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STRATEGIES OF RENDERING NON-VERBAL COMPONENTS IN MULTIMODAL CONSTRUCTIONS COMPRISING NATIONALLY-BIASED LEXICAL UNITS (BASED ON BRITISH POLITICAL VIDEO INTERVIEWS AND DEBATES)

Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive review of the research exploring non-verbal components observed in modern British political texts across two video genres, particularly focusing on the rendering of nationally-biased units. The emphasis lies on the phenomenon of realization of non-verbal speech components in Ukrainian translations of political discourse texts and the claim that the strategy of rendering significantly depends on the emotional pattern of the presented material, such as interviews and political debates. Each genre of the political discourse has unique parameters for conveying information to the interlocutor. Since the communicative aim differs in each of the presented genres, an interpreter encounters challenges in grasping the gist of the main idea in the utterance. Notably, non-verbal components of a communicative act are considered as the confounding factor in choosing the appropriate strategy of source language text translation. This article also investigates features of non-verbal communication, aiming to create a novel paradigm for rendering non-verbal components. To achieve this objective, the author analyses videos of two video genres such as interviews and political debates featuring nationally-marked lexicon of Great Britain. The study concludes that the genre-specific nature of multimodal texts is the contributing factor in selecting the suitable strategy for rendering discourse as a semantic unity. Specifically, the author considers two ways of non-verbal lexical units representation including subtitling and stenographic description and suggests “The Code of Subtitling” comprising criteria of subtitles creation, namely: accuracy, timing, length and readability, punctuation and grammar, speaker identification, handling accents and dialects, capturing audience reaction, censorship and sensitivity, font style and size and localisation. It is proved that the use of non-verbal components in multimodal constructions comprising nationally-biased units poses difficulties for translators and interpreters, who are therefore required to possess skills in understanding cultural awareness, empathy and a profound knowledge of both the source and target languages.

Keywords: non-verbal components, nationally-biased units, rendering, Ukrainian translation, British political discourse.

Анотація

У статті репрезентовано результати дослідження невербальних компонентів відтворення реалій, які трапляються в сучасних британських політичних текстах різних відеожанрів. У центрі уваги – феномен реалізації невербальних мовленнєвих компонентів в українськомовних перекладах текстів політичного дискурсу та твердження про залежність стратегії передачі від емоційної сітки репрезентованого матеріалу, тобто інтерв'ю, політичних дебатів, політичних шоу. Кожен жанр політичного дискурсу має унікальні параметри донесення інформації до співрозмовника. Оскільки комунікативна мета відрізняється в кожному з представлених жанрів, перекладачеві важко зрозуміти сутність головної ідеї висловлення. Невербальні компоненти комунікативного акту розглядають як визначальний фактор у виборі правильної стратегії перекладу тексту мовою оригіналу. Із цією метою проаналізовано відео різних відеожанрів, серед яких записи інтерв'ю та політичних дебатів, що містять національну лексику Великої Британії. Зроблено висновок, що жанрова специфіка мультимодального тексту є фактором, що сприяє вибору правильної стратегії

відтворення дискурсу як семантичної єдності. Розглянуто два способи репрезентації невербальних лексичних одиниць – субтитрування та стенографічний опис. Запропоновано “Кодекс субтитрування”, що містить такі категорії, як: точність, хронометраж, довжину та читабельність, пунктуацію та граматику, ідентифікацію диктора, обробку акцентів і діалектів, врахування реакції аудиторії, цензуру і чутливість, стиль і розмір шрифту та локалізацію. Доведено, що використання невербальних компонентів у мультимодальних конструкціях, що містять національно забарвлені одиниці, становить значну складність для перекладачів, що вимагає від них навичок розуміння культурних особливостей, емпатії та глибоких знань як мови оригіналу, так і мови перекладу.

Ключові слова: невербальні компоненти, реалії, відтворення, український переклад, британський політичний дискурс.

Introduction. The study of non-verbal components interaction in the discourse enjoys widespread attention among numerous scholars, including psychologists, anthropologists and linguists (Birdwhistell, 1952; Ekman et. al., 1971; Mehrabian, 1972; Hall, 1968; Salim, 2023; Kuts, 2023; Grillo & Enesi, 2022), as well as Ukrainian researchers (Ковалинська, 2014; Козяревич, 2006; Серякова, 2012).

The present article covers the problem of non-verbal components rendering including nationally-biased lexical units. The aim of this research is to illustrate the fundamental principles of non-verbal communicative components representation of nationally-biased lexicon units within various video genres in modern British political discourse and their rendering into Ukrainian. The novelty of research lies in the introduction of “The Code of Subtitling” aimed at establishing the criteria of effective subtitling, as well as the practical representation of the stenographic description method for creating and rendering subtitles. The research material includes videos of two political genres (interview and political debates).

It is common knowledge that communication is the cornerstone of human interaction, bridging individuals, societies and cultures. It encompasses a vast array of methods, including spoken and written language, body language, facial expressions, gestures, and even digital media. Furthermore, one should not forget that effective communication is a dynamic process that involves encoding thoughts, feelings and ideas into a message, transmitting it through a chosen channel and decoding it by the recipient. This exchange is fundamental to conveying information, expressing emotions, establishing relationships and achieving shared understanding.

In its various forms, communication plays a pivotal role in virtually every aspect of life. It facilitates personal relationships, professional collaborations and sharing of knowledge and culture. Besides, it underlies successful teamwork, negotiation and conflict resolution. Additionally, in today’s globalized world, intercultural and digital communication has become increasingly important as we connect with people from diverse backgrounds and navigate complexities of an interconnected society. Thus, understanding communication nuances, including non-verbal cues, active listening, empathy and cultural awareness, empowers individuals to express themselves authentically and to interpret messages of others accurately. It is a skill that can be honed and refined, leading to more meaningful connections, reduced misunderstandings and enhanced problem-solving abilities.

In this ever-evolving landscape, communication remains a dynamic field of study, influenced by advancements in technology, psychology and sociology. As we navigate an era of rapid information exchange, mastering effective communication becomes not only a personal asset but also a cornerstone of success in various professional, social and cultural contexts.

To increase communication productivity, linguistic expansion methodology involves sharing information across various code frameworks. The process of interaction

between people initiates upon visual contact, and at this early stage, since non-verbal communication is frequently socially and socially inferred, common understanding or common misconception between speakers may develop. In this way, non-verbal cues can influence common outcomes of conversation and shape the speaker's interpretation in the very first minutes of speaking. Regarding this, it's important to pay attention to how the social and cultural environment influences non-verbal behavior. Therefore, a certain type of information about conversational partners, context of communication itself, can be found in facial expressions, kinesics and vocal paralinguistic highlights. When possible enough, these cues provide this information in a way that is much more unambiguous than any verbal explanation.

To anticipate being confused or misled by others, it is essential to be able to understand enough body movements, facial expressions, eye contact and vocal cues, as well as how people use their physical surroundings to communicate.

Theoretical foundations on the notion of non-verbal communication. By non-verbal communication we share Watzlawick's viewpoint (Watzlawick et. al., 1967, pp. 51-52) and imply the aspect of communication which does not involve words for expressing various feelings and thoughts. Judging from this definition, non-verbal communication may encompass a wide range of behaviours, though some of the human states may not be considered as behavioural patterns at all. We also follow Hess in the idea that "among the typical tools for expressing non-verbal communication it is important to mention facial, vocal and postural expressions, touch, proxemics and gaze, as well as special ones, including physical attractiveness, facial morphology, as well as such behavioral choices as hair style, clothing and adornment" (2016, p. 3). Besides, material objects, such as a parlor organ, can also be considered as special means of non-verbal communication, as claimed by Ames (1980).

The non-verbal component is a three-tiered construction distinguished by universal, ethnospecific and personally meaningful qualities. Nowadays, universal and ethnospecific features are more studied than individually important ones, on which we focus our attention. Furthermore, people differ significantly in their capacity to encode and decode non-verbal messages (Burgoon et al., 2016, p. 25).

To make the theoretical basis of the article more reliable, it is essential to mention the types of non-verbal communication and the scholars who were involved into their research. Among the main types we distinguish *kinesics*, the study of body movements (Birdwhistell, 1952) and *proxemics*, the study of personal space (Hall, 1963).

Non-verbal communication components are of a dual nature: on the one hand, they clarify the multi-meaning (multivalence) of verbal expression, on the other hand, they are multifunctional themselves (Солощук, 2014). Owing to this, they can ensure a higher level of mutual understanding in the process of communication, as well as capture the communication partner. The appropriate use of non-verbal means and their decoding depend on the discursive personality and the discursive environment. Violation of the norms of non-verbal means use frequently attracts the attention of the addressee and requires additional knowledge and effort necessary to decode the partner's utterance. Deviation from traditional norms acts as an indicator of the speaker's general communicative intention and identifies additional content that may arise in this intention.

In this vein it is important to speak about the model of non-verbal communication. The classic model involves the transmission of message from the sender to the receiver (Shannon, & Weaver, 1949). Feedback from the receiver to the sender is present, but the message itself may be distorted. However, the model poses the problem of human non-verbal communication, which lies in interchangeable nature of message, while the message

sent actually matches the intended message and conversely that the understood message matches the received message. Barr & Kleck (1995) claim that human beings tend to overestimate the intensity of their expressions, as well as their clarity, that is, the hardens their interpretability and ability of others to observe them – such peculiarity is represented by the term ‘*spot-light effect*’ (Senécal et al., 2003).

However, social stereotypes, cultural peculiarities and legal regulations (especially if we speak about the political discourse), as pointed out by Hess (2009), “can bias the perception of the message, such that the same non-verbal behavior when shown by a different person will be interpreted differently”. Besides, Hess (2016) draws on an extensive range of sources to the new model of non-verbal-communication comprising both social and cultural interaction in the process of non-verbal means interpretation (see Figure 1).

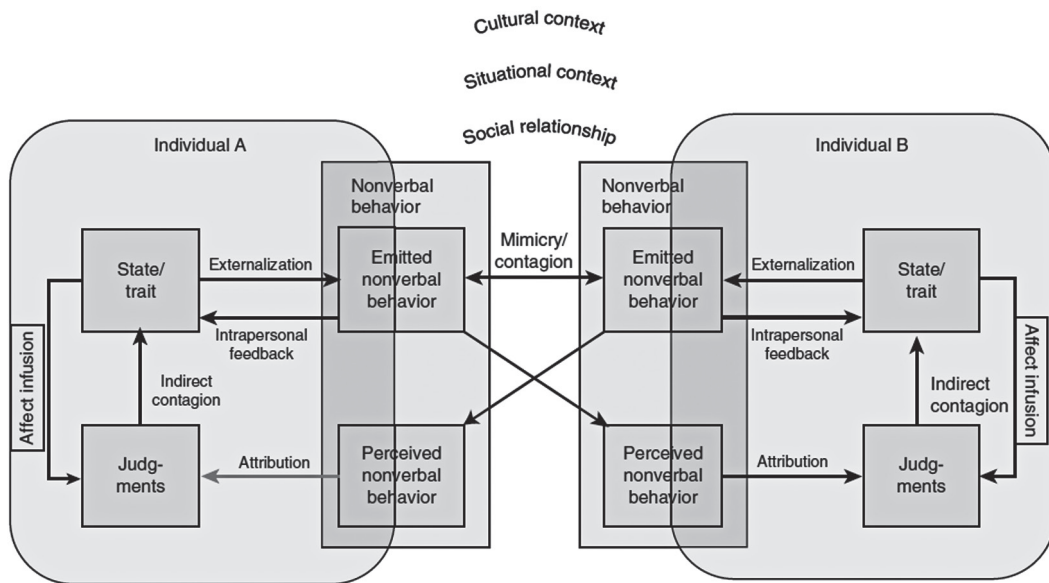


Figure 1. Model of non-verbal communication and interpretation (adapted from Hess, 2016)

Ways of rendering non-verbal constructions comprising units of nationally-biased lexicon in Ukrainian translation of British political texts belonging to two video genres such as interviews and political debates. Translation of non-verbal constructions in British political discourse into Ukrainian across various video genres encompasses several methods to render non-verbal clusters in British political texts.

First of all, we speak about *subtitling*. In British political discourse subtitling is an important aspect of communication, especially in the context of television broadcasts, online videos and public speeches. Subtitling serves the purpose of making spoken content accessible to a wider audience, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as those who might have difficulty understanding the spoken language due to various reasons.

When considering subtitling in British political discourse, we believe that a certain set of subtitles credibility may be beneficial in translation of different political texts. To follow the line, we suggest the following criteria of subtitles creation, alternatively entitled as “The Code of Subtitling”:

1. **Accuracy.** Subtitles should accurately reflect the spoken content without altering the meaning or context. It is essential to capture the nuances and intended message of the speaker to provide a faithful representation of their words.

2. **Timing.** Subtitles should appear on the screen at the right time, aligning with the speech in real-time. Proper synchronisation is crucial to ensure that viewers can read the text while hearing the spoken words.

3. **Length and Readability.** Subtitles need to be concise and easy to read. The length of each subtitle should be limited to avoid overwhelming the viewer and allow them to process the information comfortably.

4. **Punctuation and Grammar.** Correct punctuation and grammar are essential in subtitling. Errors in these aspects can lead to misunderstandings or confusion for the audience.

5. **Speaker Identification.** In political discourse where multiple speakers may be involved, it is essential to clearly identify the speakers. This can be done using speaker tags (e.g., “*Prime Minister: ...*”, “*Opposition Leader: ...*”) to ensure clarity for the audience.

6. **Handling Accents and Dialects.** British politics often involves speakers from various regions with different accents and dialects. Subtitlers must be sensitive to these variations and provide subtitles that accurately represent the speaker’s speech patterns while maintaining clarity.

7. **Capturing Audience Reaction.** In some cases, subtitlers may include information about the audience’s reaction, such as applause, laughter, or booing, to provide a more immersive experience for viewers.

8. **Censorship and Sensitivity.** Subtitlers need to be cautious about potentially offensive or sensitive language used in political discourse. They may choose to censor or omit certain words or phrases when necessary, while still preserving the intended message.

9. **Font Style and Size.** The choice of font style and size plays a significant role in subtitle readability. A clear and legible font should be used, ensuring that the text contrasts well with the background.

10. **Localisation.** For international audiences, subtitling might involve translating the spoken English into other languages while ensuring cultural context and political terminology are appropriately conveyed.

Overall, subtitling in British political discourse is a vital tool for promoting accessibility and ensuring that important political messages can reach diverse audiences effectively. Careful attention to the aforementioned considerations helps create accurate, clear and engaging subtitles that enhance the viewer’s understanding and engagement with political content.

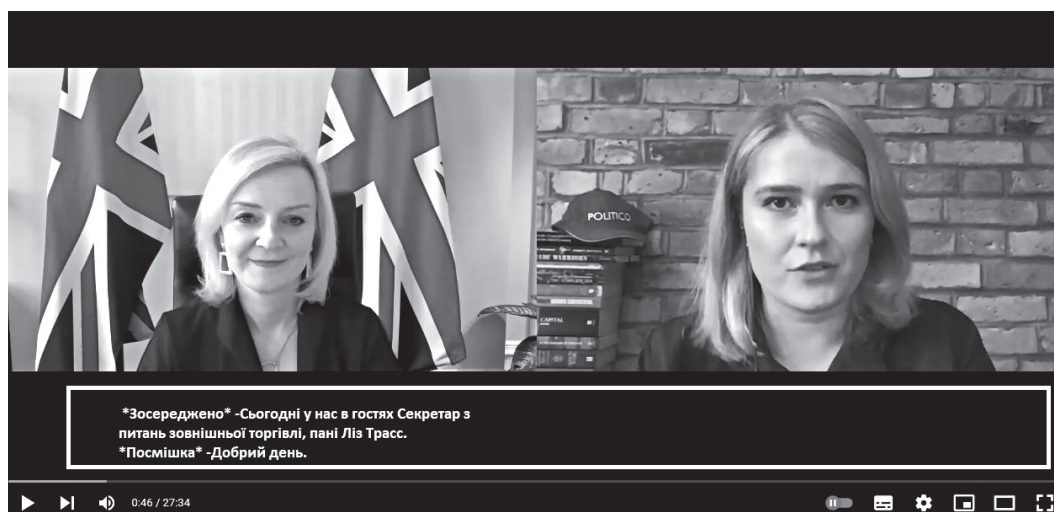
As an illustration, we demonstrate the actual process of subtitling into the Ukrainian language on the material of Liz Truss’ interview on the “Politico Europe” YouTube channel (Politico Europe, 2021) and its greeting part comprising the unit of nationally-biased lexicon, which is *International Trade Secretary*.

In step I we translate the transcript of the video from the source language into the target language and find all non-verbal clues (English and Ukrainian respectively). To make the transcription easier, it is possible to use video-to-text converters, for example, Inicio (Picture 1). The most surprising aspect of the data is in the non-verbal clues in the system that are presented in square brackets, but some of them are unmarked, which makes the rendering process even more complex. Notably, these encompass the mimics of the interviewer and the interviewee in our case.



Picture 1. Non-verbal components representation in the Inicio transcriber

Following the phase of identifying all non-verbal clues and translating the transcript of the video, Step II involves inserting the translated text into the video frame.



Picture 2. Ukrainian subtitles conveying non-verbal components of interaction

In the pursuit of accurately conveying the non-verbal representation of Mrs. Truss' and interviewer's emotions, the translator opted for a descriptive translation approach. Such words as *зосереджено* (Eng.: concentrated), *посмішка* (Eng.: smile) convey the expression observed on the TV screen or PC monitor. The way how the Politico interviewer pronounces the unit of nationally-biased lexicon (see Picture 2) forces the translator to add the word “*зосереджено*” in order to demonstrate the high position of the interviewee who represents the governmental body of the United Kingdom.

The second way to represent the non-verbal means is *stenographic description*. The point of this method lies in adding information about the non-verbal component outside the original video, but in a special stenogram. In the context of political discourse, a stenogram (sometimes spelled “stenograph”) refers to a written or typed record of spoken words or statements made during a political event, such as a debate, speech, or meeting. It is similar

to a transcript, capturing the dialogue and exchanges among politicians, policymakers or public figures in real-time.

Stenographers, also known as court reporters or shorthand reporters, are responsible for creating stenograms. They use a specialized shorthand writing system to quickly record spoken words, ensuring accuracy and efficiency in capturing the information.

This method can be found applicable in analysing UK political debates, particularly evident in events such as the Brexit debates (Brexit, 2019), since in such debates the real-time conversation presents challenges for a translator/interpreter, especially if it is abundant with units of nationally-biased lexicon.

Generally, the scheme of creating stenographic description consists of three main stages:

I. Creating a stenogram of the meeting/debates.

II. Finding all non-verbal clues.

III. Translating the stenogram into Ukrainian.

Picture 3 provides the experimental data on the stenographic description formation. The translation is as follows:

(Eng.: STENOGRAM OF THE UK PARLIAMENT MEETING ON BREXIT

Speaker 1.....26:30 To protect our *unintelligible* democratic

Constitution *active gesticulation*)

СТЕНОГРАМА ЗАСІДАННЯ ПАРЛАМЕНТУ ВЕЛІКОЇ БРИТАНІЇ ЩОДО ВІХОДУ З ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО СОЮЗУ

Мовець 1.....26:30 Захищати нашу *нерозбірливо* демократичну

Конституцію *активне жестикулювання*|



Picture 3. The Brexit stenogram in Ukrainian

Further analysis showed that the translator, who also performs the role of a stenographer, uses descriptive translation to convey the actual speech manner of the Member of Parliament. It can be seen that even his speech imperfections are included as non-verbal clues to

demonstrate the impulsive manner of the speaker and to demonstrate that the actual speech fragment is unintelligible. Furthermore, the image of the speaker can be added in order to visualise the actual communicative situation which helped to convey both verbal (the nationally-biased unit “Конституція” (Eng.: Constitution) and non-verbal components of the conversation (exemplified by the descriptor “нерозбірливо” (Eng.: unintelligible part)). Thus, this approach enhances the viewer’s engagement, providing a more immersive and accurate experience of the original discourse.

Conclusions. Based on the results, it can be concluded that translating non-verbal communication, with such elements as facial expressions, body language, gestures, postures, eye contact, touch, proxemics and paralinguistics, can be challenging due to the inherent complexities and cultural variations associated with these forms of expression. Addressing these challenges effectively requires skilled translators who possess cultural awareness, empathy and a profound understanding of both the source and target languages. While technology and machine learning advancements show potential in assisting with non-verbal translation process, human intuition and cultural knowledge remain indispensable in handling these intricate forms of communication.

We have managed to arrange non-verbal parameters of speech (cultural, context, situational context and social leadership) and demonstrate important postulates of rendering non-verbal means of communication in subtitling (accuracy, timing, length and readability, punctuation in grammar, etc.) by implementing the novel approach in processing information in political texts of various video genres entitled “stenographic description”. The results obtained thus far are promising, providing valuable insights for translators and interpreters, who deal with the challenges related to rendering nationally-biased units of speech in particular.

Acknowledging the accomplishments, it’s crucial to recognize the limitations of our work. Nevertheless, we believe our work could be the basis for improving the subtitling process. The avenues explored in this study lay the groundwork for future research, and we anticipate that these topics will be further investigated in the future PhD thesis, ultimately validating and expanding upon the theories proposed herein.

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