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ACCUSATION TACTICS IN AMERICAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH-UKRAINIAN TRANSLATION

Summary. This research paper examines the accusation tactic employed in American political discourse and the strategies of its rendering in English-Ukrainian translation. The study analyzes linguistic means used by politicians to accuse opponents and the challenges encountered in translating these accusations into Ukrainian. A corpus of modern American political texts and their Ukrainian translations is analyzed, including public speeches, debates, and interviews of modern US politicians. Common markers of accusation tactics in American political discourse are identified, and the translation strategies used to convey these markers in Ukrainian are evaluated for their effectiveness. Within the research, translation strategies employed are categorized as reproductive or adaptive. Reproductive strategies aim to maintain the intensity and negative evaluation of the source text, while adaptive strategies involve pragmatic shifts to effectively convey accusation tactics in the target language. Reproductive strategies proved successful in conveying the accusatory tone and rhetorical power of the source text in cases of similar connotations and stylistic coloring in both languages. However, challenges arise in finding equivalent expressions with the same negative connotations and resonance with the target audience. Adaptive strategies, such as neutralization, substitution, and stylistic amplification, address linguistic and cultural differences, particularly in rendering negative evaluative metaphors, phraseological units, and lexemes with high levels of evaluative or expressive load. This research contributes to a better understanding of accusation tactics in American political discourse and the challenges in translating them. It emphasizes the need for translators to be aware of the pragmatic nature of these tactics and find effective ways to convey their impact in different cultural and linguistic contexts.

Key words: translation strategies, political discourse, confrontation strategy, accusation tactic, adaptation.

Problem statement. The increasing polarization in modern society and the negative dynamics in conflict resolution have significantly influenced US political discourse at the current stage of its development. The escalating confrontation between the Republican and Democratic parties, conflicts within the political elite and the White House administration, growing discontent among social groups and minorities, the spread of "hate speech" beyond social media, and heightened tensions on the global stage have all contributed to increased aggression and hostility in political communication [1]. This shift has disrupted generally accepted conventional norms in political discourse, leading to the widespread use of confrontation strategies and tactics. One of the most productive tactics of the communicative strategy of confrontation is **accusation**, which involves the strategic use of lexical units

and rhetorical techniques to discredit opponents and manipulate the audience for desired pragmatic effects.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The communicative tactic of accusation has gained attention from scholars studying confrontational and manipulative strategies [See, e.g. 2–4]. The accusation tactic is referred to as a linguistic way of implementing the communicative strategy of discrediting or "downplay" [3]. It aims at a negative characterization of the actions, behaviour or personality of a political opponent, which is implemented explicitly. Its inherent characteristic is an indication of the negative consequences created by activities of the discreditation subject.

Yu. Sudus notes that there is no universal formula for constructing accusatory statements [4, p. 54]. Speaker A, typically a politician, directs accusations towards the object of discreditation, which can be their political opponent, potential voters, journalists, or media figures. These statements are often activated by lexical items that carry a negative evaluative component and are typically expressed through direct assertive speech acts.

Speaker's intentions in making accusations are usually evident from the context [4]. In face-to-face interactions, the goal is typically to influence the addressee's self-esteem and provoke a specific reaction. However, in political communication, this tactic is predominantly employed in the presence of third parties, such as the audience, aiming to discredit the opponent and tarnish their positive image within the social environment. In both cases, the accusation targets the positive face of the communicator, i.e., the desire to be well-regarded in society [5].

Building upon the existing body of research into the particular aspects of translating political discourse texts [1; 6], this study aims to fill the gap in the research by focusing on the translation of accusation tactics in the political discourse. The rich functional and discursive potential and the pragmatic nature of this confrontation tactic raises the important issue of **rendering accusation tactic in political discourse translation**, which often becomes a sensitive material, taking into account both the ethical issues of conveying negative pragmatic and semantic components of evaluation in translation, as well as the lexical, grammatical and cultural asymmetry between the two language and political systems. The nature of the communicative situation of political interaction places certain demands and limitations on the translator. At the same time, the correct rendering of communicative strategies and tactics helps to avoid misunderstandings between communicators in the process of intercultural interaction. Furthermore, ensuring the accurate interpretation of the speaker's intention and subsequently conveying it appropriately in the translation of political discourse is a crucial requirement

that enhances the communicative effectiveness of top-level negotiations, which determines the **relevance** of this study.

Thus, **the aim of the paper** is to study the translation of accusation tactic markers in American political discourse into the Ukrainian language. **The research objectives** are to identify the most common markers of accusation tactics used in American political discourse, to analyze the translation strategies used to convey these markers in Ukrainian, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in conveying the intended meaning.

The materials used in this study include a corpus of American political discourse texts (the source language texts) and their translations into Ukrainian (the target language texts). The source language corpus consisted of fragments of the latest public speeches, addresses, debates and interviews of US political actors such as Donald Trump, Joseph Biden, Antony Blinken and Mitt Romney (130 text fragments accounting to more than 830 units under analysis). The sample material reflected the extensive use of confrontation strategies and tactics, namely the accusation tactic and various linguistic and expressive markers of its implementation.

The study was conducted in three stages. In the first stage, the corpus of American political discourse texts and their translations into Ukrainian were collected. In the second stage, the sample material was thoroughly analyzed and screened in order to single out the examples of using accusation tactics. The most common markers of accusation tactics used in American political discourse were identified through a qualitative analysis of the corpus. In the third stage, the translation strategies and methods used to convey these markers in Ukrainian were analyzed, and the effectiveness of these strategies in conveying the intended meaning was evaluated.

Methodology. The study employed a method of *qualitative analysis* to identify main linguistic and rhetorical markers of accusation tactics in the source texts. The *comparative method* was used to single out the translation strategies and methods used to convey accusation tactics markers in the text of translation, as well as to establish any recurrent factors and patterns, that influence the choice of translator’s techniques while dealing with such texts. The theoretical framework for this paper is based on the functional-

pragmatic approach to translation, which emphasizes the importance of context and communicative function in translation. Thus, the *method of pragmatic analysis* was applied to examine the overall characteristics of the text, including its general nature, contextual factors, and the immediate communication situation. Additionally, it considered the utilization of discursive strategies, the significance of non-verbal elements and other essential pragmatic elements.

Discussion and Results.

The phonetic, morphological, lexical and syntactic analysis of the texts that constituted our sample made it possible to establish a ratio of the linguistic markers of confrontation that represent the accusation tactics at different levels of the language system (Table 1).

The research has shown that such lexical markers as lexemes with an inherent negative evaluation, metaphors, phraseological units, colloquialisms and intensifiers are the main means of expressing the communicative tactic of accusation in modern American political texts. Syntactic markers (in particular, elliptical constructions, topicalisation, inversions and repetitions) also play an important supporting role in the successful functioning of this tactic and significantly enhance its rhetorical impact.

The comparison of the translation strategies used in rendering accusation tactic markers allowed us to trace the ratio of the use of reproductive and adaptive strategies in translation (Figure 1), as well as to study the challenges of rendering the linguistic markers of these tactics in Ukrainian translation.

Reproductive translation strategies (61%) play a crucial role in accurately conveying the content, meaning, and tone of a source text confrontation markers in the target language by rendering the source text means as close to the original as possible. In employing reproductive strategies, translators strive to maintain the same level of intensity, impact, and negative evaluation conveyed by the original linguistic markers. This involves identifying the appropriate equivalents in the target language that carry similar negative connotations and rhetorical force. The research showed that by carefully selecting lexemes with inherently negative evaluations and using metaphors, phraseological units,

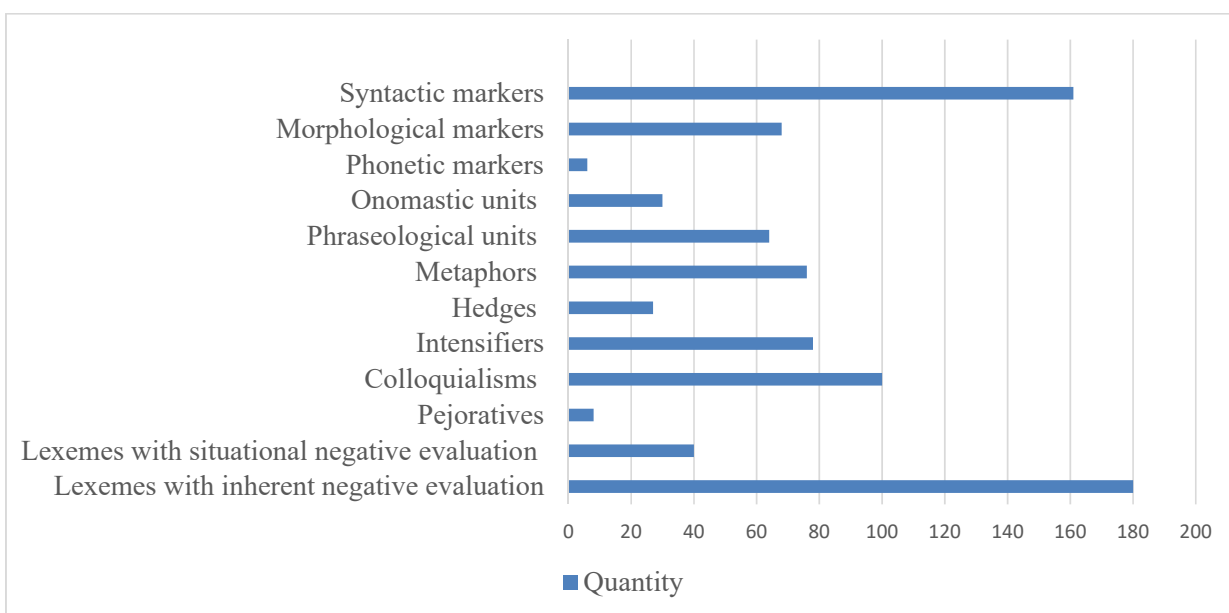


Table 1. Linguistic markers of the accusation communicative tactic in American political discourse

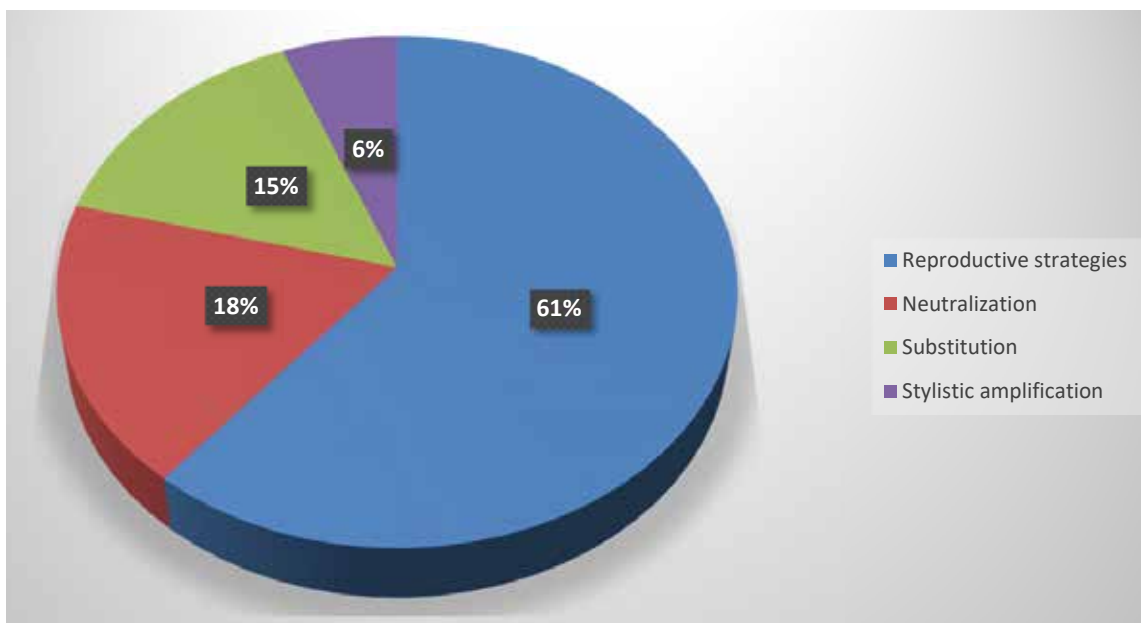


Fig. 1. Translation strategies for reproducing the communicative tactics of accusation in US political discourse into Ukrainian

colloquialisms, and intensifiers that are characteristic of the target language, translators can effectively reproduce the accusatory tone and persuasive power of the source text in a fairly high amount of text. These strategies also demonstrated the high level of efficiency while dealing with syntactic means found in accusation tactics. However, it is important to acknowledge that reproductive strategies may encounter challenges when dealing with linguistic and cultural differences.

Regarding the use of adaptive strategies (39%), the study of the sample material revealed main types of pragmatic shifts, which were subsequently examined and classified into three fundamental groups. By considering the nature of the pragmatic shift occurring in the translation (whether the expressiveness of an accusation was levelled, intensified or preserved by replacing the marker with its equivalent in the target language) we identified the following adaptive strategies: neutralization (18%), substitution (15%) and stylistic amplification (6%) [7, p. 5]. These three local strategies are employed in translation through the application of translation transformations. The choice to employ certain transformations is influenced by the translator's decisions aimed at accurately reproducing the pragmatic force of particular communicative tactics and the means by which they are expressed.

A few examples from the analysis of the data related to the strategies of rendering particular linguistic means of accusation tactic are provided below.

One of the most potent marker of accusation tactics in American political discourse is the strategic use of **lexemes with inherent negative evaluation**. These lexemes can take various forms and be of different parts of speech. By using them politicians seek to denigrate, condemn, or criticize their targets, often with the intention of discrediting their character or actions. However, the translation of lexemes with inherent negative evaluation poses challenges for translators. It requires finding equivalent terms or expressions in the target language that carry the same negative connotation and effectively convey the accusatory tone. Translators must navigate cultural nuances, consider the rhetorical impact, and maintain the confrontational

intent while ensuring the translated text resonates with the target audience.

In the following example the US President Joe Biden employs the tactic of accusation which manifests itself through an abundant use of verbs which actualize strong negative evaluation: *President Putin's decision has ripped apart families, forced millions from their communities, destroyed homes, schools, hospitals, and other civilian infrastructure, exacerbated a global food crisis, destabilized energy markets, and undermined international peace and security. This war has shredded Russia's international reputation, left Russia weakened and isolated, and decimated its economy* (Blinken) [8] – *Рішення президента Путіна призвело до розлучення сімей, змусило мільйони людей покинути свої громади, спричинило знищення будинків, шкіл, лікарень та іншої цивільної інфраструктури, загострило глобальну продовольчу кризу, дестабілізувало енергетичні ринки та підірвало міжнародний мир та безпеку. Ця війна знищила міжнародну репутацію Росії, залишила Росію ослабленою та ізольованою й зруйнувала її економіку.*

The statement makes use of lexemes with inherent negative evaluation to strongly emphasize the negative consequences of Putin's actions. These lexemes are chosen deliberately to create a highly critical and condemnatory tone. The choice of words such as "ripped apart," "destroyed," "exacerbated," "destabilized," "undermined," "shredded," "weakened," "isolated," and "decimated" all carry a strong negative connotation and evoke a sense of destruction, suffering, and loss. When translating such lexemes into Ukrainian, one of the challenges lies in finding equivalent words or expressions that effectively convey the same level of negativity and evoke the intended emotional response in the target audience. The translator succeeded in rendering the overall confrontation tone of the statement. However, such equivalents as "ripped apart families" – «призвело до розлучення сімей», "shredded Russia's international reputation" – «знищила міжнародну репутацію Росії» demonstrate the lower emotional load as their counterparts in the original. This allows us to say that they underwent a certain level of neutralization in translation.

Metaphors and **phraseological units** are frequently used by modern American politicians as markers of accusation tactics and serve as a powerful rhetorical device to convey negative evaluations, criticize opponents, and persuade the audience. Reproductive strategies, as observed in the research findings, constitute a significant portion of the translation strategies employed in rendering these markers in Ukrainian translation. This approach is often chosen when the metaphors in the source text have direct cultural or linguistic equivalents in the target language. Reproductive strategies ensure that the confrontational nature and impact of the metaphors are maintained, allowing the translated discourse to resonate with the target audience. Let us consider the use of reproductive strategies of rendering metaphors in examples.

While accusing Hillary Clinton of corruption, Donald Trump uses the "puppet" metaphor, which is common in American political discourse and indicates that Clinton's actions are determined by the interests and desires of her influential supporters rather than the electorate. The metaphor is further developed in the immediate context: "she is their puppet" and "they pull the strings". Thanks to the clarity of the image to the Ukrainian recipient "puppet – a person who blindly follows someone's will" and "pulling the strings – manipulating; using one's influence and power", the translation manages to reproduce the necessary connotations and preserve the image: *Big business, elite media and major donors are lining up behind the campaign of my opponent because they know she will keep our rigged system in place. She is their puppet, and they pull the strings* [9] – *Великий бізнес, елітні ЗМІ та впливові спонсори вишикувалися в чергу, щоб підтримати кампанію моєї опонентки, тому що вони знають, що вона збереже нашу роздубану систему... Вона їхня маріонетка, тож вони смикають за ниточки.*

Reproductive strategies show the similar level of efficiency while rendering **phraseological units** within the accusation tactic. In the following example, the phraseological unit "a wolf in sheep's clothing" is modified to enhance the rhetorical effect of the accusation tactic. The modified expression "a wolf in wolf's clothing" indicates that the reform does not even try to hide its true nature or intentions – it openly positions itself as a wolf, embodying the negative aspects attributed to it. Calqueing the original expression in the translation by similarly modifying the target language phraseological unit is understandable to the target audience and fully conveys all the necessary connotations: *Obamacare is a wolf in wolf's clothing – it's expensive, intrusive and unconstitutional* [10] – *Обатакаре – це вовк у вовчій шкурі: вона дорога, агресивна і не відповідає Конституції США.*

However, pragmatic and semantic discrepancies between the images underlying metaphors in the source and target languages may push translators towards the use of adaptive strategies. The most prolific adaptive strategy in rendering metaphors is substitution.

For example, during the presidential debate, Joe Biden accused Donald Trump of failing to resist Russian pressure, calling the former American leader "Putin's puppy". The metaphor of a "puppy" suggests subservience and lack of autonomy. It frames Trump as weak, easily influenced, and lacking independent decision-making. In the translation, the metaphorical unit was changed to the Ukrainian equivalent "маріонетка", which conveys the semantics of the original image, namely "a

weak-willed, coward person who is easily manipulated", which preserves the negative evaluation and expressiveness inherent in the accusation: *The fact is that I've gone head-to-head with Putin and made it clear to him, we're not going to take any of his stuff. He's Putin's puppy. He still refuses to even say anything to Putin about the bounty on the heads of American soldiers* [11]. – *Справа в тому, що я зустрічався з Путіним віч-на-віч і дав йому зрозуміти, що ми не збираємося забирати нічого з його майна. Він – путінська маріонетка. Він досі відмовляється навіть говорити Путіну про винагороду за голови американських солдатів.*

Neutralization is also proved to be a frequent strategy for rendering metaphorical and phraseological units in confrontational political discourse. It suggests the need to tone down or eliminate the metaphorical aspect of the expression, opting for a more straightforward rendering that conveys the accusatory message without relying heavily on metaphorical language.

The following example shows a metaphor and a phraseological unit used applied in the accusation towards senator Paul Ryan, who tried to overhaul the Medicare proposal. The metaphor "to annihilate Medicare" suggests complete destruction or elimination, implying that his policies would have devastating consequences for Medicare. Additionally, the phraseological unit "to the knife" intensifies the accusation by suggesting a ruthless and uncompromising dedication to protect the defense budget, even at the expense of other priorities or programs. The rhetorical power of the expression is also intensified by phonetic device of alliteration ("defend the defense budget"), which makes the statement more memorable and impactful to the listener or reader. All three markers are neutralized in translation: *After all, it is Mr. Ryan who has built his career on a plan to annihilate Medicare, all the while defending the "defense" budget to the knife* [12] – *Зрештою, саме пан Райан побудував свою кар'єру на плані знищення програми медичного страхування, захищаючи "оборонний" бюджет до останнього.*

The translation of intensifiers also demonstrated some tendencies. Intensifiers are the linguistic means that add emphasis, intensity and emotional weight to statements, allowing politicians to express their confrontational position more effectively and influence public opinion. The most common class of intensifiers found in the analyzed material were adjectives that modify nouns (enormous, complete, immense), adverbs that intensify verbs (very, greatly, rather, too, extremely, violently, desperately, passionately) and noun intensifiers (hell, damn). In combination with such an intensifier, all the connotations of the words combined with it are strengthened due to the fact that the original meaning of the modifying words is not perceived directly, but in the form of a particularly strong bound. The cases of rendering intensifiers in our sample showed fairly high rate of translation with the help of reproductive strategies: *Extraordinary brutality from Russian forces and mercenaries. They have committed depravities, crimes against humanity, without shame or compunction. They've targeted civilians with death and destruction. Used rape as a weapon of war* [13]. – *Надзвичайна жорстокість російських військ і найманців. Вони скоювали злочини проти людства, вони умисно цілили по цивільному населенню, використовували вбивства як зброю.*

However, we also observed cases of amplifying the stylistic coloring of the original text in translation, including the attempts

to compensate for expressive, associative or symbolic losses of original confrontational load in the translated text. For example, the use of stylistic amplification was observed in the following example: *The senator blasted the proposed policy, calling it a threat to our fundamental rights* [14]. – *Сенатор вицент розкритикував запропоновану стратегію, назвавши її загрозою для наших основоположних прав*. The lexeme "to blast" belongs to a colloquial register. It typically conveys a sense of strong criticism, vehement opposition, or forceful expression of disapproval, and has strong inherent negative connotations. In the translation the intensifier "вицент" was added to bridge the discrepancy in connotation, thus enhancing the stylistic and emotional impact of the source text.

Conclusion. The research focused on studying the features of rendering accusation tactics of American political discourse in the Ukrainian translation. Through a qualitative analysis of a corpus of American political discourse texts and their translations into Ukrainian, the study identified the most common markers of accusation tactics and analyzed the translation strategies used to convey these markers. The effectiveness of these strategies in conveying the intended meaning was also evaluated.

The findings revealed that lexical markers, including negatively evaluated lexemes, metaphors, phraseological units, colloquialisms, and intensifiers, are prominent means of expressing accusation in American political discourse. Syntactic markers such as elliptical constructions, inversions, topicalization, and repetitions further enhance the rhetorical impact. It is crucial to accurately translate these markers to preserve the pragmatic effect of the original text.

Translation strategies were categorized as reproductive and adaptive. Reproductive strategies aimed to maintain the intensity and negative evaluation conveyed by the original markers. They proved effective in conveying accusatory tones and persuasive power, particularly with negatively evaluated lexemes, intensifiers, and most syntactic markers. However, challenges arose due to linguistic and cultural differences.

Adaptive strategies involved pragmatic shifts, such as neutralization, substitution, and stylistic amplification, to adapt the markers to the target language and culture. These strategies successfully bridged cultural and pragmatic gaps when translating negative evaluative metaphors, phraseological units, and some expressive lexemes like colloquialisms.

The research highlighted the importance of accurately conveying the content, meaning, and tone of accusation tactics in translation, considering cultural nuances, rhetorical impact, and maintaining the confrontational intent. Prospects for further research may include the comprehensive study of other communicative tactics of the confrontation strategy (e.g. insult, condemnation, ridiculing, name-calling etc) in modern American political discourse and the effectiveness of applying translation strategies in conveying the pragmatic load of the original.

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Севастиук М. І. Відтворення тактики звинувачення американського політичного дискурсу в українському перекладі

Анотація. У статті розглянуто особливості використання тактики звинувачення в сучасному американському політичному дискурсі, а також основні стратегії її відтворення в англо-українському перекладі. Проаналізовано мовні засоби, що використовуються політиками в рамках звинувачення, а також труднощі, що виникають при відтворенні цих засобів українською мовою. Аналіз корпусу сучасних американських політичних текстів (зокрема публічних промов, звернень, дебатів та інтерв'ю сучасних американських політиків) та їхніх перекладів українською мовою дав змогу виявити основні маркери тактики звинувачення в американському політичному дискурсі та оцінити ефективність перекладацьких стратегій, що використовуються для передачі цих маркерів українською мовою. У межах дослідження перекладацькі стратегії були класифіковані на репродуктивні та адаптивні. Репродуктивні стратегії спрямовані на збереження інтенсивності негативної оцінки вихідного тексту за допомогою схожих засобів мови перекладу, тоді як адаптивні стратегії передбачають прагматичні зміни

у відтворенні тактики звинувачення в мові перекладу. Репродуктивні стратегії показали ефективність у передачі оцінки та риторичної сили вихідного тексту у випадках співпадіння конотацій та стилістичного забарвлення в обох мовах. Однак, було виявлено труднощі з пошуком еквівалентів для деяких маркерів, які потребували адаптації до цільової культури чи мови, або певної зміни конфронтаційного навантаження для кращої рецепції потенційною аудиторією. Адаптивні стратегії, такі як нейтралізація, типізація та емпатизація, враховують лінгвістичні та культурні відмінності, зокрема, при передачі негативних оціночних метафор, фразеологізмів

та лексем з високим рівнем оцінного або експресивного навантаження. Дослідження сприяє кращому розумінню тактики звинувачення в американському політичному дискурсі та проблем, пов'язаних з її перекладом. Воно підкреслює необхідність усвідомлення перекладачами прагматичної природи політичних текстів та пошуку ефективних способів відтворення впливу комунікативних стратегій політиків в різних культурних та мовних контекстах.

Ключові слова: стратегії перекладу, політичний дискурс, стратегія конфронтації, тактика звинувачення, адаптація.