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STYLISTICS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION FROM A SOCIOCULTURAL AND TRANSLATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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This paper examines linguistic characteristics and sociocultural features that influence professional interactions across languages. Based on authentic English-language documents and their corresponding Ukrainian translations, the study highlights translation strategies that preserve the intent, tone, and style of the utterance. The research examines how cross-cultural differences impact lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic choices in business discourse, emphasizing the translator's role in balancing accuracy and cultural relevance for effective international collaboration and institutional representation.

Key words: pragmatic adaptation, translation strategies, institutional style, register consistency, cross-cultural transfer.

СТИЛІСТИКА ОФІЦІЙНО-ДІЛОВОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ КРІЗЬ ПРИЗМУ СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРИ ТА ПЕРЕКЛАДУ

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Стаття присвячена аналізу лінгвістичних характеристик і соціокультурно зумовлених чинників, що визначають специфіку ділової комунікації в міжмовному просторі. Метою є виявлення впливу міжкультурних відмінностей на стилістичні параметри ділового дискурсу, а також ідентифікація перекладацьких стратегій, спрямованих на збереження змісту, інтенції та стилістичної цілісності вихідного тексту. На матеріалі автентичних англійськомовних документів та їх українських перекладів проаналізовано відтворення мовних структур з урахуванням комунікативної мети й соціокультурного контексту. Завданням дослідження є визначення ролі перекладача в забезпеченні точності, стилістичної релевантності та культурної відповідності перекладу. Огляд наукових напрацювань уможливив окреслити основні теоретичні підходи до стилістики ділового мовлення, а також висвітлити актуальні проблеми, пов'язані зі збереженням стилістичної узгодженості у процесі перекладу. Особливу увагу приділено аналізу перекладацьких стратегій, зокрема функціональній еквівалентності, адаптації, експліцитації та збереженню регістру як засобів гармонізації культурних і комунікативних очікувань адресата. У висновках наголошено, що ефективне відтворення ділового дискурсу вимагає від перекладача не лише знання мовної системи, а й володіння прагматичною чутливістю та культурною компетентністю. Стилiстика ділової комунікації, інтерпретована крізь соціокультурну та перекладознавчу призму, постає як складна, багатовимірна і динамічна сфера, яка потребує поглибленого міждисциплінарного вивчення. Перспективою подальших досліджень визначено вивчення стилістичних особливостей ділової комунікації в умовах глобалізованого інформаційного простору, а також розробку ефективних моделей професійної підготовки перекладачів до діяльності в полікультурному професійному середовищі.

Ключові слова: прагматична адаптація, перекладацькі стратегії, інституційний стиль, відповідність регістру, міжкультурний трансфер.

Statement of the problem. In the context of globalized business interaction, official and business communication serves not only as a means of exchanging information but also as a vehicle of cultural identity and socio-professional values. Despite the formal nature of business discourse, its stylistic features are deeply embedded in the sociocultural norms of a particular linguistic community. The challenge arises when such discourse is subject to translation, particularly between linguistically and culturally distant languages. Translators should not only convey the meaning but also preserve stylistic appropriateness, register, and culturally determined communicative strategies. However, existing translation practices often overlook the sociocultural dimension of stylistic choices in business texts, leading to distortions in pragmatic intent and the erosion of the linguistic image of the sender. This issue necessitates a comprehensive study that integrates stylistic, sociocultural, and translation-oriented approaches to ensure adequate interlingual and intercultural communication in the business domain.

Analysis of recent research. The present analysis focuses on recent research related to the stylistic features of business discourse, translation strategies, and intercultural communication in business settings. The examined sources represent both Ukrainian and foreign scholarship and offer a multidimensional view of the field from stylistic, pragmatic, and translation-oriented perspectives.

The reviewed studies can be categorized into three groups: (1) core theoretical explorations of business discourse and stylistic norms (Науменко, 2003; Наумова, 2000); (2) works centering on translation and stylistic analysis (Мінцис, Телегіна, 2024; Boase-Beier, 2012; Doubenko, 2017; Panou, 2012); and (3) studies emphasizing practical aspects of business communication (Babelyuk, 2024; Sant, 2008). Ukrainian scholars L. Naumenko, N. Naumova, E. Doubenko contribute significantly to understanding domestic linguistic and stylistic conventions, while foreign researchers like J. Boase-Beier and D. Panou broaden the discussion through intercultural, cognitive, and pragmatic frameworks relevant to translation studies. The synthesis of stylistic insight with translation theory, as presented by E. Mintsyts, N. Telegina and J. Boase-Beier, proves especially useful for crafting translation strategies attuned to genre-specific features, register, and communicative goals.

Overall, the reviewed literature illustrates a growing recognition of stylistic and intercultural factors in business communication and translation. Ukrainian scholarship provides strong theoretical foundations, particularly in stylistics and pragmatics, while foreign studies enrich the field with models that integrate stylistics into translation theory and practice. These sources support a comprehensive understanding of how style, function, and cultural context influence business communication across languages. However, the absence of detailed empirical translation case studies signals a need for more applied research in this area.

The study **aims** to analyse how cross-cultural variations influence the linguistic and stylistic choices in professional business communication, focusing on translation strategies used to maintain the intent, tone, and style of the source text.

Outline of the main material of the study. Business communication is a vital element of global professional interaction. The English language, being a dominant medium in international business, shapes and standardizes various forms of official correspondence, contracts, reports, and proposals. These documents exhibit specific stylistic features that contribute to clarity, professionalism, and functional efficiency. Understanding these stylistic characteristics is essential not only for effective communication but also for high-quality translation.

English business communication prioritizes **formality and objectivity**. The tone is typically neutral, avoiding any emotional or personal biases that could be perceived as unprofessional. Writers emphasize clarity, neutrality, and facts, which helps convey professionalism. For example: *I believe the new policy will work well for the company* (informal). *It is anticipated that the implementation of the new policy will contribute positively to the company's operational efficiency* (formal). This shift not only changes the tone but also makes the statement sound more detached and business-like, avoiding any personal opinions.

In business documents, the **precision of language** is essential. Legal, financial or technical texts rely on exact wording, ensuring no ambiguity. Domain-specific terms are frequently used to communicate specialized knowledge effectively. For example: *We need to look at how we can reduce costs* (informal/general). *A comprehensive cost-reduction strategy should be implemented to optimize operational expenditures and enhance financial performance* (precise/technical).

A critical feature of business writing is the use of **fixed expressions or templates**. These formulaic phrases help maintain consistency and professionalism. Phrasing such as *We are writing to inform you* or

Please be advised that is ubiquitous and helps prevent any deviation from the expected tone. For example: *I am sending you the requested report* (informal). *Please find attached the report you requested for your review* (formulaic). This formalized phrasing streamlines communication and ensures that all essential elements (e.g., purpose of the document, action required) are included without unnecessary deviation.

Passive constructions are a hallmark of business writing. They de-emphasize the doer and focus more on the action or result, maintaining objectivity and neutrality. For example: *The accounting department completed the financial report* (active). *The financial report was completed by the accounting department* (passive). The passive voice helps maintain an impersonal tone, which is essential in conveying information without assigning blame or personal responsibility, especially in formal reports or legal documents.

Business writing often turns verbs into nouns (**nominalization**) to achieve a more formal and concise tone. This transformation makes the language more abstract, removing unnecessary details and focusing on the essential concepts. For example: *We need to examine the proposal* (verb-based). *An examination of the proposal is required* (nominalized). This shift makes the statement sound more formal and detached, further aligning with the conventions of business language.

Business documents rely on **cohesive devices** to ensure smooth transitions and clarity. These devices include conjunctions *therefore*, *however*, *in addition*, and clear, logical paragraphing. Such structures guide the reader through the document and ensure that ideas are presented in a coherent, organized manner. For example: *The contract outlines the terms. The terms are negotiable* (without cohesion). *The contract outlines the terms, which, however, are negotiable based on mutual agreement* (with cohesion). The second example uses a conjunction *however* to connect two related but contrasting ideas, creating a smoother reading experience.

Business documents place great emphasis on their **visual layout** to enhance readability. Key visual elements, such as bullet points, numbered lists, and headings, are used to break down complex information into digestible sections. This allows for quick scanning and understanding of the content. For example: *Standard Structure: Overview of the Project; Scope of Work; Timeline; Budget Breakdown*. Each section is clearly labelled, using both bold headings and bulleted or numbered lists, to present information in a way that's easy to follow and understand. A proposal document might use charts to represent budget forecasts, making the data more accessible and visually appealing. The structure and visual presentation of the document signal professionalism and help ensure that the reader can navigate complex information quickly and efficiently.

Business communication often requires a balance between **directness and indirectness**. Direct language is typically used for commands or clear instructions, while indirect expressions help maintain politeness and avoid appearing too abrupt or authoritative. For example: *You need to submit the report by Monday* (direct). *We would appreciate it if the report could be submitted by Monday* (indirect). This shift reflects the need to soften requests in certain business contexts to maintain a courteous tone, especially in hierarchical or international business communication.

Modal verbs (*can*, *may*, *should*, *must*, etc.) are commonly used in business communication to express necessity, possibility, or permission. They are instrumental in conveying both obligations and suggestions while maintaining an appropriate level of formality. For example: *It is imperative that the report be submitted no later than Friday* (lexically strong, often found in high-stakes or legal contexts). *It may be advisable to reassess the timeline for more accurate forecasting* (hedges recommendation, formal register). *The client is allowed to amend the terms before the agreement is finalized* (legal phrasing, maintains formal tone.) *No amendments can be made once the document is signed* (impersonal and final – standard in contracts). Modals help soften commands or create nuances of meaning, making the language more flexible and adaptable to various business situations.

Conciseness is a vital feature of business writing. Sentences should be clear, straightforward, and free from unnecessary jargon or redundancies. For example: *Regarding the matter of the meeting scheduled for next week, I am writing to inform you that we are going to cancel it.* (verbose). *The meeting scheduled for next week has been cancelled* (concise). Eliminating redundancies (e.g., *regarding*, *I am writing to inform you*) leads to more direct communication, which is vital in business contexts where time and clarity are crucial.

These stylistic features are integral to the effectiveness of English business documents. They serve the dual purpose of ensuring clarity in communication and maintaining the level of professionalism expected in the business world.

Sociocultural markers in business communication reflect the specific conventions, values, and expectations of a linguistic and cultural community. These markers encompass a range of elements such as culturally bound terminology, greeting and closing formulas, references to institutional, and politeness strategies. For instance, English business letters often begin with a polite, indirect tone to establish a sense of distance, while other cultures may prefer a more direct approach or use collective expressions. These sociocultural differences significantly influence linguistic and stylistic choices in professional communication, shaping how messages are constructed, interpreted, and conveyed across different cultural contexts. The influence of these cultural variations is evident in several key areas.

Lexical choices differ across cultures, since equivalent concepts may be expressed through terms with unique legal or cultural implications. For instance, words like *contract* or *negotiation* may evoke different associations depending on a society's legal framework or business tradition. Translators must choose vocabulary that aligns with the target culture's institutional and contextual norms.

Tone and formality differ in American, British, and Ukrainian business communication. In American business communication, a direct and informal tone is common, with frequent use of first names – even in formal settings – to promote approachability and minimize hierarchical distinctions. In British business communication, while clarity is valued, a more formal and reserved tone is customary, often employing polite expressions and indirect language to maintain respectful distance, with titles and surnames used until a closer relationship is established. In Ukrainian business communication, a high level of formality and respect for hierarchy is maintained through the use of honorifics like *Пан* or *Пані* followed by the surname, formal greetings, and the respectful pronoun *Ви*, reflecting the importance of status in professional interactions. Translators must balance these differences to maintain the message's intent and suit the target culture's norms.

Cultural references and idioms present challenges in translation, as they often lack direct equivalents across languages. For example, the English phrase *thinking outside the box* may need to be replaced in Ukrainian with a culturally familiar or neutral expression to ensure clarity. Successful adaptation relies on the translator's deep understanding of both cultures to preserve meaning and communicative effect.

Sociocultural norms shape business communication by influencing hierarchy and etiquette. While Ukrainian business culture typically requires formal address and the use of titles, American culture often allows first-name interaction, and British norms strike a balance between the two. Translators must account for these cultural expectations to convey the appropriate level of professionalism and respect in the target language.

Pragmatic decisions differ across American English, British English, and Ukrainian due to cultural communication styles. American English often favours directness and efficiency, British English leans toward politeness and understatement, while Ukrainian tends to balance formality with context-driven nuance. Translators must consider these differences to preserve the intended meaning and avoid cultural misinterpretation.

Non-verbal communication, while not always present in written texts, is crucial in spoken business interactions. Gestures, eye contact, and body language can significantly affect message interpretation. In written translation, understanding non-verbal cues helps ensure that certain phrases align with cultural communication norms. Interpreters of business exchanges must be particularly attuned to these non-verbal elements to maintain cultural appropriateness in the spoken message.

In translation, such markers pose challenges because their literal equivalents may not carry the same pragmatic or cultural weight in the target language. The translator must identify these markers and decide on strategies to ensure communicative and cultural appropriateness. Failure to consider sociocultural nuances can lead to miscommunication, unintended offense, or loss of authority and professionalism in the translated document. Hence, sociocultural competence is as crucial as linguistic accuracy in translating business texts.

To maintain the integrity of both style and cultural context in translated business documents, translators may employ several key strategies.

Functional equivalence involves adapting expressions from the source language to fit the cultural context of the target language, ensuring the original intent and function are preserved rather than focusing on a literal translation. For example, the English phrase *We regret to inform you that your application has not been successful this time* can be translated into Ukrainian as 'На жаль, змушені повідомити, що цього разу вашу заявку не було схвалено'. This version moves away from a direct

translation like ‘Ми шкодуємо повідомити’ and uses a culturally appropriate way of expressing negative news with politeness and formality, achieving the same communicative goal.

Adaptation involves adjusting cultural references, idioms, or tone to align with the expectations and norms of the target audience. For example, the English phrase *He always brings his A-game to the boardroom* is translated into Ukrainian as ‘Він завжди демонструє найвищий рівень професіоналізму на переговорах’. Since there is no direct equivalent of the idiom *bring his A-game* in Ukrainian, the translator selects a culturally and contextually suitable expression that conveys the same idea. By modifying both the idiom and formality level, the translation ensures the message is clear and relevant within the Ukrainian business context.

Explicitation involves making implicit meanings in the source text clearer for the target audience, especially when cultural or contextual differences may hinder understanding. For example, the sentence *The company decided to pull the plug on the project* is translated into Ukrainian as ‘Компанія вирішила остаточно припинити реалізацію проєкту через невідповідність очікуваним результатам’. The metaphor *pull the plug* may not be easily understood by a Ukrainian reader, so the translator explicitly states that the project is being terminated and explains the reason. This approach ensures that the intended meaning is clearly conveyed.

The use of **neutral style** involves selecting language that is universally understandable and professional when a direct cultural or idiomatic equivalent is either unavailable or inappropriate in the target context. For example, the English sentence *The client was over the moon with the proposal* is translated into Ukrainian as ‘Клієнт залишився дуже задоволений запропонованим рішенням’. The original idiom *over the moon* is emotionally charged and informal, which would be unsuitable for business communication. Instead of searching for a Ukrainian idiom, the translator opts for a neutral and formal expression that preserves clarity and aligns with the business tone, thus demonstrating the effective use of neutral style.

Preserving register involves maintaining the same level of formality, specificity, and technicality as the original text to reflect the conventions of the given genre in the target language. For example, the sentence *All submitted materials must comply with the procurement documentation and be duly certified* is translated into Ukrainian as ‘Усі подані матеріали повинні відповідати тендерній документації та бути належним чином завірені’. In this case, the translator maintains the formal tone and technical terminology, such as ‘тендерна документація’ and ‘належним чином завірені’, which accurately reflect the register of official-business discourse. This ensures that the translated text aligns with professional and legal standards while preserving the intended level of formality.

Conclusions and directions for further research in this area. Viewed through a sociocultural and translational perspective, the stylistics of business communication represents a multifaceted and evolving domain shaped by the interplay of linguistic conventions, communicative intentions, cultural norms, and translation strategies. A comparative review of contemporary Ukrainian and foreign scholarship underscores the importance of preserving stylistic consistency and achieving functional equivalence in business discourse translation, particularly in settings where accuracy, appropriate tone, and intercultural intelligibility are essential. The examination of sociocultural influences on business communication reveals the indispensable role of cultural competence and pragmatic sensitivity in ensuring effective cross-cultural interaction. Translators must move beyond mere linguistic equivalence, attending to variations in tone, register, idiomatic expressions, non-verbal elements, and culturally embedded expectations. Strategies such as functional equivalence, adaptation, explicitation, neutral style, and register preservation serve as vital tools for addressing these challenges and crafting translations that are both contextually accurate and culturally appropriate.

In conclusion, the stylistic dimension of business communication remains a fertile area for both theoretical exploration and applied research. By deepening our understanding of how style functions across languages and cultures, we can better support translators, improve intercultural communication, and enhance the overall effectiveness of global business interactions.

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