

THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATING NEOLOGISMS
AND STRATEGIES OF OVERCOMING THEM

Iryna Phlyshnyk

Graduate Student,

Anna Pohorila

Associate Professor,

Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, Ukraine

The translation of neologisms within the media and political contexts is one of the most intricate areas of translation practice, demanding careful consideration of both linguistic and cultural dimensions incorporated in new concepts. High-quality translation not only ensures the precise transference of information but also contributes to the accurate reflection of current trends, cultural phenomena and social dynamic changes. However, translators encounter a range of challenges that makes it difficult to convey the essence of neologisms from the source language to the target one. According to Newmark (1988, p.167) “a word denoting an object, an institution, or if such exists, a psychological characteristic peculiar to the source language culture is always more or less untranslatable”.

The first primary challenge is the polysemy of neologisms. Many new words and terms as well carry multiple meanings, making it necessary to carry out a thorough analysis in order to select the most appropriate translation option. For example, the term “gaslighting” not only denotes manipulation but also carries psychological nuances that are difficult to be fully rendered with the help of a single equivalent, while preserving all semantic aspects at the same time. In such cases, it is essential to do the translation at the lexical level and consider the contextual specifications as well.

Another significant challenge is cultural specification. Numerous neologisms arise within particular cultural settings reflecting unique cultural realities. For instance, terms like “second gentleman”, “second lady” (these are honorary titles often used in reference to the spouse of a vice president, or spouse of a lieutenant governor or other second-ranked government official. The title is styled after first lady or first gentleman, which are used to describe the spouse of a president or governor); “nepo baby” (is the offspring of a famous person who follows their parent into creative industries and often is met with success despite the competition) (Lowe, 2022). Those above provided terms carry cultural connotations that require not only linguistic adaptation but also an awareness of sociocultural factors. Consequently, translators must seek suitable equivalents that convey a specific meaning understandable to numerous audiences in other cultures.

Neologisms containing elements of humor or wordplay, are often used in media discourse for satirical representation, require particular attention. This challenge demands that translators creatively adapt and preserve the stylistic effects of the original text. Equally important is the adaptation of technical neologisms that emerge with technological advancements and frequently lack equivalents in other languages. For example, the term “deepfake” describes a phenomenon of information manipulation through artificial intelligence, necessitating additional explanations to ensure accurate audience understanding.

In the realm of political discourse, the translation of neologisms also presents unique considerations. Challenges include accounting for ideological and geopolitical contexts that influence the perception of new terms. For instance, the term “Chavista” refers to supporters of a specific political movement and requires preservation of its ideological meaning. Political neologisms may also carry rhetorical and strategic significance, shaping public opinion and the emotional responses of the audience.

The findings of this scientific research enable us to outline the following recommendations for translators:

- **Semantic and contextual analysis** should include a comprehensive understanding of neologisms, their meanings and cultural connotations to achieve accurate reproduction in the target language.
- **Cultural adaption** should ensure that the cultural aspects of neologisms are appropriately represented in the target language.
- **Preservation of stylistic effects** means that creative adaptation should maintain comedic or rhetorical effects
- **Adaptation of technical terms** should make use of explanations and adapted equivalents for technical neologisms.
- **Retention of emotional and ideological tones** implies that the emotional impact of terms should be conveyed and it is essential for preserving their rhetorical function.

A translator must possess the knowledge and intelligence necessary to accurately comprehend the intended meaning. Additionally, it is essential to consider the type of text and the target audience. Understanding the meaning of political neologisms relies heavily on analyzing the context in which the term appears. The successful translation of these terms requires an accurate understanding of their meaning which in itself is a difficult task. Proficiency in the source language entails fully grasping the intended meaning behind linguistic expressions, while proficiency in the target language requires the translator to convey these meanings in forms that are equally appropriate for the intended target audience.

Furthermore, the translator must be well-versed in both the source and target cultures to effectively bridge communication gaps, as cultural meanings are deeply embedded within the linguistic fabric. Translation, therefore, extends beyond merely substituting words with similar meanings; it involves finding suitable ways of expressing concepts in another language.

References

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