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TRANSLATION OF PROPER NAMES IN THE NATO VILNIUS SUMMIT COMMUNIQUÉ (2023)

The translation of proper names in political and diplomatic discourse presents unique challenges, especially in the context of international summits where terminology carries not only linguistic but also symbolic and political weight. The *Vilnius Summit Communiqué* issued by NATO Heads of State and Government on July 11, 2023, serves as a valuable case study for examining the strategies used in the Ukrainian translation of proper names and their implications for international communication. Proper names in this communiqué include personal names,

institutional names, geopolitical toponyms, and names of strategic programs and initiatives. These names often require careful treatment to preserve both their referential meaning and cultural significance.

In the Ukrainian version of the communiqué, several dominant strategies can be observed. The first is transliteration, which is applied to personal names to preserve pronunciation while respecting Ukrainian phonetic rules, e.g. EN *Stoltenberg* is rendered as UA *Столтенберг*, and EN *Zelenskyy* as UA *Зеленський*. This method ensures recognisability while maintaining linguistic consistency. Institutional names, such as EN *European Commission*, EN *NATO*, and EN *United Nations*, are translated using official equivalents that have been standardised by Ukrainian governmental and academic bodies. These equivalents, UA *Європейська комісія*, UA *НАТО*, UA *Організація Об'єднаних Націй*, contribute to terminological uniformity and help avoid confusion among readers. A specific challenge arises with hybrid names that combine institutional identity with functional description. In these cases, calque (loan translation) is frequently employed, e.g., EN *Comprehensive Assistance Package* becomes UA *Комплексний пакет допомоги*. This approach allows for semantic transparency but may risk losing the connotative nuances embedded in the original English term. Another area that demands attention is the translation of strategic programs and concepts, e.g., EN *Peace Formula*, introduced by President Zelenskyy, is translated as UA *Формула миру*, which reflects a literal meaning but also maintains the rhetorical strength of the original. Similarly, e.g., EN *Strategic Concept* is rendered as UA *Стратегічна концепція*, a term widely used in Ukrainian security discourse.

The translation of geographical names in the communiqué is largely standardised, yet still loaded with political significance, e.g., EN *Crimea* is translated as UA *Крим* without any modifying language, reinforcing Ukraine's sovereignty over the peninsula. The consistent use of EN *Ukraine* as UA *Україна*, without the Russian-influenced locative form *"на Україні"*, aligns with the modern Ukrainian language norm and carries strong nation-affirming connotations. This reflects the broader socio-political shift discussed by Chaika (2024), who notes that linguistic choices in translation often reinforce or resist forms of cultural suppression and ideological narratives imposed by aggressive actors. Translators must also handle the names of countries whose political status or alignment might be sensitive, e.g., EN *Belarus* is translated as UA *Білорусь* rather than the outdated Soviet-era form UA *Білорусія*. This change, while minor on the surface, reflects a conscious decolonisation of language use and a reorientation toward Ukrainian national and geopolitical identity, as explored in Chaika, Sharmanova, and Makaruk (2024). In the context of the *Vilnius Summit Communiqué*, the use of appropriate translation strategies not only ensures accuracy but also contributes to the broader diplomatic message being conveyed. Every proper name in such documents functions as a node of meaning and symbolism. As Chaika (2023) argues, cultural sensitivity in translation is crucial for maintaining international understanding and mutual respect. This is particularly true when the document addresses sensitive issues such as NATO expansion, Russia's aggression, or international legal norms.

In conclusion, the translation of proper names in political documents like the NATO communiqué is a task that extends beyond technical equivalence. It requires awareness of political context, cultural nuance, and audience expectations. By examining real examples from the Ukrainian translation, it becomes evident that translators serve not only as linguistic mediators but also as agents of meaning in geopolitical discourse.

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