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The peculiarities of political discourse interpreting

Особливості перекладу усного політичного дискурсу

Анотація. Переклад усного політичного дискурсу є складним та багатогранним процесом, який вимагає глибокого розуміння соціополітичного контексту та його труднощів. Пропонована стаття досліджує особливості перекладу усного політичного дискурсу, розкриваючи проблеми, з якими часто стикаються перекладачі. Залучаючи різні лінгвістичні методи, дослідження спрямоване на порівняльний аналіз текстів першоджерела та цільової мови для виявлення спільних та відмінних ознак у передачі політично зумовлених значень. Крім того, стаття підкреслює значущість ролі перекладача у подоланні мовних та культурних розбіжностей. Перший виступає посередником між мовцями та слухачами і сприяє їхній ефективній взаємодії. Проведений комплексний аналіз оригінального тексту та тексту перекладу доводить, що політичний дискурс передбачає широке використання спонукальної риторики, емотивної лексики та стилістичних засобів. Політичні діячі часто використовують політичну мову та дискурс для формування громадської думки, виклику емоційних реакцій та ефектної передачі своїх повідомлень. Результати проведеного дослідження показують, що політична мова часто містить непрямі значення, виражаючи інформацію імпліцитно. Отже, компетентність та вміння перекладача розкривати приховану інформацію та правдиво її передавати у мові перекладу стають вирішальними. Крім того, дослідження підкреслює значну роль політичної термінології, яка часто містить негативні конотації, у формуванні світогляду аудиторії. Стилiстичні засоби, зокрема гіпербола, іронія та насмішка, часто застосовуються у політичному дискурсі для підсилення образності та риторичного впливу. Тому, перекладачам слід враховувати ширший контекст, політичну атмосферу та конкретні події, щоб точно відчувати приховані підтексти та наслідки політичних тверджень.

Ключові слова: політично зумовлені значення, лінгвістичні і культурні розбіжності, спонукальна риторика, імпліцитна інформація, політична термінологія, компетентність та вміння перекладача.

Abstract. Political discourse interpreting is a complex and multifaceted field requiring a deep understanding of the socio-political context and its

intricacies. The proposed article explores the peculiarities of political discourse interpreting, shedding light on the unique challenges faced by interpreters. Using various linguistic methods, this research delves into the comparative analysis of source language messages and corresponding target language ones to uncover similarities and differences in conveying politically embedded meanings. Furthermore, the article highlights the significance of the interpreter's role in bridging linguistic and cultural gaps, facilitating effective interaction between speakers and listeners. The conducted analysis reveals that political discourse involves the use of persuasive rhetoric, evocative lexical items, and stylistic devices. Political figures frequently employ political language and discourse to shape public opinion, evoke emotional responses, and effectively convey their messages. The research results demonstrate that political language often employs indirect meanings, leaving certain information unexpressed explicitly. Consequently, the interpreter's expertise and skills in deciphering implicit information and conveying it appropriately in the target language become crucial. Moreover, the study highlights the significance of political terminology in shaping the audience's worldviews, often carrying negative connotations. Stylistic devices such as hyperbole, irony, and mockery are commonly employed in political discourse to enhance imagery and rhetorical impact. Thus, interpreters must consider the broader context, encompassing the political atmosphere and specific events, in order to accurately capture the underlying connotations and implications of political statements.

Key words: *politically embedded meanings, linguistic and cultural gaps, persuasive rhetoric, implicit information, political terminology, interpreter's expertise and skills.*

Introduction. Political discourse interpreting occupies a dominant role in bridging linguistic and cultural gaps. Since societies are becoming increasingly interconnected and globalized, the need for effective interpretation of political communication is becoming ever more pressing. However, the issues interpreters face in this realm are multifaceted and require a deep understanding of the peculiarities inherent in political discourse. The formation of interpreters' language competence "should be aimed at developing the ability to use language material in the process of obtaining certain information during intercultural communication" [3, p. 241]. One of the key aspects shaping political discourse today is the concept of national identity. J. Rozenfeld claims that «postmodernism operates with the concept of nation that revolves around culture, geographical positioning, and language therefore cannot offer a suitable apparatus for redefining its meaning in the era of the digitalized transnational world» [6, p. 57]. Thus, redefining the meaning embedded in socio-political contexts in the contemporary era demands a clear understanding that transcends highly conventional boundaries.

The significance of political language is preeminent since it constructs powerful rhetoric and communicates intricate meanings embedded within

socio-political settings. M. Bánhegyi maintains that «the way translated texts are used (or misused and even abused) for political purposes has very complex social, psychological and textual implications» [2, p. 140]. In this respect, interpreters are entrusted with the onerous task of faithfully rendering complex political ideologies, concepts, beliefs, and rhetoric into the target language while ensuring the accurate transmission of the source language speaker's communicative intent.

Political discourse is a multifaceted and influential communication means reaching far beyond national boundaries. The former is a compelling research subject for scholars in interpretation and cross-cultural communication. S. Balogun and M. Murana assert that political speech, although delivered at intervals of several years, has far-reaching national and international implications, and «so listeners to it essentially cross borders» [1, p. 64]. In other words, political speeches attract audiences from various cultural backgrounds seeking to comprehend the complex messages embedded within them. In this respect, political interpreting is significant due to «its sensitivity and specificity, as well as the national ideology» [7, p. 218].

The current study aims to explore the peculiarities of political discourse interpretation, focusing on its unique challenges and strategies. By examining the latter, the paper can shed light on the interpreter's role in facilitating effective cross-cultural understanding within socio-political realms. The research seems relevant since it contributes to understanding of political discourse interpreting as a distinct field of the interpreter's activity. Furthermore, it can provide profound insights into the specific translation challenges and strategies that can inform the interpreters' training and professional development in this domain.

Methods and material. Different research methods have been applied to accomplish the intended aim. The comparative method made it possible to juxtapose the source language oral texts with the corresponding target ones, revealing both similarities and differences in conveying contextually embedded meanings. Correspondingly, contextual analysis has proven invaluable in examining the situational, cultural, and discursive factors surrounding political communicative acts. The descriptive method has helped make observations and generalizations of the obtained results.

In addition to linguistic methods, the study of political discourse interpreting has employed various materials to support the comprehensive analysis. A corpus of political speeches from different cultural and political contexts has been compiled. The former served as a valuable resource for examining the linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and cultural references embedded in political discourse. The speeches under consideration encompass diverse topics, ranging from electoral campaigns

and policy announcements to international relations and negotiations. Furthermore, video recordings of the interpreted political speeches have been collected to capture the interpreting process's intricacies and assess the interpretation's faithfulness. The transcripts of the interpreted speeches and their corresponding translations helped to make the detailed textual analysis and scrutinize the interpreters' linguistic choices and their impact on the overall interpretation.

Results and discussion. The interpreter emerges as a crucial facilitator in bridging the inherent linguistic and cultural divides, promoting effective interaction and understanding between speakers and listeners. Pöchhacker F. believes that «if what the interpreter says must make sense against the listener's horizon of socio-cultural knowledge, and if the interpreter is the only person capable of assessing that knowledge, he or she may well have to paraphrase, explain or simplify in order to achieve the communicative effect desired by the speaker» [5, p. 57]. The interpreter's expertise and sensitivity in striking this delicate balance contribute significantly to the efficacy and impact of the interpreted discourse, enabling meaningful exchanges and fostering mutual understanding.

When people from diverse cultural backgrounds gather and rely on interpreters to fulfill their communicative needs, «cultural differences can be reflected both in the language and in the way of thinking and behaviour of the participants» [4, p. 57]. In this regard, interpreters must navigate the intricate landscape of political language, balancing fidelity to the source message while adapting it to the target cultural context. In the realm of oral interpreting, political language assumes overriding importance as it actively constructs rhetoric and communicates the elaborate meanings embedded within political speeches. The former is indispensable «in convincing, mobilising, persuading and enlightening the citizenry» [1, p. 65]. Interpreters have devolved the stringent responsibility of faithfully rendering intricate political ideologies, concepts, beliefs, and rhetoric into the target language while ensuring the faithful transmission of the source language speaker's communicative intent.

A notable feature of political language lies in its tendency to employ indirect meanings, whereby not all information is explicitly stated. For instance, *His invasion cemented his long-running failure to diversify Russia's economy, to strengthen its human capital, to fully integrate the country into the global economy* [12]. The word «cement» is naturally used as a technical term meaning «to put cement on a surface or stick things together using cement». However, in political discourse it assumes a metaphoric function (*the invasion reinforced the persistent inability to achieve economic diversification*). It can be assumed that the target language equivalent successfully retained the pathos of the source

message: *Його вторгнення **закріпило** його тривалу неспроможність диверсифікувати економіку Росії, зміцнити її людський капітал, повністю інтегрувати країну у світову економіку.*

Upon decoding the implicit information retrieved in the message during interpreting, the interpreter often exerts to convey it in the appropriate target language units: *Russia is estimated to have suffered more than 100,000 casualties in the last six months alone, as Putin sends wave after wave of Russians into **a meat grinder** of his own making* [12]. – *За оцінками, лише за останні шість місяців Росія зазнала понад 100 тис. втрат, у той час як Путін кидає росіян хвиля за хвилю у створену ним **м'ясорубку**.* The translated version in Ukrainian accurately delivers both the explicit and implicit information expressed in the source language sentence. It maintains the metaphorical meaning of «*a military action, process, or campaign that results in a great amount of death, destruction, or devastation*». The interpretation strongly reflects A. Blinken's communicative intention to emphasize negative consequences of Putin's actions.

Political terminology forcefully transmits the complex and pressing nature of sociopolitical processes. The former takes an essential role in shaping a definite worldview among the potential audience. This is particularly evident in the choice of the lexis assigned to reporting events during the war in Ukraine: *Russia's invasion and **seizure** of Crimea* [15]; *Russia's purported **annexation*** [15]; *Russia's **occupation authorities*** [9]; *Russian soldiers collect votes for **self-styled 'referendums'*** [11]. The aforementioned expressions attach a strongly negative connotation, tarnishing an adversary image within the global audience and highlighting the illegitimacy of Russia's actions. The complexity of interpreting political terms often arises from their polysemy. While the meaning of a polysemous word belonging to other semantic fields can be clarified within a definite context, the meaning of a political term often remains ambiguous.

Politicians employ the first-person plural pronoun «we» to identify themselves with the audience, foster unity, and encourage the audience to adopt a trustworthy attitude towards them: ***We** have learned again that democracy is precious. So now, on this hallowed ground where just days ago violence sought to shake this Capitol's very foundation, **we** come together as one nation, under God, indivisible, to carry out the peaceful transfer of power as **we** have for more than two centuries. **We** look ahead in our uniquely American way – restless, bold, optimistic – and set our sights on the nation **we** know **we can be and we must be*** [13]. The repetition is frequently applied to set an emotional tone in the message and provoke intellectual responses by evaluating issues and actions.

Rendering such sentences generally does not pose difficulties for an expert in the field of interpretation. However, the sentence fragment containing repetition is neutralized in the target language text and, as a result, due to the omission loses its stylistic loading: *Ми знову дізналися, що демократія дорогоцінна. Тому зараз, на цьому священному місці, де всього кілька днів тому насильство намагалося розхитати саму основу Капітолію, ми зібралися разом, як одна нероздільна збережена Богом нація, щоб здійснити мирний перехід влади, так, як ми робили це понад два століття. Ми дивимося вперед на наш унікальний американський шлях, невтомний, сміливий, оптимістичний, і встановлюємо наші цілі, цілі нації, котрої – ми знаємо – ми можемо і повинні бути.* Thus, while interpreting political discourse, it becomes evident that interpreters do not make sufficient efforts to utterly uphold the pragmatics of the original text.

Politicians' speeches exhibit a persuasive rhetoric through a deliberate selection of evocative lexical items and syntactic structures heightening the emotional impact of the message. The public speeches delivered by V. Zelensky provide a notable example of this rhetorical approach. The next example demonstrates that the source language text aligns with the underlying citizens' message of being tired of politicians and their activity and adds a critical tone: *І моє обрання доводить – громадяни втомились від досвідчених, системних, надутих політиків, які за 28 років створили країну можливостей. Можливостей «відкатів», «потоків», «дерібанів»* [16]. However, an improper selection of interpretation strategies has resulted in a significant loss of the source language text's emotional intensity and rhetorical flourishes in the target language: *My election proves that our citizens are tired of the experienced, pompous system politicians who over the 28 years, have created a country of opportunities – the opportunities to bribe, steal and pluck the resources.* The faithfulness to the pragmatic function of the source language cultural references is not fully achieved.

Certain challenges arise from political realities pertaining to a particular political system and encompass unique with no counterparts in other systems: *На тимчасово окупованому Кримському півострові ось уже котрий день лунають вибухи – лише за 20 серпня відомо про «бавовну» в Євпаторії, поблизу Бахчисараю, в Севастополі та Заозерному* [14]. For the interpreter to fully adapt the text to the target language cultural context while maintaining the distinctive national identity of the source language culture, it is advisable to employ transcoding: *Explosions have been going off in the temporarily occupied Crimean peninsula for a day now – on August 20 alone, there were known «bavovna» in Yevpatoria, near Bakhchisaray, Sevastopol, and Zaozerne.*

Politicians express negative evaluations of their political opponents either directly or indirectly. They resort to invectives, labelling, constructions with negative connotations, and adopt similar tactics to convey criticism. Their strategic objective is to acquire or maintain power by exerting influence over the electorate through their discourse. The examples of direct insults can be observed in the statements made by presidential candidates in 2016 US debates: *She's done a **terrible job** for the African-Americans. She wants their vote, and she **does nothing**, and then she comes back four years later. It's **a horrible thing** she's doing. She's got **bad judgment**, and honestly, so bad that she **should never be president** of the United States. That I can tell you* [8]. The direct insult is primarily realized through expressions with negative evaluative adjectives, positively-marked lexical units combined with negation and threats containing semantic anchors.

Sometimes the sentence context itself may convey a negative connotation. Politicians may employ stylistic devices and expressive means such as hyperbole, irony, and mockery to strengthen the imagery: *Now, there may be some **new voices** in the presidential Republican choir, but **they're all singing the same old song**... A song called «Yesterday.» You know the one – **all our troubles look as though they're here to stay**... and we need a place to hide away... **They believe in yesterday*** [10].

The interpreter should consider the broader context in which the statements were made. It presupposes understanding the political atmosphere, the involved personalities, and the specificity of events. Contextual understanding helps to capture the underlying connotations and implications. Interpreters should be aware of the intention and tone expressed behind the statements: *Тепер у президентському республіканському хорі можуть з'явитися **нові голоси**, але всі вони **співають ту саму стару пісню** ... Пісня називається «Yesterday». Ти знаєш її – **всі наші неприємності виглядають так, ніби вони ніколи не зникнуть** ... і нам **потрібне десь сховатися** ... Вони **вірять в учораїній день**.*

In this case, the reference to the Republican presidential choir and the song «Yesterday» signifies the emergence of new voices within the choir but implies that they will merely echo the same outdated beliefs. The statement implies a sense of frustration and a desire to find the escape from persistent difficulties. The interpreter's awareness of these subtleties is crucial in accurately conveying the intended meaning to the target audience.

The complex nature of political language, with its embedded meanings and implicit information, poses challenges for interpreters, who must navigate through polysemy and decode hidden connotations. Furthermore, interpreters need to be sensitive to the employed persuasive

rhetoric, syntactic structures, stylistic devices and expressive means. Contextual understanding and awareness of underlying intentions and tones are essential for accurately capturing the political statements' connotations. Thus, interpreters play a crucial role in ensuring the faithful transmission of political ideologies, beliefs, and rhetoric while adapting them to the target language and cultural context.

Conclusions. The peculiarities of political discourse interpreting encompass various aspects, including the use of persuasive rhetoric, the selection of evocative lexical items, and the strategic use of stylistic devices. Political figures often use language and discourse to shape public opinion, provoke emotional responses, and convey messages persuasively. Political language often employs indirect meanings, where not all information is explicitly stated. The former necessitates the interpreter's expertise and skill in deciphering implicit information and conveying it appropriately in the target language. Political terminology occupies a conspicuous place in shaping the audience's worldviews and can carry negative connotations. Stylistic devices such as hyperbole, irony, and mockery are often employed to enhance imagery. Interpreters must consider the broader context, including the political atmosphere and specific events, to capture the underlying connotations and statements' implications.

The **prospects** for further research lie in the deeper comprehensive analysis of political rhetoric and peculiarities of rendering persuasive and manipulative strategies in interpreting.

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