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COUNTERACTING RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA THROUGH TRANSLATION

In an age of rapid information dissemination, the power of language to shape perceptions and influence public opinion has never been more evident. Translation, traditionally seen as a mere act of linguistic transfer, now plays a pivotal role in global geopolitics, serving as both a bridge and a battleground for ideologies. In the context of *the ongoing war* (also EN *ongoing conflict* similarly to UA *Російсько-українська війна* and EN *Russia-Ukraine war / conflict*) in Ukraine, translation has emerged as a key tool in the struggle against Russian propaganda, which seeks not only to distort facts but to manipulate the very narratives that define national identities and global perceptions. Propaganda, when strategically deployed, has the potential to alter the course of history by shaping public opinion, erasing historical memory, and redefining cultural values. In this scenario, translation becomes an act of resistance, as translators and cultural mediators work to ensure that the truth is not lost in the crossfire of ideological warfare.

This research seeks to explore the role of translation in countering Russian propaganda, examining both the challenges faced by translators in this high-stakes context and the strategies that can be employed to resist ideological manipulation. The research problem centers on the ethical dilemmas that arise when translating texts that are politically motivated, ideologically charged, and designed to influence public sentiment. At the heart of the issue is the responsibility of the translator to navigate the fine line between linguistic fidelity and the need to resist the spread of false narratives. In the traditional view of translation, the translator's role is to remain neutral and faithful to the original text, prioritizing accuracy and clarity. However, in cases where the source material is designed to spread disinformation or promote a particular ideological agenda, this neutrality becomes problematic. The translation of propaganda is not a mere linguistic exercise; it is a political act that can either perpetuate or challenge the ideological messages embedded in the original text. Importantly, Russian state-controlled media has long used language as a tool of political manipulation, re-writing history, distorting facts, and promoting a vision of the world that serves the Russian government's interests. From the annexation of Crimea in 2014 to the ongoing invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russian propaganda has sought to justify aggressive actions by presenting a skewed version of reality. This includes misrepresenting Ukraine's sovereignty, portraying its leadership as corrupt or illegitimate, and distorting historical narratives to create a sense of Russian superiority. When translating such content, the translator faces a difficult decision: *How can one remain true to the language of the original text without inadvertently perpetuating harmful or false narratives? How can one resist the ideological manipulation inherent in the text while still*

producing a faithful and accurate translation? In this context, the research problem also involves examining the broader implications of translation in the political and cultural domains. As such, translators must be aware of their role in either reinforcing or challenging the ideological messages that these texts convey. Moreover, the rise of disinformation in the digital age has made the act of translation even more critical, as manipulated texts are disseminated across multiple platforms, reaching audiences far beyond their original linguistic and cultural contexts.

The manipulation of language for political purposes is not a new phenomenon, but the scale and sophistication of Russian propaganda in recent years have raised new challenges for translators. The Russian government has invested heavily in its media apparatus, including both traditional outlets and digital platforms, to craft a narrative that serves its political agenda. This narrative is often built on selective historical references, distorted facts, and emotional appeals designed to elicit fear, anger, or sympathy. Russian propaganda also frequently exploits cultural and linguistic divisions within targeted societies, seeking to weaken social cohesion and undermine trust in democratic institutions.

The proposed solution is to investigate innovative translation techniques and strategies that can mitigate the impact of propaganda, safeguard the integrity of cultural identity, and foster a more accurate and balanced portrayal of historical and political realities. To counteract the effects of Russian propaganda through translation, a multi-faceted approach is necessary, combining both technical and ethical considerations. The first step is to empower translators with the tools and training necessary to identify and analyze propaganda techniques. This includes familiarizing translators with the various methods of manipulation used in propaganda, such as selective language, emotional appeals, and historical revisionism. In addition to technical expertise, translators must develop a strong sense of ethical responsibility. This involves making informed decisions about how to translate texts in ways that resist ideological manipulation. One possible solution is the adoption of critical translation practices, which prioritize accuracy while actively countering misinformation. This approach may involve providing additional context, re-framing misleading statements, or even highlighting inconsistencies in the original text.

Another key strategy is the use of *transcreation*, a more flexible form of translation that adapts the original message to suit the cultural and linguistic context of the target audience while maintaining the integrity of the core message. This approach is particularly useful when translating politically charged content, as it allows the translator to ensure that the translation resonates with the target audience while also challenging any ideological biases present in the original text. Transcreation can also be used to create counter-narratives that provide an alternative to the false narratives promoted by Russian propaganda, offering a more accurate and nuanced portrayal of events.

In conclusion, the role of translation in countering Russian propaganda is both crucial and complex. Through critical analysis, ethical decision-making, and the adoption of innovative translation strategies, translators can play an active role in resisting ideological manipulation and preserving the truth. With accurate, contextually sensitive translations that challenge disinformation and foster a deeper understanding of political and cultural realities, translators can help protect the integrity of democratic discourse and contribute to the fight against propaganda on a global scale.

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**INTERNATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
IN SHAPING UKRAINE'S IMAGE:
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

**MATERIALS
OF THE INTERNATIONAL
SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL CONFERENCE**

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Forscientists, lecturers, postgraduates, students.

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