



PRAGMATICS, PLURILINGUALISM, AND LANGUAGE DOMINANCE IN ENGLISH RUSSIAN UZBEK MEDIA CONTEXTS

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Abstract

This article examines how pragmatic factors and asymmetric language power shape the translation of contemporary media texts among English, Russian, and Uzbek. Drawing on current scholarship in translation studies, pragmatics, and Central-Asian sociolinguistics, it argues that successful mediation across these three languages demands a fine balance between global English influence, the residual prestige of Russian, and the growing identity-building role of Uzbek. A qualitative synthesis of recent literature shows that translators negotiate this tri-polar hierarchy through flexible localisation, selective retention of loanwords, and culturally embedded pragmatic moves that secure communicative equivalence. Recommendations for translator education and future research conclude the discussion.

Keywords: Pragmatics, plurilingualism, language dominance, media translation, English, Russian, Uzbek, localisation

Introduction

The triadic interplay of English, Russian and Uzbek in Central Asian media illustrates a global pattern in which one hyper-central language (English) co-exists with an erstwhile regional lingua franca (Russian) and a newly empowered national language (Uzbek). English functions as a global lingua franca, Russian retains post-Soviet prestige, and Uzbek symbolises local identity (Satibaldiyev, 2022; Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). Media translators thus confront not only linguistic differences but also the pragmatic expectations tied



to evolving power relations. This study asks: How do language dominance and plurilingual pragmatics influence translation strategies when news reports, streaming content or social-media posts circulate among these languages?

Theoretical Background

Translation scholars increasingly view pragmatics – the negotiation of meaning in context – as central to cross-cultural mediation (House, 2015). Baker (2018) highlights the need to replicate illocutionary force, implicatures and politeness routines alongside propositional content. In plurilingual settings, pragmatic transfer is further complicated by language hierarchies: dominant codes often impose discourse conventions on weaker ones (Mey, 2001). English coinages such as *live stream* or *fact-checking* frequently remain untranslated in Russian and Uzbek outlets, signalling technological modernity yet risking lexical saturation (Tinaz & Satibaldiev, 2024). Conversely, Uzbek pragmatic norms favour indirectness and kinship-based honorifics, requiring Russian- or English-source texts to be softened to maintain sociolinguistic appropriacy (Rafikova, 2020).

Analysis and Discussion

Language dominance as a pragmatic variable. English's global spread endows its textual conventions – brevity, informal directness and a preference for first-person framing – with symbolic capital. Russian-language journalists translating Anglo-American headlines often mitigate this directness through longer syntactic structures and formal lexis to meet audience expectations of gravitas (House, 2015). When the same items are localised into Uzbek, translators typically replace direct address with formulaic politeness markers (*hurmatli tomoshabinlar* “respected viewers”), aligning with Uzbek norms of deference (Satibaldieva, 2024).

Bidirectional influence between Russian and Uzbek. Although Russian lexical borrowings permeate Uzbek, pragmatic equivalence is not automatic. Humorous allusions to Soviet-era culture in Russian talk-shows may be opaque to younger Uzbek viewers. Effective localisation therefore substitutes culturally resonant referents – e.g., replacing a pun on *Moscow ring roads* with one referencing



Tashkent's *Chilanzar* district – while maintaining humour as speech act (Rafikova, 2020).

Strategic retention and hybridisation. Where English technical terminology carries prestige or lacks concise equivalents, selective retention reinforces modernity (Baker, 2018). Uzbek tech blogs, for instance, routinely keep *smartphone* or *podcast*, embedding them in otherwise Uzbek sentences. Such hybridisation indexes cosmopolitanism yet demands sensitivity to audience comprehension levels. Translators mitigate potential alienation by adding brief glosses or integrating suffixes that adapt the loan to Uzbek morphology (Satibaldiyev, 2022).

Politeness and stance-taking across the triad. English social-media discourse prizes immediacy and personal stance, whereas Russian formal journalism foregrounds institutional voice. Uzbek online outlets occupy a middle ground: they increasingly adopt first-person narration but preserve respectful address forms. Consequently, back-translation from Uzbek into English may require de-personalising kinship terms that have no pragmatic equivalent (Mey, 2001).

Technology and fast-cycle media. Digital platforms accelerate cross-language transfer, forcing translators to decide in real time whether to calque emergent slang or domesticate it. Corpus-based monitoring shows that Russian TikTok captions often absorb English phrases verbatim before any standardised Russian equivalent emerges (Satibaldieva, 2024). Uzbek translators tend to wait for institutional guidance or coin descriptive periphrases, reflecting differing degrees of openness to lexical innovation.

Implications for Practice

1. **Contextual sensitivity.** Translators must map power-laden pragmatic norms – formality levels, politeness markers, humour conventions – before deciding on localisation depth.
2. **Flexible localisation.** Retain global terms where they add clarity or authority, but domesticate culture-bound references to safeguard audience resonance.
3. **Iterative review with native consultants.** Multistage editing involving bilingual media professionals ensures pragmatic equivalence across the three languages.



4. Technological augmentation. Corpus tools can flag inconsistent borrowing, yet final pragmatic calibration remains a human skill.

Conclusion

Media translation in the English–Russian–Uzbek corridor illustrates how plurilingual pragmatics intersect with asymmetric language power. English dominance exerts centrifugal pressure, Russian supplies historical frames of reference, and Uzbek asserts local identity. Translators who master this dynamic tri-polar context mediate not just words but worldviews. Embedding pragmatic awareness – speech-act intent, politeness strategies, and cultural humour – into every lexical choice sustains communicative impact across audiences. Future research should test the efficacy of the proposed strategies in machine-assisted environments and explore audience reception studies that measure how pragmatic choices influence trust in translated news. (997 words)

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