

AGENCY AND EVIDENTIALITY IN ENGLISH, RUSSIAN, AND UZBEK NEWS
TRANSLATION**Erkinjon Kamilovich Satibaldiyev**

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e.satibaldiyev@uzswlu.uz<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19547869>**Abstract**

This paper examines how English-source media framing changes when it is translated into Russian and Uzbek. The analysis focuses on two tightly connected zones of journalistic language: agency and evidentiality. A small corpus was built from three Reuters items in finance, energy, and climate reporting (Reuters, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). For analytical control, I compared the English headline and lead of each item with one Russian and one Uzbek rendering produced for this study. The comparison shows an uneven pattern. Russian more readily preserves compressed institutional phrasing and impersonal assessment. Uzbek more often requires explicit naming of actors, clearer source attribution, and partial unpacking of technical shorthand. This does not mean that Uzbek is less suited to media discourse. It means that pragmatic equivalence is reached through different routes. In the selected material, language dominance appears not as a simple hierarchy of prestige, but as pressure to retain the tempo and compression of Anglophone news while still meeting the interpretive needs of distinct readerships.

Keywords: news translation, agency, evidentiality, plurilingualism, Russian, Uzbek

News translation is rarely a line-by-line operation. International items move fast, headlines must stay short, and editors privilege immediate intelligibility over structural loyalty. Because of this, what travels across languages is often not the source text itself, but a pragmatically redesigned version of it. Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) describe this newsroom logic as a form of adaptation built into global news production, while Schäffner (2012) shows that transediting is not a marginal accident but a regular procedure of journalistic transfer.

That broader argument becomes sharper in plurilingual media space. Multilingualism is not only the coexistence of codes; it is also a distribution of symbolic and communicative power (Cenoz, 2013). In the present topic, English often enters as the source of initial framing, Russian functions as a strong regional intermediary with an established analytical style, and Uzbek addresses a readership whose media discourse is growing quickly but still negotiates terminology, register, and source marking in real time. From this angle, language dominance is visible inside the sentence. It appears in who is named, who is hidden, and which evaluations are allowed to remain compressed.

This paper therefore asks a narrower question than a general discussion of media translation. It asks how agency and evidentiality are redistributed when English news discourse is rendered into Russian and Uzbek. I use these two categories because they sit at the center of translator intervention. Agency determines whether the event appears actor-driven, system-driven, or merely inferred. Evidentiality determines how firmly information is anchored to a source and how much epistemic distance the text preserves. Munday (2012) is useful here because translator decisions surface exactly at these value-laden points.

Method and Material

The corpus contains three Reuters texts from 2024: a finance item on expected Federal Reserve cuts, an energy item on nuclear power and AI data centers, and a climate item on the hottest year on record (Reuters, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). From each text, I selected the headline and the lead because these zones carry the strongest pressure for compression and framing. To isolate translation pressure more clearly, I did not use newsroom translations from third-party outlets. Instead, I produced one Russian and one Uzbek rendering for each English item. This decision is a limitation, because the targets are analytical constructs rather than published products. At the same time, it prevents the discussion from drifting into differences of editorial ideology, outlet policy, or platform design.

Three questions guided the comparison. First, does the translation keep the English distribution of agency, or does it assign the action to a more explicit actor? Second, how is evidentiality marked: by a clause, by an adverbial frame, by a reporting verb, or by omission? Third, what happens to compressed newsroom shorthand such as institutional labels, basis-point notation, or metaphorical collocations? Valdeón (2022) argues that gatekeeping begins before the text reaches the reader; in this study, that gatekeeping is visible at the micro-level of lexical and syntactic choice.

Analysis and Discussion

The finance headline offers a clear case of impersonal market evidentiality. Reuters writes *Fed seen nearly as likely to cut rates by 50 bps as 25 bps* (Reuters, 2024a). The phrase *seen nearly as likely* does not name the observer directly. The market is implied, not stated. A Russian rendering can stay relatively close to that compressed logic: *Вероятность снижения ставки ФРС на 50 б.п. почти сравнялась с прогнозом снижения на 25 б.п.* Russian accepts nominal density and allows the headline to sound analytical without heavy unpacking. Uzbek usually resists this degree of compression. A more workable rendering is *Bozor ishtirokchilari nazarida, FRS stavkani 50 bazis punktga tushirishi ehtimoli 25 bazis punktlik pasayish ehtimoliga deyarli tenglashdi.* Here the observing subject is made explicit through *bozor ishtirokchilari nazarida*, while the abbreviation *bps* is expanded. The English headline gains speed through omission; the Uzbek headline gains clarity through restoration.

A different pattern appears in the energy item. Reuters writes *US nuclear plants won't power up Big Tech's AI ambitions right away* (Reuters, 2024b). The line is efficient because it fuses literal and metaphorical meaning: plants produce power, but they also figuratively fail to *power up* corporate ambition. If that metaphor is transferred mechanically, the target headline sounds strained. Russian can preserve part of the compact image in *АЭС США не смогут быстро обеспечить энергией ИИ-амбиции Big Tech*, although even here the phrase remains marked and somewhat journalistic. Uzbek usually needs a more interpretive solution: *AQShdagi atom elektr stansiyalari Big Tech kompaniyalarining sun'iy intellekt bo'yicha kengayib borayotgan ehtiyojlarini tez fursatda qoplay olmaydi.* The English source lets *plants* behave like agents. The Uzbek version shifts agency back toward the companies and their energy needs. This is not loss. It is a pragmatic repair that removes an over-compressed metaphor from a context where informational precision carries more weight than stylistic punch.

The climate headline highlights source placement. Reuters writes *2024 will be world's hottest year on record, EU scientists say* (Reuters, 2024c). The proposition comes first; the evidential source arrives at the end. This ordering is typical of fast English news writing because it foregrounds the event claim before attaching attribution. Russian and Uzbek both more

naturally tolerate explicit source framing earlier in the sentence: *Учёные ЕС заявили, что 2024 год станет самым жарким за всю историю наблюдений* and *Yevropa Ittifoqi olimlari ma'lum qilishicha, 2024 yil kuzatuvlar tarixidagi eng issiq yil bo'ladi*. In both cases, the source becomes grammatically heavier and more visible. The English headline sounds immediate; the Russian and Uzbek versions sound more anchored. This matters pragmatically because the target reader is told not only what is being claimed, but also how securely that claim is attributed.

Across the three examples, Russian stays closer to English headline compression. It keeps nominal structure, tolerates institutional shorthand, and often preserves impersonal assessment with relatively little strain. Uzbek, by contrast, more often asks the translator to restore omitted relations. Readers need to know who estimates, who reports, and what technical units mean. That tendency is not simply grammatical. It is also discursive. News in Uzbek can certainly be concise, but concision usually remains more transparent when causal and evidential links are overtly signaled.

The result should be interpreted cautiously. The corpus is small, and the target renderings were produced by the researcher rather than extracted from live newsroom output. Even so, the pattern is stable enough to support one useful claim. Language dominance in media translation does not operate only through lexical borrowing or source-language prestige. It also works through the expectation that the target text should inherit the source text's speed, ambiguity tolerance, and compression ratio. Where Russian can often accept that inheritance with modest adjustment, Uzbek more often requires selective decompression.

Conclusion

This paper argued that agency and evidentiality are two reliable indicators of pragmatic shift in English, Russian, and Uzbek news translation. In the selected corpus, English regularly economizes on actor naming and source marking because its newsroom style allows a high degree of inferential compression. Russian often preserves that compressed stance with limited restructuring. Uzbek more frequently redistributes information by making actors visible, fronting attribution, and unpacking technical shorthand.

Two implications follow from this pilot analysis. First, translators working into Uzbek should treat English headline brevity with suspicion rather than admiration. What looks elegant in English may become vague in Uzbek unless evidential anchors are restored. Second, translators working into Russian should not assume that formal closeness is neutral; preserving compression may also preserve the ideological rhythm of the source. A larger corpus with published Russian and Uzbek newsroom texts would test these claims more rigorously, but even this small study shows where pragmatic asymmetry begins: in the first few words the reader sees.

Adabiyotlar, References, Литературы:

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