RENDERING THE OUTDATED: TRANSLATING OBSOLETE AND OBSOLESCENT LANGUAGE IN LITERARY DISCOURSE

ВІДТВОРЮВАННЯ ЗАСТАРІЛОЇ ЛЕКСИКИ: ПЕРЕКЛАД АРХІЇЗМІВ І ІСТОРИЗМІВ В ЛІТЕРАТУРНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ

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The article is devoted to a comprehensive analysis of translation strategies for reproducing temporally distant vocabulary in a literary text that is historically or culturally marked. In modern translation studies, this problem is becoming increasingly relevant, since the language of the past not only indicates the temporal context of the work, but also performs stylistic, symbolic and ideological functions. The author justifies the need to create a context-sensitive translation model that takes into account both the formal characteristics of lexical units and cultural conditioning, the stylistic role and perception by the target audience. The study aims not only to outline the range of linguistic and culturological problems, but also to form a theoretical and methodological approach to their solution in the conditions of Ukrainian translation practice. The study examines fragments of literary classics – in particular, "As You Like It" by W. Shakespeare and "Jane Eyre" by S. Bronte – and their Ukrainian translations performed by Y. Andrukhovych, M. Strikha, O. Hryhorash and M. Kianovska. A comparison of the strategies of foreignization (preservation of archaic form and stylistic distance) and domestication (adaptation to the linguistic norm of the modern recipient) is carried out. Special attention is paid to cultural substitutions that arise in contexts with a lack of denotative correspondence (for example, the replacement of "Palm Sunday" with "Verbna Nedilya" in the Slavic cultural context). Based on the analysis, a model is proposed that includes four parameters: linguistic fidelity, stylistic authenticity, cultural-historical signaling and receptive accessibility. The article also contains a number of methodological recommendations for educational programs in literary translation: the introduction of corpus analysis of historicisms, parallel analysis of translations, research on receptive reaction, as well as the study of typical strategies in working with texts marked by time.

Key words: obsolete vocabulary, archaisms, historicisms, literary translation, cultural adaptation, stylistics, reception, translation methodology.

Статтю присвячено комплексному аналізу перекладацьких стратегій відтворення темпорально віддаленої лексики в художньому тексті, що маркована історично або культурно. У сучасному перекладознавстві ця проблема набуває дедалі більшої актуальності, оскільки мова минулого не лише позначає часовий контекст твору, а й виконує стилістичну, символічну та ідеологічну функції. Автор обґрунтовує потребу у створенні контекстно-чутливої моделі перекладу, що враховує як формальні характеристики лексичних одиниць, так і культурну обумовленість, стильову роль та сприйняття цільовою аудиторією. Дослідження має за мету не лише окреслити коло лінгвістичних та культурологічних проблем, а й сформувати теоретико-методологічний підхід до їх вирішення в умовах української перекладацької практики. У межах дослідження розглянуто фрагменти літературної класики – зокрема «Як вам це сподобається» В. Шекспіра та «Джейн Ейр» Ш. Бронте – та їх українські переклади у виконанні Ю. Андруховича, М. Стріхи, О. Григораш і М. Кіановської. Проведено зіставлення стратегій форенізації (збереження архаїчної форми та стилістичної дистанції) і доместикації (адаптація до мовної норми сучасного реципієнта). Окрему увагу приділено культурним заміщенням, які виникають у контекстах з відсутньою денотативною відповідністю (наприклад, заміна «Palm Sunday» на «Вербну неділю» у слов'янському культурному контексті). На основі аналізу запропоновано модель, що охоплює чотири параметри: мовну вірність, стилістичну автентичність, культурно-історичну сигналізацію та рецептивну доступність. Стаття також містить низку методичних рекомендацій для освітніх програм з літературного перекладу: впровадження корпусного аналізу історизмів, паралельного аналізу перекладів, дослідження рецептивної реакції, а також вивчення типових стратегій у роботі з текстами, маркованими часом.

Ключові слова: застаріла лексика, архаїзми, історизми, літературний переклад, культурна адаптація, стилістика, рецепція, методологія перекладу.

Problem statement. In contemporary translation studies, increasing attention is being paid to the temporal dimension of language, particularly the translation of obsolete and obsolescent lexical units in literary texts. These time-marked elements serve not only as stylistic tools to evoke historical periods or literary registers but also as carriers of cultural identity and historical intertextuality. Their presence in a source text often signals a deliberate attempt to frame the narrative in a certain temporal or cultural context, which presents both linguistic and interpretative challenges for the translator. Despite their stylistic and pragmatic complexity, the translation of temporally distant lexis remains insufficiently systematised in Ukrainian scholarship. Much of the existing literature focuses on lexical classification of archaisms and

historicisms [1; 2], while little attention is given to practical translation strategies for these elements in literary discourse.

Review of the recent studies and publications. Recent years have seen a gradual increase in scholarly interest in the translation of historically marked and obsolete language, particularly within literary discourse. However, this domain remains relatively underexplored when compared to other stylistic or cultural aspects of translation.

In Ukrainian translation studies, scholars such as Petro Selihei and Mykola Kocherhan have laid the foundations for understanding stylistically marked lexis in the source language. Selihei [1] identifies and classifies various types of obsolescent and expressive vocabulary in contemporary Ukrainian, highlighting their cultural resonance. Kocherhan [2] discusses archaic and historic vocabulary as markers of national linguistic identity, though his work does not explicitly address translational implications. More targeted research has been carried out by H. Strohanova [3, c. 123–140] and L. Zubenko [4, c. 45–60], who examine the challenges of conveying archaisms in historical fiction and religious texts, pointing to the lack of consensus in domestic methodological approaches.

In contrast, Western and European researchers have long explored this issue through the lenses of stylistic equivalence, cultural compensation, and reception theory. Scholars such as Newmark [5] and Baker [6] argue that archaic or outdated vocabulary often serves as a marker of tone, characterisation, or narratorial distance, and that translators must choose between preserving stylistic fidelity and ensuring accessibility to modern readers. Peter Newmark [5], in particular, advocates for stylistic preservation, particularly in literary translation, while also cautioning against excessive foreignisation that might hinder reader comprehension; while Mona Baker [6] frames obsolete lexis as a challenge to semantic and pragmatic equivalence, proposing compensation through tone and register rather than one-to-one lexical matches.

Venuti [7] and Berman [8] further highlight the ethical tension between domestication and foreignisation, particularly when translating historical or linguistically marked texts. Antoine Berman's [8] concept of *l'épreuve de l'étranger* ("the trial of the foreign") positions archaism as an ethical opportunity – a means of retaining the historical alterity of the text. A key voice in this discussion, Lawrence Venuti [7; 9], critiques the Anglophone tendency toward domestication, noting that the erasure of temporally marked language contributes to the invisibili-

sation of both the source culture and the translator. He encourages translators to maintain formal markers of temporal distance when possible, even if this risks a degree of reader discomfort.

Other scholars – including Nord [10], Chesterman [11], and Eco [12] – approach the issue from ethical and communicative perspectives, examining the translator's role as a mediator of both linguistic form and cultural time depth. Nord [10], for example, proposes a functionalist approach that prioritises the intended effect on the target audience, which may in some cases justify partial stylistic levelling. Chesterman [11, c. 59–69], in turn, frames translator decisions within a broader system of norms and ethics, offering a useful framework for discussing stylistic fidelity versus cultural accessibility.

In addition, digital corpora and historical lexicography have influenced this area of study. Tools such as the Oxford English Dictionary's Historical Thesaurus and Google Books Ngram Viewer enable researchers and translators to identify the frequency and diachronic lifespan of particular lexical items, providing empirical support for decisions related to obsolescence and contextual adequacy.

Nonetheless, what remains absent from many of these studies is a systematic typology of obsolete or obsolescent language from a translation-oriented perspective, as well as empirical studies grounded in comparative textual analysis. In Ukrainian scholarship, in particular, there is still limited integration between theoretical insights and pedagogical strategies for training literary translators to work with time-marked lexis. Interdisciplinary approaches that combine translation theory, lexicography, literary studies, and hermeneutics are still relatively scarce.

The aim of the study. Thus, the current study aims to: a) systematically examine the types and functions of obsolete and obsolescent language in literary translation; b) analyse translation strategies employed in rendering these temporally distant elements; c) propose a context-sensitive model of translation decision-making that considers not only linguistic equivalence but also stylistic, cultural, and reception-oriented factors.

Main body of the study. In order to illustrate the challenges of translating historically marked language, this study examines an excerpt from William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* (Act I, Scene 5) [13]. The lines under consideration are rich in metaphorical and religious imagery and include multiple lexical items that are now considered archaic or poetic:

The palmers' kisses are from the holy palms stolen,
Which holy palmers give [13, c. 852].

The key temporally distant elements in this passage include the noun "palmers", an obsolete term referring to medieval Christian pilgrims who carried palm branches from the Holy Land, and the metaphorical verb "stolen", which, though not obsolete, is used in a poetic sense that is distant from contemporary usage. The phrase "holy palms" carries both literal and symbolic religious connotations and contributes to the elevated register of the utterance.

These items function not merely as vocabulary choices but as stylistic and cultural markers. They reinforce the solemn, spiritual, and ritualistic atmosphere of the scene, while also locating the utterance within a historically remote linguistic framework. Consequently, their translation requires careful consideration of both form and function.

Two modern Ukrainian translations of this passage offer contrasting approaches to rendering the archaic and stylistically elevated lexis. The first is by Yurii Andrukhovych [14], known for his experimental and stylistically rich interpretations of classical texts. The second is a more neutral rendering by Maksym Strikha [15], whose translation strategy tends toward clarity and accessibility.

Andrukhovych's [14, c. 351] version reads:

Поцілунки пілігримів запозичені зі священних пальмових гілок,

що святі прочани дарують.

It is worthy of note that Andrukhovych employs a marked foreignising strategy (cf. Venuti 2013 [9]) by preserving elevated diction and historical lexical items. He uses the archaic Ukrainian «*пілігрим*» instead of the more common «*паломник*», and selects «*запозичені*» to mirror the poetic metaphor of "*stolen*", maintaining the metaphorical layer and rhythm of the original though inaccurately rendering the lexical meaning of the original lexical unit.

Furthermore, the phrase «*пальмових гілок*» explicitly clarifies the symbolic reference, functioning as explicitation – a compensatory strategy that makes implicit cultural content accessible to the target reader.

Maksym Strikha [15, c. 122], in contrast, renders the lines as:

Поцілунки паломників – зі священних пальм узяті,

які паломники дарують.

It is noticeable that Maksym Strikha [15] opts for lexical neutralisation and stylistic simplification. His use of «*паломник*», a more familiar and modern term, along with «*взяті*», reduces the metaphorical and historical texture of the line, prioritising comprehension and readability. His version reflects a domesticating strategy, rendering the text in a stylis-tically neutralized register more suited to the general Ukrainian reader.

Moreover, the fragment has additional lexicosemiotic layers which might be outlined only in the footnote or glossary. An illustrative example of cultural substitution–relevant to both translation and cultural adaptation–is found not in literature per se, but in liturgical and ritual language, which often serves as a key intertext in literary works. The biblical account of Palm Sunday, commemorating Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, traditionally features the crowd strewing palm branches in his path. In English and other Western Christian traditions, this is referred to as Palm Sunday.

However, in the cultural context of Kyivan Rus', where palm trees were not native or available, the term "*palm*" had to be recontextualised in both ritual and language. By the 11th century, the feast became known locally as *Вербна неділя* (*Willow Sunday*), with the willow branch (*verba*) functioning as the symbolic replacement for the palm. This substitution reflected both climatic reality and symbolic reinterpretation, as the willow in Slavic tradition was already associated with fertility, rebirth, and seasonal renewal–all congruent with the themes of the feast. Thus, the term "*Palm Sunday*" is typically translated into Ukrainian as «*Вербна неділя*», with no lexical or botanical equivalence, but a functional and cultural one.

This allusion is not reflected in any of the translations by Andrukhovych [14] or Strikha [15], though it underscores a key strategy in the translation of obsolete or culturally marked terms: when direct lexical correspondence is unavailable or misleading, the translator may opt for cultural substitution, preserving the function and symbolic role of the original item rather than its literal form. In literary translation, especially of historical or religious texts, such decisions are frequent and critical.

In order to further illustrate the complexity of rendering obsolete and obsolescent language in literary translation, we have selected a fragment from Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* (1847) [16, c. 193], a text rich in archaisms, historical lexis, and stylistically elevated register. These features contribute significantly to the novel's historical atmosphere, moral tone, and stylistic depth.

Hearken, then, Jane Eyre, to your sentence: tomorrow, place the garland on your head; wear the bride's attire; veil yourself; and then wait the word–yes, the word of a man who loves you–that word shall be your marriage vow.

The imperative "Hearken" and the formal construction of the sentence exemplify Brontë's use of

Biblical register and legalistic tone, evoking both solemnity and historicity. The challenge for the translator lies in reproducing the gravity and emotional resonance while maintaining stylistic cohesion in the target language.

Ukrainian translators face the dual challenge of preserving this temporal flavour while ensuring accessibility for contemporary readers. Ukrainian translations by Oleksandra Hryhorash (2011) [17] and Mariya Kiianovska (2020) [18] demonstrate different strategic approaches to rendering archaism and stylistic compensation.

In Hryhorash's translation [17, c. 278], this passage reads:

Отже, слухай, Джейн Ейр, свій присуд: завтра увінчай голову вінком, зодягни весільне вбрання, закрий обличчя фатою – і чекай на слово. Так, слово чоловіка, що кохає тебе: те слово буде твоєю шлюбною обітницею.

Hryhorash [17] uses the verb «слухай» to translate "hearken," retaining the imperative form while opting for a more familiar and direct modern Ukrainian equivalent. While «слухай» lacks the archaic colouring of "hearken," its placement at the start of the sentence and its formal construction preserve the elevated and performative tone of the original. The phrase "твій присуд" for "your sentence" maintains the judicial metaphor, reinforcing the moral solemnity of the passage.

Overall, Hryhorash [17] adopts a strategy of stylistic mimicry, aiming to preserve the emotional and rhetorical force of the English while only partially replicating its historical lexis.

In Kiianovska's version [18, c. 310], the same passage is rendered as:

Отже, Джейн Ейр, прислухайся до свого вироку: завтра вплети у волосся вінок, одягни весільне вбрання, прикрий обличчя фатою – і чекай на слово. Так, на слово людини, яка тебе кохає: це слово буде твоїм обітницею шлюбу.

Kiianovska [18] opts for the verb «прислухайся», which introduces a more introspective and contemplative nuance compared to the direct command of "hearken." This verb choice reflects a more psychologised and internalised reading, characteristic of Kiianovska's [18] broader strategy of modernising syntax and register. The translation of "sentence" as «вирок» retains the judicial metaphor but introduces a slightly harsher tonal colouring, perhaps shifting the interpretive weight of the sentence toward existential judgment rather than romantic drama.

Furthermore, Kiianovska's [18] rendering of "man who loves you" as «людина, яка тебе кохає» neutralises the gendered element of "man," which

may be interpreted as a subtle adaptation for contemporary Ukrainian readers, aligning with inclusive language norms.

In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë frequently uses temporally marked expressions–such as "*tenant*," "*tythe*," to establish its 19th-century English setting. These terms serve stylistic, functional, and cultural purposes as they reference older property and ecclesiastical arrangements, signalling historical context.

According to Lasinska [19, c. 97–101], such historically marked vocabulary is central to the historical stylisation of the source. She notes that Ukrainian translators often replicate this effect through a mixture of archaisms, historicised terms, and occasional explanatory devices. Lasinska [19, c. 97–101] identifies a range of lexico-semantic transformations used in Ukrainian translations, including calques, contextual substitution, and archaic substitution. Thus, for the word "*tenant*" Hryhorash [17] often retains a historic register (*"tenant"* → «орендар»), mirroring the English legal-historical context, while Petro Sokolovskyi [19] prefers modernization ("tenant" → «мешканець»), signaling a domesticated approach and prioritising comprehension.

Based on the above analysis, we propose a context-sensitive model that accounts for the multiple dimensions involved in rendering obsolete and obsolescent language in translation. The model incorporates four interrelated parameters:

1. **Linguistic Fidelity** – the degree to which the lexical choice preserves the formal features of the source term;

2. **Stylistic Authenticity** – the extent to which the original tone, register, and voice are retained;

3. **Cultural-Historical Signalling** – the preservation of historically significant lexical items that carry symbolic or contextual meaning;

4. **Reception Accessibility** – the clarity and comprehensibility of the translated item for the contemporary target reader.

The model does not impose a prescriptive choice but encourages translators to reflect on the text type, audience, and communicative goals when approaching historically marked language. For instance, in academic or literary contexts where historical resonance is essential, a foreignising strategy with archaisms may be preferred. In contrast, for general readership or educational materials, a domesticated approach that simplifies or explicates obsolete terms might be more appropriate.

Conclusions. Our analysis has highlighted the multifaceted challenges associated with translating obsolete and obsolescent lexical elements in literary discourse. These temporally marked units–ranging

from archaisms and historicisms to culturally situated lexical relics–function not merely as linguistic artefacts but as stylistic, ideological, and cultural signals. Their presence in a literary text serves to construct temporal atmosphere, shape characterisation, and embed intertextual or symbolic meaning. Consequently, their translation requires not only lexical accuracy but also a strategic orientation toward historical fidelity, stylistic tone, and target audience expectations.

The proposed context-sensitive model of translation decision-making offers a pragmatic framework for navigating such choices. Rather than prescribing a singular solution, the model encourages translators to assess the communicative function and contextual weight of each temporally distant element and align their strategy accordingly.

As literary translation continues to mediate between cultural memory and contemporary relevance, the translator's role grows increasingly complex. Rendering outdated or historicised language is not a merely technical task; it is a hermeneutic and ethical undertaking, one that requires informed, context-aware, and aesthetically sensitive judgment. This article contributes to a growing body of research that seeks to empower translators to approach temporal distance not as a barrier, but as a site of creative and critical engagement.

Prospects for development. From a pedagogical perspective, these findings bear significant relevance for translator training programmes, particularly in the domain of literary translation. The ability to recognise and appropriately render obsolete or historicised vocabulary is not intuitive and must be cultivated through conscious instruction, critical comparison, and contextual analysis.

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following pedagogical recommendations are proposed:

1. **Incorporate Historical Lexis as a Focus Area in Curriculum**. Translator education should include systematic study of archaisms, historicisms, and culturally embedded terms, tracing their evolution and functions in both source and target languages.

2. **Use Parallel Text Analysis of Multiple Translations**. Comparative exercises involving several Ukrainian translations of the same source text can help students identify how different strategies influence stylistic tone, narrative dynamics, and reader response.

3. **Contextualisation through Cultural Substitution Cases**. Teachers should highlight examples like the *Palm → Willow* substitution in Ukrainian liturgical tradition as models of functional equivalence over literal translation, linking textual interpretation with cultural adaptation.

4. **Encourage Strategic Flexibility over Formal Rigidity**. Rather than advocating for strict "archaising" or "modernising" tendencies, instructors should promote a case-by-case approach, encouraging students to consider genre, readership, and purpose in each translational decision.

5. **Integrate Reception Theory into Translator Training**. Students should be introduced to reception-oriented frameworks–helping them anticipate how temporally marked language will be perceived by contemporary audiences, and how this perception shapes the ethical dimensions of translation.

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