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A. Bakitov¹, *Ye. Tyazhina², Z. Khassenova³

^{1,3}Al-Farabi Kazakh National University,

Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty;

²S. Seifullin Kazakh Agrotechnical

Research University,

Republic of Kazakhstan, Astana.

¹ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5461-7394>

²ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-0091-6841>

³ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3908-2988>

*e-mail: helene_32@mail.ru

OVERVIEW OF AMERICAN POLITICAL REALIA AND WAYS OF THEIR TRANSLATION

The paper examines American political realia, describes five possible ways of their translation into Russian, and demonstrates that the techniques of translating realia are closely intertwined. The purpose of the paper is to analyze Americanisms typical of political discourse, study their typology; identify translation techniques, and determine the role of techniques' combination in improving translation quality. The relevance of the study lies in the fact that realia, as one of the most complex lexical units of any language, permeate political discourse; and therefore, to create an adequate translation of American political materials, a strong theoretical foundation regarding Americanisms is necessary. Sector 1 of the article provides various definitions of the word «realia» and puts forward three main problems of translating realia. Descriptive, comparative, and definitional analysis methods were used. In the sector 2 of the article, the peculiarities of the language of political discourse were formulated, and examples for each of the eleven categories of political Americanisms were provided. Component analysis and contextual analysis methods were applied. In the final sector, the author compiled a table with all the political Americanisms covered in the course of the study, their rendering into Russian, and the names of the translation techniques used, thereby proving that the combination of techniques often best conveys the national and historical color of realia. The research results can be used for an in-depth study of American political realia by translators of political texts.

Keywords: political discourse, non-equivalent lexis, realia, Americanisms, translation technique.

Introduction

This topic was chosen in connection with changes in the geopolitical situation over the past two years, which led to the strengthening of diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and the United States. American political discourse is more important than ever for Kazakh translators working with political texts and speeches. For effective work, they need to know the classification of American political realia and the ways of their translation, which are thoroughly studied in this article.

The main problem lies in the insufficient depth of research on American political realia in Kazakhstani and Russian translation studies: the most informative sources were written in the 80s-90s of the 20th century, and given the rapid pace of vocabulary updates in political discourse, some of the described realities are no longer relevant in the modern world. Thus, the author identifies the following research tasks: 1) provide a general overview of realia, 2) describe in detail the techniques of translating realia, 3) create a table of political Americanisms with their translation into Russian and an indication of the translation technique used, 4) contribute to expanding the theoretical base of Kazakhstani researchers regarding American political realia.

A review of the literature on the topic of realia. In every language, there are non-equivalent linguistic units, which can be lexical or grammatical. Levitskaya T. R. and Fiterman A. M. [1] identified three types of non-equivalent grammatical units: separate morphological forms, parts of speech, and syntactic structures. Latyshev L. K. and Provotorov V. I. [2] presented three methods of their translation. The first, called «zero translation», implies the complete exclusion of the grammatical unit in the target text – this method is most often used in relation to such parts of speech as articles. The lost grammatical meaning is compensated by lexical or grammatical means. The second method is «approximate translation», which uses a syntactic structure that corresponds to the original language units only partially. In translating from English to Russian, absolute constructions are usually approximately translated. And the last method, «transformational translation», involves the use of grammatical transformations, mainly substitution, to change the form of a word, part of speech, sentence elements, or sentence type. According to Komissarov V. N. [3], lexical non-equivalent linguistic units, in turn, are divided into neologisms, i.e., words that have recently appeared in a specific language or old words whose meaning has been reinterpreted in accordance with the requirements of the modern world, and realia [3, p. 57].

Over the years of the existence of translation studies as a science, many definitions have been given to realia. The word «realia» itself comes from the Latin

adjective «realis», which means «substantial», and currently, it denotes any aspects of reality that are characteristic of a specific country, society, etc. In translation studies, «realia» is a term and a lexical unit, not the phenomena they denote.

In their works, Revzin I. I. and Rozentzveig V. Yu. [4] call realia «lacuna», that is, units of the vocabulary of one language that cannot be translated into other languages because they denote situations peculiar to the culture of one nation but not observed in another culture [4, p. 78].

Barkhudarov L. S. defines realia as «words denoting objects, concepts, and situations that do not exist in the practical experience of speakers of another language» [5, p. 90].

Fedorov A. V. understands realia as words conveying national-specific features [6, p. 95].

Vlakhov S. I. and Florin S. P. made a significant contribution to the study and understanding of the linguistic essence of realia in translation. According to their definition, realia are «words or phrases denoting objects characteristic of the life of one people and foreign to another». These linguists highlight the connotative meaning, national, cultural, and historical coloring of realia, which cannot be translated without additional explanation [7, p. 17].

Materials and methods

The study employed both general scientific methods of cognition and specific methods characteristic of translation studies. Among the universal methods, the descriptive method was used to present characteristics of realia; the comparative method was applied to compare various definitions of realia to identify common properties; the analytical method was used to understand the ways of translating Americanisms by studying their parts and properties. The logical method was applied throughout the work and manifested in the clear division of research into introduction, results, discussion, and conclusion.

Moving on to specific methods, the method of definitional analysis was used to form translator competence regarding the term «realia»; the method of component analysis was applied to search for generalizing elements; the method of contextual analysis was used to identify connotative meanings of political Americanisms.

Results and discussion

Based on the definitions of realia, three main issues in their translation can be formulated: 1) the absence of a constant translation correspondence due to the uniqueness of the phenomenon to a specific language and culture; 2) the need to transfer not only the semantic, or denotative meaning but also the connotative meaning, which may be associated with national traditions, cultural aspects, historical background unknown beyond a particular country or society; 3) due to the frequent need for descriptive translation, the target text can quickly become

incommodious and difficult to understand. Thus, realia are rightfully considered one of the most challenging lexical units for a translator.

Speaking of types of realia, the author refers to the subject classification by Vlachov S. I. and Florin S. P.:

1 Geographic realia: names of objects;

2 Ethnographic realia: daily life (utensils, food, drinks); clothing (national costumes, footwear, headdress); art and culture (music, dance, musical instruments), etc.

3 Socio-political realia: everything related to the political, administrative, and military structure of a country [7, p. 80].

Political realia represent the pinnacle of nationally colored vocabulary, which best conveys how citizens live not only in a physical sense (realia of regional administrative agencies and offices) but also spiritually. If the names of geographic realia reflect the features of the natural-geographic environment in which the language's native speakers live, then the names of institutions, authorities, various state and public organizations capture the features of the country's political layout; the socio-political structure of the society served by this language.

Many political realia are closely intertwined with historical events that have had a profound impact on the people of a particular nation and contributed to the formation of their worldview. They give the text a vividly expressed national flavor, so they are preserved in translation and widely used in describing facts of existence.

In addition to the presence of political realia, the characteristics of political discourse language are clarity, expressiveness, and persuasiveness. It predominantly employs simple native words instead of complex foreign terms and exhibits a notable absence of intricate and prolonged syntactic structures. The expressiveness of political discourse is evident through the use of stylistic figures of speech at various levels – morphological, lexical, syntactic, and complex lexico-syntactic – contributing to an impactful manner of communication. Persuasiveness is achieved through the use of elements of persuasive rhetoric, as highlighted by Aristotle. This includes pathos – an elevated style of speech with emotional intensity, logos – facts and logic, and ethos – the sense of authority, the perception of the speaker by the audience.

Tomakhin G. D. refers to American realia as «Americanisms» and dedicates an entire chapter to American political realia. According to his classification, they are divided into 11 groups:

1 *State symbols and symbols of states*. The most vivid examples include the U.S. coat of arms, which has names related to realia: «bird of freedom», «national bird», «spread-eagle, and the U.S. flag, which is also called «stars and stripes», «old glory», «star-spangled banner».

Even here, differences in connotative meaning are easily noticeable, despite all these words denoting the same object. While «bird of freedom» and «national bird» are relatively neutral nicknames, «spread-eagle» is also used to mean «praising the USA» and «ultrapatriotic speeches», which some people perceive negatively. Similarly, with nicknames for the flag, «old glory» has a particularly lofty and solemn connotation associated with historical context. Specifically, with the American ship captain William Driver, who traveled in the 19th century with a handmade flag, which he cherished as the apple of his eye and hid from Confederate troops. Since then, «old glory» has become a symbol of patriotism and the respect Americans hold for other countries that William Driver visited on his ship.

2 Realia related to the U. S. Constitution. For example, «grants-in-aid» refers to financial assistance provided by the federal government to the states. This mechanism is one of the methods of centralizing state power in the United States and puts pressure on higher authorities on lower ones. Federal agencies maintain complete control over the area for which funds are allocated.

The Twentieth Amendment to the Constitution is widely known as the «lame-duck amendment»; it changed the order of replacing officials not elected for the next term. This realia also has a pronounced historical context. Before the adoption of the «lame-duck amendment in 1933, the newly elected president and vice president, elected in November, began their duties only in March, and members of Congress only in December. During this time, the «lame-ducks», who suffered defeat in the elections, remained in power.

3 Realia of the legislative branch. The U. S. Congress, especially the Senate, has long been called a «rich man's club» because, upon assuming office, members of Congress gain access to networks and information that can be leveraged to enhance their wealth in ways unmatched in the private sector. Moreover, when these politicians exit office, their established connections afford them opportunities to further capitalize on their influence for financial gain. The realia «whip» is used for the role of a party organizer of a faction in Congress, who performs the functions of an assistant to the faction leader on organizational issues. They monitor the attendance of deputies at meetings, the voting participation, committee work, and so on.

The realia «backbencher» in the American political context refers to a congressman who has no experience serving in Congress, that is, the word focuses on a politician's low rank in the party hierarchy.. It is interesting to note that «backbencher» is also used in the English political context, but it implies those who consistently vote as directed by the leadership of the House of Commons.

4 President and the White House apparatus. This category includes realia such as «recess appointments», «pocket veto», «brain trust», «government by crony», etc. Any appointments to positions made by the President of the United States

during the break between sessions of Congress are called «recess appointments». «Pocket veto» is the President's right to delay signing a bill until the close of a congressional session, thereby rendering the bill invalid. The realia “brain trust” refers to a collective of experts spanning diverse fields who function as informal consultants on matters of policy and strategy. This realia has a notable association with the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who specifically chose a small cadre of academics to provide him assistance during the Democratic candidate's 1932 presidential campaign. «Government by crony» has a negative connotation and describes a situation where the president selects advisors based not on their professional qualifications but solely from among their friends.

5 Departments. Some remarkable realia in this category include «bureau», «desk», «departmentalism», «gunboat diplomacy», and «Monroe Doctrine». Regarding the latter realia, it is a doctrine about the special role of the United States in the Western Hemisphere. According to it, European powers should not create new colonies in the American continent, and the United States, in turn, undertook not to interfere in the affairs of European countries. It was proclaimed in 1823 by U. S. President J. Monroe. The Monroe Doctrine was used in the interests of expansion and served as a cover for intervention against Latin American countries.

«Gunboat diplomacy» is one of the common methods of conducting aggressive policies, using the demonstration of the military power of a country (especially its navy) to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries.

6 Agencies. Often, realia in this category are presented as abbreviations. For example, NASA – National Aeronautics and Space Administration, CIA – The Central Intelligence Agency, CBP – United States Customs and Border Protection, ATF – The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, DEA – The Drug Enforcement Administration.

7 Civil Servants. Striking examples include «life tenure» – a term of office that extends throughout the entire life of the office holder, unless the individual is removed from their position due to misconduct, extraordinary circumstances, or voluntary resignation; and «merit system» – appointments to positions and promotion based on the employee's qualifications, not political connections.

8 Judiciary. Examples are «the Supreme Court», «kangaroo court», «counsel», «political racketeering». In translation of realia of this category, calque is often used.

9 State and Local Government. Perhaps the main American realia of this type is the word «state», and accordingly, phrases related to it: state senate, state senator, state police, state house, state House of Representatives, etc.

10 Elections. American elections are characterized by special solemnity, publicity, and flamboyance, so many realia related to them are figurative: stalking horse, cemetery vote, landslide, log rolling, log-cabin politician, etc. These realia are mainly visible in flashy newspaper headlines characterized by sensationalism.

11 *Political Parties*. This includes the names of American political parties and their nicknames. For example, due to their mascots, the Republican and Democratic parties are known as «elephant» and «donkey, respectively [8].

Five methods of translating realia can be identified: 1) transcription and transliteration; 2) calque; 3) analogue, or approximate translation; 4) transformation-lexical substitution; 5) explanatory translation.

Transliteration means translating letter formation of a word in the source language, e.g. vice-president – вице-президент. *Transcription* is based on representing the sound structure of a word in the source language by correspondent sounds in the target language, operating at the level of phonemes, e.g. speaker – спикер. Both transliteration and transcription become essential when there is a need to preserve the lexical nuances of realia and maintain their original forms from the source language. This is particularly important when emphasizing the specificity of a subject or concept that lacks an equivalent in the target language. Usually foreign words are imported into the target language to underscore the unique nuances of cultural or contextual elements. In cases where a transliterated or transcribed word is infrequently used or introduced for the first time in the target text, it becomes necessary to offer explanations and provide appropriate context to ensure clarity for the audience.

Calque is a literal translation of a word, phrase or part of a word (half-calque), that allows rendering realia from source language into target language by keeping fully its semantic, e.g. the Great Depression – великая депрессия. The adoption of calque is an effective way of translation, which makes it possible to retain the content and nuances of realia. When it comes to half-calque, it constitutes a form of partial borrowing and involves the creation of new words or phrases; they are constructed using a combination of original material and elements borrowed from foreign words. This hybrid approach allows for a nuanced conveyance of meaning while incorporating both native and foreign linguistic elements, e.g. декабрист – Decembrist.

Many correspondences created through the application of calque become prevalent in translation practice and eventually transition into usage in non-translated materials within the target language. Consequently, the units from the source language cease to be considered non-equivalent, establishing constant correspondences as they become integrated into the everyday language of the target culture.

The selection of a closely corresponding term in the target language for a lexical unit in the source language that lacks an exact equivalent is known as *analogue translation*. This process involves choosing a term in the target language that captures the closest possible meaning and conveys the intended sense of the original lexical unit, even though an exact match may not exist. For

example, «public defender», «attorney», and «counsel» can be translated into Russian using the same word «адвокат». However, it's important to understand that in doing so, the original terms lose their distinct meanings bestowed to them by American political and legal systems. «Attorney» is a general term used to refer to any lawyer who can participate in criminal investigations or provide legal advice to authorities on various legal matters, while a «public defender» is strictly a lawyer provided to the accused when they cannot afford private legal assistance. A public defender represents the interests of their client in court on a pro bono basis. «Counsel» denotes a lawyer who offers legal advice and guidance to individuals or organizations.

Transformation-lexical substitution allows to convey the meaning of a non-equivalent word in some specific text using one of the types of translation transformations that linguistic theory employs in describing the process of translation. It creates an irregular, exceptional way of translating realia, suitable only for a given context.

In case it is impossible to create a correspondence using the methods mentioned above for translating non-equivalent lexis, a *descriptive translation* is used that reveals the meaning of realia through an expanded phrase, e.g. veep hunting season – период поиска кандидатуры на пост вице-президента. Often, the use of transcription or calque for translating a non-equivalent word is accompanied by a description of the meaning of that word in a special note or footnote. This allows combining the conciseness inherent in transliteration, transcription and calque with ensuring a complete understanding of the occasional correspondence by the audience.

Translations of the American political realia discussed in the article are presented in the table below, along with an indication of how they were translated.

Table 1 – Translation of American political realia into Russian

Source text	Target text	Way of translation
Bird of freedom	Птица свободы	Calque
National eagle	Национальная птица	Calque
Spread-eagle	Хвастливое преувеличение о величии США	Descriptive translation
Stars and stripes	Звездно-полосатый флаг	Descriptive translation
Old glory	«Былое величие» – высокопарное название флага США	Calque and descriptive translation
Star-spangled banner	Звездно-полосатый флаг	Calque and transformation-lexical substitution

Continuation of the Table 1

Source text	Target text	Way of translation
Grants-in-aid	Финансовая помощь, оказываемая штатам федеральным правительством	Descriptive translation
Lame-duck amendment	Поправка о порядке замещения не переизбранных должностных лиц	Descriptive translation
Richman's club	Клуб богачей	Calque
Whip	Организатор парламентской фракции	Descriptive translation
Backbencher	Заднее скамейчик – политик в низах партийной иерархии	Calque and descriptive translation
Recess appointments	Назначения президентом на должности в период между сессиями Конгресса	Descriptive translation
Pocket veto	Карманное вето – прием президента США, дающий ему возможность воспрепятствовать принятию законопроекта	Calque and descriptive translation
Brain trust	Мозговой трест – группа экспертов в какой-либо области или собрание советников	Calque and descriptive translation
Government by crony	Правительство из закадычных друзей	Calque
Bureau	Бюро	Transcription
Desk	Сектор	Analogue
Departmentalism	Департаментализм – деление организационной структуры на отдельные элементы	Transliteration and descriptive translation
Gunboat diplomacy	Дипломатия канонерок – умышленная демонстрация вооруженных сил страны	Calque and descriptive translation
Monroe doctrine	Доктрина Монро	Calque and transcription
Life tenure	Пожизненный срок пребывания в должности	Descriptive translation
Merit system	Система учета служебных заслуг	Descriptive translation
The Supreme Court	Верховный суд	Calque
Kangaroo court	«Суд кенгуру» – незаконный суд, пародия на правосудие	Calque and descriptive translation
Counsel	Адвокат	Analogue

Continuation of the Table 1

Source text	Target text	Way of translation
Political racketeering	Политическое рэкетирство, подкуп должностных лиц, запугивание избирателей	Calque and transformation-lexical substitution
State	Штат	Transcription
Stalking horse	Фиктивный кандидат партии	Descriptive translation
Cemetery vote	Голосование от имени умершего человека	Descriptive translation
Landslide	Победа на выборах с большим отрывом	Descriptive translation
Log rolling	Взаимная поддержка друг друга политиками	Descriptive translation
Log-cabin politician	Политик из низов	Descriptive translation
Elephant	Республиканская партия	Transformation-lexical substitution
Donkey	Демократическая партия	Transformation-lexical substitution

Conclusion

In the process of bilingual communication, not only interlingual exchange but also intercultural one takes place because language and culture are inseparably connected. Understanding the interaction between language and culture is crucial for the translator to act as a bridge for mutual understanding among individuals and societies; to find consistent correspondences; to handle the translation of non-equivalent language units, and especially their most complex category – realia.

Realia can be translated using five methods: 1) transcription and transliteration; 2) calque; 3) analogue translation; 4) transformational-lexical substitution; 5) descriptive translation. It should be noted that these translation techniques are not used in isolation; they intertwine in the process of rendering. Using only one method can lead to the loss of national specificity or, conversely, the «overloading» of the translated text with foreign elements, as seen, for example, with the exclusive use of transliteration or transcription.

It is also necessary to consider, as emphasized by I. R. Podzolkova in her research article, that «some realia that do not carry semantic load can be ‘dropped’ in translation». It means that when the translator chooses the appropriate translation technique, they must clearly understand the type of realia they are dealing with – geographic, ethnographic, socio-political, etc. – taking into account its peculiarities, the role in the text, and significance in the context. Based on the above, we can draw the following conclusion: when choosing a method for translating realia,

one should consider the word-forming capabilities of languages, literary and linguistic traditions; in accordance with the specificity of the reader of that translation [9, P. 87].

When translating specifically political realia, a combination of techniques is often applied: transcription, transliteration, or calque with additional explicative translation. Since detailed explanations in the target text may be impractical, footnotes become a useful tool for providing additional context. Thus, the art of professional translation involves not only knowledge of various techniques for dealing with realia but also the ability to skillfully combine them. An experienced translator must possess a deep understanding of both the foreign and native languages and have broad knowledge of the culture, history, mentality, traditions, and customs of the people from the language being translated. Such a comprehensive approach ensures a nuanced and accurate conveyance of realia in the target language.

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А. Бәкітов¹, *Е. Тяжина², З. Хасенова³

^{1,3}Әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті,

Қазақстан Республикасы, Алматы қ.

²С. Сейфуллин атындағы Қазақ ғылыми-зерттеу

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АМЕРИКА САЯСИ РЕАЛИЙЛЕРІНЕ ШОЛУ ЖӘНЕ ОЛАРДЫ АУДАРУ ТӘСІЛДЕРІ

Мақала америкалық саяси реалийлердің топқа жіктелуін қарастырады, оларды орыс тіліне аударудың бес мүмкін жолын сипаттайды және реалийлерді аудару әдістерінің бір-бірімен тығыз байланысты екенін көрсетеді. Мақаланың мақсаты – саяси дискурсқа тән американизмдерді талдау, олардың типологиясын зерттеу; аударма әдістерін бөліп көрсету және аударма сапасын арттырудағы техниканы біріктірудің ролін анықтау. Мақаланың өзектілігі – кез-келген тілдің ең күрделі лексикалық бірліктері ретінде реалийлер саяси дискурсқа енеді, сондықтан американдық саяси материалдардың барабар аудармасын жасау үшін американизмге қатысты терминдерлік база болуы керек. Мақаланың бірінші бөлімі аударма термині ретінде «реалий» ұғымының әртүрлі анықтамаларына талдау жасап және соларға сүйене отырып, реалийлерді аударудың үш негізгі мәселесін алға тартады. Қолданылған әдістер сипаттамалық, салыстырмалы, анықтамалық талдау әдісі болып табылады. Мақаланың екінші бөлімінде саяси дискурс тілінің ерекшеліктеріне және саяси американизмнің он бір санатының әр қайсысына мысалдар келтірілді. Компоненттік және контекстік талдау әдісі қолданылып, реалийлерді аудару ерекшеліктері сипатталады. Соңғы бөлім деавторлар жұмыс барысында зерделенген барлық саяси американизмдермен, олардың орыс тіліндегі баламалары және қолданылған аударма әдістерінің атаулары мен кесте құрастырған. Осылайша техниканың бірігуі көбінесе реалийлердің ұлттық және тарихи еңкіні жақсы жеткізуге

мүмкіндік беретін әдісқолдануы дәлелденеді. Зерттеу нәтижелерін саяси мәтіндердің аудармашылары американдық саяси реалийлерді терең зерттеу үшін қолдана алады.

Кілтті сөздер: саяси дискурс, баламасыз лексика, реалий, американизм, аударма техникасы.

А. Бакитов¹, *Е. Тяжина², З. Хасенова³

^{1,3}Казахский национальный университет имени аль-Фараби,
Республика Казахстан, г. Алматы;

²Казахский исследовательский
агротехнический университет имени С. Сейфуллина,
Республика Казахстан, г. Астана.

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ОБЗОР АМЕРИКАНСКИХ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ РЕАЛИЙ И СПОСОБОВ ИХ ПЕРЕВОДА

Статья рассматривает классификацию американских политических реалий, описывает пять возможных путей их перевода на русский язык и демонстрирует, что техники перевода реалий тесно переплетены между собой. Цель статьи – проанализировать американизмы, характерные для политического дискурса, изучить их типологию; выделить техники перевода и выяснить роль комбинирования техник в повышении качества перевода. Актуальность заключается в том, что реалии, как одни из самых сложных лексических единиц любого языка, насильственно пронизывают политический дискурс, и поэтому для создания адекватного перевода американских политических материалов необходимо иметь сильную теоретическую базу касательно американизмов. Первая часть статьи приводит различные определения слова «реалия» как переводоведческого термина и, исходя из них, выдвигает три главных проблемы перевода реалий. Использованными методами являются описательный, сравнительный, метод дефиниционного анализа. Во второй части статьи были сформированы особенности языка политического дискурса, и приведены примеры на каждую из одиннадцати категорий политических американизмов. Были применены метод компонентного анализа и метод контекстуального анализа. В последней части авторы составили таблицу со всеми

политическими американизмами, затронутыми в ходе работы, их рендерингом на русский язык и названиями использованных техник перевода, тем самым подтверждая, что зачастую объединение техник лучше всего передает национальный и исторический окрас реалий. Результаты исследования могут быть использованы для углубленного изучения американских политических реалий переводчиками политических текстов.

Ключевые слова: политический дискурс, безэквивалентная лексика, реалия, американизмы, техника перевода.

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«Toraighyrov University» баспасынан басылып шығарылған

Торайғыров университеті

140008, Павлодар қ., Ломов к., 64, 137 каб.

«Toraighyrov University» баспасы

Торайғыров университеті

140008, Павлодар қ., Ломов к., 64, 137 каб.

67-36-69

e-mail: kereku@tou.edu.kz

www.vestnik.tou.edu.kz