

THE EVOLUTION AND KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TECHNO-THRILLER GENRE IN CONTEMPORARY FICTION

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Abstract:

This article investigates the lexical-semantic and pragmatic challenges of translating English information security and cyber-terminology into the Uzbek language, particularly within the context of literary texts. The study analyzes the polysemy and metaphorical nature of cybersecurity terms, raising the issue of the lack of standardized field-specific dictionaries in Uzbek. The linguistic characteristics of the three main translation strategies most frequently used for rendering foreign terms into Uzbek—borrowing, calque (literal translation), and descriptive translation—are explored. Furthermore, the paper discusses pragmatic issues such as maintaining the literary aesthetics and narrative pacing of the work when conveying complex technical terms to the reader, managing footnotes, and accurately expressing contextual meanings. In conclusion, the article emphasizes the necessity of utilizing flexible translation strategies for the proper development of the Uzbek terminological base in the era of digitalization.

Keywords: *information security terminology, translation problems, lexical-semantic features, borrowing, calque, descriptive translation, pragmatic adaptation, literary translation, cyber-terms.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature has always served as a mirror reflecting human progress, achievements, and fears. The unprecedentedly rapid development of science and technology during the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century paved the way for new thematic directions in literature—specifically, the emergence of the "techno-thriller" genre as a distinct phenomenon [1]. Today, issues such as technological disasters, cybercrime, and information security are at the

forefront of attention not only for specialists but for society as a whole, and the literary portrayal of these themes generates significant interest among readers. By its nature, a thriller is a work designed to evoke a sense of tension, unpredictability, and suspense—a mix of excitement and fear—in the reader [2]. The techno-thriller, while retaining the core elements of the traditional thriller, places technological threats and scientific-technical processes at the heart of the conflict. This subgenre synthesizes characteristics of detective, science fiction, and spy novels, yet technology—grounded in reality—always occupies the central role [3]. The primary objective of this article is to analyze the techno-thriller genre in contemporary fiction from a literary perspective, examining its origins, its evolutionary development, and its defining characteristics. It also aims to highlight the trend of shifting the genre's characters and conflicts from traditional physical confrontations to the digital realm and the arena of intellectual struggle.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employs a qualitative literary-analytical approach to examine the evolution, structural characteristics, and contemporary transformation of the techno-thriller genre. The analysis is based on a review of selected literary and scholarly sources addressing thriller literature, science fiction, crime fiction, information technology, cybersecurity, and digital culture. Particular attention is given to the historical development of the genre from traditional spy and military narratives to modern cyber-thrillers. The study applies comparative analysis to identify similarities and differences between classical techno-thrillers and contemporary works in terms of thematic focus, sources of conflict, characterization, narrative structure, and the representation of technology. In addition, descriptive and contextual analysis is used to examine the role of scientific and technical terminology, technological authenticity, narrative pacing, and global threats in shaping the genre. The analysis also considers the transformation of protagonists from traditional military or intelligence figures into programmers, cryptographers, cybersecurity specialists, and digital analysts. Through these approaches, the study identifies the major literary features that distinguish the techno-thriller from related genres and demonstrates how the development of digital technologies has influenced its contemporary form.

III. RESULTS

The analysis demonstrates that the techno-thriller has undergone a significant transformation in accordance with changes in technology and the nature of perceived threats. Its early foundations can be associated with spy and military fiction, in which technological innovations generally functioned as supporting elements of plots focused on human conflicts and intelligence activities. With the emergence of works in which military technologies, scientific developments, and complex technical systems directly determine the development of the narrative, technology gradually became a central structural component of the genre. The study also identifies three major characteristics of contemporary techno-thrillers: technological authenticity, accelerated narrative development, and the global scale of conflict. In modern works, the representation of cybersecurity, encryption, artificial intelligence, databases, and information networks has expanded the thematic boundaries of the genre. At the same time, the traditional physical battlefield has increasingly been replaced by virtual environments. Another notable result is the transformation of character types. Contemporary techno-thrillers frequently place technologically specialized protagonists, including programmers, cryptographers, and digital analysts, at the center of the narrative, while antagonists are often represented through anonymous hacker groups or technologically organized networks. These

developments demonstrate that the genre has adapted its literary mechanisms to the realities of the digital age.

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the evolution of the techno-thriller is closely connected with broader technological and social changes. Earlier works primarily reflected concerns associated with military confrontation, nuclear weapons, espionage, and scientific experimentation, whereas contemporary narratives increasingly focus on cybersecurity, cybercrime, digital surveillance, data protection, and artificial intelligence. This transformation does not eliminate the fundamental characteristics of the thriller; rather, it relocates suspense and conflict into technologically mediated environments. The importance of technological authenticity is particularly significant because credible descriptions of computer systems, encryption, intelligence procedures, and digital networks contribute to the documentary realism of the narrative. At the same time, the increasing use of specialized terminology creates a linguistic and cultural challenge, particularly when such works are translated into Uzbek. Technical terms may have multiple meanings, metaphorical uses, or no established Uzbek equivalent, which can affect both accuracy and literary expressiveness. Therefore, the contemporary techno-thriller should be considered not only as a literary genre shaped by technological development but also as a field that creates new challenges for literary translation and terminology development. The findings further suggest that future research should pay greater attention to Uzbek translations of cyber-thrillers, particularly to the strategies used for transferring cybersecurity terminology while preserving the original work's meaning, narrative pace, and literary effect.

1. Origins and evolution of the techno-thriller genre:

In literary studies, the roots of the techno-thriller genre are traced back to the spy novels of the Second World War and the subsequent Cold War era [4]. During this period, international conflicts and the rivalries between intelligence agencies took center stage in the works of authors such as Ian Fleming and John le Carré [5]. However, in these works, cutting-edge technology and inventions served primarily as supporting elements, while the human factor and traditional detective skills remained at the heart of the narrative. The emergence of the techno-thriller as a fully fledged, independent genre occurred in the 1980s. Most critics regard Tom Clancy's 1984 novel **The Hunt for Red October** as the first classic example of the military techno-thriller [6]. In this work, submarine design, nuclear weaponry, and military technologies became the primary mechanisms directly driving the plot. Concurrently, Michael Crichton laid the foundation for the scientific and biotechnological branch of the genre with works such as **The Andromeda Strain** (1969) [7]. By the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the rapid advancement of information technology brought about a fundamental shift in the evolution of the genre.

While nuclear bombs constituted the primary threat in the techno-thrillers of the 1980s, the source of danger has since shifted to the virtual realm [8]. Consequently, traditional military plots have gradually given way to the "cyber-thriller" subgenre, which centers on information security.

2. Key features and characteristics of the techno-thriller genre:

The most important criterion distinguishing the techno-thriller from other literary genres is its factual accuracy (authenticity) and close adherence to reality [9]. Complex mechanisms, computer code, or intelligence agency protocols featured in the work are depicted with such credibility that they create an illusion of documentary realism for the reader [10].

Another central feature of the genre is the high narrative pace and the "ticking clock" element. Events unfold like a race against time, with characters having only a few hours left to avert a looming tragedy [11]. Short chapters and concise, punchy sentences serve to maintain a sense of constant suspense for the reader.

A third characteristic is the global scale of the conflict and the danger involved. Modern works centered on cybersecurity demonstrate that an attack on a single encryption algorithm can throw the global information system into disarray [12].

3. New facets of the techno-thriller in the modern era (The cybersecurity age):

The battlefield has shifted from geographical territories to virtual space—to servers and databases. Cybersecurity, encryption technologies, artificial intelligence, and data privacy are emerging as the central themes of modern techno-thrillers [13]. Writers are now focusing less on traditional threats and more on scenarios where cyber-terrorism paralyzes entire nations [14]. Consequently, the typology of protagonists has undergone a transformation. In modern cyber-thrillers, the central figures are highly skilled specialists—programmers, cryptographers, and digital analysts [15]. Meanwhile, antagonistic forces often appear as faceless hacker groups, underscoring that conflicts have escalated into battles of pure intellect.

V. CONCLUSION

In contemporary fiction, the techno-thriller serves as a unique literary mirror reflecting the anxieties of humanity living in the era of the technological revolution. This genre vividly portrays issues of information security—one of the most pressing challenges facing our society—within a narrative framework.

The genre's reliance on rapid pacing and complex scientific-technical terminology presents significant challenges for translators. In particular, finding appropriate equivalents for specialized terms and accurately conveying a foreign technological environment to the Uzbek reader when translating works related to information security constitutes a vital issue in translation studies. A comparative analysis of the linguistic and stylistic features of such works defines the primary direction for researching Uzbek translations of modern cyber-thrillers..

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