SPECIFICS OF MODERN BRITISH AND UKRAINIAN POLITICAL TEXTS
TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION IN TERMS OF VIDEO GENRES

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Purpose. The purpose of the article is to identify and describe specifics of modern British and Ukrainian texts translation in terms of video genres.

The object of the research is political texts, which include nationally-biased lexical units that convey ethnic and cultural information specific for British way of life and describes the political life of the UK.

The subject of the research is the peculiarities of political texts translation and interpretation in terms of different video genres. Methods. The following research is conducted with the help of several methods: method of stylistic analysis, discourse analysis method, comparative method and pragmalinguistic method.

The methodology of translation and interpretation research involves a set of procedures and techniques used to collect, analyse, and interpret data related to translation and interpretation of the text. The method of case study research is relevant for this research, since the author analyses particular cases of multimodal theory implementation in audiovisual material of various video genres. Case studies in translation and interpretation research can provide rich, detailed data that can help researchers gain a deeper understanding of the translation process, as well as the factors that influence translation quality. However, because case studies are focused on a specific individual or situation, they may not be generalisable to other translations or translators. As with any research method, it is important to carefully consider the research question and the appropriateness of using a case study approach before conducting the research. Results. This article is aimed at describing the characteristics of contemporary British and Ukrainian political texts in various video genres. Both British and Ukrainian political speeches tend to be formal and structured, with clear introductions and conclusions. However, while British politicians may use more humor and rhetorical means to engage their audience, Ukrainian politicians employ a more serious tone. Political issues play an important role in British society, so the style of political discourse is seen as a central factor in reflecting the visual: the linguistic nature of political communication, the production of political texts. It is attested that peculiarities of British political texts are specified in the article, such as the nature of multimodality. The concept of reconstructed reality inherent in these genres is achieved through modes of transmission such as revoicing, narration, and simultaneous interpretation. Conclusions. It is stated that the translation of political texts in British and Ukrainian media should consider cultural differences of both countries, avoiding typical cultural stereotypes, and ensure equivalency of translated lexical units. In British texts, there is usually a clear distinction between the reporting of facts and the opinions of journalists. This is reflected in the use of neutral language and the inclusion of quotes from various sources. Ukrainian media may be more biased, with journalists expressing their own opinions more freely.

Key words: political texts, video genres, multimodality, reconstructed reality, revoicing, narration, voice-over.
1. Introduction

Official political discourse has always been one of the most prominent objects of modern mass media communication. It has always served as the sole medium of international communication. Politics, public figures and celebrities use a wide range of peculiar techniques to enrich their speech. Today, however, the audiovisual translation industry is thriving.

Although the range of non-entertainment products is expanding, localised and/or made accessible, it is of particular interest to scholars or professionals. This is especially true for institutional video subgenres. For example, Díaz-Cintas and Remael claim that audiovisual translation has existed “since the invention of cinema as a professional practice” (Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2020) and has become a niche for both academic researchers and mass media practitioners, be it both small and large corporations, non-profit and public institutions that quickly realised that audiovisual media provided an opportunity to build images and communicate more effectively with specific population groups to enhance their audiovisual presence and adapt it to overcome specific language and cultural barriers. Political texts tend to be no exception to this rule.

2. Theoretical foundations of the problem of audiovisual translation

The majority of scholars have studied the translation of political texts from the perspective of audiovisual translation. Gieve and Norton argue that “the linguistic representation of the “foreigner”
in British non-fiction broadcasts has a profound ideological impact on the discursive construction of identity” (Gieve & Norton, 2010: 108), discusses the cross-cultural relationship of the British non-fiction broadcasting where an “ideological impact on the discursive construction of identity and intercultural relations” (Gieve & Norton, 2010: 108).

Scientists present the point of view that language differences can even flatten out or even dissolve in the documentary, travel and lifestyle television genres. Consequently, communication between speakers of different languages is routinely portrayed as “smooth, unproblematic, and permanent” (Gieve & Norton, 2010: 206).

This genre-specific reconstructed reality (Orero, 2006: 2) is realised by “modes of transmission such as narration translation, revoicing, narration, and simultaneous interpretation” (Orero, 2006: 3), Secondly, “the peculiar situation in which two people appear to be speaking in different languages” (Gieve & Norton, 2007: 200), especially when talking about political discourse. Voice-over is also used to “convey meaning in translation-mediated audiovisual news products; in particular, foreign politician’s speeches, and interviews” (Darwish, 2003, 2006; Darwich & Orero, 2014). These are “discursive fields in which the translation process is susceptible to ideological manipulation” (Diaz-Cintas, 2012) that could provoke “wide-ranging and possibly disastrous consequences” (Diaz-Cintas, 2012). Despite such potential to create or subvert meaning, voice over techniques remain “mainly unchartered forms of audiovisual translation” (Orero 2004: 76).

However, given that it is an increasingly popular way to disseminate information about cultural and linguistic diversity in the non-fiction television genre, or to relay information about news from abroad, A systematic study of narration translation and closed captioning in all manifestations has long been carried out” (Orero, 2004: 77).

Professor Baker’s ideas (Baker, 2006) are closely related to the ideas of stereotypes and mental his frame. As she intends, narratives “function in the normalizing effect of publicly disseminated expressions” (Baker, 2006) as well as “discourses” or “myths” (Baker, 2006), but it can be different at times and bear the meaning of “much more specific and accessible” (Baker, 2006: 3). Professor Baker defines stories as “the stories we tell ourselves and others about the world in which we live <...> These stories form the primary interface between us and the world as well” (Baker, 2006: 350). She suggests that “narrative theory provides a framework that allows us to find the ways in which translation is employed in the elaboration of foreign or “other” narratives (Baker, 2006: 351) “that cut across time and texts” (Baker, 2006: 352).

In other words, the author proposes the unit of inquiry is the narrative as a whole, rather than focusing on discourse practices in a particular text, and the result (Baker, 2006: 349). This concept helps us examine some of the details of British identity, because stories of British cultural identity “span different genres and different texts, weaving them together to create narratives of Britishness” (Baker, 2006: 350). Represented by nationally focused lexicographic units, observed in various British media products and intertwined with translations.

Some scholars (Dyer, 1977: 30; Hall, 1998: 258) claim that “The notion of cultural superiority leads to stereotypical practices of the other” (Hall, 1998: 259). Discussing the typical British interpretation of the news, Conboy explains: “At the core of the [British] are news values, and encoded in its language, the normativeness of the British perspective that make up an integral part of reporting on ethnic and geographical outskirts British culture is rooted in a history which is indelibly marked with the associations of empire and cultural presumptions of superiority” (Conboy, 2006: 108).

It is interesting that the “insular mentality” (Kilborn, 1993: 649) still exerts foreign influence in British broadcasting. Regarding the difference between language and language learning, Kilborn (ibid.) states: “In Britain, for example, learning a foreign language has never been given high cultural importance, and there is a somewhat arrogant assumption that most activities of life, including broadcasting, can be adequately carried out in English”.

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Scholars Gieve and Norton (Gieve & Norton, 2007: 193), say that by “constructing speakers of English as linguistically deficient” (Gieve & Norton, 2007), they found out that “the positive perspective is encouraged” (Gieve & Norton, 2007), for example, in terms of speakers of political discourse who do not speak other languages are not given the same negative image” (Gieve & Norton, 2007: 193). They further state that the non-fiction genre is “reluctant to allow foreigners in television programs to speak in their own voices” (Gieve & Norton, 2007: 193).

One way he achieves this is by “employing a narration strategy rather than subtitling as a means of translation” (Gieve & Norton, 2007: 194). As invisible translations, often interwoven with commentary and narrative, the discourse of the final audiovisual product “requires careful analysis, which is the rationale for an important discourse analysis approach” (Gieve & Norton, 2007: 194).

3. Discourse analysis and multimodality

Viewing discourse as “the production of knowledge through language” (Hall, 1997: 44), critical discourse analysis scholars attempt to differentiate the practice involved in producing meaning as the ideological “weapon” of narration. It is the aim of critical discourse analysis to reveal the “body of assumptions” (Hatim & Mason, 1997: 218) that lie behind the power structures intertwined in discourse.

Multimodality, defined as “the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001: 20), is not a new field of study; however, in the modern world, archetypal multimodal texts such as films, television programs, and websites have greatly broadened the scope of such studies. Different writers have labeled the word “semiotic mode” as semiotic modality, “semiotic resource”, and so on, but for the sake of clarity, the term mode will be used throughout this piece. The ever-increasing significance of multimodality affects virtually all fields, including translation and text interpretation.

In Fairclough’s (Fairclough’s, 1991/2003: 26) terminology, texts are “naturalized implicits of an ideological character” that people are generally unaware of and that contribute to the “social reproduction of power relations”.

Christina Schäffner (Schäffner, 2004: 145) argues that critical discourse analysis “is used in the context of translated news or political discourse to use and misuse texts for national ideological purposes” and “positively exploring the practice of self-expression in discovering and giving negative remarks to others”.

Narration as a mode of translation is “mainly used in non-fiction genres and related to the (re)creation of reality in audiovisual products” (Orero, 2006; Franco, 2001; Daly, 1985; Ávila, 1997; Franco et al., 2010). Indeed, Franco (Franco et al., 2010: 26) affirms that “the unique character of narration contributes to the realism, truth and authenticity that Sachsendangen relies on”. Narration has been described as “an accurate and faithful translation of the original source text, especially in terms of media studies” (Luyken, 1991: 80).

Furthermore, it is considered to be “a literal, authentic, complete version of the original audio” (Luyken, 1991: 81), which some without “basic knowledge of translation or language” (Luyken, 1991: 82) refer to as “reliable transmission mode” (Luyken, 1991: 82).

The illusion of authenticity, so important to the non-fiction genre, is “created with the help of specific narrative techniques” (Franco 2001: 289). For example, “listen to the original sound for the first few seconds of speech and then reduce it for colloquial translation” (Luyken et al., 1991: 80; Franco, 2001: 290).

4. British and Ukrainian media as the object of research

It is also important to talk about “political discourse” and “transmission of meaning” (Kilborn, 1993). Kilborn (Kilborn, 1993: 648), in one of his first articles dealing with the audio transmission of audiovisual products, argued that, from a cultural studies perspective, narration is “especially suitable as a method of reproducing speeches by foreign politicians”. He also argued that “If
other modes were used, many listeners would find them quite inappropriate in practice” (Kilborn, 1993). The British socio-cultural scene has changed dramatically since then. Speaking about the Ukrainian scene, it has dramatically changed since the country gained independence in 1991. In this part of the article, we attempt to provide insight into current trends in narrating political discourse, particularly in the Ukrainian/English context. The first is a Freedom interview case (Freedom, 2022).

Camplcy Bucan-Smith, the colonel of the British army, is being interviewed on training of Ukrainian soldiers in Great Britain. The point of the conversation was the military aid to Ukrainian soldiers who should learn new NATO practices. Although being the Ukrainian channel, “Freedom” made a special Russian-language bulletin for all former Soviet republics and immigrants from the former USSR as well. The multimodality in this case lies even in the representation of colonel’s name on the multimedia panel. The topic of military aid to Ukraine is backed up even with the QR-code for television stations to interact with the viewers (see Pic. 1 for further details).

Here we can notice a typical voice-over in Russian language edited to the original English track, hence, we speak about some remarks that appeared post production in the Ukrainian studio.

Producers of the bulletin also provide the point of view of the Ukrainian side in order to compare even outlooks of the British and the Ukrainian nations, since British tend to be more conservative rather than Ukrainians. For instance, the Ukrainian soldier under the nickname of “Neptun” hides his face in order not to be recognised by the enemy forces which, in turn, seems to be a trace of multimodal practices that demonstrates the situation in the whole country in the state of war.

Ukrainian soldier asks for military aid and makes a lot of expressive gestures aimed at influencing both the viewers of the TV channel and the interviewer whose aim is to bind the addressee to act in a certain way, namely, to provide a reasonable amount of information which will be represented in the news bulletin. Needless to say that the Ukrainian soldier tries to be quite laconic in his utterances because the military secrets should not be revealed, hence, he may avoid some provocative questions in terms of future military operations.

Another peculiar episode can be traced in the British media. As for example we take the Margaret Thatcher interview. As we know, she was the former Prime Minister of Great Britain who was accused of being too harsh to the politicians and the constituents.
In this particular interview for Thames Television (Thames, 1987) the interviewer chats with Mrs. Thatcher on the activity of the Conservative party for the last 8 years. To analyse this interview, we use the newly conceived notion of “historical multimodality”. By historical multimodality we mean those multimodal practices that were typical for a certain historical period. In this very case the setting, due to this period tendencies (late 1980’s), is quite dull. It can be explained by both a certain amount of conservativeness of the UK and as well some drawbacks of technical equipment of the studio.

Nevertheless, the interviewer tends to be humble to the speaker, and the Prime Minister at the time is also quite calm and resilient. It makes up the multimodal construal of peace and prosperity for British viewers who were watching this programme.

Again, due to a certain level of conservativeness, the conversation seems to be a bit artificial due to absence of gestures and permanent stable frame.
Broadly speaking, British conservatism emphasises the importance of tradition, stability, and order, and is often associated with a preference for free markets and a limited role for the state. In terms of social issues, British conservatives tend to be more traditional and conservative on issues like marriage, family, and national identity.

Margaret Thatcher, the first female British Prime Minister, was known for her distinctive style of presentation, which was characterised by a commanding presence, a strong voice, and a no-nonsense approach to politics. All along it gave the full conservative image of the country as the UK.

Here are some of the key elements of Thatcher’s style of presentation:

1. **Confidence and Authority**: Thatcher exuded a sense of confidence and authority when she spoke, projecting a strong and decisive image. She had a clear sense of her own beliefs and was not afraid to speak her mind.

2. **Clear and Direct Language**: Thatcher was known for her use of clear and direct language, which helped her to communicate her ideas effectively to the public. She avoided political jargon and used everyday language to make her points.

3. **A Strong Voice**: Thatcher had a powerful and distinctive voice, which helped her to command attention and project confidence. She used her voice effectively to emphasize key points and to make sure her message was heard.

4. **Preparation and Discipline**: Thatcher was known for her meticulous preparation and discipline when it came to public speaking. She rehearsed her speeches extensively and was always well-prepared for interviews and debates.

5. **Use of Analogies and Metaphors**: Thatcher often used analogies and metaphors to help explain complex ideas in a way that was easy for the public to understand. She was particularly skilled at using memorable phrases that captured the essence of her message.

Overall, Thatcher’s style of presentation was highly effective in communicating her message and winning over audiences. She was a skilled orator who used a range of techniques to project confidence, authority, and clarity of thought.

5. **Conclusions**

The following article presents a very basic and preliminary overview of the current situation in the representation of British linguistic-cultural identity on Ukrainian and British television, along with some selected detailed techniques of political texts and non-fiction broadcasting techniques. The timeliness of this study was a starting point for furthering the discussion on the increasing use of narratives as a method of translating and interpreting audiovisual non-fiction texts, the purpose of which was descriptive rather than hypothetical. The examples presented here demonstrate how
British ethnotypes are represented and reinforced in the non-fiction genre through storytelling and other cultural translation and interpretation techniques. For example, in an interview with Freedom TV Channel, we learned that there are more innovative approaches to bridging language differences on television, using code-switching, closed captions, and simultaneous interpretation by the participants. Cultural frameworks, on the other hand, often fall into the stereotype of being a well-known British person. In case with Thames Television interview with Mrs. Thatcher, we can observe a range of cultural stereotypes that seem to be entrenched in the political arena. However, as quoted above, linguistic representations of “foreigners” in British and Ukrainian non-fiction programming can influence the discursive construction of identity and cross-cultural relations. Especially it is evident through the prism of historical multimodality, the mechanism which enables to compare different approaches to the theory of multimodality through different historical periods. Without thorough examination of content acceptance, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these seemingly distorted representations interfere with effective communication. Further work can be done to further analyse the British and Ukrainian political discourses in terms of multimodal theory.

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