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CREATIVITY IN THE TRANSLATION OF PROSE FICTION: “WHY DON'T YOU DANCE?” BY R. CARVER

The purpose of the article is to explore the concept of creativity and its practical application in the translation of prose fiction. In the article, a short overview of views on creativity in translation is presented, and a comparative analysis of the translations of the very short story “Why Don't You Dance?” by R. Carver is done, taking into account the translation equivalence and the role played by creativity in those translations. In addition, ways of amending the disadvantages are pointed out, and revised variants of translation of the analyzed fragments are proposed.

We selected five text fragments and compared those source fragments with their translation into Ukrainian by Yu. Paustovsky and our own. During this comparative analysis, we determined the key differences, advantages, and disadvantages of both translations, which allowed us to amend them and understand the influence of the translator's creativity on the final product of his work. Yu. Paustovsky uses generalization a lot in his translation of the very short story “Why Don't You Dance?” which, in our opinion, is not appropriate considering the very nature of minimalism in literature in general and microprose in particular; because it only serves to blur the meaning and eventually the understanding of the translated source text. Furthermore, he sometimes allows himself to add elements that were not present in the source text at all (or are present later on in the story). The addition in any form in the context of minimalism is the very thing it strives to avoid.

Due to their original minimalistic nature, in texts such as very short stories, the translator's creativity must be aimed not at the addition of new words and structures but rather at the removal of anything that is not essential to the understanding with the help of such transformations as concretization and substraction, etc.

Key words: *creativity, comparative analysis, translation equivalence, microprose, Carver.*

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КРЕАТИВНІСТЬ У ПЕРЕКЛАДІ ХУДОЖНЬОЇ ПРОЗИ: «МОЖЕ, ПОТАНЦЮЄТЕ?» Р. КАРВЕРА

Стаття присвячена питанню вивчення концепції креативності та його практичному застосуванню у процесі перекладу творів художньої прози. У статті запропоновано короткий огляд поглядів на креативність в історії перекладознавства, а також виконано порівняльний аналіз україномовних перекладів дуже короткого оповідання Р. Карвера «Може, потанцюєте?» з огляду на еквівалентність перекладу і роль креативності перекладача. Також запропоновано шляхи ліквідації недоліків та надано уточнений варіант перекладу фрагментів тексту.

Ми відібрали п'ять фрагментів тексту і порівняли ці фрагменти з їх перекладом на українську мову Ю. Паустовського та нашим власним. В результаті цього порівняльного аналізу ми визначили ключові відмінності, переваги та недоліки обох перекладів, що дозволило поліпшити їх і зрозуміти вплив креативності перекладача на кінцевий продукт його роботи. Ю. Паустовський дуже часто використовує перекладацьку трансформацію узагальнення у своєму перекладі дуже короткого оповідання «Може, потанцюєте?», яка, на наш погляд, не підходить, враховуючи саму природу мінімалізму в літературі загалом і мікропрози зокрема, оскільки вона лише служить для розмиття сенсу і, врешті-решт, заважає розумінню читачем перекладеного вихідного тексту. Крім того, перекладач іноді дозволяє собі додавати елементи, які взагалі не були присутні у вихідному тексті (або ж були введені в сюжет пізніше). Додавання в будь-якій формі в контексті мінімалізму – саме те, чого він прагне уникати.

Завдяки своїй оригінальній мінімалістичній природі, у таких текстах, як дуже короткі оповідання, креативність перекладача повинна бути спрямована не на додавання нових слів і структур, а на вилучення всього того, що не є необхідним для розуміння за допомогою таких перекладацьких трансформацій як конкретизація, вилучення і т. д.

Ключові слова: *креативність, творчість, порівняльний аналіз, еквівалентність перекладу, мікропроза, Карвер.*

Introduction. While the notion of creativity in translation has been considered a form of digression, creativity is an inevitable and important aspect of the translation process. The suspicion surrounding creativity in translation is in part due to the indeterminacy of the term and in part to the frequent impression that creativity is a crutch for translators of lesser talent, knowledge, and competency. It has, in fact, been a neglected research topic in translation studies. In this paper, we will try to uncover this issue's practical side, using translations of the very short story "Why Don't You Dance?" by R. Carver into Ukrainian as an example.

Problem statement. The scholarly works on the topic of creativity as a general concept are few and far between. The research on the topic of creativity in translation is even less common or thorough. The relevance of this research is determined by the consideration of aspects of the importance of the concept of creativity for translation. This paper is devoted to the analysis of the concept of creativity in relation to practical prose translation from English to Ukrainian and takes the very short story "Why Don't You Dance?" by R. Carver as an illustrative example.

The analysis of recent research and publications on the topic. Creativity is essential both to human nature as an individual and to human society as a whole; it enables problem solving and allows us to innovate. As stated by Sternberg and Lubart, "Creativity is the ability to produce work that is both novel (i. e. original, unexpected) and appropriate (i. e. useful, adaptive concerning task constraints)" (Sternberg, Lubart, 1999: 3).

As for the translation, there are generally two distinct trains of thought that can be loosely described as "literal" and "creative" ones. These opinions existed for a very long time and were formulated at least as early on as the time of the Ancient Romans. Both Cicero and Horace advocated for non-literal translation while remaining true to the original in style: "For Roman translators, the task of transferring a text from language to language could be perceived as an exercise in comparative stylistics, since they were freed from the exigencies of having to "make known" either the form or the content per se, and consequently did not need to subordinate themselves to the frame of the original" (Bassnett, 2002: 51–52). The first systematic attempts to formulate the theory of translation were made with the invention of the printing press in the XV–XVIth century by E. Dolet (1509–46) and G. Chapman (1559–1634). Among their successors we can name P. Holland (1552–1637), J. Donham (1615–1669), A. Cowley (1618–1667), J. Dryden (1631–1700), A. Pope

(1688–1744), J. W. Goethe (1749–1832), A. F. Tytler (1747–1813), S. T. Coleridge (1772–1834), A. W. Schlegel (1767–1845), F. Schlegel (1772–1829), F. Schleiermacher (1768–1834), D. G. Rossetti (1828–1882), W. Morris (1834–96), Th. Carlyle (1795–1881). The XXth century continued this scholarly tradition: E. Pound contributed greatly to the theory and practice of translation, both through his own translations and ideas. H. Belloc in his lecture "On Translation" and J. McFarlane in his article "Modes of Translation" laid the foundations for the theory and practice of translation as an interdisciplinary study.

The issue of creativity in translation is essential to the theory of translation and constitutes, basically, its foundation. As was noted above, there are, generally speaking, two opposite views on the necessity and degree of creativity allowed in translations. The followers of the "literal" approach advocate the view of the translator as a "shadow" of the author. Given that the translation strives to replicate the creative intention of the original, the translator is restrained by his medium and that necessity. One must remain true to the form: you cannot translate prose into poetry and vice versa. But the intention to simply follow the raw original to the letter tends to result in an inferior copy of the original, devoid of its outstanding features, sense, and aesthetic beauty. This simplistic and mechanical translation is in stark contrast to the ones that are more creative and, therefore, more successful. This latter opinion was most vividly expressed as early as the end of the XVIIIth century by S. T. Coleridge. In his "Biographia Literaria" (1817) he outlined his theory of the distinction between Fancy and Imagination, asserting that Imagination is the supreme creative and organic power as opposed to the lifeless mechanism of Fancy. As other writers gradually turned their attention towards a discussion of theories of Imagination, away from the former emphasis on the artist's moral role and from what Coleridge described as "painful copying" that "would produce masks only, not forms breathing life" (Bassnett, 2002: 70).

In the modern theory of translation, the concept of creativity has three levels:

A) Linguistic level: on the linguistic level, multiplicity is revealed in the possibility of expressing extracted senses with the help of different language signs and/or their combinations.

B) Textual level: on this level, the act of translation is brought up to the level of creative writing, as the creative activity of the translator is focused on the text (both the original and the translation).

C) Procedural level: on this level, creativity is regarded as a productive and reflective activity of the

translator as a creator (co-creator), which is aimed both at the text and the translator himself (Rebrii, 2014: 109–110).

The research purpose and objectives. The purpose of the article is to explore the concept of creativity and its practical application in the translation of prose fiction. To achieve our purpose, we will have to fulfill the following objectives:

- provide a general definition of creativity;
- attempt a short historical overview of views on creativity in translation;
- complete a comparative analysis of selected fragments of translations into Ukrainian of a very short story “Why Don’t You Dance?” by R. Carver;
- provide alternative, more adequate translations of the analyzed fragments.

The body of the research. Although there is an abundance of research devoted to the issues of translating poetry, much less attention is devoted to translating prose. One reason for this must be that prose is generally considered to have a much simpler textual structure than poetry. It must be noted, though, that this general opinion doesn’t correspond to reality, as no prose genre can be considered easy to translate, i. e. they all have their own peculiarities. R. Carver was a master of a sub-genre of minimalist prose called microprose. The foundation of modern short prose is the philosophy and aesthetics of postmodernism: the idea of chaos, the departure from external reality to the study of the inner world of humans, fragmentation, masterful execution of the stream of consciousness, intertextuality, as well as the element of playing with the reader. The protagonist of such stories is often an antisocial and sometimes even marginalized person; most often, that person has no background and sometimes no name. However, they are not abstract, generalized characters either, because they resemble

the reader. We see either suffering individuals rejected by society or people obsessed with phobias and painful memories. This sometimes creates a dark atmosphere of cruelty, heartlessness, and loneliness.

The very short story “Why Don’t You Dance?” is an example of R. Carver’s mature style. It has all the hallmarks of a very short story sub-genre and markedly minimalist characters. That is why a faithful translation of this very short story is so difficult to accomplish. The first (and so far only) effort to translate it into Ukrainian was made by Yuri Paustovsky in 2020. R. Carver is just gaining popularity in Ukraine, so there is hope for the future when more of his works will be translated as well.

The first two paragraphs of this very short story contain a lot of details that not only create a believable background for further events but are also important for understanding and connecting the plot of the story and the reasons that led to the fact that the protagonist decided to move his possessions out of the house. Therefore, when translating these fragments, it is important not to miss a single detail.

The first paragraph of the story depicts an incomplete situation: there is no description of the cause of what is happening to the man; we only see the result: he takes all his furniture and possessions outside, arranges them just as they were in the house, and then goes to the store to buy some alcohol.

In this fragment, the translator is dealing with furniture. Here, in particular, we read the phrase “bedroom suite”, which Yu. Paustovsky translated as «меблі зі спальні». In the Merriam-Webster dictionary, we read that “suite”, taking into consideration our context, is “a set of matched furniture” (Merriam-Webster, n. d.), which implies unity. Moreover, we have a direct equivalent of the noun “suite” in Ukrainian, «гарнітур», which we

Table 1

Fragment 1

Source text	Translation by Yu. Paustovsky	Our translation
In the kitchen, he poured another drink and looked at the bedroom suite in his front yard. The mattress was stripped and the candy-striped sheets lay beside two pillows on the chiffonier. Except for that, things looked much the way they had in the bedroom – nightstand and reading lamp on his side of the bed, nightstand and reading lamp on her side. His side, her side. He considered this as he sipped the whiskey (Carver, 2009: 223).	На кухні він налив собі ще і подивився на меблі зі спальні, що стояли у дворі. Голі матраци, смугасті простирадла, складені на комоді з двома подушками. Взагалі-то, все майже так, як було у спальні: тумбочка й лампа з його боку ліжка, його бік, її бік. Він сьорбав віскі й думав про це (Карвер, 2020: 6).	Стоячи на кухні, він налив собі ще склянку віскі та поглянув на спальний гарнітур у своєму дворі. Матрац було знято та два смугасті простирадла лежали поряд з подушками на шафі. Крім цього все виглядало точно так само, як і було у вітальні – тумба та лампа для читання з його боку ліжка, тумба та лампа з її боку. Його бік, її бік. Він задумався над цим, сьорбаючи віскі (Ігошев, 2022: 74).

used in our variant of the full translation of this short story. Another word that poses some difficulty is “chiffonier”, mostly because it has quite a few more or less direct equivalents in Ukrainian. Merriam-Webster gives the following definition: “a high narrow chest of drawers” (Merriam-Webster, n. d.), which seems to us more like a closet than a chest of drawers («комод»), as Yu. Paustivsky would have it. Both translations of “bedroom suite” as «меблі зі спальні» and “chiffonier” as «комод» (Карвер, 2020: 6) are cases of generalization, which can still be considered relatively inappropriate based on the context and the nature of the sub-genre of the very short story.

In the second paragraph, the description of unusual changes in the protagonist’s house is continued. Here we read a more detailed list of all the furniture he brought outside and their locations relative to each other.

A noticeable change in comparison with the original text of this fragment in the translation by Yu. Paustovsky is the introduction of the TV set and the indication of its location relative to other items of furniture in the protagonist’s yard: «Великий телевізор стояв на журнальному столику» (Карвер, 2020: 6). Although it is not present in the original text, the presence and location of the TV can be calculated quite easily based on details from the further text of the short story (specifically the episode where the young couple asks the protagonist about it). But, in our opinion, for the style of minimalism in general and for the style of R. Carver in particular, it

is important not to add such arbitrary details, because sometimes this can lead to a change in the atmosphere and/or even the meaning of the story. In this case, however, such a change does not occur; that is, this detail of the description (the TV) can be included or not; it does not change anything in the understanding of the plot because the TV still appears and plays its role, only a bit later.

Next we have “the buffed aluminum kitchen set”. Yu. Paustovsky uses generalization again and translates it simply as «меблі з кухні» (Карвер, 2020: 6), but due to the adjectives “buffed” and “aluminum”, it seems to us that the author meant the kitchen sink as well and not only the kitchen cabinets, as it may seem from the translation. Therefore, we included these adjectives in our variant of translation, as it seems more accurate and appropriate. The cases described above in which the translator uses generalization and addition, can be considered excessive and inappropriate because they only serve to blur and obstruct the meaning and eventually the understanding of the translated source text. R. Carver, as one of the brightest representatives of minimalism in American literature, strove for the very opposite: for the brevity and clarity of form and meaning in his works, sometimes almost to the point of inarticulateness.

The next quote is describing a scene in which the young people drive up to the man’s house, see all the displayed furniture in the back yard, and decide to stop and ask if anything is for sale. “They got out of the car and began to examine things, the girl touching the muslin cloth, the boy plugging in the blender and

Table 2

Fragment 2

Source text	Translation by Yu. Paustovsky	Our translation
The chiffonier stood a few feet from the foot of the bed. He had emptied the drawers into cartons that morning, and the cartons were in the living room. A portable heater was next to the chiffonier. A rattan chair with a decorator pillow stood at the foot of the bed. The buffed aluminum kitchen set took up a part of the driveway. A yellow muslin cloth, much too large, a gift, covered the table and hung down over the sides. A potted fern was on the table, and a few feet away from this stood a sofa and chair and a floor lamp. The desk was pushed against the garage door. A few utensils were on the desk, along with a wall clock and two framed prints (Carver, 2009: 223).	Комод стояв за кілька кроків від ліжка. Вранці чоловік повикидав усе з ящиків у коробки, які тепер стояли у вітальні. Біля комода – переносний обігрівач. Плетене крісло з декоративною подушкою біля ліжка. Меблі з кухні зайняли частину проїзду. Зі стола звисала жовта муслінова скатертину, завелика – хтось подарував. На столі – горщик із папороттю, коробка зі столовим сріблом і програвач. Теж подарували. Великий телевізор стояв на журнальному столику. Ще за кілька кроків – диван, крісло і торшер. Письмовий стіл підпирав гаражні двері. На ньому лежав якийсь посуд, настінний годинник і дві картини в рамках (Карвер, 2020: 6).	Шафа стояла за кілька кроків від ліжка. Зранку він переклав усе з ящиків до картонних коробок, і тепер вони стояли у вітальні. Поряд із шафою стояв переносний обігрівач. Плетене крісло з декоративною подушкою – біля ліжка. Полірована алюмінієва кухня зайняла частину проїзду. Жовта муслінова скатертину звисала зі стола, завелика – чийсь дарунок. На столі стояла папороть у горщику, а за кілька кроків від них – диван, крісло та торшер. Письмовий стіл притулювся до гаражних дверей. На ньому лежало столове приладдя, а також настінний годинник та дві репродукції в рамках (Ігошев, 2022: 74).

turning the dial to MINCE” (Carver, 2009: 223), which is translated by Yu. Paustovsyy as «хлопець підключив блендер і поставив його на режим «фарш» (Карвер, 2020: 6), where the translator uses the past form of the verb «підключив» in a sense “to establish an electric circuit by inserting a plug” (Merriam-Webster, n. d.) in our opinion is better translated as the past form of the verb «під’єднав» (as in original we have “plugging in”).

The next fragment partially uncovers the protagonist’s thoughts about his unexpected young guests.

It is clear from the fragment that the man hesitates and cannot guess whether these young people are good or not, as well as what the relationship between them is. He looks at their faces in the light of the lamp (perhaps reminded of himself and his wife and

comparing himself and her to this young couple) and sees something in them, but what exactly – beautiful or ugly – it is not clear to him. In our translation, we decided to highlight the pronoun “something” («щось») in italics because, in our opinion, it is a focal point in this whole paragraph.

The last fragment contains the last two paragraphs of the story, in which we read about the girl recounting her meeting with the protagonist to her friends, describing again and again the events that she had experienced that evening.

In this fragment, excessive emotionality and imbalance in the heroine’s statements are interesting. It seems that she feels pity or sympathy for the protagonist, involuntarily expressing it verbally. Speaking about the protagonist, she uses such an expression as «the old guy», which in Yu. Paustovsky’s

Table 3

Fragment 3

Source text	Translation by Yu. Paustovsky	Our translation
They got out of the car and began to examine things, the girl touching the muslin cloth, the boy plugging in the blender and turning the dial to MINCE, the girl picking up a chafing dish, the boy turning on the television set and making little adjustments (Carver, 2009: 224).	Вони вийшли з машини і стали розглядати речі: дівчина мацала муслінову скатертину, хлопець підключив блендер і поставив його на режим «фарш»; дівчина розглядала каструлю з підігрівом, хлопець підкрутив телевізор (Карвер, 2020: 7).	Вони вибрались із машини та почали оглядати речі. Дівчина помацала муслінову скатертину, хлопець під’єднав блендер та поставив його на режим «фарш». Дівчина розглядала каструлю з підігрівом, хлопець ввімкнув телевізор і заходився його налаштовувати (Ігошев, 2022: 75).

Table 4

Fragment 4

Source text	Translation by Yu. Paustovsky	Our translation
He looked at them as they sat at the table. In the lamplight, there was something about their faces. It was nice or it was nasty. There was no telling (Carver, 2009: 226).	Він роздивлявся їх за столом. У світлі торшера щось було в їхніх обличчях. Щось миле чи огидне. Неясно (Карвер, 2020: 9).	Він дивився на них за столом. У світлі торшера було <i>щось</i> в їхніх обличчях... Гарне чи бридке? Неясно (Ігошев, 2022: 77).

Table 5

Fragment 5

Source text	Translation by Yu. Paustovsky	Our translation
Weeks later, she said: “The guy was about middle-aged. All his things right there in his yard. No lie. We got real pissed and danced. In the driveway. Oh, my God. Don't laugh. He played us these records. Look at this record-player. The old guy gave it to us, and all these crappy records. Will you look at this shit?” She kept talking. She told everyone. There was more to it, and she was trying to get it talked out. After a time, she quit trying (Carver, 2009: 227).	За декілька тижнів вона розповідала: – Дядько немолодий уже. Всі речі були прямо на подвір’ї. Чесне слово. Ми накидалися і почали танцювати. Біля дому. Боже. Не смійся. Він нам ставив платівки. Дивись, оце той програвач. Він віддав. Із усіма цими паршивими платівками. Диви, яке гівно». Вона говорила й говорила. Всім розказала. Було ще дещо, про що вона намагалася розповісти. Але потім перестала (Карвер, 2020: 11).	Проїшли тижні, а вона все розповідала: «Дядько був вже немолодий. Всі речі вінніс на подвір’я. Чесне слово. Ми напились і танцювали. Прямо на проїзді. Та боже мій, не смійся. Він ставив нам ці платівки. Ось він, той програвач. Старигань віддав, разом з усіма довбаними платівками. Подивись-но на це лайно!» Вона все говорила й говорила. Розповіла усім. Було в цьому ще щось особливе, про що вона намагалася розповісти. Проїшов час і вона перестала (Ігошев, 2022: 78).

translation is rendered by the Ukrainian equivalent of the neutral pronoun “he” («він»), although in our opinion the original expression has certain positive emotional and evaluative connotations. Then, as if irritated by her own attitude towards the older man and unable to explain it, the girl changes the tone of the conversation completely. For example, when she mentions the records that “the old guy” gave them for free, she says, “these crappy records”, later calling everything they received from him “shit”, which certainly carries a negative emotional and evaluative connotation in this context. This presents another problem for the translator of this very short story, which both we and Yu. Paustovsky struggled with, trying to select as close equivalents as possible.

Conclusions. In our article, we attempted to provide a brief overview of views on creativity in the theory of translation and also analyze its application in the translation of prose fiction. In the course of our research, it became obvious that creativity is a fundamental concept of the theory of translation,

because without it, the act of translation itself becomes impossible. Creativity in translation realizes the shifts that stem from the need to reformulate linguistic, stylistic, and cultural particularities. In accommodating this difference, creative strategies remake originals and reposition translations in a global society wavering between the specific and the universal. Exploring creativity as part of an internationalized aesthetics or cultural commodification legitimizes the individual subjectivities that inform translations and opens up further discussion on the creative constructs in translation. In dealing with minimalist prose in general and the very short stories by R. Carver in particular, it is important for the translator to remember the essential characteristics of these literary forms: the brevity of form and the complexity of meanings of such works. That is why we consider Yu. Paustovsky’s use of generalization and addition inappropriate because it only serves to blur the meaning and eventually the understanding of the translated source text.

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