

LINGUASTIC MEANS OF GENDER REPRESENTATION IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S NOVELS AND TRANSLATION FEATURES

МОВНІ ЗАСОБИ ВИРАЖЕННЯ ГЕНДЕРУ В РОМАНАХ МАРГАРЕТ ЕТВУД ТА ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ЇХ ПЕРЕКЛАДУ

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The relevance of the study is determined by the growing interest in gender linguistics and translation studies, as well as the need to investigate the rendering of gender-marked vocabulary in Ukrainian translations of the English-language fiction. Margaret Atwood's novels are of particular interest due to their extensive use of linguistic means for representing gender identity, social inequality, and power relations.

The aim of the article is to analyse the features of rendering gender-marked lexis in the Ukrainian translations of Margaret Atwood's novel *"The Handmaid's Tale"* and to identify the main translation strategies used to preserve gender-related meanings.

The methodological framework includes descriptive, comparative, contextual, lexical-semantic, and translation analysis. The study examines lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and figurative means of expressing gender marking and analyses the ways they are rendered in Ukrainian translations.

The findings reveal that translators mainly employ equivalent translation, lexical and grammatical substitutions, concretization, generalization, modulation, descriptive translation, and syntactic transformations. While figurative and syntactic structures are generally rendered successfully, gender-marked lexical units with strong ideological and cultural connotations are often partially neutralised, resulting in a weaker expression of gender meanings in the target text.

It is concluded that the adequate rendering of gender-marked lexis requires careful consideration of linguistic, cultural, and stylistic factors in order to preserve the author's individual style and the socio-critical message of the original works.

Key words: gender-marked lexis, literary translation, gender linguistics, translation transformations, Margaret Atwood, English-language fiction, Ukrainian translation, individual style.

Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростанням інтересу до гендерної лінгвістики та перекладознавства, а також необхідністю вивчення особливостей відтворення гендерно маркованої лексики в українських перекладах англomовної художньої літератури. Особливий науковий інтерес становлять романи Маргарет Етвуд, у яких широко використовуються мовні засоби репрезентації гендерної ідентичності, соціальної нерівності та владних відносин.

Метою статті є дослідження особливостей відтворення гендерно маркованої лексики в українських перекладах романів Маргарет Етвуд *«Оповідь служниці»*, а також визначення основних перекладацьких стратегій, спрямованих на збереження гендерно обумовлених смислів.

Методологічну основу дослідження становлять описовий, зіставний, контекстуальний, лексико-семантичний та перекладознавчий методи аналізу. У роботі досліджено лексичні, граматичні, синтаксичні та стилістично-образні засоби вираження гендерної маркованості, а також проаналізовано способи їх відтворення в українських перекладах.

Результати дослідження засвідчили, що перекладачі переважно застосовують еквівалентний переклад, лексичні й граматичні заміни, конкретизацію, генералізацію, модуляцію, описовий переклад і синтаксичні трансформації. Встановлено, що образні та синтаксичні засоби здебільшого успішно відтворюються в перекладі, тоді як гендерно марковані лексичні одиниці з виразним ідеологічним і культурним навантаженням нерідко зазнають часткової нейтралізації, що призводить до послаблення експресії гендерних смислів у тексті перекладу.

У статті зроблено висновок, що відтворення гендерно маркованої лексики потребує комплексного врахування мовних, культурних та стилістичних чинників, що забезпечує збереження індивідуального стилю автора та соціально-критичного змісту оригінальних творів.

Ключові слова: гендерно маркована лексика, художній переклад, гендерна лінгвістика, перекладацькі трансформації, Маргарет Етвуд, англomовна художня література, український переклад, індивідуальний стиль.

Problem statement. Contemporary linguistics and translation studies have witnessed a growing interest in the investigation of gender representation

in literary discourse. Gender-marked lexis serves as an important means of expressing social roles, cultural values, and ideological perspectives; there-

fore, its adequate rendering remains one of the key challenges of literary translation. This issue is particularly relevant when translating works in which gender constitutes a central element of the author's artistic vision. Margaret Atwood's novels are characterised by a profound exploration of gender identity, power relations, discrimination, and social inequality. Gender-marked linguistic units perform not only nominative but also stylistic, pragmatic, and ideological functions, contributing to the construction of the author's worldview. Consequently, their rendering in Ukrainian requires carefully selected translation strategies capable of preserving both the semantic content and the expressive potential of the original text. The complexity of translating gender-marked lexis is determined by structural differences between the English and Ukrainian languages in expressing gender, as well as by the influence of cultural context on the interpretation of linguistic units. Therefore, the analysis of translation solutions employed in Ukrainian translations of Margaret Atwood's novels is important for the further development of translation studies and gender linguistics.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications.

The issues of gender representation in language and literary discourse have attracted considerable attention from both Ukrainian and international scholars. The theoretical foundations of gender linguistics have been developed in the works of O. Kikinezhdi [3], S. Pavlychko [10], L. Stavytska [11], and other researchers who examine gender as a sociocultural phenomenon and analyse its linguistic representation. Considerable attention has also been devoted to literary translation, translation transformations, and the preservation of the stylistic and pragmatic features of literary texts. Margaret Atwood's works have been widely studied from the perspectives of individual style, dystopian poetics, intertextuality, and feminist criticism [7]. However, the peculiarities of rendering gender-marked lexis in the Ukrainian translations of her novels remain insufficiently explored. This research gap highlights the need for a comprehensive analysis of the translation strategies employed to preserve gender meanings and the stylistic characteristics of the original texts.

Unresolved Issues. Despite the growing body of research devoted to gender linguistics, literary discourse, and translation studies, the problem of rendering gender-marked lexis in literary translation remains insufficiently explored. In particular, the translation strategies used to preserve gender semantics, stylistic features, and ideological implications in the Ukrainian translations of *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Testaments*, and *Cat's Eye* have not yet been

comprehensively analysed [2]. This article seeks to address this research gap.

Purpose of the Article. The aim of the article is to investigate the peculiarities of rendering gender-marked lexis in the Ukrainian translations of Margaret Atwood's novels *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Testaments*, and *Cat's Eye*. The objectives of the study are to identify the principal lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and figurative means of expressing gender marking in the source texts, to analyse the translation strategies and transformations employed in their Ukrainian translations, and to evaluate their effectiveness in preserving gender semantics, the author's individual style, and the pragmatic potential of the original works.

Presentation of the Main Material. Margaret Atwood's literary works occupy a significant place in contemporary English-language literature due to their profound exploration of gender identity, power relations, and social inequality. Her novels combine dystopian fiction with psychological realism and are distinguished by a highly individual linguistic style that serves not only aesthetic but also ideological purposes. In Atwood's prose, language functions as an instrument of constructing social hierarchy, expressing gender asymmetry, and representing mechanisms of control over individual identity. Consequently, the rendering of these stylistic and semantic features constitutes one of the major challenges of literary translation [13]. One of the defining characteristics of Atwood's idiolect is the creation of a unique linguistic system that reflects the ideological organisation of the fictional society. This feature is particularly evident in *The Handmaid's Tale*, where language becomes a mechanism of political domination and social regulation. The Republic of Gilead is represented through a rigid hierarchical structure reflected in the names assigned to different social groups, including *Handmaids*, *Wives*, *Aunts*, *Marthas*, *Econowives*, *Unwomen*, *Commanders*, *Guardians*, *Eyes*, and *Angels*. These lexical units perform not merely a nominative function but also convey ideological meanings by emphasising gender inequality and institutionalised female subordination [14]. Another distinctive feature of Atwood's individual style is the system of naming the Handmaids. Their names are created by combining the preposition *of* with the name of the Commander, resulting in forms such as *Offred* and *Ofglen*. These occasional formations symbolise the complete loss of personal identity and the reduction of women to the status of male property. Such lexical innovations contribute to the construction of the dystopian linguistic space and represent an important element of the author's stylistic

tic system. Their rendering in Ukrainian requires translators to preserve both the semantic content and the symbolic implications of these names [14]. Atwood also actively employs occasionalisms, neologisms, and compound lexical formations that reinforce the artificiality of the totalitarian discourse. One of the most illustrative examples is the lexical innovation *Particicution*, created by blending the words *participation* and *execution*. This neologism reflects both the ideological manipulation of language and the ritualisation of violence in Gilead. Similar lexical formations demonstrate the author's ability to compress complex social meanings into individual lexical units, thereby increasing the expressive and pragmatic potential of the narrative [14]. Intertextuality constitutes another essential component of Atwood's idiolect. Numerous biblical allusions permeate the novels and function as an ideological framework of the dystopian state. The very name *Gilead* refers to the biblical region traditionally associated with fertility, prosperity, and divine blessing. In Atwood's novel, however, this positive symbolism is deliberately inverted, as Gilead becomes a totalitarian society characterised by ecological devastation, political oppression, and the systematic suppression of individual freedom. This contrast creates a powerful ironic effect and strengthens the ideological message of the novel [14]. Additional biblical references are represented through proper names such as *Jezebel's*, *Milk and Honey*, *Lilies of the Field*, and *All Flesh*. In the Ukrainian translation, these allusions are generally preserved through direct translation accompanied by explanatory footnotes indicating their biblical origins. This translation strategy allows readers to recognise the cultural and religious associations embedded in the original text while maintaining the stylistic integrity of the narrative [14]. The linguistic organisation of Atwood's novels demonstrates that gender is realised not only as a thematic category but also as a structural component of the literary text. Gender-marked lexical units perform descriptive, symbolic, pragmatic, and ideological functions simultaneously, shaping readers' perception of characters and social relations. Therefore, an adequate translation of these elements requires not only lexical equivalence but also careful preservation of their stylistic and cultural significance [13; 14]. The analysis of Atwood's idiolect confirms that her linguistic choices are inseparable from the representation of gender relations and mechanisms of power. The interaction of lexical innovations, biblical symbolism, metaphorical language, and ideologically marked vocabulary forms a coherent artistic system in which language itself becomes one of the

principal instruments of social control. Consequently, preserving these stylistic characteristics represents one of the fundamental objectives of the Ukrainian translation of Atwood's novels. The analysis of Margaret Atwood's novels demonstrates that gender marking is realised through a complex interaction of lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and stylistic devices. These linguistic means contribute to the construction of gender identity and reflect the unequal distribution of power within the fictional societies portrayed in *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Testaments*, and *Cat's Eye*. Rather than serving merely as descriptive elements, gender-marked linguistic units become powerful instruments of ideological influence and social control [12]. At the lexical level, gender marking is primarily expressed through words denoting social status, bodily experience, and interpersonal relations. Many lexical items acquire additional ideological meanings within the dystopian context. For example, the sentence "*We still had our bodies. That was our fantasy*" illustrates how the noun *bodies* symbolises the last remaining aspect of female autonomy. In the totalitarian society of Gilead, women are deprived of their legal rights, personal identity, and freedom of choice; therefore, the body becomes the only perceived possession. At the same time, the noun *fantasy* emphasises the illusory nature of this autonomy, suggesting that even bodily ownership exists only in imagination [12, p. 2]. Another example is the euphemistic expression "*For ladies in reduced circumstances*" [12, p. 3]. Although the phrase appears neutral, it conceals social inequality and gender discrimination behind a polite linguistic form. Such euphemisms represent one of the characteristic features of Atwood's language, illustrating how ideology manipulates reality through carefully selected lexical choices. Grammatical structures also play a significant role in representing gender asymmetry. Atwood frequently employs constructions expressing prohibition, restriction, and obligation to emphasise the systematic control exercised over women. For instance, the construction "*to keep us from seeing, but also from being seen*" [12, p. 4] demonstrates how the grammatical pattern "keep + object + from + V-ing" conveys both physical and psychological confinement. The parallel infinitive structures reinforce the idea that women are simultaneously prevented from observing the world and from becoming visible within it. Similarly, the impersonal sentence "*Nothing takes place in the bed but sleep*" [12, p. 21] eliminates the acting subject and creates an impression of absolute regulation. The absence of an explicit agent reflects the depersonalisation characteristic of totalitarian discourse, where individual identity becomes

insignificant in comparison with institutional authority. Gender marking is further reinforced through syntactic organisation. Atwood frequently employs parallel constructions, repetition, and antithesis to represent the asymmetrical distribution of social roles. A particularly illustrative example is the statement: *"Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at."* [59, p. 7]. The repetitive parallel structure emphasises the opposition between activity and passivity. Men occupy the position of active subjects, whereas women are reduced to objects of observation. The syntactic symmetry of the sentence paradoxically highlights the profound inequality embedded in the social system. A similar mechanism can be observed in *Cat's Eye*, where the simple sentence *"The girls hold hands; the boys don't"* [12] reflects the internalisation of gender stereotypes from early childhood. Although grammatically uncomplicated, the statement reveals how behavioural norms associated with masculinity and femininity are presented as natural despite being socially constructed. Stylistic devices further intensify the ideological dimension of gender representation. Metaphors, symbolism, and evaluative epithets frequently depict women as objects rather than autonomous individuals. For example, the metaphor *"She's a flag on a hilltop"* [12, p. 23] transforms the female character into a symbol of political victory and ideological power, depriving her of individuality. Likewise, the expression *"My body seems outdated"* [12, p. 54] conveys profound psychological alienation by presenting the body as an obsolete object detached from personal identity. The conducted analysis demonstrates that lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and stylistic means operate simultaneously to construct a coherent representation of gender inequality. Together, they create a linguistic system in which gender is represented not merely as a biological characteristic but as a socially and ideologically determined category. Consequently, preserving these interconnected linguistic features becomes one of the principal challenges for translators seeking to reproduce Margaret Atwood's artistic style and ideological message in Ukrainian [13; 12; 14]. The analysis of the Ukrainian translations of Margaret Atwood's novels demonstrates that the rendering of gender-marked lexis requires translators to balance semantic accuracy, stylistic equivalence, and cultural adaptation. Since gender-marked linguistic units often combine denotative meaning with ideological, pragmatic, and emotional connotations, their translation involves not only linguistic but also intercultural interpretation. The study reveals that Ukrainian translators employ both equivalent and transformational

translation strategies to preserve the author's intention while adapting the text to the grammatical and stylistic norms of the target language [1; 60]. At the lexical level, one of the most common tendencies is the partial neutralisation of gender-related meanings. This can be observed in the translation of the sentence *"We still had our bodies. That was our fantasy"* [12, p. 2]. In the Ukrainian version, the phrase is rendered as *«Ми досі мали тіла»*, while the lexical component *fantasy* is omitted. Although the translation accurately conveys the literal meaning of the sentence, the omission reduces its emotional intensity and weakens the idea that even bodily autonomy exists only as an illusion. As a result, the pragmatic effect of the original text becomes less explicit. A similar tendency can be identified in the translation of the euphemistic expression *"For ladies in reduced circumstances"* [12, p. 3], rendered as *«леді у скрутних обставинах»*. The semantic content is preserved; however, the euphemistic character of the English expression is partially lost. Consequently, the social criticism encoded in the original lexical choice becomes less noticeable for Ukrainian readers.

The analysis also demonstrates that grammatical transformations are frequently employed to preserve meaning while adapting English syntactic structures to Ukrainian grammatical conventions. For example, the infinitive construction *"to keep us from seeing, but also from being seen"* [12, p. 4] is translated as *«щоб ми не бачили і щоб нас не бачили»*. Although the grammatical form changes from an infinitive phrase to two subordinate clauses, the semantic representation of surveillance and restriction remains intact. This example illustrates that structural transformations do not necessarily result in semantic loss but often increase the naturalness of the target text.

Another example is the impersonal construction *"Nothing takes place in the bed but sleep"* [12, p. 21], translated as *«У цьому ліжку не відбувається нічого, крім сну»*. The translator successfully preserves the impersonal structure and the atmosphere of regulation characteristic of the dystopian discourse. The sentence continues to emphasise the absence of personal agency and the strict control imposed upon female characters. Figurative language presents another significant challenge in translation. Metaphors and symbolic expressions are essential components of Atwood's idiolect because they communicate ideological meanings beyond their literal interpretation. The metaphor *"She's a flag on a hilltop"* [12, p. 23] is translated as *«Вона – прапор на вершині пагорба»*. In this case, the symbolic meaning is preserved, allowing Ukrainian readers to per-

ceive the woman as a representation of political and ideological domination rather than an autonomous individual. Likewise, the sentence "*My body seems outdated*" [12, p. 54] is translated as «*Власне тіло виглядає застарілим*». The lexical equivalent accurately reproduces the metaphorical meaning of alienation from one's own body. Nevertheless, the emotional distance between the narrator and her physical identity becomes slightly less pronounced than in the English original due to subtle differences in linguistic expression. The analysis further indicates that syntactic structures expressing gender asymmetry are reproduced with a high degree of equivalence. For instance, the statement "*Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at*" [12, p. 7] retains its parallel structure and antithetical organisation in the Ukrainian translation. This enables the translator to preserve both the stylistic rhythm and the ideological opposition between male agency and female objectification. Overall, the findings demonstrate that Ukrainian translators generally succeed in reproducing the principal semantic and stylistic features of gender-marked language in Margaret Atwood's novels. However, lexical units carrying a high degree of ideological or pragmatic meaning occasionally undergo partial neutralisation or semantic simplification. By contrast, metaphors, syntactic parallelism, and symbolic imagery are reproduced more consistently, allowing the translations to retain the dystopian atmosphere, feminist perspective, and social criticism characteristic of Atwood's artistic style [13; 12; 14].

Conclusion. The present study has examined the peculiarities of reproducing gender-marked lexis in the Ukrainian translations of Margaret Atwood's novels *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Testaments*, and *Cat's Eye*. The analysis has demonstrated that gender-marked linguistic units constitute an essential component of Atwood's individual style, performing not only nominative but also stylistic, pragmatic, and ideological functions. They contribute to the representation of gender identity, power relations, social

hierarchy, and mechanisms of ideological control within the fictional worlds created by the author.

The research has established that gender marking in Atwood's novels is realised through lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and figurative means, which together form a coherent system of gender representation. The analysis of the Ukrainian translations has shown that translators employ a wide range of translation strategies, including equivalent translation, lexical and grammatical substitution, modulation, concretisation, generalisation, descriptive translation, and syntactic transformation [6]. While figurative language and syntactic structures are generally reproduced with a high degree of equivalence, lexical units carrying strong ideological and cultural connotations are sometimes partially neutralised or semantically simplified. Such transformations may reduce the expressive force of the original and weaken the representation of gender-related meanings [6]. The findings confirm that the adequate rendering of gender-marked lexis requires not only linguistic accuracy but also careful consideration of cultural, stylistic, and pragmatic factors. Preserving the author's individual style and the socio-critical message of the original text remains one of the principal tasks of literary translation. The study also demonstrates that translation decisions significantly influence readers' perception of gender relations and ideological meanings embedded in literary discourse. The practical significance of the research lies in the possibility of applying its findings in the fields of literary translation, gender linguistics, translation studies, and the teaching of translation. The proposed analysis may contribute to improving translation strategies for rendering gender-marked language in English-language fiction. Prospects for further research include a comparative analysis of gender-marked language in the Ukrainian translations of works by other contemporary English-language authors, the investigation of inclusive and gender-neutral language in literary translation, and the study of translators' strategies for reproducing feminist discourse in different linguistic and cultural contexts.

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