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## STRATEGIES OF ADAPTATION IN CHINESE FICTION TRANSLATION (BASED ON CAN XUE'S SHORT STORY "黑眼睛")

**Summary.** This article attempts to outline the problem of selecting translation strategies for the adaptation of Chinese fiction texts. The material chosen for practical research is a story by a famous Chinese contemporary writer, a prominent representative of avant-garde women's prose – Can Xue (殘雪). The study examines the main functions of translation as a medium of intercultural communication, its role and influence on the "dialogue of cultures", as well as establishes the importance of choosing expedient translation strategies to achieve and fulfill the previously mentioned functions of translation. The theoretical part of the paper provides an overview of the existing classifications of translation strategies, characterizes their division into macro- and micro-strategies, which is caused by the difference between so-called «broad» and «narrow» understanding of the term "strategy". Particular attention is paid to two types of text adaptation strategies: foreignization (укр. *очуження*) and domestication (укр. *одомашнення*), outlining the advantages and disadvantages of both types in terms of adequacy, accuracy and stylistic conformity of the target language text to the original.

In the practical part of the paper, we describe the mechanisms of the translator's choice of a macro-strategy for translating the short story "Black Eyes" (黑眼睛) by Can Xue and provide some examples of specific translation cases in which we consider ways to overcome translation difficulties, in particular, the transmission of the author's style, atmosphere, and cultural and historical realities. In addition, we provided a brief description of the peculiarities of the writer's individual style and established the connection between the features of Can Xue's works and personal life experience and worldview.

The results of the research not only contribute to the current issues of Oriental translation studies, but can also be used to deepen knowledge in an interdisciplinary context: the availability of high-quality literary translations into the Ukrainian language paves the way for further linguistic, literary and socio-cultural studies of the creative heritage of China.

**Key words:** translation strategies, Chinese avant-garde, dialogue of cultures, translation adaptation, foreignization, domestication.

**Research analysis.** Considering the topic of our research, it is impossible not to mention prominent scholars such as L. Venuti, F. Schleiermacher, S. Bassnett, A. Lefevere, E. Nida, G. S. F. Fong, W. Dongfeng, I. Korynets, O. Volchenko and others, who have devoted their research to translation problems and, in particular, translation strategies. The very concept and definition of strategies

first appeared in the works of L. Venuti [1], which inspired our current research and became the foundation of our paper. The literary scholars who have studied the works of the Chinese writer Can Xue include M. S. Duke, Li Xiaofeng, Bai Xianyun, Qu Feng, Hong Zhigang, as well as Ukrainians: V. Maksymets, M. Voyna, and N. Isaeva.

**The objective of the paper** is to define the types of translation adaptation strategies, analyse the advantages and disadvantages of each of them, and determine the optimal approach to choosing a successful translation strategy when dealing with Chinese fiction.

**The outline of the main findings.** Translation has been around since the emergence of the earliest language barriers experienced by humans. Nowadays, depending on the purpose of the translation, it can perform a variety of functions, but the most important and oldest has always been and still is a social one. At the simplest level, this function involves ensuring interlingual communication between individuals. Yet, if we are to consider literary translation, its social function is to provide the world community with access to the cultural heritage of separate nations, which, in turn, ensures the mutual exchange of literary experience, mutual linguistic and cultural enrichment, and deepening of people's understanding of the world. Therefore, the term "translation" is almost always accompanied by the concepts of "intercultural interaction", "dialogue of cultures", "ethnocultural integration", etc [2, pp. 179–183].

The study of various aspects of literary translation is essential for understanding the peculiarities of intercultural discourse, especially when it comes to cultures that appear to be quite distant from each other, such as Chinese and Ukrainian. Literary translation of Chinese literature into Ukrainian introduces Ukrainian readers not only to the writings of a certain author, but also to all the ethnocultural, historical, and social backgrounds of a given piece. In this way, this kind of "dialog" between our cultures allows us to identify and explore both their differences and similarities, thereby enabling a better understanding and development of our own identity.

The matter of intercultural interaction, achieved through literary translation, is often followed by the problem of choosing and applying translation strategies. While the translated work serves as a bridge between two cultures, the translator himself becomes an intermediary between the author of the original work and its foreign-language reader [1; 3]. In this case, the translation strategy applied might have a significant impact on both the result of the translation and the fulfillment of the objectives and tasks assigned to it.

As of now, the concept of translation strategies in Oriental translation studies remains more or less unclear. The most attention is often paid to translation transformations, methods and ways of solving separate translation problems, while the concept of strategies, despite being widely studied in Western translating tradition, can be considered a relatively recent phenomenon. Nevertheless, the problem of translation strategies is gradually gaining recognition in wide circles of sinologists and orientalists. It is believed that there are two main interpretations of the concept of translation strategies: broad and narrow [1, p. 242]. The «broad» one describes translation strategies as a collection of principles, rules, and beliefs that form the general point of view of the translator, which he or she adheres to during the translation process. In the «narrow» interpretation, strategies are equated with methods used to solve specific translation difficulties in a particular part of the text. Thus, the main difference lies in the level or «layer» of their implementation. The broad understanding refers to the macro level (the level of the entire text in its integrity), and the narrow one to the micro level (the level of specific textual units).

Scholars have suggested the division of translation strategies into the following directions: standardization and adaptation. Standardization is generally known to lose the cultural value of a work, whereas, from the linguistic aspect, the received text is brought to a common language standard. This determines the relative unpopularity of standardization among the majority of literary translators. Adaptation is an attempt to capture and portray the peculiarities and specific features of the original text in the target language. In this way, the text is «adapted» to a new audience, while preserving its linguistic, pragmatic, and socio-cultural value. Adaptation comprises two types of strategies: foreignization (укр. *очуження*) and domestication (укр. *одомашнення*). The latter has the advantage of focusing on the target language and, eventually, on the potential reader. Its main purpose is to bring the product of translation closer to the mentality and worldview of the target audience, and for this reason, the historical and cultural specifics of the source text are partially omitted and smoothed out. On the contrary, the strategy of foreignization emphasizes the ethnic aspect of the text, the difference between the language and socio-cultural environment of the original and the translation [3, p. 439].

The choice of strategy is usually the personal decision of the translator, but there are also certain trends in the approach of Western researchers to translating Chinese literature: previously, the perception of Chinese literature had a festival and exotic nature, but nowadays the mindset has become one of tolerance and a sense of equality between Eastern and Western cultures. In other words, many former translations may have contained too much domestication of the «Chinese nature» of the translated text, attempting to accommodate and adjust the foreign culture to a «familiar and explicit» Western standard. In some other cases, the Chinese text was subjected to excessive foreignization, lacking any adaptation for the potential audience. This led to further misunderstanding and deepening of the intercultural gap. As a result, many modern translation specialists are guided by the well-known Eastern principle of the «golden mean» in their approach to the choice of translation strategies. The key is to find a balance and maintain the flexibility that will allow them to meet all the objectives and tasks of translation. The issue of the use of translation strategies remains no less tangible when it comes to contemporary Chinese literature.

Can Xue (born 1953), whose real name is Deng Xiaohua (邓小华), is a prominent representative of avant-garde women's fiction in China and abroad. The Chinese avant-garde was greatly inspired by Western modernism and postmodernism. It is referred to by many scholars as a synthesis of the formal techniques of Western modernism and Chinese traditional reality [4, p. 127; 5; 6]. This allowed the creation of new, alternative literature and the destruction of conservative ideas of writing by all means. The representatives of this literary movement expressed their desire to reform the established concepts of literature and introduce them to the global arena. Can Xue's works have many features that are typical of the time: fatalism, mysticism, the dominance of text's form over content, fiction as the work's core, time-space discretion, schematization of characters, distorted cause-and-effect relationships, extensive symbolization, abstraction, and a metaphorical tone [7, pp. 329–331; 8, p. 68].

Can Xue's fiction, including the short story «Black Eyes» (黑眼睛), is imbued with a mysterious atmosphere that is fascinating, surprising, and frightening at the same time. It is marked by deep psychologism, chaos, and a sense of doom in human existence [9]. Recognizable features of the author's idiosyncrasy are the placement of characters in the reality of a nightmare, the events in which are devoid of any apparent logic and chronological sequence:

«三叔，你见过黑眼睛了吗?»

«那是大迁徙之首的传说了，你说的就是那个东西吧。唉，本来我是不想去哪山沟的，可是你姨姨她快临产了，只有那里有个产婆。黑灯瞎火的，我扶着她走了多少路啊»

– «Дядьку, а ти бачив чорні очі?»

– «Ти говориш про легенду, що існує з часів Великого переселення народів, Ех, спочатку я не хотів їхати до гірського яру, але твоя тітка ось-ось мала народити, а повитуха була лише там. О, скільки ж доріг я допомагав їй пройти за суцільної темряви...» [10, p. 89]

[– "Uncle, did you see the black eyes?"

– "You're talking about a legend that has existed since the Great Migration... Eh, at first I didn't want to go to the mountain gully, but your aunt was about to give birth, and there was the only midwife. Oh, how many roads I helped her cross in the pitch black..." ]

One of the central themes is the theme of insanity (often female):

«我既受不了那双眼睛的邪恶，我也受不了它的严肃和专注。它的严肃和专注全是对着我来的，它穿透了我的五脏六腑，并且在我的胃里面烧起一团火.....»

«Не витримую зла цих очей, так само як не витримую їхньої суворості та пильності. Вони все ж настigli мене, проникли в моє тіло та душу, навіть розпалили вогонь у моєму животі» [10, p. 88].

[ "I cannot bear the evil of those eyes, nor can I bear their severity and vigilance. They have reached me, penetrated my body and soul, and then lit a fire in my stomach" ].

In the dreams of Can Xue's characters, human sensations materialize into images of insects:

«可惜这样做的结果是除了斩断了一些蚯蚓，让少量鲜血流出之外，还留下了惶惑不安的感觉»

«Та, на жаль, усе, з чим я лишаюсь, – тільки тривожне почуття розгубленості, декілька розрубаних черв'яків і трохи витеклої з них крові» [10, p. 87].

[ "But unfortunately, all I was left with was a disturbing feeling of confusion, a few chopped-up worms, and some blood that had leaked out of them" ].

«我将冬茅拔出泥土，看见洞里满是大大小小的蚯蚓，令人肉麻»

«Я стрімко почав виривати очерет із землі й натрапив на яму з купою огидних, різних за розміром хробаків» [10, p. 87].

["I quickly started pulling the reeds out of the ground and came across a pit with a bunch of disgusting worms of different sizes"].

Idioms, metaphors, and symbols are also culturally marked:

«当夜生了个男孩。满山都是猴子在叫。接生婆举着个脸盆，对着月亮敲了又敲»

«У ту ніч народився хлопчик. Пам'ятаю крики мавп з гори. А повитуха, що приймала пологи, підняла розбитий таз і стукала по ньому на місяць» [10, p. 89].

["A boy was born that night. I remember the monkeys screaming from the mountain. And the midwife who delivered the baby picked up the broken bowl and was knocking on it for a month"].

«我找三叔打听，三叔坚决地否定了我的企图，说我»不知天高地厚»

«Я знайшов дядька, аби розпитати у нього, але він рішуче відмовив мені, сказавши, що я, мовляв, не знаю «наскільки високе небо і наскільки широка земля» [10, p. 94].

["I found an uncle to ask him, but he flatly refused, saying that I didn't know 'how high the sky and how wide the earth are'"].

These excerpts from the short story translation include recognizable features of Can Xue's writing (symbolic images, distinctive speech of the characters, historical and customary allusions, idioms, etc.), and therefore may create certain challenges in translation. While choosing adaptation strategies, it is necessary to analyse what impact the chosen strategy will have on different levels of translation. First of all, it is worth noting that in literary translation, the structural and formative correspondence of the resulting text to the original is of great value (syntactic level). This principle should also guide the choice of a translation strategy: if a work in the source language is difficult to understand, has a confusing structure, or inconsistent narrative, the translator's task is to perceive these as important features of the author's ideostyle that should be reflected in the target language to the fullest extent possible. The second level is the emotional and stylistic one. It includes all the means of expression that create the proper atmosphere when reading, convey emotions, and are in charge of the text's aesthetics. For instance, if the key element of the text's style is its so-called "Chineseness", this feature may be lost when using the domestication strategy. The third level is lexical, which involves the difficulties of translating allusions and translation realias. At this level, the translator will need to estimate his or her audience and guess at the possible level of their background knowledge - will it be enough to understand what is being said without context? In any case, a fairly safe option is to use translation comments at the bottom of the page or at the end of the translation, which will contain explanations of all the "risky" moments, although this approach also can be considered passive domestication.

**Conclusions.** The author's style, similar to that of Can Xue, enriched with allusions, psychology, and deep folk touch, makes the text difficult to understand even for native speakers, which must be taken into account when translating. In order to correctly determine the ratio of translation strategies used, it is necessary to anticipate the potential readiness of the Ukrainian reader for such literature and pre-estimate the level of their background knowledge. However,

even with all this in mind, the complexity of the translation task is caused by the need to preserve the originality and authenticity that the author has brought to the work. This is one of the most striking cases of the urgent importance of maintaining a delicate balance between domestication and foreignization. Hence, researchers of Can Xue's oeuvre believe that the key to understanding her stories is to understand her own worldview and self-identity, as well as the peculiarities of the customs, traditions of the area, and the life circumstances in which she grew up. Through the dark, smoky prism of sleepwalking madness, she conveys her impressions of real life and everything about it.

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**Коцюба О. О., Семеніст І. В. Стратегії адаптації перекладів китайськомовної художньої літератури (на прикладі оповідання Цань Сюе «黑眼睛»)**

**Анотація.** У цій статті зроблено спробу окреслення проблеми вибору перекладацьких стратегій адаптації китайськомовного художнього тексту. Матеріалом для практичного дослідження було обрано оповідання відомої китайської письменниці сучасності, яскравої представниці жіночої прози авангарду – Цань Сюе (残雪). У ході дослідження розглянуто головні функції перекладу як медіуму міжкультурної комунікації, його роль та вплив на «діалог культур» та встановлено важливість питання вибору перекладацьких стратегій для досягнення й виконання вищезгаданих функцій. У теоретичній частині роботи наведений огляд існуючих класифікацій стратегій перекладу, охарактеризовано їхній поділ на макро- та мікстратегії, що обумовлюється різницею між, так званими, «широким» та «вузьким» розуміннями терміну «стратегія». Більшу увагу приділено двом піднапрямам стратегії адаптації тексту: фореїзації (очуженню)

та доместикації (одомашненню), викладено погляди на переваги та неділки обидвох напрямків з точки зору адекватності, точності та стилістичної відповідності тексту мови перекладу до оригіналу.

У практичній частині роботи описуємо механізми вибору перекладачем макростратегії перекладу оповідання Цань Сюе «Чорні очі» (黑眼睛) та наводимо окремі приклади перекладацьких ситуацій, в яких розглядаємо шляхи подолання труднощів перекладу, зокрема передачі авторського стилю, атмосфери й реалій культурно-історичного характеру. Окрім цього, надано коротку характеристику особливостей ідіостилю письменниці

та встановлено зв'язок рис її творчості з особистим життєвим досвідом та світоглядом авторки.

Результати праці не лише становлять внесок в актуальні питання східного перекладознавства, а й можуть бути використані для поглиблення знань у міждисциплінарному розрізі: наявність якісних художніх перекладів українською мовою відкриває двері для подальших лінгвістичних, літературних та соціокультурних досліджень творчої спадщини Піднебесної.

**Ключові слова:** перекладацькі стратегії, китайський авангард, діалог культур, адаптація перекладу, форенізація, доместикація.