

Halyna Onyshchak,

*Candidate of Philological Sciences,
Associate Professor at the Department of English Philology,
State University "Uzhhorod National University"
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5133-4313>
Uzhhorod, Ukraine*

Kateryna Nykytchenko,

*Candidate of Philological Sciences,
Associate Professor at the Department of Theory and Practice of
Translation from the English Language,
Kyiv National Linguistic University
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4938-5290>
Kyiv, Ukraine*

Reproducing the stylistics of a psychological thriller in the Ukrainian translation of Colleen Hoover's novel "Verity"

Відтворення стилістики психологічного трилеру в українському перекладі роману Коллін Гувер «Verity»

Summary. *The current paper explores the translation of stylistic devices in psychological thrillers, focusing on the Ukrainian rendering of Colleen Hoover's novel «Verity». Psychological thrillers rely heavily on suspense, emotional tension and internal character conflict to engage the reader. These effects in the novel under consideration are achieved through a variety of stylistic means such as metaphors, similes, personification, and syntactic constructions like repetition, rhetorical questions, parallel constructions, nominative sentences and aposiopesis. The study highlights the translator's task not only to transfer meaning but also to preserve psychological depth, implicit information and emotional intensity. Using methods of continuous sampling, contextual analysis and comparative analysis, the research examines how key stylistic means function in both the source and target language texts. While many devices such as anaphora and parallel constructions were successfully adapted, others underwent shifts in tone and imagery. Similarly, emotionally intense metaphors and personifications were sometimes softened in translation. The findings demonstrate that grammatical and lexical translation transformations impact the suspense-building mechanisms of the target language text, influencing the reader's emotional perception and cognitive engagement. Moreover, the analysis reveals that stylistic shifts often stem from the translator's attempts to align the narrative with cultural and linguistic norms of the target audience. The study concludes that while the translator achieves a high degree of equivalence, subtle*

linguistic and cultural differences inevitably affect the preservation of stylistic nuances in the target language. Ultimately, the research emphasizes the delicate balance between fidelity to the source text and adaptation to the target culture in literary translation.

Key words: *stylistic devices, psychological thriller, grammatical and lexical translation transformations, target language, equivalence, linguistic and cultural differences.*

Анотація. У статті досліджується відтворення стилістичних засобів у психологічних трилерах, зокрема в українському перекладі роману Коллін Гувер «Веріті». Психологічні трилери значною мірою базуються на саспенсі, емоційному напруженні та внутрішньому конфлікті персонажів для утримання уваги читача. У досліджуваному романі ці ефекти досягаються за допомогою різноманітних стилістичних засобів, таких як метафори, порівняння, персоніфікації, а також синтаксичних конструкцій, зокрема повторів, риторичних запитань, паралельних конструкцій, номінативних речень і апозіопези. Основним завданням перекладача є не лише передати зміст, але й зберегти психологічну глибину, імпліцитну інформацію та емоційну насиченість першоджерела. Використовуючи методи суцільної вибірки, контекстуального та порівняльного аналізу, дослідження розглядає функціонування ключових стилістичних засобів у текстах оригіналу й перекладу. Хоча багато стилістичних прийомів, як-от анафора чи паралельні конструкції, були вдало адаптовані в перекладі, деякі зазнали змін у тональності та образності. Емоційно насичені метафори й персоніфікації були дещо пом'якшені під час перекладу. Результати дослідження засвідчують, що граматичні та лексичні трансформації при перекладі впливають на механізми створення напруги в тексті перекладу, формуючи емоційне сприйняття та когнітивну залученість читача. Крім того, аналіз виявив, що стилістичні зміни часто зумовлені прагненням перекладача узгодити розповідь із культурними та мовними нормами цільової аудиторії. Отже, хоча перекладач досяг високого рівня еквівалентності, мовні та культурні відмінності неминуче вплинули на збереження стилістичних нюансів у перекладі. Дослідження підкреслює баланс між точністю оригінального тексту та адаптацією до культури цільової мови у художньому перекладі.

Ключові слова: *стилістичні засоби, психологічний трилер, граматичні та лексичні перекладацькі трансформації, мова перекладу, еквівалентність, мовні й культурні відмінності.*

Introduction. In contemporary society, psychological thrillers have gained increasing popularity among readers, captivating them with intricate and unpredictable narratives, complex characters and an ever-present sense of suspense. The genre immerses its audience in the atmosphere filled with psychological tension, constantly driving their curiosity to uncover hidden truths. However, the process of translating psychological thrillers extends beyond the mere linguistic transfer of the text. It requires a profound understanding of the genre's stylistic

intricacies and sensitivity to preserving the same degree of suspense and psychological depth in the target language. Furthermore, it is important to regard implicit information, since it «facilitates understanding of the text structure's essential elements, which help penetrate into its basic concepts» [2, p. 252].

The primary objective of a psychological thriller is to evoke emotional tension in readers, inducing feelings of unease, anxiety, anticipation and uncertainty. Central to achieving this effect is the concept of «suspense», which serves as both a literary device and a key narrative technique. The suspense effect is crafted through the strategic use of various stylistic elements, including metaphors, allusions, symbolism, repetition, comparisons, epithets and other stylistic expressive means. These linguistic and stylistic choices not only shape the novel's atmosphere but also play a crucial role in sustaining the reader's psychological engagement.

The proposed study examines the peculiarities of reproducing the stylistics of a psychological thriller in the Ukrainian translation of Colleen Hoover's novel «Verity». The research aims to contribute to the broader field of literary translation studies by analyzing the extent to which the translation retains the original work's stylistic features, suspense-building techniques and psychological intensity. It highlights the challenges translators face when rendering psychological thrillers and explores strategies that effectively preserve their unique stylistic and emotional impact in the target language.

Methods and material. Several scientific methods were used to fulfill the research objectives. Firstly, continuous sampling was utilized to compile a corpus of linguistic material in both the source and target languages, which was subsequently subjected to a comparative analysis. The latter enabled us to disclose similarities and differences in the reproduction of the stylistics in the Ukrainian translation of C. Hoover's psychological thriller «Verity». Secondly, contextual analysis proved indispensable for examining the linguocultural features of the source and target language material. Lastly, the descriptive method played a pivotal role in systematically observing the data and formulating generalizations based on the findings.

Results and discussion. Psychological thrillers are distinguished by extended emotionally charged dialogues and deep character self-analysis. Additionally, the authors frequently employ stylistic devices and expressive means to saturate the text with deep inner thoughts and emotions. The characters in psychological thrillers «are typically complex and layered, with motivations that are not always clear or easy to understand» [1, p. 76]. The former are often depicted as highly knowledgeable individuals with refined perspectives, experiencing «a range of

emotions, including fear, paranoia, anxiety, or suspicion, which can lead to unpredictable behaviour» [1, p. 76]. Consequently, stylistic devices play a crucial role in generating emotional tension. In her novel «Verity», C. Hoover utilizes a range of linguistic and stylistic techniques to establish an immersive psychological atmosphere that influences the reader's consciousness, evokes deep-seated fears and unveils hidden mysteries.

A simile serves as a stylistic device which conveys a resemblance between seemingly unrelated elements from different areas, enhancing the unexpectedness and vividness of the expression within the text. The greater the contrast is between them, the more profound the impact is on the reader. For instance, the sentence «*I might have been obsessed with him, but a woman knows if she wants to keep a man forever, she has to act like she could get over him in a day*» [3, p. 76] exemplifies the use of comparison to heighten the psychological complexity of relationships. Thus, the simile functions as a stylistic device that juxtaposes two seemingly contradictory ideas – deep emotional attachment («*obsession*») and the appearance of emotional detachment («*getting over him in a day*»). This contrast intensifies the unexpectedness of the statement, reinforcing the paradoxical nature of human emotions and creating a striking effect on the reader. It challenges conventional expectations about love and commitment, making the expression more vivid and thought-provoking.

In the translated version, the calqued phrase «*поводиться так, наче*» closely mirrors the function of «*act like*», maintaining the idea of simulated detachment. However, «*I might have been obsessed with him*» is interpreted as «*Хоч я й запала на нього*» [4, p. 92], which conveys strong attraction but does not fully capture the obsessive connotation present in the original, leaning more toward deep interest, slightly softening the emotional intensity.

In the following example, the sound of a head bursting open was compared to the popping of a champagne cork: «*I closed my eyes before his head went under the tire, but I heard it pop like the cork of a champagne bottle*» [3, p. 1]. To render the sentence into Ukrainian, the translator employs both lexical and grammatical translation transformations. Thus, the outer partitioning was used to adapt the sense of the original to the target language readers. The source language phrase «*like the cork of a champagne bottle*» is expanded in the translation: «*Я встигла заплющити очі, щоб не бачити, як його голова пірнає під колесо, однак дуже виразно почула, як вона тріснула. З таким звуком корок вилітає з пляшки шампанського*» [4, p. 5]. This expansion emphasizes the vividness of the comparison, offering a more dynamic and immediate sense of the sound. The original comparison is preserved,

yet its description is enriched, potentially increasing the intensity of the sensory experience for the target language reader.

Moreover, to enhance the emotional impact of anticipation in psychological thrillers, metaphors are frequently employed. They often convey both explicit and implicit meanings, serving to exaggerate the events or characters' emotional state. For instance, the metaphor in the following sentence vividly conveys how deeply ingrained and pervasive the main character's paranoia became over time: «*That paranoia bled into my adulthood, and by then, I was set in my ways*» [3, p. 16]. The second part of the sentence, «*I was set in my ways*», suggests that the paranoia became a fixed part of Verity's personality, influencing attitudes and behaviors. It conveys a powerful image of internal struggle and lasting psychological impact.

While the idea of gradual, uncontrolled spread is maintained in the translated version, the intensity and emotional impact of the verb *bled* is slightly diminished: «*Ця параноя протекла в мою зрілість, підтягнувши за собою цілий набір комплексів*» [4, p. 16]. In the source language text, it suggests something more painful and invasive, while the chosen equivalent («*протекла*») in Ukrainian feels less intense. The description («*підтягнувши за собою цілий набір комплексів*») shifts the focus to the psychological baggage paranoia brought, providing more explicit information than the English original. In other words, while the translation effectively conveys the invasive nature of paranoia, it still lacks the intensity of the original metaphor, focusing on a more explicit depiction of the psychological burdens carried by the main character.

To convey mystery and psychological complexity without explicit description, C. Hoover employs antonomasia by referring to the woman as the iconic painting by Leonardo da Vinci instead of directly describing her expression or demeanor: «*For a moment, I can't escape her gaze. She's the Mona Lisa, following me as I move across the room*» [3, p. 83]. The Mona Lisa is universally recognized for her enigmatic expression, piercing gaze and the illusion of eyes that follow viewers. The reference to the Mona Lisa in the mentioned sentence suggests that the woman in question embodies mystery and perhaps she is unreadable like the famous portrait.

While the English sentence directly assigns the woman the qualities of the Mona Lisa, the Ukrainian translation softens this with «*немовби*», suggesting a resemblance rather than an identity: «*Якийсь час мені не вдається уникнути її пильного погляду. Вона немовби Мона Ліза, стежить за всіма моїми рухами, де б я не була в цьому кабінеті*» [4, p. 100]. The translation captures the essence of the original text, maintaining the sense of mystery and psychological depth, yet the translator

made slight adjustments that reflect the linguistic and cultural sensibilities of the Ukrainian language.

Personification also plays a significant role in establishing the emotionally tense atmosphere characteristic of psychological thrillers. The former intensifies the reader's emotional engagement and heightens the sense of internal conflict by attributing human qualities to emotions. For instance, the sentence «*I can feel the embarrassment creeping up my neck*» [3, p. 67] personifies embarrassment, portraying it as a tangible, invasive force. This choice of imagery evokes a sense of unease, anticipation and anxiety, allowing readers to experience the character's discomfort viscerally.

The Ukrainian translation «Я ніяковію» [4, p. 83] depicts a straightforward expression of the character's state but lacks the metaphorical depth of the original. It eliminates the personification and instead delivers emotion directly, which reduces the emotional impact. Furthermore, the translation focuses more on the resulting emotion rather than the process, omitting the gradual progression captured in «*creeping up my neck*». However, it remains an appropriate and contextually justified choice due to linguostylistic considerations since it evokes a sudden, unavoidable discomfort in target language readers, aligning with the unsettling atmosphere typical of psychological thrillers.

In her novel «Verity», C. Hoover masterfully utilizes anticlimax in a very effective way, building emotional tension and the significance of the situation incrementally: «*I was about to have a breakdown. I could feel it. Or at least a meltdown. A temper tantrum. A hissy fit. Any of them would have been inappropriate, though*» [3, p. 136]. The author employs it by arranging the utterance so that each subsequent description of emotional collapse becomes progressively less serious.

The translation preserves the use of anticlimax, though with some differences in terms of tone and emotional intensity: «Я була на межі нервового зриву. Я відчувала це. Або на межі депресії. Спалаху гніву. Вибуху істерики. Хоча всі ці прояви були б зараз недоречні» [4, p. 167]. The use of more intense emotional descriptors in Ukrainian creates a heavier atmosphere, which affects how the target audience experiences the character's emotional progression. As a result, there is a more dramatic portrayal of emotional collapse, potentially leading the audience to focus more on the character's internal conflict rather than the emotional release that is present in the original English version.

In psychological thrillers, syntactic stylistic devices also play a crucial role in building suspense and heightening the emotional intensity of the narrative. For instance, repetition amplifies key emotions or ideas, creating a sense of obsession or even escalating panic: «*I needed to please him.*

I needed to be what made him smile, breathe, wake up in the mornings» [3, p. 65]. For a Ukrainian-speaking audience, the translation effectively reproduces the stylistic function of anaphoras by maintaining the obsessive tone of the original: «Я відчувала необхідність задовольняти його бажання. Я відчувала необхідність бути такою, яка змушувала його усміхатись, дихати і прокидатись щоранку» [4, p. 80].

Sometimes repeated phrases and words underline a character's growing anxiety, contributing to a feeling of compassion: «*«I'm so sorry,» I whisper. And I am. Sorry about his daughter. Sorry for being curious»* [3, p. 8]. The translation does not directly replicate the repetition found in the original. Instead, it disperses the sense of regret and guilt through a more detailed and explanatory approach: «*Я шепочу: Пробачте, я не знала. Прийміть мої співчуття. Я кажу це абсолютно щиро. Мені справді шкода, що з його донею трапилося таке нещастя. І мені дуже ніяково за свою безтактність»* [4, p. 12]. In other words, it shifts the tone from self-reproachful to empathetic, slightly altering the mood of the scene.

The consecutive contact repetition mimics the rhythm of disjointed thoughts, emphasizing a sense of helplessness and disbelief: «*Oh, my God. I cover my mouth with unsteady fingers. No, no, no!*» [3, p. 67]. The character's mind is racing, struggling to process the situation, and the repetition conveys the overwhelming nature of her distress. The translation captures the character's mental rejection of a horrifying situation: «*О божє мій! Я прикриваю рот тремтячою рукою. Ні, ні, ні!*» [4, p. 82]. Thus, the repetition preserved in the translation draws readers deeper into the unsettling atmosphere of the psychological thriller.

The aposiopesis coupled with anaphora in the following passage mimics the character's mental disarray and paranoia, reinforcing the suspenseful mood: «*“Please ... please ...” I say out loud. Though I don't know why or to whom I'm saying it»* [3, p. 162]. The Ukrainian translation mirrors this structure precisely: «*“Будь ласка ... будь ласка ...” – промовляю вголос, хоча до кого я звертаюсь – я не знаю»* [4, p. 199]. The repetition of «*будь ласка*» in Ukrainian carries the same emotional weight as «*please*» in English, resonating with readers as a desperate plea. The stylistic device remains effective without cultural distortion, ensuring natural translation while preserving the intensity of the scene.

Parallel constructions often serve to mirror the dualities within a character's psyche or the contrasting forces at play in the novel under analysis: «*I did all the easy parts of mothering and Jeremy and the nanny did all the hard parts»* [3, p. 190]. They create tension through balance and symmetry, yet subtly hinting at an underlying conflict. The translator effectively replicates the parallelism by maintaining a similar structure:

«Я виконувала всі прості обов'язки матері, а Джеремі з нянькою робили всю важку роботу» [4, p. 233]. While achieving the same symmetrical effect in the translation, the parallel construction also highlights the emotional distance and passive acceptance of the situation.

Moreover, rhetorical questions in C. Hoover's «Verity» evoke inner turmoil and self-doubt, as the characters grapple with existential uncertainties: «*Did I see her? Was it a hallucination because of stress? Did I feel guilty for being with her husband?*» [3, p. 187], «*Was it my destiny from the beginning to suffer such a tragic end?*» [3, p. 57]. These questions deepen the psychological complexity and pull the audience deeper into the web of suspense, maintaining an air of uncertainty and tension throughout the narrative.

The rhetorical questions are rendered into Ukrainian using interrogative constructions, mirroring the syntactic structure of the original: «*А я точно її бачила? Може, це була галюцинація від стресу? Чи це я почуваюсь винною за те, що була з її чоловіком?*» [4, p. 230], «*Чи мені від самого початку судилося страждати від такого трагічного фіналу?*» [4, p. 69]. The translated questions are not aimed at eliciting answers but rather express the narrator's uncertainty, guilt and psychological confusion.

The extended nominative sentence «*Death by routine*» [3, p. 1] in «Verity» by C. Hoover plays a striking role in establishing the tone characteristic of a psychological thriller. Though syntactically condensed, the phrase is semantically and emotionally dense. Its elliptical structure immediately draws the reader into the protagonist's mental state. The Ukrainian translation retains the central semantic message, yet introduces a significantly different syntactic and stylistic structure that subtly alters its effect on the readership: «*Людину вбила звичка*» [4, p. 5]. The former includes an explicit subject («*людину*») and a finite verb («*вбила*»), converting it into a complete syntactic unit. While this increases grammatical clarity, it removes the elliptical feel of the original, which was more reflective of internal, unarticulated thoughts.

In the sentence «*I'm not sure it was healthy – how codependent I was. Still am, really*» [3, p. 74], the ellipsis is realized through the omission of expected elaboration, which plays a key role in generating suspense and psychological tension. The construction is substituted in the target text by the concise and emotionally loaded phrase «*Я й досі залежна*» [4, p. 90]. The translation demonstrates a high degree of stylistic and emotional equivalence, preserving both the ellipsis-driven suspense and the character's psychological state. Together, syntactic stylistic devices enhance the psychological depth and immersive nature of thrillers, keeping readers on edge and invested in the evolving mystery.

Conclusions. The analysis demonstrated that C. Hoover's psychological thriller «Verity» is marked by intense emotional plot, intricate character psychology and the strategic use of stylistic devices to heighten suspense and emotional responses in readers. These devices serve as a means through which complex emotional states such as paranoia, obsession, fear and guilt are vividly revealed. While many of them are successfully preserved and appropriately adapted in the target language, subtle shifts in tone, intensity and imagery reproduction often occur. The translator's linguistic choices, although sometimes constrained by the target language's specificity, play a crucial role in maintaining the psychological ambiance and stylistic integrity of the source language text. Ultimately, the success of the translation lies in the translator's ability to balance fidelity to the source with sensitivity to the target audience's cultural and emotional expectations.

Future research could expand its scope by conducting comparative translation analyses across C. Hoover's multiple novels, exploring how linguistic and stylistic choices shape the reception and interpretation of psychological thrillers in diverse cultures.

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