

A Study on the Chinese Translation Strategies of Nadsat in A Clockwork Orange: A Corpus-Based and Critical Discourse Analysis Approach

Jingjing Cao

Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China

Abstract: This study focuses on the translation strategies of Nadsat in A Clockwork Orange, aiming to explore how to accurately convey the unique style, cultural connotations, and textual functions of this constructed anti-language during the translation process. As a literary work with widespread global influence, the translation of Nadsat in A Clockwork Orange is crucial for understanding the ideological depth and artistic distinctiveness of the novel. From the theoretical perspectives of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis, this study employs methods such as corpus analysis and textual interpretation to conduct a comprehensive and in-depth investigation into the translation strategies of Nadsat in A Clockwork Orange. It is anticipated that this research will unveil the core strategies employed in handling Nadsat in the Chinese translation, assess the balance achieved between the defamiliarization effect of the “anti-language” and reader accessibility, and provide valuable references for translation practitioners to enhance translation quality. Furthermore, it seeks to deepen the academic understanding of fictional language translation in literary works, propose theoretical frameworks and practical recommendations for translating constructed languages in literature, and expand the scope and perspectives of translation studies. Lastly, it aims to offer insightful references and inspiration for cross-cultural communication and literary education, thereby fostering mutual understanding and dialogue between different cultures.

Keywords: A Clockwork Orange; Nadsat; Corpus Analysis; Critical Discourse Analysis

1. Introduction

1.1 A Clockwork Orange and Nadsat

Anthony Burgess's A Clockwork Orange remains his most renowned work, exerting a profound influence across literary, musical, and visual culture. The novel engages with themes such as the tension between individual agency and state control, the treatment of juvenile offenders, and the complex nature of moral redemption. Its linguistic innovation and the ethical dilemmas it explores continue to resonate with contemporary relevance. Nadsat, from the Russian word meaning ‘teen’, is the name of the invented slang in which Alex narrates the novel. Anthony Burgess decided to use Russian because he had learned the basics of the language before visiting Leningrad in 1961. As a typical “anti-language”, Nadsat constructs a teenage subcultural symbolic system resistant to mainstream society through the transliteration of Russian roots, the collage of English slang, and the metaphorical reconstruction of invented vocabulary.

1.2 Literature Review

Currently, research on the translation strategies of Nadsat in A Clockwork Orange remains relatively scarce both domestically and internationally, with specialized studies in this area being nearly non-existent within China. Most existing research has primarily focused on analyzing the linguistic features, cultural connotations, and textual functions of Nadsat, while systematic investigation into its translation strategies has been notably lacking. Some scholars have approached the topic from perspectives such as literary criticism and cultural studies, exploring the role of Nadsat in shaping the novel's anti-cultural atmosphere and expressing adolescent rebellion. However, these studies have not engaged in systematic or in-depth analysis of translation strategies.

The earliest relevant domestic study, by Zhang Yuewei (2013), applied functional linguistics to examine the metaphorical mechanisms of Nadsat as an “anti-social language,” though it did not address translational dimensions.[1] Shen

Wenjing (2015, 2018) adopted a critical discourse analysis approach to investigate how Nadsat constructs a counter-cultural identity through phonological alterations (e.g. back-formation, consonant substitution) and morphological innovations (e.g. clipping, borrowing).[2] Nonetheless, her research did not extend to comparative analysis of different translations.

In contrast, international research has focused more on cross-linguistic comparisons of Nadsat translations, particularly its adaptability as a “third language” (L3) in varying cultural contexts. The French version (L’Orange Mécanique, 1972) is widely regarded as a successful case. Vincent & Clarke (2020), through corpus-based analysis, demonstrated how the translator preserved the defamiliarizing effect of the original by employing “creative morphological reconstruction” (e.g. blending Russian phonemes with French roots) and “compensatory strategies” (e.g. introducing anglicized neologisms).[3]

The main Chinese versions include the 2019 translation by Du Dong and the 2000 version by Wang Zhiguang, both published by Yilin Press. Yet there has been little dedicated academic evaluation or analysis of the strategies used in rendering Nadsat in these translations, nor of their effect. This significant gap in the domestic research landscape underscores the urgent need for further in-depth investigation. This study represents the first systematic effort to address this void, focusing on the Chinese translations of *A Clockwork Orange* and employing a combined corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis approach to examine the translation strategies and cultural adaptability of Nadsat, thereby filling a critical gap in the field.

2. Research Object, Content, and Process

2.1 Research Object

The objects of this study are Anthony Burgess’s novel *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) and its Chinese translation. Given the extensive use of the constructed language Nadsat in the novel, its translation directly influences how target-language readers perceive the defamiliarized style and socio-critical undertones of the work. The Chinese version selected for analysis is the 2019 translation by Du Dong, published by Yilin Press, with a specific focus on the treatment of Nadsat lexicon.

In order to establish a systematic corpus of

Nadsat items for analysis, this thesis adopts a two-step procedure. First, using Sketch Engine, the English source text was compared with a standard English reference corpus (the British National Corpus, BNC) to extract the 100 most statistically overrepresented lexical items. Second, an artificial screening process was applied to ensure the selection captured the linguistic distinctiveness of Nadsat. Following these procedures, a total of 72 Nadsat words were identified as the final dataset for this study. This dataset serves as the empirical basis for both the quantitative statistical analysis of translation strategies and the qualitative case studies of individual lexical items. Furthermore, this study employs A Nadsat Glossary-compiled by Scott McDonald in collaboration with Elizabeth Cole, Andy Webb, Kevin Faust, and Michael Wargula-as supplementary material. This glossary provides detailed entries on each Nadsat term, including its meaning, origin, and corresponding translation strategy, serving as a foundational dataset for subsequent statistical and qualitative analysis.

2.2 Research Content

This study employs a multi-faceted approach to investigate the translation of Nadsat, the constructed anti-language in Anthony Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange*, into Chinese. The research is structured around two primary pillars: a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic features of Nadsat itself, followed by a systematic examination of the translation strategies employed in its Chinese rendition. The core of the analysis leverages a self-built parallel corpus and utilizes a combined methodology of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis (CDA) to ensure both quantitative rigor and qualitative depth.

(1) Analysis of the Linguistic Features of Nadsat: Using corpus linguistics methods, systematically examines the distinctive features of Nadsat at lexical, grammatical, and semantic levels, establishing a basis for investigating translation strategies. Specific tasks include categorizing and conducting statistical analysis of Core Nadsat(Russian borrowings), Babytalk, Compounding, Creative Morphology, Rhyming Slang and Truncation in Nadsat, summarizing its structural patterns and stylistic traits.

(2) Analysis of Nadsat Translation Strategies (Du Dong’s 2019 Translation): Analyzes the translation of Nadsat in *A Clockwork Orange*

into Chinese. Combining corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis, it examines both the linguistic features of Nadsat and the application of domestication or foreignization strategies in the translated text. The study investigates translation consistency, creativity, and the socio-cultural factors influencing the final output.

2.3 Research Process

(1) Corpus Collection:

Source Text: Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (1962)

Translated Text: *A Clockwork Orange*, translated by Du Dong, Yilin Press, 2019

Storage Format: Plain text format (.txt), UTF-8 encoding

(2) Corpus Cleaning

Software Used: Notepad++

Cleaning Protocol:

Table 1. Cleaning Protocol

Cleaning Objective	Regular Expression	Replace With	Description
Remove page numbers	\d+\s*\r?\n	Blank	Deletes lines starting with numbers (page numbers)
Remove English chapter headings	CHAPTER.*\r?\n	Blank	Deletes English chapter headings
Remove Chinese chapter headings	Di [Yi Er San Si Wu Liu Qi Ba Jiu Shi Bai Qian0-9]+\Zhang.*\r?\n	Blank	Deletes Chinese headings like "Chapter X"
Remove square bracket contents	\[.*?\]	Blank	Removes footnotes, illustration notes, etc.
Remove parentheses contents	\(.*?\)	Blank	Removes notes, parenthetical insertions, etc.
Remove Chinese book title marks	《.*?》	Blank	Removes titles of cited books or works
Remove excessive blank lines	(\r?\n){2,}	\r\n	Merges multiple consecutive blank lines into one

(3) Corpus Alignment and Parallel Corpus Construction

Sentence-level alignment between the cleaned English source text (E.txt) and the Chinese translated text (C.txt) was performed using Aligner software.

Manual verification and correction of automatically aligned sentence pairs were conducted to ensure accurate correspondence between the source and target texts.

Successfully aligned sentence pairs were exported in a standard format and uploaded to the corpus analysis platform Sketch Engine to construct a dedicated bilingual parallel corpus.

(4) Corp Preliminary Quantitative Analysis

(a) Keyword Extraction:

Tool: Keywords Tool in Sketch Engine.

Reference Corpus: The large-scale general English corpus English Web 2021 (enTenTen21) was selected as the reference corpus.

Procedure: The keyword extraction tool was executed using the constructed *A Clockwork Orange* source text corpus (containing Nadsat) as the analysis target. By comparing against the reference corpus, a list of 100 keywords with statistical significance was extracted.

Screening: From the extracted keyword list, 72 terms unambiguously identified as belonging to the Nadsat lexicon were manually selected as the core analysis objects. Selection criteria were based on the words' unconventional morphology

(e.g., Russified features, slang-like spellings, neologisms) and their definitions within established Nadsat glossaries.

(b) Frequency and Distribution Analysis:

Tool: Frequency List in Sketch Engine.

Procedure: A frequency list for the screened 72 core Nadsat words was generated based on their occurrences throughout the entire source text of *A Clockwork Orange*.

Output: Quantitative data on the frequency of occurrence of Nadsat words in the original text was obtained, categorized according to the classification framework established in section 3.3.5.

(5) Nadsat Classification

(a) Classification by Word Formation: Based on the framework proposed by Vincent & Clarke (2017) in their study, the 72 core Nadsat words selected for analysis were categorized according to their morphological formation.

(b) Classification by Translation Strategy:

Drawing on Lawrence Venuti's translation theory[4], the binary framework of Domestication and Foreignization was adopted as the core theoretical lens for analyzing the translated text.

Domestication refers to a translation strategy that minimizes the foreignness of the source text by adapting it to the linguistic, cultural, and stylistic norms of the target language. This approach aims to make the translation read

fluently and naturally, as if it were originally produced in the target culture, often at the expense of obscuring the cultural and rhetorical specificities of the source text.

Foreignization, in contrast, is a strategy that deliberately preserves the linguistic and cultural peculiarities of the source text. By retaining source-language features-such as unusual syntax, culturally specific terms, or stylistic idiosyncrasies-the translator challenges target-language conventions and invites readers to engage with the foreignness of the original work.

This approach is often aligned with an ethical stance that values cultural difference and resists the dominance of target-culture values.

This framework is used to examine whether Du Dong's translation tends to weaken the heterogeneities of the source text and align with target-language cultural norms (domestication), or preserve the foreignizing features of the source language and challenge target readers' conventions (foreignization) in rendering Nadsat vocabulary.

Table 2. NadSAT Classification by Word Formation

Category	Explanation	Example
Core Nadsat	Words formed primarily through the transliteration or adaptation of Russian roots into English.	droog[friend](from Russian друг/drug)
Babytalk	Words that mimic childlike speech, often featuring reduplication and simplified phonology.	eggiweg [egg],
Compounding	Words created by combining two or more existing English words to form a new term.	sleepland [asleep]
Creative Morphology	Words formed through morphological innovation, such as blending, affixation, or other modifications of standard words.	horrorshow (good, from Russian хорошо/khorosho + "show")
Rhyming Slang	Words derived from Cockney rhyming slang traditions, often shortened from a rhyming phrase.	pretty polly (referring to lolly [money])
Truncation	Words formed by shortening or clipping standard English words.	guff[guffaw]

(6) Quantitative Analysis

(a) Data Extraction: All instances of the selected core Nadsat words identified in the source text and their corresponding translated expressions in Du Dong's Chinese version were manually extracted based on the parallel corpus from Sketch Engine. A paired list in the form "Nadsat word – Chinese translation" was compiled for further analysis.

(b) Manual Annotation: An annotation table was created using Microsoft Excel. Each pair of Nadsat term and its Chinese translation was annotated with two types of information, word formation category and translation strategy.

c) Statistical Analysis: The annotated dataset was processed using the Pivot Table function in Microsoft Excel to perform the following quantitative operations:

Strategy Distribution: The frequency of use for each translation strategy (Domestication/Foreignization) was calculated within each word formation category. Results were expressed as both raw counts and normalized percentages to illustrate the translator's strategic preferences for different types of Nadsat words.

Lexicon Composition: The proportional representation of each word formation category

within the entire studied Nadsat lexicon was calculated. This analysis determined the relative prevalence of different morphological types (e.g. Core Nadsat vs. Truncation) in the source text, providing crucial context for interpreting the translation strategy frequencies.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Analysis of Nadsat Word Category Distribution

Figure 1 illustrates the categorical distribution of Nadsat vocabulary within *A Clockwork Orange*. The pie chart reveals that Core Nadsat constitutes the overwhelmingly dominant category, accounting for 86% of the lexicon. This finding indicates that Anthony Burgess's primary method for constructing Nadsat was the borrowing and morphological adaptation of Russian lexical roots. This extensive cross-linguistic transfer not only generates a strong effect of defamiliarization but also intentionally creates a hybrid linguistic feel that transcends standard English.

In contrast, the remaining categories-Creative Morphology (3%), Compounding (4%), Babytalk (1%), Rhyming Slang (3%), and Truncation (3%)-each constitute a minor proportion of the total lexicon. These secondary word-formation

strategies play a supplementary role, adding variety and expressive layers to the anti-language. Nevertheless, the fundamental characteristic of Nadsat remains its lexical heterogeneity achieved primarily through Russian-derived loans. In other words, the uniqueness of Nadsat is largely defined by large-scale cross-linguistic borrowing, while other strategies provide occasional rhetorical variation.

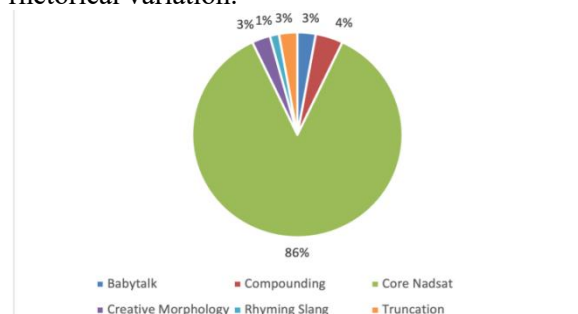


Figure 1. Various Word-Formation Sources in Nadsat

3.2 Analysis of Nadsat Translation Strategy Distribution

Figure 2 presents the distribution of translation strategies applied to Nadsat in Du Dong's Chinese version. The data indicates that Domestication constitutes the predominant strategy (64 instances), whereas Foreignization is employed to a considerably lesser extent. This result suggests that the translator generally prioritizes comprehensibility and reading fluency for the target-language reader, thereby somewhat reducing the defamiliarizing tension inherent in the original text. In other words, the translation demonstrates a clear domestication-oriented approach, with foreignization reserved only as an occasional, localized tactic.

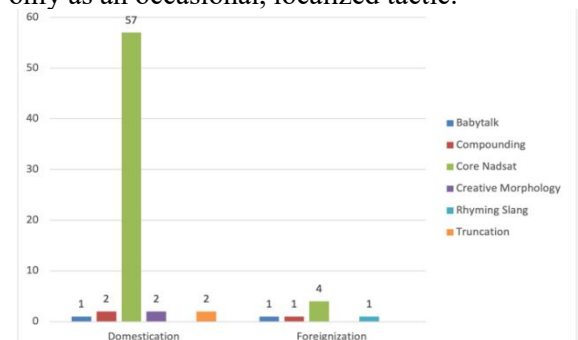


Figure 2. Comparison of the Usage Frequency of Different Translation Strategies Across Nadsat Categories

This tendency is particularly evident in the following case analyses:

(1) Domestication Strategy

(a) I could feel the knives in the old **moloko**

starting to prick, and now I was ready for a bit of twenty-to-one.

Wo Jue De **Niu Nai** Li De Dao Zi Kai Shi Za Wo Le, Xian Zai Wo Da Suan Lai Dian Er Shi Dui Yi De Ba Xi.

In this instance, the original word **moloko** (from Russian for "milk") is directly translated into the common Chinese word "**Niu Nai**". However, within the narrative context of *A Clockwork Orange*, **moloko** does not simply denote a beverage; it refers specifically to milk laced with drugs, carrying strong alienating connotations. Du Dong's translational choice eliminates the sense of strangeness but simultaneously dilutes the implied associations with decadence. Without necessary contextualization or annotation, readers can easily overlook the term's specific cultural significance.

(b) Well, the real **horrorshow** leader knows always when like to give and show generous to his like unders.

Zhen Zheng De **Lao Da** Zhi Dao He Shi Ying Dang Gei Xia Mian Ren Tian Tou, Biao Xian Da Fang.

Here, **horrorshow** originates from the Russian *khorocho* (meaning "good"). The original term possesses a deliberate ambiguity: it phonetically echoes "horror," hinting at underlying, while simultaneously meaning "excellent" within the Nadsat lexicon. The translation renders it as "Zhen Zheng De **Lao Da**", fully assimilating it into a conventional expression. This approach ensures readability but sacrifices the polysemy and linguistic playfulness present in the source text.

(2) Foreignization Strategy

In contrast, the use of foreignization is relatively sporadic, though identifiable in some passages.

(a) Now as I got up from the floor among all the cracking **kots and koshkas** what should I slooshy but the shoom of the old police-auto siren in the distance.

Wo Zhong Yu Cong Di Shang Pa Le Qi Lai, Bai Tuo Le Gui Jiao Gui Nao De **Mao Gong Mao Po**, Ci Ke, Wo Ting Dao Yuan Fang Jing Che De Jing Di Sheng Da Zuo.

The terms "**kots**" and "**koshkas**" ("cat" and "she-cat") retain a trace of foreignization in the translation. The rendered phrase "**Mao Gong Mao Po**" appears unusual compared to standard Chinese descriptions for cats, thus partially preserving the defamiliarizing effect of the original. However, such attempts to maintain strangeness occur infrequently throughout the

translated work.

(b)...adding hair and stiff rods and dirty ballooning slovos out of the dignified rots of these **nagoy** (bare, that is) cheenas and vecks.

...The "Hai Lang Zhe Xie Dong Ti" (also known as "Jiu Shi Guang Shen Zi") is a collection of five-character poems by Nan Nan Nu Nu Ti, featuring the most distinctive Barisai Chu style..

Here, the word **nagoy** is partially retained via a parenthetical explanation "Ye Jiu Shi Guang Shen Zi", preserving some trace of the foreign term. This method partially continues the linguistic 'foreignness' characteristic of Nadsat. Nonetheless, its application is not consistent enough across the text to establish a sustained stylistic pattern.

(3) Inconsistency in Translating Nadsat

Du Dong's translation exhibits a degree of inconsistency in rendering Nadsat terms. That is, the same or similar lexical items are translated differently across various contexts, making it difficult for readers to form a coherent and stable perception of its defamiliarizing effect. This variability reflects the translator's flexible, yet unsystematic, approach to strategy selection, resulting in a lack of stylistic uniformity. Take the word **jeezny** (from Russian *zhizn'*, meaning "life") for instance:

(a) Here was my bed and my stereo, pride of my **jeezny**, and my discs in their cupboard, and banners and flags on the wall.

Wu Li You Chuang, Hai You Yin Xiang, Na Ke Shi Wo De **Ming Gen Zi**, Chu Li Fang Zhao Wo De Chang Pian, Qiang Shang Tie Zhao Ge Zhong Da Xiao Qi Zhi Jing Fan.

Here, **jeezny** is translated as "**Ming Gen Zi**", a highly colloquial and emotionally charged domesticated expression that enhances affinity with the target reader.

Dim can't go on all his **jeezny** being as a little child.

Ding Man Zong Bu Neng **Yi Bei Zi** Dou Guo De Xiang Ge Xiao Pi Hai.

Although both translations are semantically acceptable, such inconsistency may prevent readers from forming a consistent understanding of **jeezny**: it is perceived both as a core emotional value "**Ming Gen Zi**" and a plain temporal concept "**Yi Bei Zi**". As a result, the systematic linguistic effect of Nadsat is partially undermined. A similar inconsistency occurs in the translation of **droogs**:

b) It was round by the Municipal Power Plant that we came across Billyboy and his five

droogs.

Zai Shi Li Fa Dian Chang Fu Jin , Wo Men Zao Yu Le Bi Li Zai He Ta De Wu Ge **Shou Xia**.

Here, **droogs** is translated as "**Shou Xia**", a word that implies social hierarchy and emphasizes a relationship of subordination.

There was me, that is Alex, and my three **droogs**, that is Pete, Georgie, and Dim.

Ben Ren Shi A Li Ke Si, Hai You Wo De San Ge **Ge Men Er**: Bi Te, Qiao Qi, Hai You Ding Man.

In this instance, however, **droogs** is rendered as "**Ge Men Er**", which suggests camaraderie and an equal, friendly relationship. The noticeable semantic and stylistic gap between "**Shou Xia**" and "**Ge Men Er**" not only alters how character relationships are portrayed but also influences the reader's interpretation of the bond between Alex and his companions.

In conclusion, the representation of Nadsat in Du Dong's translation lacks consistency: identical words are translated using different strategies and with varying degrees of domestication depending on the context. While this approach may enhance readability and localization in isolated segments, it ultimately weakens the systematic nature and overall defamiliarizing tension of Nadsat. In other words, Nadsat is broken down into scattered verbal experiments in the Chinese context, rather than being reproduced as a coherent "anti-language."

(4) Creative Translation

In Du Dong's Chinese translation, although domestication strategies generally predominate, certain categories of Nadsat vocabulary—particularly those related to money—are rendered with a greater degree of creativity. This creativity manifests in two ways: first, by introducing localized idiomatic expressions that carry new semantic associations; and second, by preserving the sense of defamiliarization while simultaneously enriching the target text with culturally resonant meanings. Such strategies allow the translation to retain the experimental quality of Nadsat while avoiding excessive opacity for Chinese readers. For instance:

(a) I could do a crasting job soon as I got out and fill the old carmans with **pretty polly**.

Deng Yi Chu Yu, Wo Jiu Xian Tou Shang Ji Shou, Rang Dou Li Zhuang Man **Piao Zi**.

In the source text, **pretty polly** is an English slang term for "money", carrying strong foreignizing overtones. Du Dong translates **pretty polly** as "**Piao Zi**", which not only

conveys the original meaning but also infuses the translation with a distinctly local flavor. This choice produces a parallel effect of defamiliarization within the target culture, aligning well with the streetwise, subcultural tone of Nadsat. Another example demonstrates a similar approach:

(b) "I've been out of the rookers of the **millicents** for a long time now."

"**Tiao Zi** You Hao Xie Ri Zi Mei Peng Guo Wo Le."

Here, *millicents* (derived from "militia," referring to the police) is rendered as "**Tiao Zi**", a colloquial and derogatory Chinese term for police officers. This translation not only conveys Alex's hostility and irreverence toward authority but also reproduces the playful, subversive register of the source text. The choice of "**Tiao Zi**" thus exemplifies how creative translation can simultaneously preserve the antagonistic spirit of Nadsat and adapt it meaningfully for Chinese readers.

(5) Cultural and Reception Factors Behind the Translation Strategies

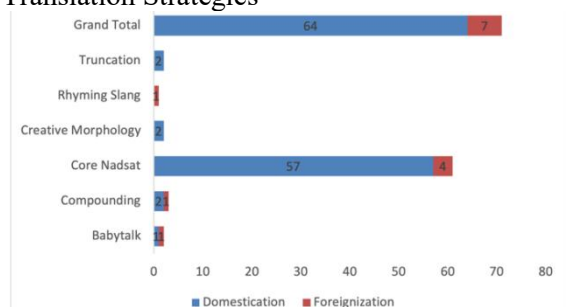


Figure 3. Domestication and Foreignization Strategies in Nadsat Translation

From the perspective of Venuti's theory, "the translator's choices reflect a dynamic negotiation within the cultural context"[4], the statistical data from Figure 3 indicates that domestication overwhelmingly dominates Du Dong's translation, which suggests a strong concern for the target readers' comprehension and reception. Given that Nadsat is largely constructed from Russian borrowings, which are opaque to ordinary Chinese readers, an uncompromisingly foreignized rendering would likely create semantic barriers and diminish both readability and literary circulation. Thus, the translator's frequent use of domestication should not be regarded as a mere tendency toward assimilation, but rather as an adaptive response to the cultural environment of the target language.

It is worth noting, however, that Du Dong did not completely efface the defamiliarizing effect

of the original. In certain high-frequency or thematically central Nadsat terms, he occasionally adopted foreignization or creative adaptation in order to preserve the experimental quality of Burgess's language. For instance, terms relating to money are sometimes rendered with a measure of defamiliarization, thereby partially retaining the "otherness" of the source text. This approach simultaneously respects Burgess's linguistic innovation while accommodating the target audience's interpretive needs.

Nevertheless, from a broader perspective, such limited instances of foreignization remain insufficient to fully reproduce the pervasive defamiliarization of the original Nadsat system. Take high-frequency words such as *moloko*, *gulliver*, and *veck* as examples: had the translator opted for direct transliteration (e.g. "Mo Luo Ke", "Ge Li Fo", "Wei Ke"), supplemented by footnotes or translator's notes, the sense of linguistic estrangement could have been more effectively sustained, while mitigating comprehension difficulties for readers. This practice can be observed in Wang Zhiguang's translation, which consistently uses transliteration to preserve foreignness while providing explanatory notes on etymology and meaning:

(a) These sharps were dressed in the height of fashion too, with purple and green and orange wigs on their gullivers, each one not costing less than three or four weeks of those sharps' wages.

Zhe Xie Xiao Niu Ye Da Ban Ru Shi, Ge Li Fu^① Shang Shi Zi Se, Lv Se, Ju Hong Se Jia Fa, Mei Ran Yi Ci De Hua Fei, Kan Yang Zi Bu Di Yu Ta Men San Si Ge Xing Qi De Gong Zi. [① Nadsat, means head]

(b) You'd lay there after you'd drunk the old *moloko* and then you got the messel that everything all round you was sort of in the past.

He Guo Mo Luo Ke^② Zhi Hou Jiu Tang Dao, Xin Li Chu Xian Huan Xiang, Si Hu Zhou Wei Yi Qie Dou Cheng Le Wang Shi. [② Nadsat, means milk]

Such treatment not only maximizes the preservation of the original defamiliarization but also allows readers to perceive the linguistic heterogeneity of Nadsat while still achieving comprehension.

Overall, Du Dong's translation demonstrates a form of "cultural compromise": Nadsat's linguistic distinctiveness could not be entirely

abandoned, yet the translator had to prioritize the reading experience of the target audience. This balance reveals the dual tension inherent in literary translation: domestication ensures textual accessibility, while foreignization, though limited, maintains elements of defamiliarization. The strategy thus underscores the inherent complexity and limitations of cross-cultural translation.

A systematic examination of Nadsat vocabulary and its rendering in Du Dong's translation suggests that: Nadsat's Russian-based borrowings create a striking defamiliarizing effect in the original; domestication predominates in the Chinese translation, safeguarding comprehensibility but weakening aspects of estrangement; inconsistency and creativity emerge in certain instances, reflecting the translator's situational flexibility.

The interplay between domestication and foreignization ultimately constitutes a cultural negotiation, mediating the tension between "faithfulness to the source" and "service to the reader." Hence, the translation of Nadsat is not merely a matter of linguistic transfer but a site of cultural and reception-oriented negotiation. It demonstrates both the creative potential of literary translation and the applicability, as well as the limitations of Venuti's domestication and foreignization framework in practice. Future research could fruitfully compare different translations to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how experimental linguistic texts are disseminated and reimagined across cultural contexts.

4. Nadsat Translation from a Critical Discourse Analysis Perspective

The quantitative findings presented in Chapter 4 reveal clear patterns in the translation strategies employed for Nadsat. To move beyond a descriptive account and critically interrogate the reasons behind these patterns, why domestication predominates, why inconsistency occurs, and what social forces shape these choices, this study adopts the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA contends that language use is a form of social practice, inherently intertwined with power, ideology, and institutional contexts. By applying CDA's three-dimensional model, text, discursive practice, social practice[5], the following analysis examines how the translation of Nadsat is not merely a neutral linguistic transfer, but a site

where cultural values, publishing norms, and ideological inclinations are negotiated and reproduced. However, Cirne & Efken caution that Fairclough's model often reduces the translator to a "passive agent" in cross-cultural settings, overlooking the latter's active role in reproducing experimental discourse. The anti-language identity of Nadsat is precisely re-configured through the translator's micro-decisions either to retain or to neutralize defamiliarization. [6]

4.1 Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research

At the textual level, corpus statistics and case analysis reveal discernible tendencies in Du Dong's strategies for translating Nadsat.

Firstly, for related terms (e.g. "ultraviolence"), the translator often adopts relatively neutral renderings. While the original term carries an extreme and shocking defamiliarizing effect, its sharpness is somewhat blunted in the translation. This mitigation reduces the impact of the original's violent narrative on the reader, aligning the text more closely with reading conventions in the Chinese context, yet it weakens the visceral shock Burgess constructed through language. Mohammad & Najim, examining Arabic sub-cultural texts, argue that domestication, while improving readability, simultaneously "bleaches" the resistant hue of marginal discourse[7]. This finding offers cross-cultural evidence for explaining why Du Dong neutralizes the most violent Nadsat items.

Secondly, when dealing with Nadsat words derived from Russian roots, the translator demonstrates a preference for domestication over transliteration. For instance, *moloko* ("milk") is sometimes translated semantically rather than phonetically. This choice enhances reader comprehension but simultaneously diminishes the sense of foreignness intrinsic to Nadsat as an "alien language," thereby diluting its rebellious charge and its challenge to the dominant linguistic order.

Regarding narrative tone and style, the original protagonist Alex's voice blends a cynical "black humour" with an intertwining of aesthetic spectacle. The translation does not fully capture this style. The translator frequently employs more formal and standardized expressions, which attenuates the subversive feel of Alex's narration. While this treatment improves readability, it results in a translation that lacks the stylistic

tension of the original.

4.2 Discursive Practice Dimension: Translating Agent and Publishing Context

At the level of discursive practice, the final form of the translation is shaped by the translator, the publisher, and socio-cultural norms. The translator, Du Dong, possesses a background in language and literature, and his translation style emphasizes clarity and accessibility. This leads him to favour domestication to reduce comprehension barriers when confronting Nadsat's defamiliarization. This translational ethos directly influences his choices regarding Nadsat: prioritizing the communication of content over the preservation of form. Furthermore, Yilin Press, as a mainstream publisher, operates under the dual objective of both "popularization and academic integrity." Within this framework, excessive linguistic foreignization and an opaque translational style might be deemed detrimental to broader appeal. A survey of Slavic translations further shows that retaining the phonetic shell of Russian roots (e.g., transliterating *moloko* as "Moloko") constantly signals to readers the "third-language" space and thus consolidates Nadsat's alienating effect[8]. Once Chinese contexts abandon transliteration altogether, this alerting device vanishes. Consequently, at the editorial level, the translation may have undergone a degree of normalization, particularly in scenes involving sexual suggestion, indicating possible conscious or subconscious censorship.

Within the published context of China in 2019, societal acceptance of youth subculture remained cautious. Overly flamboyant rebellious discourse could be perceived as misaligned with mainstream cultural guidance. Therefore, the limited preservation of Nadsat's defamiliarizing qualities in the translation reflects, in some ways, the sensitivity and adjustments made by the translator and publisher to their cultural environment.

4.3 Social Practice Dimension: Cultural Reproduction and Ideology

At the level of social practice, Du Dong's translation constitutes both a reproduction of *A Clockwork Orange* and an adaptation to its reception environment in China. Concerning the core themes of "free will" versus "social control", the translation's relatively softened linguistic treatment tones down the radicalism of Nadsat as

an anti-language. This implies that the original's sharp linguistic resistance is partially neutralized within the Chinese context, making the text more palatable for the mainstream market but, in effect, dissolving the experimental nature of Burgess's language. Liu reminds us that the linguistic play of Nadsat is not a mere aesthetic experiment but a biting index of educational breakdown and familial disintegration[9]. When the translation replaces its coinages with over-domesticated colloquialisms, the novel's critique of "linguistic corruption" and social dysfunction is quietly blunted, reducing the Chinese version to a "readable yet depoliticized" youth-crime narrative.

Within the Chinese context, the translation of Nadsat does not fully replicate its function as a resistant symbol of British youth subculture. Instead, it is largely transformed into a "legible literary experiment". This transformation diminishes the defamiliarizing function of Nadsat, rendering it more a representation of a "literary style" than a genuine symbolic system challenging mainstream culture.

In terms of social impact, Du Dong's translation significantly domesticates Nadsat, making it a text acceptable to mainstream culture. While this approach sacrifices some of the original's subversive power, it ensures the work can circulate within China's publishing context, thereby extending the cross-cultural vitality of *A Clockwork Orange* as a world literary classic.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, Du Dong's translation exhibits distinct characteristics of "cultural compromise" across all three dimensions-textual, discursive practice, and social practice. Through strategies of domestication and mitigation, the translator reduces the linguistic strangeness and impact of the original; constraints from the publishing and socio-cultural environment further reinforce this tendency; ultimately, the translation prioritizes "acceptability" in cross-cultural communication, partially sacrificing the original's "anti-language" and "resistant" qualities. This outcome reveals the complexity of the interplay between language, culture, and ideology in cross-cultural translation.

4.4 Future Research Directions

This thesis has examined only one Chinese translation of *A Clockwork Orange*, which inevitably limits the scope of its conclusions. Future research could expand in three directions. First, comparative studies with other Chinese

versions, such as Wang Zhiguang's translation, or with translations into other languages, would help clarify how cultural and institutional contexts shape translators' choices. Second, reception-oriented research—through surveys, reader reports, or interviews—could reveal how Chinese readers actually perceive Nadsat and whether its function as an estranging anti-language is retained or diminished. Third, the integration of advanced corpus tools, such as collocational analysis and keyword dispersion, could more systematically trace the distribution of defamiliarization in different translations. By combining textual, reception, and corpus-based approaches, future studies may provide a fuller understanding of how experimental sociolects like Nadsat are reconfigured across cultural boundaries, balancing readability, resistance, and cultural negotiation.

5. Conclusion

This study has systematically investigated the translation strategies for Nadsat, the constructed anti-language in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, in Du Dong's 2019 Chinese translation, employing a hybrid approach of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Through quantitative corpus analysis of 72 core Nadsat terms and qualitative textual interpretation, the findings reveal that domestication overwhelmingly dominates (64% of instances), prioritizing readability and cultural assimilation for Chinese readers, while foreignization is applied sparingly to preserve occasional defamiliarization. Core Nadsat, primarily Russian-derived borrowings constituting 86% of the lexicon, is often neutralized through semantic equivalents, diluting the original's subversive and estranging effects. Inconsistencies in rendering recurring terms (e.g., jeezny as "Ming Gen Zi" versus "Yi Bei Zi") further fragment Nadsat's systematic identity, transforming it from a cohesive resistant sociolect into scattered verbal adaptations. However, creative translations in specific domains, such as slang for money or authority (e.g., "Piao Zi" for pretty polly), demonstrate situational ingenuity, injecting localized subcultural flavor without fully alienating readers. From a CDA perspective, these strategies reflect a "cultural compromise" shaped by textual choices, discursive practices (e.g., translator's ethos and publishing norms), and broader social ideologies. Domestication mitigates the

radicalism of Nadsat's themes—youth rebellion, moral ambiguity, and linguistic corruption—aligning the text with mainstream Chinese reception norms, yet at the cost of blunting its critique of social dysfunction. This negotiation highlights the translator's role as an active agent in cross-cultural reproduction, balancing fidelity to Burgess's innovation with accessibility in a context cautious toward subversive discourse.

Theoretically, this research enriches translation studies by applying Venuti's domestication-foreignization framework to fictional constructed languages, revealing its limitations in capturing hybrid strategies like creative adaptation. Practically, it offers translators recommendations: consistent transliteration with annotations (as in Wang Zhiguang's version) could better sustain defamiliarization, while corpus tools enable more rigorous strategy evaluation. For cross-cultural communication, the study underscores how linguistic experiments like Nadsat facilitate dialogue on universal themes of agency and control, fostering deeper intercultural understanding.

Despite its contributions, this analysis is limited to one translation and could be expanded through comparative multilingual studies or reader reception surveys to assess real-world impacts. Future directions include integrating advanced corpus metrics (e.g., collocational networks) and exploring digital adaptations of Nadsat in multimedia formats. By bridging linguistic analysis with socio-cultural critique, this study not only fills a gap in domestic research on *A Clockwork Orange* but also inspires broader inquiries into translating experimental literature, ultimately enhancing the global dissemination of innovative texts.

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