which was featured in the second episode. In this episode, the undersecretary attempts to exit the room just as Buket enters, hinting at a likely private moment between her and the minister. In this scene, the minister genuinely refers to his hobby of caring for/watering plants with his secretary Buket. The undersecretary asks if the minister is pleased with the flower watering performance of Buket, followed by asking where it happens. The minister gives a response—prone to being misunderstood as if he were watering flowers with his secretary—in various places such as on the desk, on the coffee table, in front of the window, and by the wall.

While the undersecretary uses "watering the flowers" as a metaphor for engaging in sexual intercourse, the minister is completely unaware of the metaphorical implication. The comedic element of this scene lies

⁷In Perdikaki's framework, the shift types "modulation," "modification," and "mutation" apply to medium-independent narrative units—plot structure, narrative techniques, characterization, and setting (temporal and spatial).

in the contrast between the undersecretary's thoughts and the reality of what is happening. In this way, the Turkish remake maintains a noticeably sensualized and objectified portrayal of women.

In the Turkish remake (*Evlilik Hakkında Her Şey*) of the British legal drama *The Split*, the nature, presentation, and subjects of the legal cases featured in the two dramas also differ considerably. In both series, the first case involves a woman who has been cheated on. However, in the Turkish version, the woman's reactions to her unfaithful husband are far more intense. Unlike the source show, the cheated woman in the remake adopts a more confrontational and assertive stance, ransacking the shared home, throwing her husband's belongings out the window, and frequently confronting the other woman to assert her dominance. This dynamic and, at times, entertaining portrayal contrasts with her counterpart in *The Split*, where the British character navigates the situation with more caution and relative calm.

The shifts in characterization —alongside the main plot, narrative, and the establishment of conflicts — in the Turkish remake of *The Split* seem to indicate that the two versions might be perceived as belonging to different genres. In S1/E1 of *The Split*, leading divorce lawyer Hannah (the leading female) leaves the family firm to join a rival company. In the Turkish remake, Azra (Turkish Hannah) departs from the company after her mother reneges on a promise to appoint her as the head. Consequently, the Turkish version features a highly intense mother-daughter relationship characterized by tension and conflict. This heightened emotional response and the transformation of the crisis into a dramatic power struggle are notable. Additionally, while *The Split* narrates the departure of the father character, who leaves his wife Ruth and their three daughters, the Turkish remake presents the mother informing her daughters that their father has passed away. Consequently, the daughters' reactions upon reuniting with their father differ dramatically between the two versions. In the Turkish remake, the daughters, believing their father to be deceased, react with intense emotions upon seeing him, reflecting a profound sense of betrayal and sadness. The primary difference between the British drama and its Turkish remake is the dramatization of the attitudes of the characters in the Turkish remake. The Turkish remake of *The Split* highlights the tendency for characters to display heightened emotions and impulsive actions.

The Turkish remake of *The Split* offers another example where shifts in characterization through the workings of masculinities are observed. The British source drama portrays Nathan (Sergen in the Turkish remake) with non-sexist masculinity traits at the center, displaying egalitarian attitudes toward women, the ability to express their emotions and fairly sharing duties and responsibilities with women, whilst Sergen's character is notably more impulsive than Nathan. Similarly, in *Prisoners' Wives*, Sergeant Hunter maintains a distant and professional communication with Gemma, while in the Turkish remake, Police Officer Mehmet (Turkish Hunter) personally takes on the responsibility of protecting Gülay (Turkish Gemma) from potential harm due to her husband's imprisonment. This provides a clear instance of amplification as a modulation technique in characterization, as outlined in Perkidaki's model. In the case of *The Split*, Turkish lead male characters are frequently amplified, characterized by an exaggerated sense of masculinity and protectiveness, thereby driving clear modifications in different aspects of the storyline. For instance, the Turkish remake of *Prisoners' Wives* reflects a shift between Gülay (Gemma) and Mehmet (Detective Sergeant Hunter). Unlike the original drama, which depicted no intimacy between Gemma and Hunter, the Turkish remake includes multiple scenes showcasing their romantic moments. Consequently, this divergence precludes the remake from being categorically defined as a crime drama, the genre of its original counterpart. Driven by shifts in characterization, the Turkish remake reveals instances where it steers toward melodrama.

The Turkish remake of *Happy Valley*, a British crime drama series, shows a more pronounced shift in characterization through emotionally charged storytelling, as it explores the struggles of a police sergeant dealing with personal and professional challenges. The additional scene in the first episode is a deliberate

alteration aimed at shifting the female lead's portrayal in the Turkish setting. In both versions, the daughters of the main characters—Catherine and Mihri—tragically take their own lives after being raped and becoming pregnant. While this event is only briefly alluded to in *Happy Valley*, the Turkish remake explicitly depicts Mihri's daughter committing suicide by hanging, with Mihri present to witness the act and react with uncontrollable grief. As with the previous examples, the focus on a dramatic tone in this event amplifies the female lead, as evidenced by Mihri's dramatized expressions of grief after her daughter's death.

The omission of characters, as a form of characterization mutation, is a recurring feature in Turkish remakes of British dramas, with LGBTQ+ characters being the most frequently excluded in these remakes. While *Prisoners' Wives* does not include LGBTQ+ representation among its main cast, one of the main female characters (Harriet) is mistaken for a lesbian by her young neighbor, leading to humorous exchanges between Harriet and her neighbor on this topic. Such an insinuation is absent in the Turkish remake. In *Shameless*, several LGBTQ+ characters are prominently featured, including Ian Gallagher, a gay character, and Monica Gallagher, who is revealed to be bisexual and later lives with her partner, Norma Starkey. *The Split* also includes multiple LGBTQ+ characters, with Zander Hale, a gay man, marrying Tyler, while Nina Defoe, initially engaged to Zander, has an affair with Tyler, who is later revealed to be a fraud. These shows provide diverse representations of LGBTQ+ individuals, showcasing different expressions of sexuality and related concerns. However, Turkish remakes of these series tend to sanitize LGBTI+ representations, aligning them with the sociocultural values and cultural politics of Turkish society.

Instances of family and parental dynamics in the British source dramas, which are likely to challenge the pro-family regulations and moralistic conservative values upheld in Turkish television, are often omitted or altered in the Turkish remakes. Notable examples include Frank's nude moments in *Shameless* and the candid conversations between Hannah and her daughter in *The Split* about topics like sexuality and protection, which are typically simplified or omitted. Francesca's (from *Prisoners' Wives*) son Matt confronting his mother in *Prisoners' Wives* after having sex with his girlfriend and accusing her of being tense due to her inability to engage in sexual relations is also absent from the Turkish remake. These shifts, particularly in characterization, reflect a broader trend in the Turkish remakes, where the characterization of key figures is adjusted to align with conservative family values. Such shifts are part of a larger effort to reinforce traditional social norms and uphold social order.

While not evident in the remakes, the theme of religion in British dramas mostly causes authentic and humorous moments. The way characters approach the topic of religion and engage in religiously charged conversations varies significantly between the British and Turkish versions of the same shows. For instance, in *The Split* (S1/E1), Rose and James (a young couple) inquire with the vicar about getting married in a church. Rose cannot help laughing and remark on the absurdity of the situation. James responds, "You were the one who wanted to get married in this bloody church", and they laugh together. This scene features a playful and somewhat sarcastic dialog about the couple's beliefs. In S2/E1, we witness humorously entertaining dialogs among family members who have gathered to scatter the ashes of the deceased father, Oscar. Oscar's ex-wife, Ruth, expresses her desire to quickly conclude the ceremony and return to work, while Oscar's daughters jest that if it were up to her, she would simply flush the ashes down the toilet. Alongside these instances, British dramas also profoundly explore religious topics through their characters. In *Prisoners' Wives*, Gavin's exploration of Islam in prison and the deep discussions between Harriet (Gavin's mother) and a prison chaplain about Islam and Christianity are prominently featured. Such moments reveal much about the characters' outlook on life, their perceptions of religion, and their mental and psychological states. This highlights that the treatment of religious themes significantly impacts character portrayals. However, in the Turkish remakes, these instances are omitted or altered, likely due to the taboo nature of religion in Turkish television, as well as the cultural sensitivities and preferences of Turkish audiences.

The original female characters in *Happy Valley*, *Mistresses*, *Shameless*, and *The Split* often engage in relationships and behaviors that reflect individual autonomy, such as extramarital affairs, casual sexual encounters, or morally ambiguous actions. For instance, Catherine secretly rekindles a sexual relationship with her ex-husband, Katie has an affair with a married, terminally ill patient and aids in his physician-assisted suicide, Fiona engages in casual sexual encounters and nightlife, and Hannah navigates infidelity and a past pregnancy with her ex-lover. In contrast, the Turkish remakes significantly altered these depictions to align with local cultural norms. Mihri (Turkish Catherine from *Happy Valley*) refrains from romantic or sexual intimacy with her ex-husband. Filiz (Turkish Fiona from *Shameless*) avoids casual intimacy, questions the propriety of men visiting her home, and attends neighborhood weddings rather than nightclubs. Similarly, Azra (Turkish Hannah from *The Split*) is portrayed without any romantic or sexual involvement with her former lover. These remarkable shifts in the remakes stem from varying levels of modulation and modification for portraying Turkish female protagonists as models of purity and moral integrity.

The findings suggest that the significant modulations, modifications and mutations in characterization—encompassing shifts in character dynamics, emotional depth and attitudes—are pivotal in explaining the limited use of British dramas as source material for Turkish remakes. These extensive shifts often result in substantial divergence from the original, likely undermining the remakes' authenticity and appeal, and consequently diminishing their suitability for remaking in Türkiye.

Conclusions

Employing the theoretical framework of media flow and Katerina Perdiki's methodological approach to adaptation shifts, this study initially investigated the global dynamics of television drama circulation, focusing particularly on the limited incorporation of British dramas as source material for Turkish remakes. It employed a comparative textual analysis of Turkish remakes based on British dramas, examining how distinct conventions of characterization shape their remaking in the Turkish context. While it is widely acknowledged among drama professionals that scripts necessitate more than "mere" translation during the remake process, this principle has become particularly evident in the pronounced modulations, modifications, and mutations observed in Turkish remakes of British television dramas.

Examining global television flows, this paper initially posited that the transition from cultural imperialism to regional interdependence has reshaped the landscape, with US and British exports still dominant while local productions gain significance. A review of key milestones in the evolution of television dramas in the US, UK, and Türkiye has revealed distinct trajectories shaped by cultural, economic, and technological forces: the US shifted from sponsor-driven live broadcasts to a post-network era of cable and digital platforms, British television—renowned for literary adaptations and high production values—achieved global acclaim but struggled with international appeal in the late 1990s, and Türkiye evolved from a content consumer to a prolific producer, balancing original productions and remakes in a dynamic industry shaped by both local and global influences.

This study has explored why some source cultures are preferred over others for television remakes in Turkish television. The continued dominance of US television appears to stem from historical ties and market-driven dynamics, evolving from dubbed imports to remakes, while South Korean dramas have recently overtaken US productions in remake frequency due to cultural proximity, emotional resonance, and South Korea's strategic export efforts. Despite ranking third, British dramas contribute relatively little, highlighting the need for comparative textual analysis to explore the factors limiting their adoption.

The Turkish remakes of British dramas have revealed notable shifts in characterization. These shifts have often manifested as heightened emotional responses, intensified interpersonal conflicts, and a tendency

toward melodramatic storytelling. Characters in the Turkish versions of British dramas frequently exhibit amplified traits, particularly in the portrayal of masculinity and family dynamics, which align with the values of protectiveness, moral integrity, and adherence to traditional social norms. The key shifts also include the transformation of female characters into paragons of moral integrity, emphasizing purity and familial devotion over autonomy and morally ambiguous behavior. Similarly, humor and nuanced critiques of topics such as religion, common in British originals, are largely absent, favoring portrayals that conform to cultural sensitivities. Overall, the characterization shifts in the Turkish remakes underscore a broader strategy of cultural adaptation, transforming narratives to resonate with local values and audience preferences.

This study encourages researchers to track global drama flows through an in-depth analysis of narrative reconfiguration in television remakes to address why certain national industries (e.g., Türkiye's) favor particular source cultures (e.g., South Korea, the US) while others (e.g., British dramas) remain less influential, resonating with studies on format adaptation and global TV trade. Applying a Translation Studies lens provides insight into the varying preference for foreign dramas as Turkish remakes, informing drama producers' selection of source cultures while also guiding scriptwriters in applying adaptation/remake shifts—modulation, modification, and mutation—throughout the remaking process. Furthermore, the discussion of the constraints on British dramas as sources for remakes in Türkiye (e.g., the omission of LGBTQ+ characters, the reinforcement of family values) engages with scholarship on media regulation, governmental influence, and cultural policies shaping domestic television industries.



Peer Review	Externally peer-reviewed.
Conflict of Interest	The author has no conflict of interest to declare.
Grant Support	The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

Hakem Değerlendirmesi	Dış bağımsız.
Çıkar Çatışması	Yazar çıkar çatışması bildirmemiştir.
Finansal Destek	Yazar bu çalışma için finansal destek almadığını beyan etmiştir.

Author Details	Mehmet Erguvan (Dr. Öğretim Üyesi)
Yazar Bilgileri	¹ Yeditepe Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Çeviribilim Bölümü, 26 Ağustos Mevki Kayışdağı Cad., Kayışdağı, Ataşehir, İstanbul  0000-0003-3649-8392  mehmet.erguvan@yeditepe.edu.tr

References

- Bassnett, S. and Lefevere, A. (Eds.). (1990). *Translation, history, and culture*. Routledge.
- Bigsby, C. (2013). *Viewing America: twenty-first-century television drama*. Cambridge University Press.
- DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport). (1999a). *Building a global audience: British television in overseas markets—a report by David Graham and associates*, DCMS, London.
- DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport). (1999b). *The report of the creative industries task force inquiry into UK television exports*, DCMS, London.
- Devran, Y., Göksun, Y. & İhtiyar, B. (2018). İhracatta yeni bir alan: Değer ihracı. In Y. Göksun (Eds.), *Televizyon dizilerinin keşfi* (pp. 39-66). Kaknüs Yayınları.
- Devran, Y., Orujova, A. & Saltık, R. (2018). Edebi eserlerin televizyona uyarlanmasında sorunlar: Reşat Nuri Güntekin'in *Çalılıkuşu* romanı ile *Çalılıkuşu* dizisi üzerinden bir değerlendirme. In Y. Göksun (Eds.), *Televizyon dizilerinin keşfi* (pp. 143-168). Kaknüs Yayınları.
- Dorfman, A., & Mattelart, A. (1975). *How to read Donald Duck*. International General, New York.



- Duraner, J., Işıklar-Koçak, M. & Tunalı, G. (2017). Fansubbers as cultural agents for Korean dramas, In D. Orrego-Carmona & Y. Lee (Eds.), *Non-professional subtitling* (pp. 145-170). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Erguvan, M. (2023). Çeviribilim Perspektifinden Yeniden Çevrim ve Yeniden Çeviren. *İstanbul Üniversitesi Çeviribilim Dergisi* (19), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.26650/iujts.2023.1371201>
- Erguvan, M. (2022). Presentation of Turkish Television Remakes in Media Paratexts. In Faruk Yücel and Mehmet Tahir Öncü (Eds.), *Germanistik in der Türkei, Vol. 20: Translation and Interdisciplinarity. Diverse Contacts, Relationships and Effects*. 113-128.
- Even-Zohar, I. (1990). Polysystem studies. *Poetics Today: International Journal for Theory and Analysis of Literature and Communication*, 11(1), 1-268.
- Gencel Bek, M. (2010). Changing media and public sphere in Turkey: the role of the state, market and the EU candidacy. In J. Gripsrud & L. Weibull (Eds.), *The development of European media* (pp. 171-192). Intellect.
- Heilbron, J. (1999). Towards a sociology of translation: book translations as a cultural world system. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 2 (4), 429-444. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431990020040>
- Hilmes, M. (2012). *Network nations: A transnational history of British and American broadcasting*. Routledge.
- Iwabuchi, K. (2006). Contra-flows or the cultural logic of uneven globalization? In D. K. Thussu (Eds.), *Media on the move: Global flow and contra-flow* (pp. 61-76). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203001233>
- Kongar, E. (2013). 21. yüzyılda Türkiye. Remzi Kitabevi.
- Kuipers, G. (2011). Cultural globalization as the emergence of a transnational cultural field: transnational television and national media landscapes in four European countries. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 55(5), 541-557. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764211398078>
- Lévy, P. (1997). *Collective intelligence: Mankind's emerging world in cyberspace*. Perseus.
- Lotz, A. D. (2007). Textual (im)possibilities in the U.S. post-network era: negotiating production and promotion processes on lifetime's any day now. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21(1), 22-43. 10.1080/0739318042000184389
- Lozano, J. C. and Hernández Lomelí, F. (2020). Media flows. *The Routledge Handbook to the Culture and Media of the Americas*. In Wilfried Rausert, Giselle Liza Anatol, Sebastian Thies, Sarah Corona Berkin and José Carlos Lozano (Eds.), (pp.382-392). Routledge.
- Moreno Esparza, G. (2020). Television. In Wilfried Rausert, Giselle Liza Anatol, Sebastian Thies, Sarah Corona Berkin and José Carlos Lozano (Eds.) *The Routledge handbook to the culture and media of the Americas* (pp.453-461). Routledge.
- Nordenstreng, K. and Tapio, V. (1975). *Television traffic, a one-way street? A survey and analysis of the international flow of television programme material*. UNESCO.
- Oh, C.-J. & Chae, Y.-G. (2013). Constructing culturally proximate spaces through social network services: The case of *Hallyu* (Korean Wave) in Turkey. *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 10 (38), 77-99.
- O'Regan, T. (2000). The international circulation of British television. In E. Buscombe (Eds.), *British Television: A Reader* (pp. 303-21), Clarendon Press.
- Öztürkmen, A. (2018). "Turkish content": the historical rise of the dizi genre. *TV/Series*, 13, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.4000/tvseries.2406>
- Perdikaki, K. (2016). *Adaptation as Translation: Examining Film Adaptation as a Recontextualised Act of Communication*. [Unpublished PhD Dissertation], University of Surrey.
- Sancaktaroğlu Bozkurt, S., & Okyayuz, A. Ş. (2021). Gender identification in the portrayal of female roles in the remakes of American TV series in Turkey. *Babel*, 67(3), 255-272. <https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.00224.san>
- Sapiro, G. (2010). Globalization and cultural diversity in the book market: The case of literary translations in the US and in France. *Poetics*, 38, 419-439. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2010.05.001>
- Steevers, J. (2005). No longer 'the best in the world': the challenge of exporting British television drama. *Media International Australia*, Vol.115 (1), 33-47.
- Straubhaar, J. (1991). Beyond media imperialism: Asymmetrical interdependence and cultural proximity. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol.8 (1), 39-59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295039109366779>
- Tanrıöver, H. U. (2012). *Türkiye'de televizyon yayıncılığı 2011*. İstanbul Ticaret Odası Yayınları.
- Thompson, R. J. (1996). *Television's second golden age. From Hill Street Blues to ER*. Syracuse University Press
- Varis, T. and Nordenstreng, K. (1985). *International flow of television programmes*. UNESCO.
- Wallerstein, I. (2004). *World-systems analysis: an introduction*. Duke University Press.
- Weissmann, E. (2012) *Transnational television drama: special relations and mutual influence between the US and UK*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wohlsen, M. (2014, October 10). As Online Viewing Soars, Internet TV Will soon Be the Only TV. Wired, online edition. www.wired.com/2014/10/online-viewing-soars-internet-tv-will-tv/
- Yücel, V. (2014). *Kahramanın yolculuğu: mitik erkeklik ve suç draması*. İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.