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WHEN THE FOREST 'SPEAKS' A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: ECOLINGUISTIC CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING GREEN DISCOURSE (MICHAEL CHRISTIE'S "GREENWOOD")

Bohovyk O. A.

Ukrainian State University of Science and Technologies

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4315-2154>

oksana.a.bogovik@gmail.com

Bezrukov A. V.

Ukrainian State University of Science and Technologies

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5084-6969>

dronnyy@gmail.com



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Exploring a work of fiction from an ecolinguistic perspective involves examining how language and narrative techniques depict environmental issues, emphasising the complex relationship between humans and nature and highlighting the interconnections among language, literature and the environment. In Michael Christie's ecofiction novel "Greenwood" (2019), trees function not only as a natural backdrop but also as a central narrative element, symbolising historical memory, intergenerational connections and an ethical challenge to anthropocentrism. Consequently, the concept of 'green' space acquires philosophical, religious and existential dimensions within the novel. Through his chosen narrative strategies, Christie underscores the importance of preserving the natural environment despite the degradation caused by human activity, prompting readers to reflect on the urgent need for new approaches to environmental sustainability. As there is no professional Ukrainian translation of "Greenwood", the authors of the article have translated selected excerpts from the original text. This translation integrates recent developments in ecolinguistics and ecocritical studies, making it a valuable contribution to the field. Such an approach reveals the artistic and translational potential of environmental literature in general and of ecofiction in particular.

Keywords: *agency, ecological consciousness, translation strategy, ecocentrism, green narrative, wood, ecocriticism.*

Боговик О. А., Безруков А. В. Коли ліс "говорить" іншою мовою: еколінгвістичні виклики у перекладі зеленого дискурсу (роман Майкла Крісті "Грінвуд").

Дослідження художніх творів у еколінгвістичній площині покликане увиразнити взаємозв'язок між мовою, літературою і довкіллям, аналізуючи, як тексти зображують екологічні проблеми, взаємодію людини та природи, а також формують екологічні цінності. В екофікшн-романі Майкла Крісті "Грінвуд" ("Greenwood", 2019) дерева постають не лише природним тлом, а й повноцінним наративним суб'єктом, репрезентуючи історичну пам'ять, зв'язок поколінь та етичний протест проти антропоцентризму. Саме тому "зелений" простір набуває у романі філософського, релігійного й екзистенційного вимірів. Через вибрані наративні стратегії Крісті підкреслює важливість збереження природного середовища попри деградацію, зумовлену антропогенним впливом, заохочуючи читачів замислитися про нагальну потребу змін щодо підходів до екологічної відповідальності. За відсутності опублікованого професійного українськомовного перекладу роману "Грінвуд" елементом наукової новизни визначається переклад проаналізованих уривків з оригінального тексту, виконаний авторами статті з урахуванням найновіших надбань еколінгвістичних і екокритичних студій. Такий підхід оприявнює художній та перекладознавчий потенціал "зеленої" літератури взагалі й екофікшн зокрема.

Ключові слова: *агентивність, екологічна свідомість, перекладацька стратегія, екоцентризм, зелений дискурс, ліс, екокритика.*

Introduction.

Ecolinguistic research in fiction emphasises the interaction between language and culture, revealing how linguistic and semantic structures shape ecological identity. It explores the linguistic features of literary works while considering their environmental and cultural contexts, as "the experience of nature is culturally mediated" (Feder, 2014, p. 228). This approach emphasises the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration between linguistics and ecology to gain a deeper understanding of literary texts, the stylistic means by which authors express their intentions and cultural codes, and the development of environmental consciousness. Through this lens, a distinctive way of writing about nature emerges, enabling nature authors to "interpret and verify their observations through aesthetic language" (Stewart, 1995, p. xix). Furthermore, a promising direction in modern interdisciplinary studies is the ecolinguistic examination of literary translations. This area of research focuses on the interplay of linguistic and ecological aspects and how translation may preserve or transform these elements, including stylistic features and semantic nuances of the original text. It also aims to

identify interlinguistic and intercultural differences that influence the perception of green literature.

Theoretical background.

The development of ecolinguistics is most commonly linked to the work of Einar Haugen, who proposed using an ecological metaphor for language analysis about 50 years ago. He defined the ecology of language as "the study of interactions between any given language and its environment" (Haugen, 1972, p. 325). Haugen understood the "environment" of a language to refer to the society that uses it, including social and psychological contexts, but not the physical environment. He drew an analogy between the ecology of language and natural ecology, where organisms (such as animals and plants) interact with their surroundings. This perspective aligns with Arne Næss's deep ecology (Næss, 2008), which emphasises the intrinsic value of nature beyond a utilitarian approach. In the realm of literature, ecocriticism (Garrard, 2023) addresses similar themes by analysing how texts construct environmental consciousness, particularly through metaphors and symbolism. It is also important that "public discussion of global environmental problems [...] made obvious the need for ecocritical discourse to develop new ways of addressing global interconnectedness [...]" (Buell et al., 2011, p. 421). Consequently, works of green literature have become key platforms for discussing contemporary environmental issues.

Researchers observe that we are living in a time when traditional narratives are being 'destroyed' by modern challenges, particularly the coronavirus pandemic and the increasing negative impact of human actions on the environment and biodiversity. In this context, Arran Stibbe argues that there has never been a more opportune moment to create new stories. He sees the link between ecology and language in "how humans treat each other and the natural world is influenced by our thoughts, concepts, ideas, ideologies and worldviews, and these in turn are shaped through language" (Stibbe, 2021, p. 2). Michael Christie's *Greenwood* (2019) serves as a striking example of how contemporary fiction addresses environmental concerns through nuanced literary discourse and ecological language. In this novel, nature is portrayed as having its own agency, enabling it to act independently; the forest is treated as the subject of action rather than the object. It is noteworthy that modern ecofiction can serve as a valuable source of "empirical" data for examining the changes associated with an anthropocentric attitude toward nature. While Peter Barry points out that ecocritics reject "the

notion that everything is socially and/or linguistically constructed" (Barry, 2017, p. 252), ecofiction literature, with its social and linguistic potential, can help to shift this perspective.

The use of the concepts described above as a methodological approach to analysing the novel aims to show how "Greenwood" redefines and clarifies humanity's role within the ecosystem. Specifically, the portrayal of the forest as a 'language archive' aligns with Næss's idea of biocentric equality. Christie creates a complex network of relationships between the natural world and humanity, presenting trees not only as physical entities but also as deeply symbolic beings. The text develops its ecological-linguistic theme by portraying the forest poetically, giving it human qualities, using it as a metaphor, and linking it to the memories of the characters. For example, in the opening scene set in 2038, the trees are depicted as a sacred space: "They come for the trees. To smell their needles. To caress their bark. To be regenerated in the humbling loom of their shadows. To stand mutely in their leafy churches and pray to their thousand-year-old souls" (Christie, 2021, p. 3) – *Вони приходять до дерев. Вдихають запах хвої. Проводять рукою по шорсткій корі. Відновлюються у смиренному переплетінні тіней. Мовчки стоять в зелених соборах і моляться тисячолітнім душам дерев.* The author endows the forest with communicative ability, in particular, through kinaesthetic perception: *to caress their bark, to smell their needles, to be regenerated.* Thus, contact with nature is not only an aesthetic experience, but also a restorative, ethical, and spiritual one. This image reinforces the thesis of ecocritics about the forest as a space of transcendent experience, where the trees symbolise not only nature, but also a moral compass that indicates the sphere of human ethical orientations. Thus, the image of a tree becomes a symbolic marker of moral choice.

Particularly revealing is the scene where tens of thousands of books rise into the sky along with a dust storm, metaphorically identifying a cultural and ecological catastrophe: "[...] she hears the roof removed with a tremendous screech of pulled nails and an almighty sucking *whoosh*. Then comes the uncanny sound [...]: ten thousand books drawn up into the sky, all at once" (Christie, 2021, p. 321) – *[...] вона чує, як із жахливим скреготом вирваних цвяхів і всепоглинаючим зойком вітру зриває дах. А потім моторошний звук [...]: десятки тисяч книжок одночасно здіймаються в небо.* In this excerpt, the boundary between the natural and cultural landscape is blurred, and a book and a tree become interchangeable symbols of the preservation of knowledge and

suffering. Therefore, in translation, one should be attentive to the ecolinguistic structure of the text, since language plays a key role in "shaping, nurturing, influencing or destroying relationships between people, living conditions and the environment" (Yuniawan et al., 2017, p.292). Analysed from this perspective, "Greenwood" once again proves the viability of the ecolinguistic concept, demonstrating that every verbal 'reference' to the trees is part of an ideological field as a protest against a consumerist attitude towards nature.

In the novel, the ecosystem gains a voice through wood, a living material that continues to 'breathe'. Timothy Clark emphasises that environmental ethics should move away from anthropocentrism and recognise that humans are not the sole bearers of meaning and value in shaping the narrative (Clark, 2015, p. 47). While efforts to avoid narrative anthropocentrism are important for maintaining objectivity and a diversity of approaches in environmental discussions, they Attempts to move beyond narrative anthropocentrism, often advocated by ecocritics, may not provide an effective framework to articulate the climate crisis (Archer, 2024, p. 22). Within this context, the linguistic representation of the trees also becomes significant. For example, in Christie's novel, the protagonist observes: "'Most people believe that wood dies when it's cut,' [...]. 'But it doesn't. A wooden house is a living thing. Moving moisture through its capillaries. Breathing and twisting, expanding and contracting. Like a body'" (Christie, 2021, p. 325) – *"Більшість людей вважає, що дерево помирає, коли його зрубано [...]. Але це не так. Дерев'яна оселя – це організм, що живе своїм ритмом. Його капілярами тече волога. Він дихає, тремтить, пульсує – то напружується, то розслаблюється. Як тіло"*. The metaphorical comparison of the human body to a tree underscores the tree's function as an unindexed text of memory – a structure in which time accumulates and solidifies, like the concentric rings within a trunk. Consequently, the novel's green discourse can be interpreted through the tree metaphor, which functions as an archive of human history and collective memory. This concept aligns with Richard Mabey's perspective on plants, viewing them not only as decorative elements but as living, dynamic beings that influence our environment and our perception of time (Mabey, 2016, pp. 3–4).

Such images often tend to represent the forest as a living entity that interprets and reshapes history. It 'speaks' its own language and requires a sensitive translator who can truly listen to its message. In this context, the novel's green discourse portrays the forest not merely as a physical setting but as a vital custodian of history, culture and language. Translating this green discourse

presents ecolinguistic challenges primarily due to the cultural and contextual differences in how various languages conceptualise nature, ecology and environmental values. These challenges arise from the subtleties of meaning, metaphor and cultural symbolism associated with green themes, including sustainable development, nature conservation and ecological identity. Translators should be mindful of the potential loss or distortion of environmental meaning, emotional depth, and ideological messages embedded in the original text. The translated work must retain the intended green ethos.

Results and discussions.

The style of Christie's "Greenwood" establishes a distinct green poetics, where nature serves not merely as a backdrop but as a fully developed character with its own voice, rhythm, and inner life. The language used to describe the forest is poetic, featuring rich metaphors and a rhythmic structure that immerses the reader in a 'wooden temple', where words become like roots and branches.

From the very beginning of the novel, Christie establishes a key stylistic dominant, depicting the forest as a sacred space, which is revealed in the rhythmic blocks of descriptions of the trees: "Each year of its life, this tree has expanded its bark and built a new ring of cambium to encase the ring of growth that came the year before it. That's twelve hundred layers of heartwood, enough to thrust the tree's needled crown into the clouds" (Christie, 2021, p. 9) – *Рік за роком дерево пульсувало життям, укладаючи навколо себе кільце нової плоті, щоб захистити попередній слід часу – кільце минулого року. І от вже тисяча двісті рівнів пам'яті тягнуть його крону крізь простір до хмар*. The author employs ring repetition, which emphasises the poetic image of the tree and highlights the concept of cyclicity. The syntactic rhythm of the text mirrors the gradual growth of the tree, seamlessly integrating the poetic dimension into the narrative's structure.

In the episode of the falling tree, which became the 'finger of God', Christie reaches a culminating concentration of poetic expression: "[...] the great tree begins to crash faster and faster through the branches of its neighbours. It hits the earth with the force of a comet strike, and the ground rumbles beneath her boots and she [Jake] nearly loses her footing. A blast of air flings the cap from her head and swirls her hair into her eyes. After the tree comes to its final rest, the forest rains needles and branches for a whole minute" (Christie, 2021, p. 9) – *[...] велетенське дерево набирає швидкість, з тріском розтинаючи гілки сусідніх*

дерев. Воно вдаряється об землю із силою комети, ґрунт аж здригається під її ногами, і вона [Джейк] ледве утримується на місці. Ударна хвиля зриває з голови капелюх, а розкуйовджене волосся заліплює очі. Навіть коли дерево вже завмирає, ліс ще довго сипле дощем із хвої і уламків кори та гілок. The author does not merely describe the fall of the tree but aestheticises it. The use of the hyperbole *with the force of a comet strike*, the onomatopoeic words *blast*, *crash* та *shudder*, and the metaphor *the forest rains* impart to the scene a sense of cosmic drama.

In the novel, Christie vividly illustrates how linguistic structures represent nature as a passive entity, subordinated to institutional power. The following sentence can be analysed to uncover how essential elements of green discourse are encoded linguistically: "She'd cut down the remaining four trees and left them where they fell, because the Cathedral staff will surely limb and burn them the second they're discovered, mainly to protect the Pilgrims from being traumatized by the sight" (Christie, 2021, p. 486) – *Вона зрубала решту чотирьох дерев і залишила лежати там, де вони впали, адже працівники Собору неодмінно обрубують гілки й спалять їх, щойно виявлять, переважно аби уберегти прочан від психічної травми, яку може завдати цей краєвид*. The excerpt combines technical vocabulary (*limb* – to cut off branches) with psychologically charged terms (*traumatized*), creating a contrast between the mechanical act of destroying trees and its emotional consequences for people. A complex sentence with a causal relationship emphasises the logic of actions: the destruction of trees is presented as a 'necessity' for protecting humans, while the trees are depicted as objects (*left them where they fell, they're discovered*), reflecting an anthropocentric approach. Institutional terminology (*Cathedral staff, Pilgrims*) highlights the conflict between the religious institution and nature. Predicates of destruction (*cut down, limb, burn*) construct an image of systematic violence against nature. The term *traumatized* ironically underscores that human discomfort at witnessing 'dead' trees is considered more significant than the fact of their destruction. The passage contains the opposition human vs nature, with the latter serving merely as a backdrop for human drama.

Christie masterfully intertwines scientific terminology with emotionally resonant description, shaping a nuanced green discourse in which nature is simultaneously an object of inquiry and a wellspring of existential reliance: "She's dedicated her life to the study of the world's great trees: the eucalyptus, the banyan, the English oak, the baobab, the Lebanese cedar, the yakusugi of Japan,

the sequoia of northern California, the Amazonian mahogany – but it is the coastal Douglas fir of the Pacific Northwest that remains dearest to her. And since the day she first arrived at the Greenwood Arboreal Cathedral, she's believed that she couldn't possibly survive without its forest, or the island that – at least for now – sustains it" (Christie, 2021, p. 486) – *Вона присвятила життя вивченню найвеличніших дерев світу: евкаліпта, баньяна, англійського дуба, баобаба, ліванського кедра, якусуґі з Японії, секвої північної Каліфорнії, амазонського махагону, але ялиця Дугласа з тихоокеанського північного заходу залишається їй найулюбленішою. І з того дня, як вперше потрапила до Грінвудського деревного собору, вона переконана, що не змогла б існувати без цього лісу чи острова, які, бодай зараз, дарували їй опору.* The enumeration of tree species evokes an encyclopaedic thoroughness, emphasising the breadth and depth of the research, while the use of proper names imbues the text with a global scope, underscoring the boundlessness of nature. The phrase *couldn't possibly survive* elevates the forest from a mere object to a condition of life, highlighting the anthropocentric paradox: even amid verdant surroundings, humans remain the focal point, projecting their own needs onto the natural world. This example demonstrates how the linguistic texture of green discourse intertwines scientific precision with emotional resonance, while still operating within an anthropocentric framework. The translation negotiates a balance between retaining original terminology and ensuring clarity, reflecting one of ecolinguistics' central challenges: can language transcend the human perspective to convey the agency inherent in nature itself?

It can be noted that the stylistic palette of the novel is richly varied: from the hyperbolic depictions of a tree's fall to the delicate poetics of the forest as a living organism. Christie's language functions as an aesthetic medium, capable not only of conveying an ecological message but also of immersing the reader emotionally in the world of nature, where 'trees have a soul' and words serve as roots. This approach presents significant challenges for translation into Ukrainian, as it requires not only lexical precision but also the preservation of the emotional and rhythmic potential of English.

The forest across cultures: Ukrainian translation and the ecolinguistic imagination. In Christie's novel, the forest emerges not merely as a natural environment but as a carrier of cultural codes, a metaphysical backdrop, and a repository of memory and ethical challenge. Translating this multilayered

discourse entails a range of challenges: from lexical idiosyncrasies to deeply culturally embedded ecolinguistic symbols. The author constructs images of trees, the forest, and ecological catastrophe by appealing to ecological ethics, biblical motifs, and linguistic play that draws on existential metaphor.

A particularly striking example is the metaphor of the forest as a cathedral, a motif that weaves like a red thread throughout the entire novel, for instance: "They come here to the Greenwood Arboreal Cathedral to ingest this outrageous lie [...]" (Christie, 2021, p. 3) – *Вони приходять сюди до Грінвудського деревного собору, щоб поглинати цю обурливу брехню [...]*. The translation manages to convey both the ecological and sacred resonances, though alternatives such as *arboreal cathedral* or *forest temple* could also be considered. At the same time, the irony in the phrase *to ingest this outrageous lie* exposes the commercialisation of spiritual experience. Accordingly, the translation must preserve this duality, capturing both the sense of transcendence and the critical undertone. In a further example, we encounter the personification of the trees: "Every tree is held up by its own history, the very bones of its ancestors [...]" (Christie, 2021, p. 484) – *Кожне дерево тримається на своїй історії, на кістках своїх предків [...]*. The trees appear as archives of time and as cultural agents, demanding a translation that carefully preserves both the rhythm and the imagery of the original.

Culturally specific realities should be considered separately: "She'll protest, blockade, obstruct. She'll teach Liam to be strong, to live symbiotically with nature. He'll learn to be a warrior. A defender of the Earth. Together they'll consume as few resources as possible, and work toward repairing a tiny portion of the harm that Harris has inflicted upon the forests of the Earth" (Christie, 2021, p. 422) – *Вона протестуватиме, саботуватиме, чинитиме опір. Вона навчить Ліама бути сильним, жити у симбіозі з природою. Він стане воїном. Захисником Землі. Разом вони споживатимуть якомога менше ресурсів і працюватимуть над відшкодуванням принаймні крихітної частини, що Гарріс заподіяв лісам планети*. The excerpt weaves together activist rhetoric and ecofeminist motifs, crafting a linguistic texture in which the struggle for nature intertwines with personal ethics and modes of consumption. The chain of verbs *protest*, *blockade*, *obstruct* conveys an aggressive yet deliberate energy of resistance, portraying the woman as a warrior-activist in stark contrast to the passive depiction of nature as a victim. The phrase *live symbiotically with nature* fuses biological terminology with an ethical imperative, signalling an effort to reconceive human/nature relations not as domination but as interdependence. The

words *warrior* and *defender of the Earth* introduce militaristic language into ecological discourse, highlighting the confrontational dimension of environmental struggle while simultaneously romanticising the human role as "saviour," a framing that may attract critique from anti-anthropocentric perspectives. Similarly, the phrase *consume as few resources as possible* employs economic vocabulary to foreground asceticism as a mode of ecological consciousness, reflecting a discourse of personal responsibility central to contemporary green movements. The notion of reparation introduces ecological redress, challenging the conventional rhetoric of conservation or protection. Here, nature is not an object for passive oversight but a subject harmed and in need of active 'healing'. This passage demonstrates how the linguistic 'fabric' of green discourse intertwines multiple ideological patterns: anthropocentric heroism vs biocentric symbiosis, individual asceticism vs collective reparation. Reconstructing this discourse in translation therefore demands not only linguistic precision but also a critical engagement with the frameworks that invisibly tether humans to longstanding paradigms of domination.

Equally challenging is the translation of episodes in which the forest is associated with memory: "All the rings of inner heartwood are essentially dead, just lignin-reinforced cellulose built up year after year, stacked layer upon layer, through droughts and storms, diseases and stresses, everything that the tree has lived through preserved and recorded within its own body" (Christie, 2021, p. 484) – *Усі кільця внутрішньої серцевини по суті мертві – лише целюлоза, укріплена лігніном, що нарощувалась рік за роком, шар за шаром, крізь посухи й бурі, хвороби й стреси. Все, що дерево пережило, збережене й закарбоване в його власному тілі.* This passage conveys both dendrological knowledge and philosophical reflections on time. In translation, it is crucial to maintain scientific accuracy alongside poetic resonance, as the tree functions as a metaphor for the text, and its structure mirrors the translator's task – to preserve time within the word. Such imagery, challenging for literal translation, demands the retention of metaphorical richness and ecological intent. The excerpt exemplifies the dendrocentric structure of the novel, in which the tree operates as a 'living text'. The idea of the tree as 'history' – *recorded within its very body* – takes on symbolic significance, with each tree serving as a metaphor for memory and experience. In this way, the translator of the green discourse in "Greenwood" functions as a cultural mediator, negotiating between divergent ecological

perceptions, the poetic representation of trees, and the challenges of translation, where each word accrues new layers of meaning.

The author employs the tree as a metaphorical 'living archive' to highlight the parallels between biological processes in nature and human life: "Because even after you cut a piece of wood and lay it straight, it lives on after you're finished, soaking up moisture, twisting, bowing, and warping into unintended forms. Our lives are no different" (Christie, 2021, p. 428) – *Навіть обрубана і вирівняна деревина продовжує жити: вбирає вологу, вигинається і гнеться, бунтує проти форми. Немов віддзеркалюючи наше життя*. The stylistic organisation of the text relies on personification, through which the tree emerges as an active agent, and the verb forms that describe it replicate patterns of typical human behaviour. This creates an ecocentric image in which nature possesses its own agency. The phrase *Our lives are no different* turns ecological discourse into an existential reflection, with the tree embodying human experience. Here, *bowing and warping* serve as metaphors for life's challenges, while moisture represents external influences shaping the individual. Key aspects of the green discourse in this example can be identified as follows: the rejection of anthropocentrism, in which the tree is understood not as mere material but as an autonomous organism responding to external conditions; ecological uncertainty, since *unintended forms* disrupt the myth of human mastery over nature; and existential connection, where the parallel with human life underscores that humans are part of biological cycles rather than their rulers. This sentence exemplifies how the linguistic structure of green discourse merges scientific descriptions of biological processes with philosophical reflection.

In the following excerpt, the contrast between the organic beauty of nature and technological intrusion is emphasised, with language serving as a tool to critique anthropocentric notions of progress: "She remembers the excitement of first seeing this landscape after arriving from Delhi – this convergence of mountains and trees and ocean that charged her with such energy she couldn't sleep for days. But so many of its great trees are gone now, replaced with climate-controlled towers of glass and steel" (Christie, 2021, p. 494) – *Вона пам'ятає те хвилювання, коли вперше побачила цей краєвид після прибуття з Делі – це злиття гір, дерев та океану наповнило такою енергією, що вона не могла заснути. Проте тепер багато з тих величних дерев зникли, їх замінили клімат-контрольованими вежами зі скла та сталі*. Among the key stylistic elements of the analysed excerpt are the following: nostalgia – the words

excitement, energy, couldn't sleep for days convey the intensity of memories where nature appears as a source of vital force, creating an eco-emotional connection which contradicts the cold technological reality – *towers of glass and steel*. The imagery of disappearance in the phrase *its great trees are gone now* evokes the loss of biodiversity, yet, in the absence of direct language of destruction, the focus shifts to a 'quiet' tragedy, heightening the dramatic effect. The use of technological terminology as an antithesis, exemplified by the term *climate-controlled towers*, both ironises human attempts to replicate natural conditions and underscores the simultaneous destruction of those very conditions.

The combination of glass and steel symbolises the soullessness and fragility of the artificial environment. The spatial dynamics – the convergence of mountains, trees and ocean – create an image of a harmonious landscape, which is disrupted by the towers, vertical symbols of power. Nature is presented as a source of life energy, while technology functions as its antithesis. The notion of climate control reveals a paradox, as humanity attempts to replicate natural conditions by simultaneously destroying their origins. This passage illustrates how green discourse can simultaneously convey personal emotions and address global ecological concerns. In translation, the contrast between the organic and the technological is preserved through lexical choices (*majestic* vs *climate-controlled*) and syntactic structures (parallelism: mountains, trees and ocean ↔ glass and steel). The reconstruction of green discourse demands not only linguistic accuracy but also a deep understanding of the cultural and ethical contexts that shape human relationships with nature.

Christie combines scientific vocabulary with figurative comparisons, transforming trees from passive elements of the landscape into active ecological agents: "‘These trees act like huge air filters,’ she carries on. ‘Their needles suck up dust, hydrocarbons, and other toxic particles, and breathe out pure oxygen, rich with phytoncides, the chemicals that have been found to drop our blood pressure and slow our heart rates. Just one of these mature firs can generate the daily oxygen required by four adult humans’" (Christie, 2021, p. 6) – *"Ці дерева діють як гігантські повітряні фільтри, – продовжує вона. – Їхня хвоя всмоктує пил, вуглеводні та інші токсичні частинки, а видихає чистий кисень, багатий на фітонциди – хімічні речовини, які, як доведено, знижують артеріальний тиск і уповільнюють серцебиття. Лише одна така доросла ялиця може виробляти денну норму кисню для чотирьох дорослих людей"*. The example employs personification, as the trees are described through the verbs

to act, to suck up, to breathe out, which grants them the features of a living organism with functions analogous to technical devices and human respiration. This underscores the agency of nature, a central component of the green discourse in the novel. The combination of technical terms (*hydrocarbons, phytoncides, blood pressure*) with accessible explanations makes the text understandable for a broad audience without losing academic accuracy. Statistics here are used as an argument, where the specific example *the daily oxygen required by four adult humans* transforms an abstract ecological benefit into a tangible, quantitative fact, enhancing the persuasiveness of the message. The metaphor *air filters* contrasts natural processes with artificial technologies, hinting that trees are more perfect than human-made devices. This passage demonstrates how green discourse can seamlessly integrate scientific accuracy with emotional resonance. The translation preserves this duality, but a question arises regarding the choice of the phrase *доросла ялиця* instead of *зріла*, which consciously brings the tree closer to an anthropomorphic image and may draw criticism from relevant scientists, but it is precisely this that makes the text more persuasive for a mass audience. Thus, the foreign-language reconstruction of green discourse in translation is a constant balance between accuracy, accessibility, and the ethics of describing nature.

"Greenwood" blurs the boundary between humanity's architectural heritage and the organic structures of nature. Religious buildings appear not as testaments to civilisational progress, but as continuations of natural forms, functioning as symbols rooted in biomorphic memory: "Back when air travel didn't command a year's salary, Jake once visited Rome on a learning exchange and saw only curving limbs and ropy trunks in its columns and porticoes. The leafy dome of the mosque; the upward soaring spires of the abbey; the ribbed vault of the cathedral – which faith's sacred structures weren't designed with trees as inspiration?" (Christie, 2021, p. 6) – *Тоді, коли авіаквиток ще не коштував річної зарплати, Джейк побував у Римі за студентською програмою й бачив у його колонах і портиках лише вигнуті гілки та вузлуваті стовбури. Вкритий листям купол мечеті, шпилі абатства, що спрямовуються угору, ребристі склепіння собору – які святині якого віросповідання не були натхненні деревами?* The phrase *curving limbs and ropy trunks* lends corporeality to the architecture, transforming stone into living matter, and thus, the sacred into the natural. The tripartite structure *the leafy dome of the mosque; the upward soaring spires of the abbey; the ribbed vault of the cathedral* not only rhythmically emphasises the unity of world religions but also stylistically reproduces the multi-layered nature of

perception. The rhetorical question functions not merely as an assessment of similarity, but as a realisation that architecture, like faith, grows out of the natural environment. Here, the tree appears as the archetype of sacred space, which unites different cultures and traditions. In translation, it is important to preserve the lexical metaphoricity – for example, *leafy dome* should be rendered not as *зелений купол*, but as *вкритий листям*, evoking the sense of a canopy – as well as the rhythm and the gradual build-up of the image: from tree to temple, from form to faith. This example embodies the philosophy of the novel, in which nature is not merely a backdrop for the action, but a source of cultural codes: architectural, religious and emotional. Translating this episode's green discourse requires exceptional sensitivity to its multi-layered metaphorical structure, which intertwines the sacred with the organic.

The text documents instances of combining an eco-historical perspective with the rhetoric of spiritual reverence. Defining the forest as a *Cathedral* is not merely metaphorical, but constitutes a symbolic transference of sacred space from architectural form to living matter. Such a designation endows the trees with the status of a temple, older and deeper than any human construct: "After lunch Jake escorts the Pilgrims to the tour's grand finale, the largest stand on Greenwood Island, where she hits them with a poetic bit she wrote and memorized years back: 'Many of the Cathedral's trees are over twelve hundred years old. That's older than our families, older than most of our names. Older than the current forms of our governments, even older than some of our myths and ideologies'" (Christie, 2021, p. 8) – *Після обіду Джейк веде Пілігримів до фінального пункту екскурсії – найбільшого гаю на острові Грінвуд, де виголошує поетичний уривок, написаний і вивчений багато років тому: "Багатьом деревам у Соборі понад тисячу двісті років. Вони старші за наші родини, за більшість наших імен. Старші за сучасні форми урядувань, навіть за деякі з наших міфів та ідеологій"*. The list *older than our families, older than most of our names, older than the current forms of our governments, even older than some of our myths and ideologies* is built on the principle of intensification: from the personal (families) to the social (government) and to the cultural (myths, ideologies). Such gradation emphasises the temporality of human structures while simultaneously highlighting the enduring nature of the forest. Here, the forest appears as a keeper of memory, surpassing human generations, political systems and cultural paradigms. The poetic tone of Jake's speech performs a ritual function, imparting a religious subtext to the tour: climax, revelation, transcendent address. In this context, the

Pilgrims become not merely tourists, but seekers of meaning, discovering a new form of spirituality precisely in the forest. Translation demands particular attention to rhythm and gradation: the repetitions of *older than* must convey solemnity, akin to a mantra or liturgy. The concept of ideologies at the end of the list serves a critical role, emphasising that human beliefs are the most transient of all that is named. This passage thus demonstrates that "Greenwood" functions not only as a novel about trees, but as an aesthetic-philosophical project that decentralises humanity in history, portraying nature as something that surpasses, teaches and blesses.

The biomorphic logic of thought in the novel is vividly illustrated in episodes where humans and trees are juxtaposed on a bodily level: "A tree's bark performs the same function our skin does: it keeps intruders out and nutrients in – so any weakening of the bark does not bode well for the tree's long-term survival" (Christie, 2021, p. 10) – *Кора дерева виконує ту саму функцію, що й наша шкіра: не впускає шкідливі і зберігає поживні речовини – тож будь-яке ослаблення кори не обіцяє дереву тривалого життя*. Christie compares a tree's bark to human skin, which performs a protective and vital function. This identification forms a central idea of the novel: nature is a body that, like the human body, deserves care, protection and respect. The phrase *keeps intruders out and nutrients in* mirrors the functions of the immune system, reinforcing the perception of the tree as a living organism rather than mere material. This is not merely a metaphor, but a mode of ecocentric worldview, in which the tree acquires bodily subjectivity. The key phrase *does not bode well for the tree's long-term survival* evokes anxiety, as the weakening of the bark is interpreted as a symptom of a global crisis. Here, the bark symbolises the fragility of ecosystems, and the vulnerability of the tree reflects human vulnerability in a world affected by climate change, the most vivid and alarming sign of anthropogenic influence on the planet's biosphere (Dederichs, 2023, pp. 9–10). In translation, it is crucial to preserve both scientific accuracy and the stylistic simplicity of this description, whose power lies in its conciseness. The semantic nuance of *does not bode well* should convey a hint of danger rather than dramatisation. This example supports a central theme of the novel: visualising the tree as a living, breathing body whose illness signals a broader ecological catastrophe, contributing to the formation of a lexicon in which there are no boundaries between body and tree, human and forest.

Christie effectively combines social critique of gender stereotypes with the integration of nature into the speech act, employing contrasts to reveal the complex

relationships between the individual, society and nature: "‘It must be difficult, as a woman,’ Corbyn says afterwards, while they’re laid out on the sofa beneath an impossibly soft cashmere blanket, ‘to be so educated and passionate in a field, and have to lead idiots like me through these beautiful trees’" (Christie, 2021, p. 30) – *"Мабуть, це важко бути жінкою, – пізніше промовляє Корбін, коли вони лежали на дивані під неймовірно м’якою кашеміровою ковдрою, – і бути такою освіченою та пристрасною у своїй справі, але водночас водити таких дурнів, як я, серед цих прекрасних дерев"*. Among the key stylistic elements, the following can be highlighted: gender discourse, where the phrase *to be a woman* emphasises the imagined difficulties associated with gender in the professional sphere, pointing to stereotypical perceptions of women in science or leadership, whose competence (educated and passionate) contradicts expectations of a passive role; irony and self-criticism, evident in the use of *дурнів* instead of the original *idiots*, which preserves the speaker’s self-deprecation but, due to a milder connotation in Ukrainian, adds a touch of light humour, creating a dynamic between respect for the female leader and irony regarding one’s own inadequacy; and nature, which serves both as backdrop and metaphor, made clear through the phrase *among these beautiful trees*, transforming the trees into symbols of a harmonious environment where intellectual exchange occurs, emphasising that green discourse addresses not only ecology but also the cultural context in which humans interact with nature. This passage illustrates how green discourse can incorporate social critique within an ecological framework. The translation preserves this interaction through careful lexical choice, combining emotional resonance with natural imagery and maintaining contrasts such as comfort versus tension, and leadership versus self-deprecation. However, a question arises: does the Ukrainian translation soften the sharpness of the gender critique? For example, using *дурнів* instead of *ідіотів* may reduce the sarcastic edge, though this is mitigated by contextual cues. Consequently, the reconstruction of green discourse in a foreign language requires careful attention to both linguistic and cultural nuances in order to preserve the multifaceted nature of the original.

At first glance a simple line of dialogue, the following excerpt performs a crucial function in constructing the forest as an object of collective admiration, aesthetic value and spiritual quest: "‘Who better than you to lead me through these amazing trees that everyone is talking about?’" (Christie, 2021, p. 34) – *"Хто, як не ти, проведе мене крізь ці неймовірні дерева, про які всі лише й говорять?"*. The passage conveys not only an enchantment with nature but also highlights the

social dimension of the ecological experience: *everyone is talking about* emphasises a shared discourse in which the forest is a phenomenon worthy of pilgrimage. The question form *Who better than you...* functions as rhetorical praise while also establishing an intimate connection between the addressee and the forest as a space. The call *to be led through these amazing trees* carries the subtext of a transition – both physical and symbolic. It is not merely about a tour, but an initiation, an entry into a world that requires an intermediary. In this sense, the heroine acts as a guide, a shaman or a forest teacher. The phrase *amazing trees* may appear simple, yet in the context of the novel it is symbolic. The forest emerges not only as a natural object but as a living system that evokes reverence, inspiration and a transformation of worldview. In translation, it is important to convey the spontaneity of live speech without losing emotional expressiveness. Here, the forest is not a backdrop but an event, and humans appear as beings in need of guidance toward harmony with nature. This line contributes to the romanticisation of the forest while reinforcing the theme of the interconnection between knowledge, trust and nature as a site of enlightenment.

An intriguing combination is that of artisanal precision and philosophical insight, illustrating how material engagement with wood can foster spiritual realisation: "And after he finishes sanding the joins and is applying the last coat of precisely concocted varnish with a sable fur brush, he's struck by the realization that perhaps his mother had been right: maybe trees do have souls" (Christie, 2021, p. 69) – *І коли він закінчує шліфувати стики й наносить останній шар ретельно приготованого лаку пензлем із соболиного хутра, його раптом вражає думка: можливо, мати мала рацію – дерева такі мають душу*. The description of actions – *sanding the joins, applying the final coat, precisely concocted varnish* – reflects meticulous attention to detail, an almost meditative state in which respect for the material is evident. This is a moment of fusion between human and tree in an act of creation. The phrase *with a sable fur brush* adds a layer of tactile intimacy, embodying not just skill but ritual. Such details elevate the scene to the level of the sacred, where the tree is not merely processed but revered. The key metaphysical thesis, *maybe trees do have souls*, is conveyed as an almost mystical intuition. It is not a statement but a supposition arising in silence and concentration from experience rather than theory. The mention of the mother as the source of this thought introduces an intertext of love, upbringing and the transmission of alternative knowledge. In translation, it is important to preserve the tenderness and sense of revelation: *he's struck by the realization* should convey

an epiphany rather than a logical conclusion. The grammatical construction *maybe trees do have souls* should sound soft and tentative, with a hint of faith rather than certainty. Thus, this passage exemplifies the aesthetic and ethical fusion of the material and the spiritual. It captures the moment when ordinary work with wood becomes an experience of reflection, where trees appear not as resources but as subjects capable of carrying their own presence and memory.

Conclusions and perspectives.

Christie's "Greenwood" holds a distinguished place in contemporary green literature, offering a deeply moving exploration of ecological and social concerns through interwoven narratives that span generations. The novel's focus on ecological awareness, resilience and the intricate interconnection between humans and nature positions it as a seminal contribution to ecofiction. By weaving personal stories with pressing environmental issues, "Greenwood" invites readers to reflect on the consequences of ecological neglect and social injustice, fostering both understanding and empathy. Its innovative dendrocentric narrative structure, coupled with vivid depictions of ecological and social 'healing', underscores the novel's enduring relevance in ongoing literary conversations about sustainable futures.

The analysis of the Ukrainian translation reveals how the linguistic 'fabric' of green discourse functions as a medium for reimagining human/nature relations. Each passage – from lyrical metaphors to precise scientific descriptions – reveals the duality inherent in ecological thought: on one hand, anthropocentric rhetoric framing the 'rescue' of nature; on the other, biocentric representations in which trees emerge as autonomous subjects endowed with agency.

Translation strategies, such as retaining personification, adapting culturally specific references and negotiating the balance between scientific exactitude and poetic freedom, underscore the pivotal role of language in cultivating ecological ethics. In Christie's novel, the green discourse is not merely a catalogue of terms but a living system of images capable of persuading, inspiring and reshaping attitudes toward the natural world. Reconstructing this discourse in Ukrainian requires conveying a worldview that ranges from critiquing technocratic paradigms to reviving a mythopoetic connection with the environment. It is precisely this linguistic vision, where trees are rendered as 'living pillars of eternity' rather than inert 'resources', that offers the foundation for a renewed ecological ethics, one

that transcends anthropocentric constraints and nurtures a more reciprocal relationship between humans and the natural world.

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