

TRANSLATION OF STYLISTIC DEVICES IN CONTEMPORARY YOUNG ADULT FICTION

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Introduction

Due to the increasing teenage interest in books, scripture becomes a source of language, in a sense that youngsters learn new words, phrases, allusions or metaphors and incorporate them in their everyday language. K. Urba (2013) describes the situation of teen literature in Lithuania as relatively bad compared to that in other countries. Therefore, demand for popular reads requires a quick reaction when translating such books. However, translating young adult fiction is a challenging task due to the use of slang and other colloquial vocabulary or stylistic devices.

The stylistic side of translation (and writing to some extent) plays one of the biggest roles in providing readership with a proper equivalent of fiction. A translator has to tackle a number of problems which occur during the process, such as selecting an appropriate translation strategy, recognizing allusions and irony, maintaining the register, the genre or the in-/formality of the text. In other words, the translator has to de-compose the original text and then recreate an equivalent which both maintains the initial intention of the author and sounds natural to the target readership.

Linguists, e.g., Danesi (1994, 2003, 2010), Doherty, (1988), Waller (2009, 2012), Urba (2013), Butkuvienė (2010, 2012), Dimavičienė (2012, 2015) have been particularly interested in teen fiction, as well as in teen language. However, since linguists mostly deal with the translation of slang but not stylistic devices the latter is an interesting issue to deal with.

The aim of the research is to analyse the translation of stylistic devices in two popular books for contemporary young adults: *Maze Runner* by J. Dashner and *Fallen* by L. Kate. The following *objectives* have been set to achieve the aim: to analyse the theoretical issues related to the translation of stylistic devices in fiction; to discuss the topic of young adolescent fiction; to select examples of stylistic devices and their translations from the novels; to reveal the importance of the use of stylistic devices in modern young adult fiction. The scientific *methods* applied in the analysis are descriptive theoretical analysis, analytical and statistical methods.

Translation of fiction

Translation as such first and foremost is an activity for social purposes the aim of which is communication. As a process it consists of a number of stages, each of them being equally important in order to convey the idea of the source text in the highest quality. Navickienė (2005, p. 30) has determined four steps and defined them as: 1) analysis of the original text; 2) search for equivalents; 3) synthesis of the original features and equivalents; 4) analysis of the translated text.

Analysis of the original helps to determine the type of the text and thus distinguishes the purpose of translation. Search for equivalents results in choosing a translation technique, scanning for culture-specific terms and their counterparts relevant to the speakers of the target language. The third step incorporates the two first phases and produces translation. Analysis is carried out in the final step in order to verify that the text type and purpose of the translation correspond to the type and purpose of the original. Bearing this in mind, it is self-evident that analysis of the original text is an essential part of the translation process. Therefore, a translator has to search for adequate counterparts of particular stylistic devices, slang words and culture-specific things which may or may not be used in Lithuanian and vice versa, to provide the target readership with the most natural sounding output.

Relevance of stylistics

Equivalent expressiveness would be impossible if not for stylistics. It plays an important role in maintaining the intention of the author and preserving the expressiveness of the text. This expressiveness is achieved by means of various sentence structures, repetition of words, synonyms/antonyms, imitation of sounds, different word forms or transferences of meaning. In other words, it is achieved by using stylistic devices which, based on the theoretical approach of Galperin (1981), may be divided into three big groups: phonetic, syntactical and lexical. Phonetic stylistic devices focus on sounds words may produce and the impact it may have on the reader in evoking particular emotions or imagery. Similarly, lexical stylistic devices aim at awaking imagery and

emotions yet by means of transferring meaning from one object or phenomenon to another thus creating wordplay. Syntactical stylistic devices use syntax, sentence construction and word order in order to attract the eye of the reader.

It should not be forgotten that intricate stylistic devices become a rather demanding issue for translators. Therefore, as Petrauskas (1980, p. 134) states, a translator should use particular stylistic devices considering the relation between the source and the target language, and the individuality of the author. In other words, before translating any stylistic device the translator should inspect how it will sound in the target language: whether it will be comprehensible and natural therefore specific expressive means should be handled with great care in order to maintain the intention of the writer.

Young adolescent fiction

Young adolescent fiction as a literary stream emerged around the middle of the 20th century with the appearance of *Catcher in the Rye* by J. Sallinger read widely ever since. In Lithuania, however, this genre gained a massive popularity over the last decade. Interestingly, as Končius and Nausėda (2007, p. 235) observe, teen fiction writers and their works have been gaining popularity not only among adolescents but also among adults. It proves how versatile teen fiction is and how its themes correspond to the likes of grown-ups.

Although, as Waller (2009, p. 3) claims, adolescence is the phenomenon that differs depending on culture, historical period, individual experiences and is intertwined with such factors as gender, race or class, topics like drugs, wretched relationship with the family, restrain, going against the world, love, loss, trying things for the first time, struggle at school and suicide not only can be related to both teens and adults all over the world. In addition, they can also be a good example of how not to behave in a particular situation. Even books about the post apocalyptic world may be seen as metaphors for a new stage in life, inevitable changes or standing up against the crowd (e.g., *Hunger Games*).

All the above mentioned themes are presented in a variety of forms. Young adolescent books are often written as diaries, first person narratives or told from the point of view of third person limited omniscient just to help the reader feel the emotions of the protagonist. The form, along with a witty choice of slang words, references and stylistic devices, depicts the linguistic tendencies of a particular period.

Literary coinages, introduced to the readers of fantasy stories, create jargon used by the fans of a particular saga or a book (e.g., *Maze Runner*, *Harry Potter*, etc.).

However, usually the world-famous franchises tend to have a very specific setting and characters. Waller (2009) describes this phenomenon as “fantastic realism”. Indeed, such stories are set in incredible places like the school of witchcraft, a post-apocalyptic world, a gigantic maze or a fantasy world (*Red Queen*) or have unbelievable characters such as vampires (*Twilight*), witches (*Secret Circle*), angels (*Fallen*) or people with special abilities (*Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children*). Realism in such books is seen in everyday life, choices and inner conflicts of the characters even though they are somewhat special. Most likely it is one of the reasons why such novels are extremely popular among teenagers. They help to escape from ordinary and mundane everyday life yet tell a story about unique characters who might be very similar to the readers themselves and therefore convincing that they can also be special.

Methodology of research

Research is aimed at analysis of the translation of stylistic devices in contemporary young adult fiction. The research material has been taken from Lauren Kate’s *Fallen* and its translation of 2011 by J. Pavlovičienė, and J. Dashner’s *Maze Runner*, translated by R. Tapinienė in 2013. The two books have been translated into many languages and have gained international success.

The examples of the stylistic devices and their translations have been grouped according to the theoretical approaches of Župerka (1997) and Galperin (1981), and fall into: phonetic, lexical and syntactical expressive means and stylistic devices. The collected instances have been also grouped according to their type and each type is illustrated by one or two examples depending on the number found, their translation and an explanation of its aim, what strategy has been used and what has been achieved.

Translation of the stylistic devices in *Fallen* and *Maze Runner*

Stylistic devices used in contemporary adolescent fiction are of many types, which may be grouped into three big categories mentioned earlier. However, in order to fully observe the use and translation of stylistic devices, examples are necessary. The figure shows statistical data of the frequency of occurrence of the stylistic devices in the two books of young adolescent fiction.

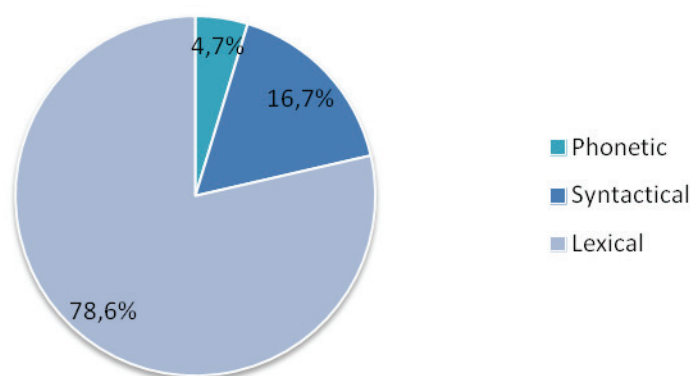


Fig. 1. Distribution of the stylistic devices in two young adolescent novels

According to the figure, phonetic stylistic devices occur not so often. It is probably because an excessive imitation of sounds would make the text rather difficult to read. Rather often syntactical stylistic devices occur, and their frequency is influenced by the fact that this group deals with sentence structures and punctuation. Therefore, they are used to attract attention or to represent the increasing suspense which is intrinsic to any literary piece. The most affluent group is lexical stylistic devices.

The three groups of stylistic devices will be discussed in detail.

Phonetic stylistic devices: onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is usually defined as a sequence of sounds (a word) which imitates non-verbal sounds produced in nature by things, people or animals.

- (1) *We gotta quit **boohooing** and feeling sorry for ourselves.* (Dashner, 2009, p. 140)
*Turime liautis **vir kavę** ir savęs gailęję.* (Dashner, 2013, p. 294)

The verb “to boohoo” perfectly imitates the sound of loud crying, thus the use of this word provides the utterance with the auditory imagery. As for its translation, in this case the translator maintains the idea of crying but the onomatopoeic word is not used. The reason for this might be the absence of such a word in the Lithuanian language.

- (2) ***Plopping** on the top bleacher <...>* (Kate, 2009, p. 17)
Atsisędusi ant viršutinio tribūnos suoloelio <...>
 (Kate, 2011, p. 55)

In this case the author uses the verb “to plop” in order to imitate the sound of an impact when the body comes in contact with the surface of the bleacher. Overall, the word implies a quick and/or relaxed movement and thus reveals that the main character feels laid back. The translator, however, uses a

neutral verb “atsisęsti” instead of an onomatopoeic expression “šlumštelėti”; therefore the stylistic device is not maintained in the translation.

Syntactical stylistic devices: inversion

Stylistic inversion is usually defined as an intentional change of a typical word order in an utterance, the aim of which is to attract the attention of the reader.

- (3) *Grievers, we call ‘em.* (Dashner, 2009, p. 24)
Mes juos vadiname grizais. (Dashner, 2013, p. 52)

The use of inversion in this case aims at bringing out the new term “griever”, which is used for the first time to name a bio-mechanical creature. A grammatically correct sentence structure should be “We call them grievers”. However, in a situation when the character is receiving plenty of information such a construction attracts attention to the first word of the utterance. The translator does not use inversion probably because the sentence would sound too unnatural. Therefore, an unusual word order is changed for the sake of naturalness of the utterance.

- (4) *Scrawled across the paper in thick black letters were five words: <...>* (Dashner, 2009, p. 34)
Storomis juodomis raidėmis buvo iškeverzoti penki žodžiai: <...> (Dashner, 2013, p. 72)

The inversion here has a different purpose. The classical sentence structure suggests the following sentence: “Five words were scrawled across the paper in thick black letters”. The sentence is relatively long therefore the most important information should be provided at the end of the utterance. In other words, focus lies at the end of the sentence where five words are given. The translation of the sentence does not have inversion. This is possible because word order in Lithuanian is relatively loose if compared to English. However, the phrase “penki žodžiai” stands at the

very end of the sentence, so attention of the readership is focused on the finale of the utterance. Therefore, it can be stated that the original intention of the sentence and thus the stylistic device have been retained.

Syntactical stylistic devices: aposiopesis

Aposiopesis, also known as break-in-the-narrative, aims at intentionally breaking off parts of the sentence to convey emotionality of the speaker. In addition, Galperin (1981, p. 234) claims that aposiopesis has a high level of predictability due to sentence structures or because of the context and sometimes it can be used for euphemistic purposes with the aim not to name an offensive or unpleasant thing.

- (5) “*Holy ...*” *he breathed.* (Dashner, 2009, p. 32)
– *Šventas... – įkvėpė jis <...>* (Dashner, 2013, p. 67)

Here the author omits the second part of the phrase, which is rather easy to predict. Bearing in mind that in the book it is said by a teenager and assuming the amount of swearwords teenagers use it is easy to guess that the full phrase should have been “holy shit”. Therefore, it can be stated that aposiopesis here has a euphemistic purpose. However, the translator has chosen to translate break-in-the-narrative literally. Indeed, the stylistic device has been maintained, yet the expression does not seem natural in the context. It could have been adapted to “eina...”, or “čia tai...”, or instead of aposiopesis it could have been transformed into an interjection such as “Oho!” or “Geras!”

- (6) <...> *I ran over to try and stop it, but it was already...* (Kate, 2009, p. 54)
<...> *mėginau ją sulaukyti, bet buvo jau...* (Kate, 2011, p. 115)

In this case the author uses aposiopesis to create an emotional effect. The utterance appears as an apology why the person did not manage to be in time when a huge statue tumbled down nearly killing the protagonist. Therefore, this stylistic device creates the effect of emotive speech and offers a tiny idea that the speaker is feeling guilty. The translation maintains aposiopesis to fulfil the intention of the author.

Lexical stylistic devices: metaphor

The simplest way to describe a metaphor is to consider it as an indirect comparison of particular features thus transferring meaning from one word to another. According to Župerka (1997, p. 61), the characteristic ambiguity of meaning in a metaphor differs from a simple comparison because of syntactical construction. In other words, a metaphor is usually more compact if compared to a comparison.

- (7) *Gears were starting to shift into place inside Thomas' head <...>* (Dashner, 2009, p. 147)
Mintys įgavo pagreitį Tomo galvoje <...> (Dashner, 2013, p. 311)

The author uses the noun “gears” to represent thoughts. The whole phrase creates an imagery of a mechanism which starts to work again after a pause. This means that Thomas finally starts understanding what is happening in his environment. Therefore, the process of understanding and starting to think about possible solutions is represented as “shifting of gears”. The translation does not maintain the metaphor but the imagery of movement is kept. The phrase connotes speed and therefore is logical because thoughts indeed come and go quickly. Moreover, even though the metaphor is not maintained, the Lithuanian phrase sounds natural.

- (8) “*Remember how I didn't press you when you clammed up about what you did to get here?*” *Arriane asked <...>* (Kate, 2009, p. 19)
– *Ar atsimeni, kad neverčiau tavęs atsakyti, kaip čia atsidūrei? – <...> tarstelėjo Ariana.* (Kate, 2011, p. 41)

In Example 8, the author uses the shellfish imagery to represent the introvert side of the main character, her refusal to talk about her past. The use of such a metaphor also provides the reader with a glimpse at the personality of the protagonist. The shellfish close when they sense threat; similarly, it can be assumed that the main character feels unsafe in her new surroundings. In the translation, however, this part of the utterance is omitted, even though the verb “to clam up” could have been translated as “užsisklęsti”.

Lexical stylistic devices: zeugma

A zeugma is a stylistic device based on similar grammatical yet different semantic uses of words. Galperin (1981, p. 150) states that zeugma is an effective device to maintain the purity of primal meanings yet at the same time to make the words stand out.

- (9) *He was tall and strong and... Slipping from her embrace.* (Kate, 2009, p. 172)
Jis buvo aukštas, stiprus... Danielis išslydo iš Liusės glėbio. (Kate, 2011, p. 367)

The author starts the utterance with the description of physical traits and suddenly a physical action is introduced. Grammatically, the sentence makes sense because the use of adjectives and then the past continuous tense are bound with the auxiliary verb “was”. It is done with the aim not to point out the appearance but to distinguish the fact that “he” was

losing his physical connection with the protagonist. The translation does not maintain a stylistic device. It is neutralized by creating two full sentences. Continuation is not maintained either. The past continuous “was slipping” is translated as the simple past “išslydo”. This Lithuanian verb has an aspect of a completed action.

Lexical stylistic devices: interjection

Interjections are a means to represent spoken language variety in literature as they mostly deal with the emotions of the speakers expressed by either or longer words in the course of speech.

- (10) “*Whatever. Do what you want.*” (Dashner, 2009, p. 141)
– *Kaip pasakysi. Daryk kaip nori.* (Dashner, 2013, p. 259)

The utterance is said as a response to a reasonable argument. This shows that the speaker is either indifferent to the topic or he is trying to disguise his defeat under the image of not being interested. In the translation, however, the interjection is neutralized and translated as “kaip pasakysi”. Such a choice might have been influenced by the common phrase “whatever you say”, yet the interjection could have been translated simply as “koks skirtumas”, “nesvarbu” or “man vienodai” to maintain a hint of indifference towards the topic.

- (11) *Whoops. Hopefully Arianne wouldn't notice* <...> (Kate, 2009, p. 20)

The context of the utterance is slightly comic. The protagonist is asked to cut another girl's hair and by accident snips a big chunk of hair which was supposed to be left. The author uses the interjection “whoops” to represent a slight guilt the protagonist feels due to the hair styling accident. As for the translation, it is absent in the book. The whole paragraph is omitted. This might have happened either because the translator missed it unintentionally or it was removed/left out in the course of printing the book. However, the interjection “whoops” could have been translated as “oi” or “vaje”.

Lexical stylistic devices: euphemism

Euphemism is a stylistic device which aims at re-naming an unpleasant or unacceptable word. Galperin (1981, p. 173) claims that euphemisms evoke definite synonyms in the mind of the reader.

- (12) “*I feel like a piece of klunk*” (Dashner, 2009, p. 112)
– *Jaučiuosi kaip šūdo gabalas* <...> (Dashner, 2013, p. 235)

In this case the author invents a new noun which is not only a euphemism for the word “shit” but also serves as an onomatopoeic word. In the book, one character explains another that it is another word for excrement because it makes a similar sound when it falls. However, the translation does not retain the euphemism. The new coinage is translated as a vulgar word, probably with the aim to use teen language. On the other hand, it would have been possible to create an equivalent to maintain the authenticity of the original. “Pliumpis” or “kliunkis” could serve as euphemisms and as equivalents for the original “klunk”.

- (13) “*Oh, jeez, please kill that metaphor,*” *Penn whispered.* (Kate, 2009, p. 83)
– *O siaube, maldauju – sunaikinkit šitą metaforą, – sušnabždėjo Penė.* (Kate, 2011, p. 178)

Religious euphemisms are very common, and in this case the word “jeez” is an altered version of saying “Jesus”. Moreover, the euphemism here is also an interjection which expresses annoyance. The translation keeps the euphemism as relation with religion is conveyed by the following verb. In the original sentence the verb “please” has a neutral meaning if compared to the Lithuanian “maldauju” which means “I beg” or “I pray”. Therefore, it can be stated that the euphemism is successfully translated and the impact on readership is maintained.

Lexical stylistic devices: periphrasis

Periphrasis is an indirect reference to a particular object by using a longer expression even though a shorter one is possible. It is used to avoid excess repetition of the same phrase or to reveal different points of view as the same thing can be named in many ways depending on a desired impact. Moreover, as Galperin (1981, p. 169) states, periphrasis also draws attention to unnoticeable qualities of the object discussed.

- (14) *But there was something about the largest object in the solar system vanishing* <...> (Dashner, 2009, p. 124)
Tačiau dingęs didžiausias saulės sistemos objektas <...> (Dashner, 2013, p. 261)

In this case the noun “sun” is replaced by the phrase “the largest object in the solar system”. Describing the sun in such a way provides the reader with the idea that the main character has some knowledge about space and points out the size factor. Also, it replaces the noun “sun” to avoid an excessive use of the word since the only external similarity between the words “sun” and “solar” is the initial consonant. Oppositely, such pair of words does not exist in Lithuanian therefore periphrasis, even though

it is maintained, does not actually help to avoid repetition but serves to show the level of knowledge of the protagonist and to underline the size of the sun.

Statistical analysis

In general, 150 examples have been collected to analyse the translation of stylistic devices in contemporary young adult fiction. The research shows that some of the translations have retained stylistic devices, while others have not. Table 1 shows the distribution of the maintained and neutralised stylistic devices in the books under research.

Table 1. *Distribution of the maintained and neutralised stylistic devices*

| | Maze Runner | Fallen |
|-------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Maintained | 49 (4 partly) | 42 (5 partly) |
| Neutralised | 26 | 33 |
| Compensated | 3 | 3 |

From the total number of 75, the translator of *Maze Runner* maintained 49 stylistic devices, 4 of them being only partially maintained. In other words, 4 instances retain either a different stylistic device which serves the same purpose or has been translated literally and thus does not have the same impact on readership as the original. The translator neutralised 26 of the stylistic devices either due to inability to find a proper equivalent or the particularities of the manner of translation. Throughout the total number of the collected stylistic devices, compensation has been used 3 times. It means that one stylistic device may be neutralised in some cases but a more expressive word may be used in another place of the text. What is more, an additional stylistic device may be incorporated in the sentence. The translator of *Fallen* maintained 42 stylistic devices, and 5 of them being retained only partially. In 33 cases the translator neutralised stylistic devices due to the reasons mentioned above. The same amount of compensated stylistic devices can be found among the instances collected from *Fallen*.

If to compare the translation of the two books, the translation of *Maze Runner* sticks closer to the authenticity of the author and therefore the text *Fallen*, however, has many episodes of free translation what means that sometimes an absolute omission of particular pieces of sentences are evident although they have equivalents and could have been translated. Most likely, it is influenced by the personal manner of translating and the translator's experience.

Conclusions

The aim of the research was to analyse the translation of stylistic devices in two books of popular

modern teenage fiction: *Maze Runner* by James Dashner and *Fallen* by Lauren Kate. The aim was achieved by observing the use of stylistic devices, their implied effect on the reader and their translated counterparts. Therefore, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Translation as such is a demanding task which requires the translator be able to tackle many issues that arise during the process. In order to successfully convey the intended ideas the translator has to take stylistics into consideration as this branch of linguistics plays a big role in presenting a natural and understandable equivalent of the original book to readership.
- The research shows that mostly stylistic devices are maintained: the translator of *Maze Runner* retained 49 out of 75, the translator of *Fallen* managed to maintain 42 out of 75. Neutralisation was used in 26 cases in the translation of stylistic devices in *Maze Runner* and in 33 examples – in *Fallen*. Each translation has 3 examples of attempts to compensate a loss of stylistic devices.
- The selected and discussed examples show that sometimes it is difficult to preserve a stylistic device due to the absence of an equivalent in Lithuanian, differences in writing traditions or a distinctive translation manner. Yet, it is possible to compensate for the loss of a stylistic device by providing it where it seems natural and appropriate. However, despite these difficulties Lithuanian translators appear to be skilled and apt to translate sometimes peculiar, sometimes simple young adult fiction.

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Summary

TRANSLATION OF STYLISTIC DEVICES IN CONTEMPORARY YOUNG ADOLESCENT FICTION

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General interest in teenage books has been upsurging because of films based on international best-sellers. Therefore, the scripture becomes a source of language, in a sense that youngsters learn new words, phrases, allusions or metaphors and incorporate them in their everyday language. Demand for popular reads requires a quick reaction translating these books as there are plenty of novels for young adults written in foreign languages. However, translation of adolescent fiction is a challenging task due to the use of slang and other colloquial vocabulary or stylistic devices. However, the translation of stylistic devices as such has not been researched since linguists focus on teen slang. The translation of stylistic devices is an interesting issue to deal with as the entire translation “eco-system” is observed not from one sentence or paragraph perspective. The research deals with stylistic devices and their translation and the analysis of translation. It also presents stylistic devices according to their types, each type is illustrated by one or two examples depending on the number found, their translation and explanation of its aim, used strategy and achieved results are provided.

Keywords: stylistic devices, translation, adolescent, fiction.

Santrauka

MENINIŲ PRIEMONIŲ VERTIMAS ŠIUOLAIKINĖJE JAUNIMO LITERATŪROJE

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Jaunimo susidomėjimas literatūra sparčiai auga dėl pasaulinių bestselerių ekranizacijų ir jų populiarumo. Būtent todėl literatūra tampa kalbos šaltiniu, mat skaitydamas jaunimas išmoksta naujų žodžių, frazių, aliuzijų ar metaforų ir pradeda jas vartoti savo kalboje. Populiariųjų skaitinių paklausa reikalauja ir spartaus vertėjų darbo. Tačiau jaunimo literatūros vertimas nėra lengva užduotis būtent dėl tokio žanro literatūros kūriniuose dažnai vartojamo slengo, šnekamosios kalbos elementų ir kitų meninių priemonių. Meninių priemonių vertimas nėra plačiai nagrinėtas, mat dauguma lingvistų susitelkia į paauglių slengą ir jo vertimo problemas. Tačiau stilistinių figūrų vertimas įdomus tuo, kad visa vertimo „ekosistema“ atsiskleidžia ne sakinyje ar pastraipoje, o žodžių junginyje ar net viename žodyje. Straipsnyje aptariamos meninės priemonės ir jų vertimo kokybė. Kiekviena stilistinė figūra iliustruojama keletu pavyzdžių, vertimu ir paaiškinimu, kodėl vartojama, ką tuo norima pasakyti, įvertinama vertimo kokybė.

Prasminiai žodžiai: meninės priemonės, vertimas, jaunimo literatūra.

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