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TRANSLATION OF POLITICAL SPEECHES: LINGUISTIC ASPECTS

Summary. The present study is carried out at the crossroads of political linguistics and translation theory. Political linguistics, or the study of the language of political communication, attempts to find the ways in which politicians construe their messages in order to shape public opinion and control the masses. All the utterances created within the domain of politics belong to political discourse. Political speeches are a distinctive genre of political discourse that aims to make a persuasive effect on the audience. The translation of political speeches requires not only linguistic competence but also understanding communicative strategies, cultural, religious, and political nuances of both the source text (ST) and the target text (TT). A competent translator or interpreter is supposed to make their translation equivalent and adequate, with adequacy being a priority. This paper examines the linguistic aspects of translating political speeches, employing which the orators can exert persuasive influence upon the audiences. These aspects include, in particular, the use of rhetorical devices (anaphora, repetition, parallelism, hyperbole, antithesis, use of epithets, rhetorical questions, etc.), figurative language (metaphor and metonymy), emotionally and ideologically loaded vocabulary, the use of the pronouns *we* or *us* as opposed to the pronouns *they* or *them*. The orators also include various kinds of speech acts (directives, declaratives, commissives, expressives), as well as modal verbs and phrases expressing certainty. The repertoire of persuasive instruments also includes ensuring intertextuality, which maintains the connection between different orators and, therefore, generations, creating the feeling of belonging to one and the same social, cultural, historical, value-based space. The mentioned above specifics of linguistic organization of political speeches are supposed to be preserved in the translation, unless adequacy of the translation is sacrificed.

Key words: political linguistics, political discourse, political speech, translation equivalence, translation adequacy, linguistic aspects of translation.

Problem statement and relevance. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the studies of political linguistics, which have gained a powerful impetus since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February, 2022. These multifaceted studies include both purely linguistic explorations and those carried out at the crossroads with other disciplines. In particular, scholars demonstrate vivid interest in political discourse per se [1; 2; 3], a variety of textual genres evolving within political discourse, their structural and linguistic features, and ways to translate political texts [4; 5] in order to maintain their original message and persuasive impact on the target audience. The ongoing turbulence in international politics determines the relevance of such studies as they can help shed light on the linguistics regularities ensuring the desired effect.

Previous research. The paper is grounded on the findings of political linguistics and translation theory. The conceptual frame-

work is established by outlining the concept of political discourse [6; 7; 1; 2], characterizing a political text in general [8; 9; 10] and a political speech as one of its realizations [11; 12]. The subsequent analysis of the linguistic aspects of translating political speeches is reinforced by the characteristics of translation equivalence and adequacy as central concepts of translation theory [13; 14; 15].

The article **aims** to analyze linguistic aspects of translating political speeches. This analysis gains its value when grounded on the outline of political discourse studied by political linguistics, as well as on the characteristics of a political speech as one of the frequently used genres within political discourse. The study also employs the concepts of translation equivalence and adequacy, which should be necessarily taken into account when translating political speeches.

Major issues. Political linguistics is considered a relatively young discipline, although rhetoric has long been one of the oldest academic fields concerned with aspects of political communication since ancient times. After World War II, political linguistics gained significant momentum as the massive use of propaganda during the war demonstrated that language can be a powerful tool for shaping public opinion and controlling the masses. Political linguistics is the discipline that systematically investigates language of political communication [12, p. 700].

A. Burkhardt who proposed the term «political linguistics» argues that it occupies an intermediate position between linguistics and political science. Political linguistics studies political language, which, according to A. Burkhardt (see [9, p. 707]), is a general term, which covers all types of talks and texts on political issues as well as the use of linguistic means typical of the political context.

The development of political discourse theory owes much of its credit to M. Foucault, R. Barthes, J. Habermas, and T. A. van Dijk (see [1, p. 166]). One of the earliest definitions of the discourse as an independent term was proposed in 1952 by Z. Harris in his article «Discourse Analysis». He defines discourse as a sequence of sentences spoken or written by a person or group of people in a particular situation (see [1, p. 166]). According to P. Chilton and Ch. Schäffner [3, p. 18], discourse can be understood in three ways: 1) as real-time utterances in general; 2) as a number of real-time utterances viewed as a single coherent event, e.g., a political speech; 3) as «the totality of utterances in a society viewed as an autonomous evolving entity». The last definition relates discourse to a particular type of language use, e.g., discourse of medicine, pedagogy, or politics. A co-founder of cultural semiotics R. Barthes explored various types of discourses, such as history, medicine, customs, myths, fashion, advertising, and mass-produced objects (see [1, p. 166]). Politics, or political discourse, can be considered as one of the discourse types, which has its own distinctive features and genres.

One of the earliest definitions of **political discourse** was proposed by T. A. van Dijk in his article «What is Political Discourse Analysis?». Political discourse is explained as identified by its actors or authors, that is politicians. The scholar emphasizes that «the vast bulk of studies of political discourse are about the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, such as presidents and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties <...>» [6, p. 12]. According to T. A. van Dijk, political discourse can be understood in terms of its context structures, or political situations that force political actors to speak in a particular way [2, p. 733]. H. Wessler [16] argues that political discourse covers all forms of communication with reference to political matters and takes place across various platforms, including political public relations, news, commentary, film, talk shows, citizens' everyday talk about politics etc. Thus, political discourse is not one single genre but comprises a variety of genres defined by the domain of politics. Political speech is one of such genres.

Characterizing **political texts** in general, including political speeches, Ch. Schäffner [17, p. 134–135] states that such texts tend to be culturally bound, which means that they contain a great number of culture-specific references (e.g., references to historic events, important places or personalities). Second, political texts are frequently ideologically loaded, which is seen from the speaker's choice of words of ideological nature. Third, political texts in general and political speeches in particular contain numerous stylistically marked elements, e.g., metaphors and euphemisms [4, p. 142; 5, p. 20].

According to M. N. Dedaić, a **political speech** is a «relatively autonomous discourse produced orally by a politician in front of an audience, the purpose of which is primarily persuasion rather than information or entertainment» [12, p. 700]. A political speech is one of the most prominent forms of oratory, or the art of speaking in public.

In antiquity, oratory was primarily used in three major areas of life: politics, religion, and law. Religion was the first social domain oratory was confined to. The periods of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Reformation were characterized by the thriving of religious preaches. The development of parliaments in the 18th century resulted in the appearance of great political orators, and the genre of the political speech acquired its place in the social life of the people. It was then that a political speech acquired its major characteristics – persuasion. Traditionally, the orator's major purpose is to convince the audience that their opinion is correct or that their decision or advice is plausible. In some cases, the orator expresses their personal viewpoint, but in the contemporary political world an orator represents a political group or a party rather than speaks as an individual [12, p. 700].

One of the pioneering studies focused on the role of language in political discourse is «Discourse and Power» by N. Fairclough [10]. In his works, he views language as a powerful medium employed to exert influence on the interlocutors. Linguistic signs serve as labels for ideas, and those in control of a language tend to control what is perceived as the norm and what is perceived as the deviation from it. Another fundamental exploration of how language is employed to construe ideologies is T. A. van Dijk's «Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach» [7]. The scholar understands ideology as a shared system of beliefs that guides the thoughts and actions of groups and is embodied in the media, political speeches, education, and everyday communication.

M. N. Dedaić [12, p. 701] suggests the following classification of the political speeches: by the occasion they can be commemorative, inaugural, farewell, proposing a bill, disputing a bill; by the speaker category who can be a national leader, a parliamentarian, a political candidate, a leader of a national or international political organization; by the audience, which can be local, national, international; immediate, TV, or combined. The scholar argues that presidential (and other head of state's) speeches and parliamentary debates have attracted the most attention from linguists. In their speeches, political leaders establish certain relationships with their audiences that are important for achieving a persuasive effect on them.

Political speeches possess a number of specific features the multitude of which creates the intended persuasive effect on the audience. Translator's or interpreter's awareness of these features is crucial for the adequate translation. First, speeches are characterized by a particular structure, which, according to J. Charteris-Black [11] comprises five parts: prologue, narrative, proof, refutation, epilogue. The prologue introduces the topic and establishes a relationship between the speaker and the audience. It also aims to attract the attention of the listeners and make them well-disposed towards the speaker. The narrative lays out the facts from the perspective favorable to the speaker. The proof presents arguments supporting the speaker's position. The refutation presents the opponent's arguments and rebuts them. The final part, the epilogue, is a summary of the most persuasive arguments so that the audience is left with a positive impression of the speaker and his position. Some speeches can have one or two parts omitted depending on the situational and cultural settings. The logical flow from one part to the next is maintained through connectives. Next, one speech may cover several issues, e.g., economic, social, religious, political. Thus, the translator or interpreter is supposed to have ample knowledge of different areas besides translation and linguistic skills [18].

In order to reach out to broad audiences, political speeches are often translated or interpreted into other languages. Translating political speeches can be quite challenging as the translator has to be aware not only of the linguistic differences between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) but also of the historical, cultural, religious differences between the two nations. Nowadays translation is viewed as more than just a linguistic activity – it is an act of communication, which aims to transfer the message from the ST to the TT. The translation process is accompanied by the involvement not only of the translator's linguistic knowledge but also of their cultural knowledge and communicative competence [19, p. 132]. Thus, a competent translator / interpreter of the political speeches should be aware of such concepts as equivalence and adequacy.

Equivalence is viewed as one of the central concepts in translation theory. There are various interpretations of this concept, among which we adopt the view which defines equivalence as the degree of semantic similarity between the ST and the TT [14]. Scholars have proposed multiple typologies of equivalence, including connotative, text-normative, pragmatic, dynamic, formal, textual and functional equivalence [20, p. 97]. A detailed analysis of these types, however, lies beyond the objectives of this paper. Of particular relevance is the classification proposed by E. Nida [13, p. 193–200], who distinguishes between formal and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence presupposes the correspondence between the ST and the TT in both form and content; the TL unit is the closest possible equivalent of a SL unit. Dynamic equivalence, which is opposed to formal equivalence, focuses on producing an intended effect on the TL

audience. In the context of translating political speeches, dynamic equivalence may often be more appropriate as it gives preference to the communicative effect over literal fidelity.

Due to significant differences in the ways languages structure and objectify ideas, finding a good formal equivalent is not always possible. Thus, the translator needs to sacrifice fidelity in favor of achieving a communicative effect equivalent to that of the ST – finding a dynamic equivalent in E. Nida's terms. In this context, the concept of translation **adequacy** becomes relevant. K. Reiss [15, p. 301] associates adequacy with appropriateness of the translation in a particular context. The scholar explains adequacy as a relation between linguistic means and purpose and considers it to be process-oriented. This purpose orientation of translation found its realization in the *skopos* theory developed by K. Reiss and H. J. Vermeer [14, p. 127–128]. The scholars emphasize that «*skopos*», or the purpose of translation, is the primary factor guiding translation decisions. The development of the *skopos* theory was a part of a more general shift in translation studies from formalist to functionalist approaches toward translation. In the context of this theory, adequacy can be understood as the extent to which the translation achieves its communicative purpose in the TL audience. In terms of translating political speeches, the concept of adequacy becomes especially significant as it is the persuasive purpose of the speech which determines its structure and the choice of the linguistic means. The subsequent part of the article provides the examples of such linguistic means.

In order to achieve the desired effect, orators often employ various rhetoical devices, such as anaphora, repetition, parallelism, hyperbole, antithesis, use of epithets, rhetorical questions, etc. Below are examples of some of these devices along with their translations, which show how these devices are preserved in the TT.

Anaphora, or the repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of a number of successive sentences, can be exemplified by the excerpt from Martin Luther King Jr's iconic «I have a dream» speech [21]: *I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: «We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.» I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.* To your consideration is the translation of the above given excerpt, which can be found on the website of the «Center for Civil Liberties» [22]: *У мене є мрія, що настане день, коли наша нація повстане і доживе до істинного змісту свого девізу: «Ми вважаємо самоочевидним, що всі люди створені рівними». У мене є мрія, що на червоних пагорбах Джорджії настане день, коли сини колишніх рабів і сини колишніх рабовласників зможуть сісти разом за столом братерства.*

Parallelism refers to similar or identical syntactical structures used across the speech, e.g., in the excerpt of Barack Obama's speech [23]: *That is the true genius of America, a faith – a faith in simple dreams, an insistence on small miracles; that we can tuck in our children at night and know that they are fed and clothed and safe from harm; that we can say what we think, write what we think, without hearing a sudden knock on the door; that we can have an idea and start our own business without paying a bribe* <...>. Parallelism is supposed to be preserved in the translation: *Це і є справжнім генієм Америки, віра – віра в прості мрії, наполегливе прагнення досягати маленьких чудес; у те, що ми можемо вкладати наших дітей спати ввечері і знати, що*

вони нагодовані, одягнені і перебувають у безпеці; у те, що ми можемо говорити те, що думаємо, писати те, що думаємо, не чуючи раптового стуку в двері; у те, що ми можемо мати ідею і розпочати власний бізнес, не даючи хабара; <...>.

Hyperbole means exaggeration aimed at making a strong impression on the target audience. This rhetorical device can be exemplified by the excerpt from the Trump-Clinton presidential debate [24]: *Our inner cities are a disaster. <...> I will do more for African-Americans and Latinos than she can ever do in 10 lifetimes.* Exaggeration should be preserved in the translation: *Наші міста – це суцільний жах. <...> Я зроблю більше для афроамериканців і латиноамериканців, ніж вона може зробити за 10 життів.*

Antithesis, or opposition between the closely located ideas is one of the frequently used rhetorical devices, as shown, for instance, in J. F. Kennedy's inaugural address [25]: *And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.* – *Отже, мої співвітчизники: не запитуйте, що ваша країна може зробити для вас, а запитуйте, що ви можете зробити для своєї країни.*

Political speeches abound in **epithets** – words or phrases vividly describing a person, place, or an object. Every politician has their own bank of favourite epithets. The following are the epithets used in Donald Trump's speeches: *righteous people and a righteous public, gracious aid, struggling families, a big beautiful ocean.* Here is the contextual use of some of these examples [26]: *And we are grateful to President Obama and first lady Michelle Obama for their gracious aid throughout this transition.* – *І ми вдячні президенту Обамі і першій леді Мішель Обамі за їхню граційну/елегантну допомогу протягом усього періоду передачі влади.* Another example: *These are just and reasonable demands of righteous people and a righteous public.* – *Це справедливі й розумні вимоги праведних людей і праведної громадськості.*

The language of political speeches is also characterized by the presence of figurative language, e.g., metaphors and metonymies. **Metaphor**, or perceived similarity between the entities, can be exemplified by the excerpt from Barack Obama's inaugural address in 2009 [27]: *What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them, that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long no longer apply.* – *Циніки ніяк не можуть зрозуміти, що ситуація кардинально змінилася, і що сталі політичні аргументи, які нас так довго турбували, більше не актуальні.* The following example of **metonymy**, which is based on the contiguity of the entities, is taken from Donald Trump's speech [28]: *I'm proud to be the president for the workers, not the outsourcers; the president who stands up for Main Street, not Wall Street.* – *Я пишаюся тим, що я є президентом робітників, а не тих, хто виводить робочі місця за кордон; президентом звичайних людей, а не фінансових еліт [на Волл Стріт].*

The use of **emotionally and ideologically loaded vocabulary** is another important characteristic of political speeches. For example, in his inaugural address [27] Barack Obama says: *My fellow citizens: I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you've bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors.* – *Мої співвітчизники: я стою тут сьогодні, відчувачи повагу до завдання, яке стоїть перед нами, вдячний за довіру, яку ви нам надали, і пам'ятаючи про жертви, принесені нашими предками.*

Interpersonal rapport with the audience can be created by the use of pronouns like *we* or *us*, which mean the supporters, and *they*

or *them*, which mean the opponents. In one of his speeches [29], Barack Obama emphasizes: *Well, it's time for them to own their failure. It's time for us to change America.* – *Що ж, настав час їм визнати свою поразку. Настав час нам змінити Америку.*

Political speeches can be characterized by the use of the particular kinds of speech acts – directives (calls to action), commissives (promises), expressives (expressing sympathy or remorse), declaratives (announcements or declarations). Examples of some of these speech acts were taken from Barack Obama's speech [29]. **Declaratives** can be represented by the following excerpt: *Tonight I say to the people of America, to Democrats and Republicans and Independents across this great land: Enough!* – *Сьогодні я звертаюся до народу Америки, до демократів, республіканців та тих, хто не віддає перевагу жодній партії, по всій нашій величній країні: Досить!* Next is the example of a **commissive**: *Ours is a promise that says government cannot solve all our problems, but what it should do is that which we cannot do for ourselves.* – *Ми обіцяємо, що хоча уряд не може вирішити всі наші проблеми, він дійсно може зробити те, що ми не можемо зробити самі.* **Expressives** can be exemplified by the fragment: *Let me express my thanks to the historic slate of candidates who accompanied on this journey.* – *Дозвольте висловити подяку історичному переліку кандидатів, які супроводжували мене на цих виборах.*

One more characteristic feature of the political speeches is the purposeful use of modal verbs and phrases expressing certainty. This can be illustrated by the excerpts from Barack Obama's speech [29]: 1) *As Commander-in-Chief, I will never hesitate to defend this nation.* – *Як головнокомандувач я ніколи не вагатимусь захищати цю державу;* 2) *At this moment, in this election, we must pledge once more to march into the future.* – *У цей момент, на цих виборах, ми повинні ще раз пообіцяти рухатися в майбутнє.*

Political discourse frequently relies on the previously delivered speeches, cultural references, historical or religious texts. Such intertextuality aims to create the feeling of belonging, connection with the previous generations maintained through common cultural, historical, and religious heritage. A bright example of intertextuality can be the use of the phrase *finest hour* by Boris Johnson in his address to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [30]: *This is Ukraine's finest hour; that will be remembered and recounted for generations to come.* – *Це година слави України, що буде в пам'яті наступних поколінь, про це переповідадуть онукам і правнукам* [31]. *Finest hour* is an iconic phrase from Winston Churchill's speech [32]: *This was their finest hour.* – *Це був їхній зоряний час.*

Conclusions. Political linguistics, which studies the language of political communication, is currently one of the mainstream fields within the broad realm of linguistic studies. It focuses on the patterns of construing political spaces, shaping public opinion and controlling the masses. All the instances of language use within the area of politics belong to political discourse. The latter is characterized by a variety of genres, with political speeches being one of the most frequently used genres. Dating back to ancient times, political speeches have evolved significantly and now possess specific structural and linguistic features. As well as other political text, speeches are typically culturally bound, ideologically loaded, and full of stylistically marked elements. What distinguishes speeches from other political texts is their persuasive power, or the intent to make a certain impact on the audience. Political speeches can be classified by the occasion, by the speaker category, and by the audience. Their typical structure comprises such parts as the prologue, narrative,

proof, refutation, epilogue. In order to reach out to broad audiences, political speeches are often translated or interpreted into other languages. Challenges the translator or interpreter faces can be determined by a number of factors. First, they are supposed to possess ample knowledge since one speech usually covers several issues (e.g., economic, social, religious, political, etc.). Second, political speeches have specific linguistic features, the awareness of which can help to make their translation both equivalent and adequate, with adequacy being an unquestionable priority.

Orators can achieve the desired persuasive effect in various ways or even through their combination. Politicians or their speechwriters employ a number of rhetorical devices, e.g., anaphora, repetition, parallelism, hyperbole, antithesis, use of epithets, rhetorical questions, etc. They also use figurative language, such as metaphors and metonymies. Political speeches abound in emotionally and ideologically loaded vocabulary appealing to the emotions of the audience. Establishing rapport with the audience can be done by the use of pronouns *we* or *us* denoting supporters and pronouns *they* or *them* denoting opponents. The use of particular kinds of speech acts (declaratives, commissives, expressives, directives) contributes to the persuasive character of a speech, as well as the use of modal verbs and phrases expressing certainty. Finally, intertextuality creates the feeling of belonging and connection with the previous generations.

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Токарчук В. Переклад політичних промов: лінгвістичні аспекти

Анотація. Дослідження виконане на перетині політичної лінгвістики та теорії перекладу. Політична лінгвістика, або вивчення мови політичної комунікації, спрямована на виявлення способів, у які політики конструюють свої повідомлення для формування громадської думки та контролювання мас. Усі висловлення, створені у межах політичного домену, належать до політичного дискурсу. Політичні промови є окремим жанром політичного дискурсу, що має на меті здійснити на аудиторію вплив-переконання. Переклад політичних промов потребує не лише володіння мовною компетенцією, а й розуміння комунікативних стратегій, культурних, релігійних і політичних особливостей як мови тексту оригіналу (ТО), так я мови тексту перекладу (ТП). Передбачається, що компетентний перекладач (усний або письмовий) робитиме переклад еквівалентним і адекватним, при цьому пріоритет надається адекватності. У статті досліджуються лінгвістичні аспекти перекладу політичних промов, беручи до уваги які промовці можуть здійснювати вплив-переконання на аудиторію. До них належать, зокрема, стилістичні фігури (анафора, повторення, паралелізм, гіпербола, антитеза, вживання епітетів, риторичні запитання тощо), тропи (метафора й метонімія), емоційно й ідеологічно забарвлена лексика, використання займенників *ми* та *нас*, які протиставляються займенникам *вони* та *їх*. Промовці також включають різні види мовленнєвих актів (директиви, декларативи, комісиви й експресиви), а також модальні дієслова й вирази, які виражають упевненість. Репертуар інструментів переконання також включає забезпечення інтертекстуальності, котра підтримує зв'язок між різними промовцями, і отже, поколіннями, створюючи почуття приналежності до одного соціального, культурного, історичного, ціннісного простору. Згадані особливості мовної організації політичних промов мають бути збережені в перекладі, якщо це не загрожує адекватності перекладу.

Ключові слова: політична лінгвістика, політичний дискурс, політична промова, еквівалентність перекладу, адекватність перекладу, лінгвістичні аспекти перекладу.

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