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The linguo-pragmatic aspect of translating political media discourse

Лінгвопрагматичний аспект перекладу політичного медіадискурсу

Summary. *The translation of political media discourse presents significant challenges due to its complex, persuasive nature and the critical role of linguo-pragmatics. Political language often carries implicit meanings shaped by cultural and socio-political contexts, requiring translators to navigate these aspects while maintaining the original message's integrity. The paper explores the intricacies involved in translating political media, particularly TED Talks, to demonstrate how linguistic choices and expressive means impact the conveyance of political ideas across languages. The study employs a range of research methods, including continuous sampling of English and Ukrainian TED Talks speeches, comparative and contextual analyses, and the descriptive method. They were used to examine the translation strategies and their effectiveness in preserving the original media discourse's ideological and pragmatic implications. The obtained results reveal that translating political discourse involves more than linguistic accuracy. It requires careful consideration of ideological and cultural contexts. Translators must handle lexico-semantic choices, gendered language,*

stylistic devices, and intertextuality with precision to avoid unintended bias and preserve the intended impact. The study also highlights the impact of translation strategies on the reception of political messages. Translators' decisions, such as the use of feminitives or the preservation of metaphors and rhetorical questions, influence how audiences understand and engage with political content. The research emphasizes the importance of balancing fidelity to the source text with ethical considerations and the potential ideological effects of translation choices. Thus, the role of linguo-pragmatics in preserving the integrity and effectiveness of political communication across languages and cultures is of paramount importance.

Key words: political media discourse, linguo-pragmatics, translation, lexico-semantic choices, stylistic devices, translation strategies.

Анотація. Переклад політичного медіадискурсу створює значні виклики для перекладачів через свою складну природу та лінгвопрагматичні особливості. Політична мова часто несе в собі приховані значення, що формуються культурними та соціально-політичними контекстами і вимагають від перекладачів розуміння цих аспектів для збереження цілісності оригінального повідомлення. У пропонованій статті досліджуються труднощі перекладу політичного медіадискурсу, зокрема промов TED Talks, для того щоб показати, як вибір лексичних одиниць та засобів виразності впливають на передачу політичних ідей у різних мовах. Дослідження використовує ряд методів, включаючи метод суцільної вибірки з промов TED Talks в англійській та українській мовах, порівняльний та контекстуальний аналізи, а також описовий метод. Вони були застосовані для визначення перекладацьких стратегій і їхньої ефективності у збереженні ідеологічних та прагматичних аспектів оригінального медіадискурсу. Отримані результати свідчать, що переклад політичного дискурсу охоплює не лише мовну відповідність, але й вимагає врахування ідеологічних та культурних контекстів. Перекладачі повинні з точністю добирати лексико-семантичні еквіваленти, гендерну мову та стилістичні прийоми, щоб уникнути небажаного упередження і зберегти задуману мовцем інтенцію. Дослідження також підкреслює вплив перекладацьких стратегій на сприйняття політичних повідомлень. Рішення перекладачів, такі як використання фемінітивів або збереження метафор і риторичних питань, впливають на те, як глядачі розуміють і взаємодіють з політичним контентом. Дослідження підкреслює необхідність досягнення точності перекладу вихідного тексту з урахуванням етичних аспектів та можливих ідеологічних впливів перекладацьких рішень. Отже, роль лінгвопрагматики у забезпеченні ефективної політичної міжмовної та міжкультурної комунікації є надзвичайно важливою.

Ключові слова: політичний медіадискурс, лінгвопрагматичні особливості, переклад, лексико-семантичні еквіваленти, стилістичні прийоми, перекладацькі стратегії.

Introduction. The translation of political media discourse presents unique challenges, particularly within the linguo-pragmatic framework. Although «understanding the source language and target language

linguistic and cultural norms is a decisive factor in the process of translation» [1, p. 12], the former also focuses on the intended communicative effect and the socio-political context in which the discourse occurs.

Given the persuasive and often complicated nature of political language, a translator must navigate both the explicit and implicit meanings embedded in the discourse to accurately convey the intended message to a target audience. E. Gumul claims that «explicitation might be a powerful tool in the hands of translators and that seemingly innocent and neutral operations involved in language mediation might in certain cases have a considerable ideological impact» [4, p. 109]. Thus, the translator's responsibility is to maintain not only linguistic accuracy but also the ideological integrity of the source text, as any misinterpretation or alteration could potentially influence the perception of the political message by the target audience.

J. Archibald maintains that translators serve as «rewriters of texts» [2, p. 4], highlighting their critical role in reshaping political discourse through the translation process. This responsibility demands that translators not only comprehend the underlying ideologies of political texts and the intentions and communicative strategies embedded within them [2, p. 4], but also consider the ethical implications of their work. Furthermore, translators wield a significant degree of power in «selecting frames from the source text, although mostly indirectly under the influence of the agency manual or overarching framing of a society» [5, p. 130]. Thus, translators must maintain the delicate balance between fidelity to the source text and the ethical considerations of their role.

The current article aims to explore the challenges and strategies involved in translating political media discourse, emphasizing the crucial role of linguo-pragmatics in maintaining the integrity and impact of the original message across different languages and cultures.

Methods and material. To achieve the stated aim, a variety of research methods have been employed. Firstly, continuous sampling was used to compile a corpus of media matter in both the source and target languages, which was further subjected to comparative analysis. The latter enabled the identification of similarities and differences in the transmission of politically embedded meanings within the media landscape. Secondly, the contextual analysis was indispensable for examining the linguistic, cultural, and discursive features that underpin politically framed communicative acts. Lastly, the descriptive method played a crucial role in systematically observing the data and drawing generalizations from the obtained findings.

A carefully selected corpus of TED Talks speeches on politics in English and Ukrainian was assembled, providing a critical resource for

analyzing the linguo-pragmatic dimensions of political media discourse. Given the political climate in Ukraine, the research was primarily conducted on speeches delivered by political analysts, activists, and human rights lawyers addressing the war in Ukraine. The former allowed for an in-depth examination of the translators' decision-making processes and the impact of these choices on the overall quality of the interpretation, which is very important in the translation process since «the essence of translation is nothing but decision making» [1, p. 13]. Finally, the corpus facilitated a thorough textual analysis, enabling a detailed exploration of the translation strategies employed by translators and their effects on the translation outcomes.

Results and discussion. In the realm of political media discourse, the translation of political texts presents a complex challenge due to their abundant use of «culturally significant lexical units revealing universal and specific features of national cultures» [7, p. 387]. The sensitivity of political language, as emphasized by E. Gumul, further complicates the translator's task, requiring careful consideration of the linguo-pragmatic implications embedded within the source language text. Moreover, as J. Milton and S. Cobelo point out, translation capacity often emerges as «the biggest bottleneck» [6, p. 95], limiting the ability to convey intricate meanings effectively across languages.

Over the recent years TED Talks have emerged as a significant object of research in the field of political media discourse translation due to their unique position at the intersection of public communication, education, and global influence. These speeches, often delivered by thought leaders and politicians, are «concise, logically thought out, transparent, clear, authoritative, dialogic, and persuasive» [3, p. 313]. Furthermore, they encapsulate a blend of culturally embedded references and ideologically charged content. The translation of TED Talks speeches, therefore, offers valuable insights into the challenges and strategies involved in conveying complex political ideas to a worldwide audience, highlighting the role of translation in shaping global political narratives.

Lexico-semantic choices play a critical role in political media reporting. The former profoundly impact the tone, precision, and overall impression of the narratives presented. Each word chosen, along with the its connotation, has the potential to shape how audiences perceive events, comprehend political matters, and develop their viewpoints.

A key lexical characteristic of political media discourse is the frequent use of political, legal and military terminology. English-language TED Talks speeches are replete with terminology like *chancellor*, *defense policy*, *national security*, *infrastructure*, *president*, *rule of law*, *democracy*, *domestic policy*, *opponent*, *negotiation*, *foreign minister*, *humanitarian*

corridors, *civilians*, *invasion*, *disarmament*, *the disposition of troops*, *to retaliate*, *a no-fly zone* and *diplomacy* [9]. These terms do not merely convey the legalities and policies at play. Moreover, they also influence public perception by framing the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine within the context of international laws and norms.

The incorporation of proper nouns in TED Talks speeches enhances precision, clarity, and specificity in political communication. The former, distinctly identifying particular individuals (*Olaf Scholz*, *Emmanuel Macron*, *Putin*, *Zelenskyy*), places (*Europe*, *the United States*, *Poland*, *Bulgaria*, *China*, *Brazil*, *Hungary*), or institutions and political bodies (*Eurasia Group*, *the NATO*, *the European Union*, *the Democratic and Republican Party*), play a crucial role in preventing ambiguity, thereby improving the overall coherence and effectiveness of political media discourse.

Intertextuality plays a pivotal role in political media reporting. The former enables the embedding of media texts within a broader network of cultural, historical, and political references. This technique not only enhances the persuasive power of political reporting but also fosters a sense of continuity and legitimacy by linking present developments to established ideologies or historical precedents.

For instance, the following TED Talk on War in Ukraine contains numerous intertextual elements to convey a powerful message about the significance of recent geopolitical events: *I'll start by saying that in my lifetime, the most important geopolitical artifact is <u>the fall of the Berlin Wall</u>. I mean, you see it if you go into <u>the new NATO headquarters in Brussels</u>, just built a few years ago ... I think that in 30 years' time, and I fear that in 30 years' time, if we look back, a second most important geopolitical artifact will be a piece of the rubble of <u>the Maidan in Kyiv</u>* [9].

The reference to the «*fall of the Berlin Wall*» serves as a potent intertextual anchor, evoking a well-known historical event that symbolizes the end of the Cold War and the triumph of democratic ideals over authoritarianism. This allusion to a universally recognized moment in history sets the stage for the comparison with the current situation in Kyiv, thereby framing the Ukrainian struggle within a broader narrative of freedom and resistance against oppression. Consequently, the reference to the «*new NATO headquarters in Brussels*» further reinforces the intertextual connection, as the NATO is historically associated with the defense of democratic values in Europe, particularly in the post-Cold War era. Thus, the speaker links the current conflict in Ukraine to the broader mission of the alliance, suggesting that the events in Kyiv are not just of local or regional importance but have significant implications for the entire Western world.

Finally, the phrase «*the rubble of the Maidan in Kyiv*» introduces a direct intertextual reference to the Euromaidan protests of 2013-2014,

which took place in Ukraine's recent history. This comparison between the Berlin Wall and the rubble of Maidan implies that the Maidan is another landmark event in the struggle for freedom and democracy, similar to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The speaker's fear that this rubble will become the «*second most important geopolitical artifact*» in 30 years highlights the potential historical significance of the Ukrainian conflict, positioning it as a defining moment in contemporary geopolitics. Thus, intertextuality serves as a rhetorical strategy that can subtly influence public opinion, as it guides the interpretation of events through the lens of familiar narratives, ultimately shaping the collective understanding of political realities.

The translation of the political media discourse presents several challenges, especially considering its intricate nature. Political language is often sensitive, and the translation process must focus on the message's pragmatic value. The translator's choices can either preserve the neutrality of the media text or infuse it with unintended bias. For instance, the use of feminitives in translation is a complex issue, particularly when it comes to rendering titles or professions in languages that have grammatical gender, like Ukrainian.

In the examples provided, the translation choices reflect different approaches to gendered language in the target text: *I have traveled here from Kyiv, where I am a human rights lawyer* [8]. – *Я приїхала сюди з Києва, де я адвокатеса з прав людини* [12]. *As a human rights lawyer, I found myself in a weird position* [8]. – *Як адвокат з прав людини, я опинилася в дивному становищі* [12]. In the first case, the translator chose to use *адвокатеса*, which reflects a growing trend in Ukrainian to create and use feminitive forms of traditionally male-dominated professions. Its use specifically highlights the speaker's gender, aligning with feminist linguistic practices that emphasize visibility and recognition of women in various professions. This choice enhances the sentence's relevance in this context where the speaker's gender is important for social and political reasons. However, in the second sentence the word *адвокат* is used in its masculine form, which maintains a more neutral tone, focusing on the profession itself rather than the gender of the person holding it. Both options are acceptable, but they serve different purposes and resonate differently with the audience. However, their inconsistent use can create confusion or distract from the message being conveyed.

In political media discourse, stylistic devices and expressive means are essential tools for creating pragmatic effects. They shape how messages are received, interpreted, and emotionally processed by audiences. TED Talks speeches often use metaphors to create a specific tone or style, which can be lost if metaphors are not preserved in translation.

The metaphor *shrouded in a sort of fog* in the following sentence is evocative, capturing the audience's imagination and conveying the idea of war as an event that is difficult to fully understand: *It's difficult to think clearly of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, because wars, while they unfold, they're kind of <u>shrouded in a sort of fog</u>* [9]. The translator's choice to render this metaphor into Ukrainian as *оповиті туманом* successfully preserves the original imagery and emotional impact: *Важко осмислити російське вторгнення в Україну, адже війни, поки вони тривають, ніби <u>оповиті туманом</u>* [13]. In this case, the metaphor contributes to a tone of caution and reflection, underscoring the uncertainty of the ongoing conflict. The translator's choice to retain the metaphor ensures consistency in tone and style, maintaining the integrity of the speaker's message in the translated text.

Rhetorical questions are used in TED Talks speeches on politics to engage the audience, provoke thought, or emphasize a point without expecting an answer: *How we people, in the 21st century, will defend human beings, their lives, their freedom and their dignity? Can we rely on the law? Or does only brutal force matter?* [8]. They are designed to make the audience reflect on the contemporary state of human rights and the efficacy of legal resolutions versus the use of force. Translating these questions into Ukrainian as *Як ми, люди, у XXI столітті, будемо захищати людей, їх життя, їхню свободу та гідність? Чи можемо ми покладатися на закон? Або має значення лише жорстока сила?* [12], the translator effectively retains the original's evocative power and ensures that the Ukrainian audience is equally engaged and provoked to consider the gravity of the issues presented.

Repetition is another powerful stylistic device in political media discourse, serving multiple functions that enhance the effectiveness of communication. The analysis of TED Talks speeches has shown that speakers frequently employ repetition of various types. For instance, anaphora in the sentences *Because <u>this is</u> not just <u>a war</u> between two states. <u>This is a war</u> between two systems: authoritarianism and democracy* [8] serves to underscore the gravity of the conflict being discussed. The speaker emphasizes that the conflict transcends a mere territorial dispute between two nations. On the contrary, it is framed as a fundamental clash between opposing ideological systems – authoritarianism and democracy.

The Ukrainian translation successfully preserves this anaphoric structure, ensuring that the emphasis and rhythm of the original are retained: *Тому що <u>це</u> не просто <u>війна</u> між двома державами. <u>Це війна</u> між двома системами: авторитаризмом і демократією* [12]. Furthermore, the translation preserves the original's intent, ensuring that the audience is similarly engaged and the gravity of the message is effectively communicated.

The use of linking in the sentence *I thought it was just <u>like the movies</u>, but <u>the movies</u> had not conveyed them in the powerful image that I was seeing, full of bright, red and orange and gray, and a full circle of explosion* [10] serves to connect various sensory impressions and thoughts, creating a vivid and cohesive narrative. The phrase *but the movies had not conveyed them* establishes a contrast between the speaker's expectations, shaped by cinematic portrayals of war, and the stark reality they are witnessing.

The translation of the sentence into Ukrainian preserves the linking of sensory impressions and thoughts effectively, achieving a similar pragmatic effect as the original text: *Я подумала, що все це <u>як в кіно</u> – тільки от <u>в кіно</u> не показують такого вражаючого видовища, котре постало перед моїми очима: весь палаюче-червоний оранжевий, сірий круг вибуху* [11]. The translator's choice to render *I thought it was just like the movies* as *Я подумала, що все це як в кіно* maintains the initial link between the speaker's expectations and the reality they encounter. The continuation with *тільки от в кіно не показують такого вражаючого видовища* mirrors the contrast established in the original sentence between the cinematic portrayals and the actual experience.

To conform to the linguistic norms of the target language and ensure the desired pragmatic effect in translation, it is often necessary for the translator to employ syntactic translation transformations. Thus, to interpret the sentence into Ukrainian, the translator employed syntactic replacement and outer partitioning, while still effectively preserving the original linking: *«War,» a friend of mine said, «is not about sound at all. It is actually about <u>silence, the silence</u> of humanity»* [10]. – *Один мій друг сказав: «Війна – це не лише звуки. Насправді, це <u>тиша. Тиша людяності</u>»* [11]. Such transformations are crucial for maintaining the meaning and emotional impact of the original text, thereby enhancing the overall coherence and faithfulness of the translation.

The use of framing in the sentence *<u>Everything</u> in my room was shaking – my heart, my windows, my bed, <u>everything</u>* [10] serves to emphasize the intensity and all-encompassing nature of the experience. The repetition of *everything* at the beginning and end of the sentence creates a sense of closure and reinforces the overwhelming impact of the event on the speaker, highlighting that the entire environment, as well as their emotional state, was affected. However, it is not preserved in the Ukrainian translation. The latter instead focuses on a more detailed description of the elements that were shaking and then emphasizes the speaker's heart with a vivid phrase: *В кімнаті все тряслось – <u>вікна, ліжко</u> – <u>моє серце шалено калатало</u>* [11]. The omission of framing could be attributed to the translator's aim to enhance clarity in the target language.

Conclusions. The translation of political media discourse, particularly in the context of TED Talks, necessitates a comprehensive approach due to the intricate nature of political language and its culturally embedded lexicon. The role of proper nouns and specific terminology in maintaining precision and clarity in political media discourse further emphasizes the need for choosing meticulous translation strategies.

Moreover, the analysis of stylistic devices and expressive means reveals their key role in shaping the pragmatic effect of political media discourse. TED Talks, with their blend of authoritative and persuasive language, illustrate the importance of preserving these rhetorical techniques to maintain the integrity of the speaker's message. The use of metaphors and rhetorical questions serves to engage audiences and provoke thought, while repetition and framing reinforce key points and emotional impact. Translators must navigate these stylistic elements carefully to ensure that the translated text conveys the same level of engagement and impact as the original, thus preserving the overall communicative effectiveness of political media discourse.

The prospects for further research lie in the detailed comparative translation analysis of media discourse on diverse topics, regarding its linguo-pragmatic peculiarities.

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