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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MULTIMODAL NATIONALLY-BIASED LEXICON RESEARCH IN LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

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This article explores the theoretical underpinnings of nationally-biased lexicon research, focusing on the concept of "realia" as culturally specific lexical units. It examines the dynamic and context-dependent nature of realia, their classifications, and the challenges they pose in translation studies. The study integrates multimodality theory to address the interplay of verbal and nonverbal elements in translating realia, emphasizing adaptation strategies to achieve cultural and functional equivalence. By synthesizing key perspectives from linguistics and translation studies, this article highlights the significance of realia as cultural markers and the need for nuanced translation strategies to preserve their meaning across cultures.

Key words: nationally-biased lexicon, realia, linguoculturemes, audiovisual translation, multimodality, adaptation, cultural specificity

Луценко Р.І. Теоретичні засади дослідження мультимодальних реалій у мовознавстві та перекладознавстві

У статті досліджуються теоретичні основи досліджень лексики з національним забарвленням, з особливим акцентом на концепції «реалій» як культурно-специфічних лексичних одиниць. Аналізується динамічний і контекстно-залежний характер реалій, їх класифікація та виклики, які вони ставлять перед перекладацькою наукою, зокрема в галузі аудіовізуального перекладу (АВП). Дослідження інтегрує теорію мультимодальності для вивчення взаємодії вербальних і невербальних елементів у перекладі реалій, підкреслюючи стратегії адаптації для досягнення культурної та функціональної еквівалентності. Узагальнюючи ключові перспективи лінгвістики та перекладознавства, ця стаття підкреслює значення реалій як культурних маркерів та необхідність використання специфічних перекладацьких стратегій для збереження їхнього значення в різних культурах.

Ключові слова: національно-маркована лексика, реалії, лінгвокультуреми, аудіовізуальний переклад, мультимодальність, адаптація, культурна специфіка

Introduction.

The nationally-biased lexicon, or *realia*, consists of lexical units that encapsulate culturally specific phenomena, such as objects, customs, or socio-political practices unique to a particular nation (Влахов & Флорин, 1960). These units pose particular challenges for translators due to their lack of direct equivalents across languages and their dynamic, context-dependent nature. The growing prominence of audiovisual media, where verbal and nonverbal elements interact in complex ways, further complicates the task of translating *realia*. This study addresses the problem of translating culturally marked lexicon—an urgent issue in linguistics and translation studies within the context of globalized cultural exchange. The originality of this research lies in synthesizing theoretical frameworks and integrating multimodality theory to examine *realia* in audiovisual translation (AVT), thereby foregrounding the interplay of verbal and nonverbal codes in the preservation of cultural meaning. The overall aim is to explore the theoretical foundations of nationally-biased lexicon research and to demonstrate how adaptation strategies combined with multimodal analysis enhance the translation of culturally specific items.

Methodological notes.

The study is grounded in several methodological postulates that ensure its explanatory coherence. First, it is inherently **interdisciplinary**, bringing together insights from linguistics, translation studies, and multimodality. This interdisciplinary approach makes it possible to conceptualize *realia* not as isolated lexical anomalies but as semiotic units embedded in larger cultural and communicative systems. Second, the research proceeds from the principle of **cultural markedness**, which treats *realia* as culturally saturated signs embodying historical memory, symbolic values, and collective experience. As such, they are not merely “equivalent-lacking units,” but markers of identity with high semiotic load. Third, the analysis is guided by the principle of **functional equivalence**, which redefines the aim of translation as the preservation of communicative adequacy rather than literal reproduction. In this view, translation is successful when it safeguards both the pragmatic effect and the cultural function of the original expression in the target context.

1. Interdisciplinarity. The research integrates insights from linguistics, translation studies, and multimodality. This makes it possible to conceptualize *realia* as semiotic units embedded in cultural and communicative systems. 2.

Cultural markedness. Realia are treated as culturally saturated signs, which embody symbolic values, historical memory, and identity. They are not only ‘equivalent-lacking units’ but carriers of cultural significance. 3. Functional equivalence. Translation is considered successful not when it literally reproduces form, but when it preserves pragmatic effect and cultural resonance of the original text.

This study employs a qualitative, theory-driven approach, synthesizing scholarship from linguistics, translation studies, and multimodality to examine nationally-biased lexicon in audiovisual contexts. The methodology integrates three interconnected procedures.

First, **conceptual analysis** is conducted to refine the core categories of the study, including *realia*, *linguoculturemes*, and *multimodality*. This stage not only clarifies definitions but also evaluates existing classifications of realia in order to assess their adequacy for translation practice. For example, the distinction between monomial units (*kobzar*) and phraseological units (*stand under a wreath*) proves essential for identifying how structural form influences translation strategies.

Second, **multimodal analysis** is applied to explore how meaning is co-constructed through the interplay of verbal, visual, auditory, and kinesic codes. This procedure foregrounds the audiovisual environment as a determinant of communicative effect. Thus, a culture-specific unit such as *Churchill’s armchair* in Zelensky’s address acquires its full resonance only in combination with the visual backdrop of Westminster Hall and the audience’s performative reaction.

Third, **comparative case studies** provide a contextualized analysis of how realia are embedded in distinct communicative traditions. For instance, Edward Heath’s 1974 interview reflects the rhetorical style of conservative British political culture, while Boris Johnson’s 2020 interview embodies a more dynamic, media-saturated mode of communication. These contrasting examples demonstrate how the pragmatic and multimodal framing of realia shapes both their translation and reception.

The methodological design ensures coherence by aligning the theoretical postulates (interdisciplinarity, cultural markedness, functional equivalence) with concrete analytical procedures. At the same time, it acknowledges its limitations: the study focuses on theoretical synthesis and interpretative analysis rather than empirical experimentation.

The **object of study** is nationally-biased lexicon in audiovisual discourse. The **instrument** is the integration of multimodality theory with translation studies. The

procedure follows a progressive sequence: conceptual clarification is undertaken first, followed by multimodal analysis and finally comparative case studies. The **aim** is to determine how realia operate as multimodal phenomena and to identify translation strategies that most effectively preserve their cultural and communicative functions across languages and contexts.

Research Framework: Logic of Analysis

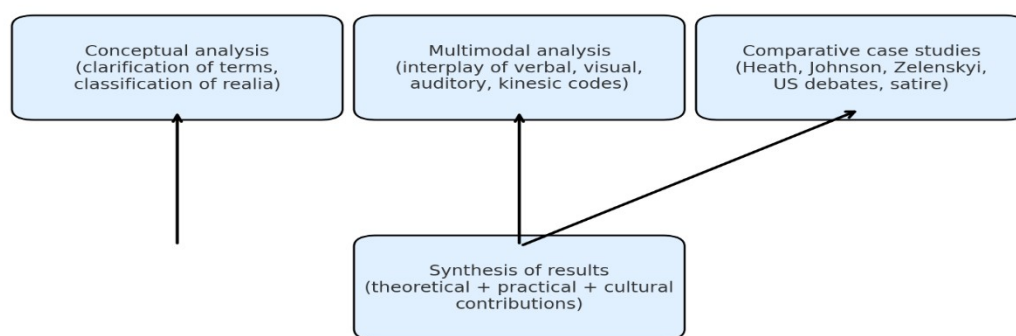


Diagram 1. The research framework

Theoretical Background. The social and political life attracts the attention of a large number of researchers, including linguists, who consider discourse as a dynamic complex multimodal structure. One of the important roles in the study of such multimodal structures is played by nationally-biased lexical units as means of reflecting the everyday life of such an important social entity as the state. Of particular interest to researchers is the study of realities in the context of developed conservative states, which include Great Britain. The problem of the concept of socio-political nationally-biased lexical units attracted the attention of both foreign and domestic researchers. The concept of "nationally-biased lexicon" is considered in the field of linguistics as "a word or word combination to denote objects, subjects that are alien to others, but characteristic of the life (lifestyle, culture, social and historical development) of a certain people" (Vlahov & Florin, 1960, p. 432).

The term "realia" or "nationally-biased lexicon" has been suggested by S.I. Vlahov and S.P. Florin (1960). The term has evolved to refer to objects, customs, habits and other cultural and material aspects influencing the shaping of a certain language. Realia can be discussed in frames of equivalent-lacking units.

Equivalent-lacking units are those concepts lacking in the target language and culture. They are also sometimes referred to as untranslatable units.

Depending on the criteria used several classifications of realia are distinguished in the current linguistic research. Depending on the criteria used several classifications of realia are distinguished in the current linguistic research. According to the structure, realities are divided into: a) monomial realities: *vechornytsi*, *kobzar*; b) realities-polynomials of a nominative character: three hundred musicians; c) realities-phraseologisms: shave foreheads, stand under a wreath. At the semantic level, the following classification of social and political realities is considered (Vlahov & Florin, 1960, p. 51):

political activity and actors: *Bolsheviks*, *Ku Klux Klan*, *Torry*;

patriotic and social movements (and their leaders):

Partisans (partisan, guerrilla fighter), *carbonarists* (carbonarists), *westerners* (easterns), *Slavophiles* (slavophile);

social phenomena and movements (and their representatives): *business*, *publicity*, *NEP*, *lobby*, *hippie*;

ranks, titles, appeals: *bachelor*, *prince*, *mister*, *sir*, *madam*; institutions: *registry office*, *golden table*, *trade delegation*;

educational institutions and cultural institutions: *college*, *lyceum*, *campus* (trunk, building), *aula*;

estates and castes (and their members): *nobility* (nobility, gentry, nobles), *merchant class*, *nobleman*, *samurai*, *muzhik*, *man*;

status signs and symbols: *Red flag* (red pore), *half moon* (half moon);

military realities: subdivision: *legion*, *phalanx*, *camp*, *horde*;

weapons: *arbalest*, *crossbow*, *musket*, *yataghan*, *battering ram*, *Finnish knife*;

uniform: *helmet* (slam), *mail* (chain mail, hauberk), *coat* (single-breast military or naval jacket), *pea jacket*;

military officers and commanders: *chieftain* (otaman, hetman), *centurion* (soтник).

Peter Newmark proposes a typology of foreign cultural terms in which he differentiates several categories: ecology (including flora, fauna, winds, and climate), material culture (such as food, clothing, housing, urban settings, transport), social culture (work and leisure), organizations, customs, activities, procedures or concepts (with artistic, religious, political and administrative subcategories), as well as gestures and habits (Newmark, 1998, p. 46).

Under the conditions of globalization, translators increasingly confront the demand to provide high-quality film translations within limited time frames. Consequently, specialists in Translation Studies attempt to establish theoretical foundations and methodological frameworks that would enable effective audiovisual translation and address its typical constraints and challenges. As a cultural artefact, cinematography may be interpreted semiotically as a communicative process that becomes meaningful only through the presence of a code (Eco, 1988, p. 31). A code represents a set of rules or knowledge that recipients share and through which the relationship between an individual unit and the general meaning it evokes is established.

In cinematographic discourse, communication is completed when the film and the audience intersect within the system of codes and rules already in place. The persuasive potential of cinema arises from the diversity, coherence and high concentration of the information it conveys—where “information” is understood as all intellectual and other structured content directed at the viewer. Audiovisual translation generally concerns the verbal component of a film, yet its specific distinguishing feature is the necessity to synchronize verbal and nonverbal elements. Translators of audiovisual products therefore engage not only with the linguistic text but also with the polyphonic dimensions of media art: dialogue or commentary, sound effects, visual imagery and the overall atmosphere.

G. Gottlieb identifies four principal information channels that must be taken into account during the translation process: (1) the verbal audio channel, encompassing dialogue, voice-over speech and songs; (2) the nonverbal audio channel, which includes music, sound effects and off-screen sounds; (3) the verbal–visual channel, represented by subtitles, signs, notes or written inscriptions appearing on the screen; and (4) the nonverbal visual channel, namely the moving image itself (Gottlieb, 1998). The coexistence of numerous meaning-bearing signs enables the transfer from one semiological complex to another in audiovisual translation. Thus, an original semiotic complex and a translated semiotic complex are formed (Pisarska & Tomaszkiwicz, 1998, p. 214). In such conditions the concept of equivalence undergoes reinterpretation: it expands to reflect the multimedia nature of translation. Equivalence, therefore, refers not only to the correspondence between linguistic units in two languages but also to the adequate interaction of verbal and nonverbal structures within both the source and the target product.

Four Channels of Multimodal Communication (Gotlieb, 1998)

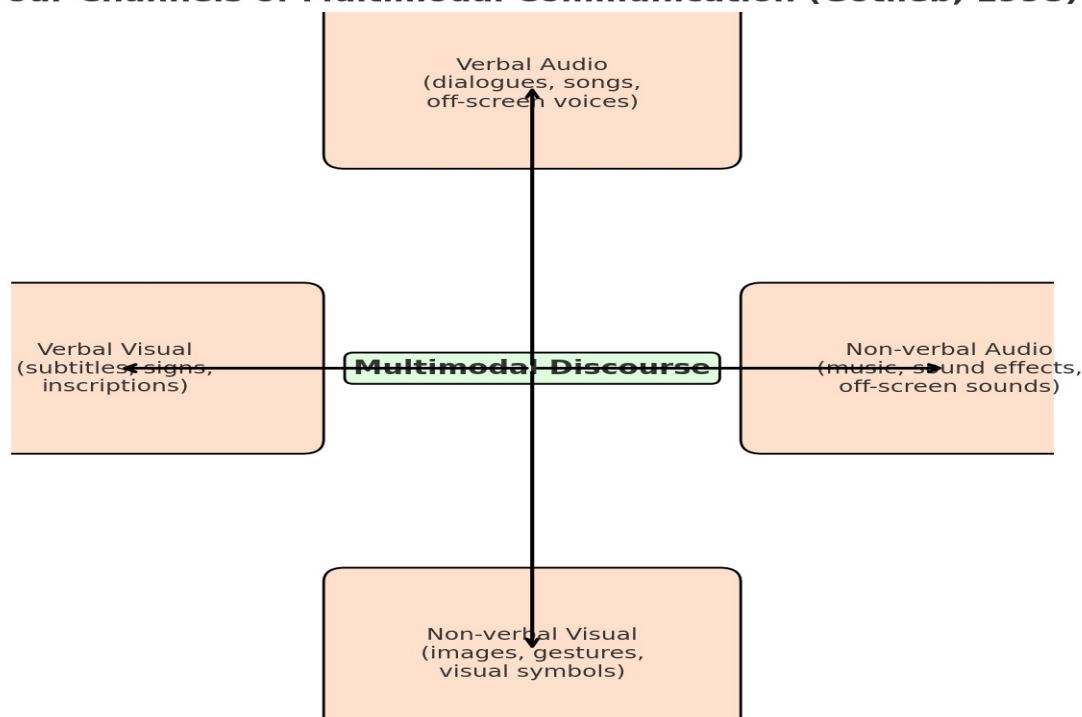


Diagram 2. Channels of communication (Gottlieb, 1998)

Within his Synchronization Theory, Tomas Herbst distinguishes three major levels of equivalence: the level of text meaning, the level of synchronicity and the level of text function (Herbst, 1994, pp. 227–237). The level of text meaning captures the overall content of the audiovisual work as well as the meaning of each complete scene. It conceptualizes the text as a unified whole and serves as the primary reference point for establishing equivalence. This level incorporates all meaningful elements and considers the text within the framework of a specific speech act performed in a concrete communicative situation. It also encompasses grammatical, stylistic and pragmatic acceptability. At this stage, the cultural background of the text becomes essential, especially when culturally marked phenomena are crucial for interpreting meaning.

The level of synchronicity comprises all aspects that emerge from the fixed situational and referential frameworks of the audiovisual product. This includes the alignment of image and sound, as well as the correspondence between source and target texts. Various types of synchronicity are distinguished: qualitative and quantitative lip synchronization; synchronization with respect to speech tempo; synchronization in relation to articulation clarity; nucleus synchronization (synchronization of stressed syllables and gestures); and referential synchronization, where the text directly corresponds to the situational context. Lip

synchronicity –i.e., the match between spoken words and visible articulation– represents one of the most substantial challenges in audiovisual translation. The term is generally interpreted as achieving an approximation of lip movements that is sufficiently accurate for the audience to perceive no conspicuous discrepancies. The final level, the level of text function, concerns the intended effect of the synchronized film text, including addressee-specific components. Complete functional identity between the source and target texts within their respective cultures is, in principle, unattainable. Nevertheless, this level requires that the target text be perceived as an organic whole, allowing the dominant functions of the original text to be reproduced as far as possible.

Results and Discussion. Regarding the multimodality of the discourse under consideration, we note that the construction of meaning in such discourse occurs through the integration through the integration of various semiotic modes, in particular: verbal – scripts of original video interviews, political shows, debates and their translation with socio-political realia; visual and static images (photographs, diagrams, graphs, etc., accompanying verbal representation of real, change of visual images in video clips accompanying verbal representation of realia); kinesic – gestures, facial expressions of participants in original video interviews, political shows, debates; auditory – melody accompanying verbal representation of realia.

Thus, the identification of strategies and tactics, as well as ways of interpreting socio-political realia in contemporary discourse of is complicated by the multimodal structure of realia as such. The Thames Television interview with former British Prime-Minister Edward Heath is the case.

The video interview with the former Prime Minister of Great Britain, Conservative Party representative Edward Heath in 1974 on Thames Television (Thames, 1974) (Figure 1) is characterised by the traditional British way of conducting dialogue through confrontation using the ‘question-answer’ model, the absence of active gestures and direct clear answers to the interviewer's questions.



Figure 1. Thames Television interviewer (left) and Edward Heath during a conversation

The theme of the interview is aimed at determining the prospects for the continued existence of Great Britain as a state that cares for its own people, especially the working class. This led Edward Heath to use relevant socio-political realia, such as *industrial action legislation* – *законодавство у галузі трудовоного права*, *Trade Unionists* – *члени Промислового Союзу*, *the Manifester* – *Маніфестант* (Thames, 1974).

The translation of these realia preserves their socio-political connotations within the British context. “**Industrial action legislation**” refers to a specific body of British labour laws regulating strikes and collective action; its Ukrainian equivalent *законодавство у галузі трудовоного права* conveys the institutional and legal dimension rather than literal wording. “**Trade Unionists**” denotes members of organized labour unions—key actors in British industrial relations—and is translated as *члени Промислового Союзу*, reflecting both class identity and collective representation. “**The Manifester**”, rendered as *Маніфестант*, retains the connotative sense of a politically active individual participating in demonstrations, emphasizing civic engagement as a social marker. Together, these realia illustrate how Heath’s discourse invokes culturally bound socio-political concepts central to Britain’s post-war identity.



Figure 2. Edward Heath answers a journalist's question

In the context of the use of socio-political realities in the XXI century, it is worth paying attention to the figure of the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Boris Johnson, and his interview with the BBC on the coronavirus situation in Great Britain (BBC, 2020).

Modern journalism is characterised by a high level of dynamic communication, fierce confrontations and excessive gesticulation.

It is worth noting that Mr. Johnson tries to avoid awkward questions and distracts from the question with a large number of counterarguments that are not always relevant to the topic of conversation, as well as excessive gesturing (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Boris Johnson answers a journalist's question

Since the conversation takes place at Boris Johnson's private residence, there is a certain ease in the conversation, accompanied by the relaxed posture of the journalist and his interlocutor. It is worth noting that in the context of the pandemic, Boris Johnson uses a large number of socio-political realia related to this topic: *the coronavirus* – пандемія коронавірусу, *lockdown* – карантин, *special social distancing measures* – запобіжні заходи для дотримання соціальної дистанції etc.

A further example may be found in the American presidential debates, where candidates regularly employ culturally loaded realia such as “*Affordable Care Act*”, – Реформа охорони здоров'я та захисту пацієнтів у США, “*Rust Belt*”, – Іржавий (Фабричний) пояс, “*swing states*” – нестійкі штати and “*Second Amendment rights*” – Друга поправка до Конституції США etc. These items encapsulate historical, political, and socio-economic realities specific to the United States. Their impact is multimodally reinforced through visual backdrops of national symbols, audience reactions captured by television cameras, and the rhetorical gesturing of candidates. Translating such debates for international audiences requires explanatory strategies, while maintaining brevity and synchronization with the audiovisual content.

The multimodal dimension of socio-political discourse becomes particularly evident when examining real-world instances in which nationally biased lexicon is reinforced by visual, auditory, and kinesic modes.

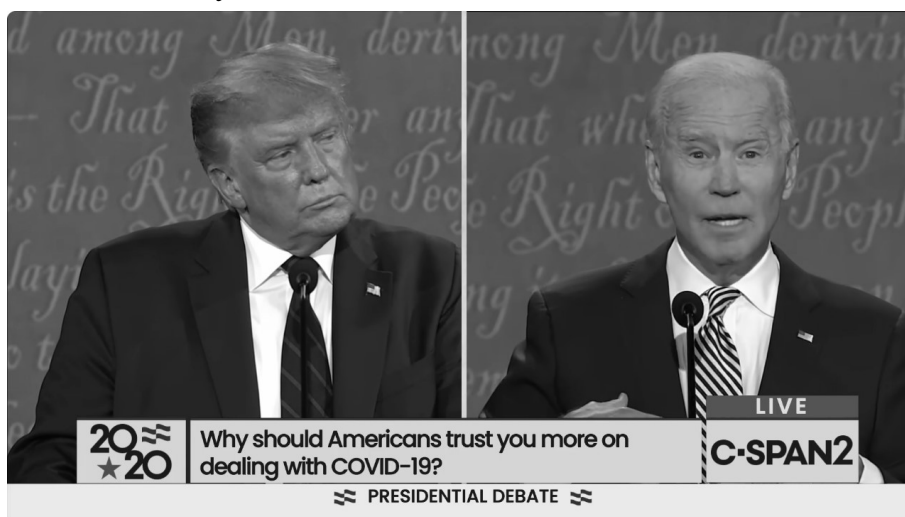


Figure 4. Donald Trump and Joe Biden During presidential debates

One striking case is President Volodymyr Zelenskyi's address to the UK Parliament. In February 2023, Zelenskyi spoke before both Houses in Westminster Hall, where his speech was broadcast live via video link into the chamber (Sky,

2023). During the address, he invoked culture-specific realia such as *“Churchill’s armchair,”* – крісло Черчилля *“freedom fighters,”* – борці за свободу, *“air defense of Ukraine”* – повітряна оборона України and *“united front for sovereignty”* – єдиний фронт за суверенітет. The translation of the realia reflects both their linguistic form and cultural symbolism. *“Churchill’s armchair”* is rendered as крісло Черчилля, preserving the proper name and its metonymic meaning as a symbol of British leadership and political continuity. *“Freedom fighters”* is translated as борці за свободу, an established equivalent in Ukrainian political discourse. *“Air defense of Ukraine”* becomes повітряна оборона України, a calque that aligns with official military terminology. Finally, *“united front for sovereignty”* is rendered as єдиний фронт за суверенітет, maintaining the metaphor of solidarity and collective resistance. Each translation seeks to retain both the pragmatic impact and the cultural resonance of the original expressions within the multimodal context of Zelenskyi’s address.

The verbal content was amplified by the multimodal setting: the solemn architecture of the hall, the MPs’ standing ovation, and the simultaneous interpreting into English.



Figure 5. Volodymyr Zelenskyi during his address to British nation

In this multimodal event, the lexicon *“Churchill’s armchair”* does not exist in a vacuum—it is embedded in visual and historical symbolism that resonates strongly in the British political-cultural context. Translators must decide whether to retain the original reference (foreignization) or to supplement it with a culturally accessible explanation (domestication). For instance, a translation might render *“Churchill’s armchair”* with a footnote or parenthetical gloss indicating its association with Britain’s wartime leadership.

The use of satire and political comedy, where nationally-biased lexicon is often interwoven with audiovisual cues. For example, BBC's *Have I Got News for You* (and analogous programs) employs references to **“Downing Street,” “No. 10,” “Cabinet reshuffle,” “Backbencher revolt”**, etc., accompanied by cut-away graphics, archival footage, and studio audience laughter. Translators face the double challenge of preserving the lexical realia and aligning them with audiovisual timing, cues, and cultural references.

The translation of these realia requires balancing lexical precision with cultural adaptability. **“Downing Street”** and **“No. 10”** function as metonymic designations of the British government, symbolizing political authority and national leadership; their Ukrainian renderings (*Даунінг-стріт*, *Номер 10*) retain the proper-noun form to preserve authenticity. **“Cabinet reshuffle”**, translated as *перестановка в уряді*, conveys the procedural nature of ministerial changes, while **“Backbencher revolt”**, rendered as *бунт рядових депутатів парламенту*, captures the political nuance of intra-party dissent. Because such expressions often appear amid visual and auditory cues—graphics, laughter, or gestures—the translator must not only reproduce the linguistic meaning but also synchronize timing and tone to sustain the satirical effect within the multimodal environment of political comedy.

The comedic impact often depends on synchronized subtitling that matches laughter or ironic pauses, and sometimes requires addition of brief explanatory glosses or adaptive equivalents in the target culture.



Figure 6. The political “forecast” on the General Elections

Taken together, these examples, from Brexit debates and pandemic briefings to monarchical and presidential speeches, satirical programs, American debates, and international campaigns—demonstrate that nationally-biased lexicon in

multimodal media functions as a complex semiotic constellation. It cannot be approached merely as “equivalent-lacking units” in isolation, since their cultural significance is mediated by the interaction of verbal, visual, auditory, and kinesic codes. Accordingly, translation strategies must address not only lexical substitution but also the preservation of multimodal framing, ensuring that the target audience perceives both the cultural specificity and the communicative effect embedded in the original discourse.

The analysis of culturally specific lexical units, or *realia*, reveals a set of recurrent features that determine their semantic, functional, and pragmatic behaviour in translation. Since such units lack direct equivalents in the target language and are often embedded in complex semiotic and multimodal contexts, translators must balance linguistic accuracy with cultural adaptability. Table 1 summarizes the principal features of *realia* translation, outlining their nature, classifications, translation challenges, and strategies. It also emphasizes the role of multimodal competence as a key component of successful cross-cultural mediation in audiovisual discourse.

Table 1. Specific Features of Translating Realia

<i>№</i>	<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Description (English)</i>	<i>Description (Ukrainian)</i>	<i>Example</i>
1	Nature of Realia / Природа реалій	Lexical units denoting culturally specific objects, phenomena, traditions, or socio-political concepts.	Лексичні одиниці, що позначають культурно специфічні предмети, явища, традиції чи соціально-політичні поняття.	kobzar, vechornytsi, Downing Street, swing states
2	Translation Challenge / Проблема перекладу	Realia lack direct equivalents; meaning is context-dependent and culture-bound.	Відсутність прямих еквівалентів у мові перекладу; значення визначається контекстом і культурою.	Realia cannot be translated literally without semantic loss.
3	Classification (Vlakhov & Florin) / Класифікація (Влахів і Флорин)	1) Monolexemic (kobzar); 2) Polylexemic (three hundred musicians); 3) Phraseological (stand under a wreath).	1) Монолексемні; 2) Полілексемні; 3) Фразеологічні реалії.	Structural type determines the translation strategy.

4	Classification (Newmark) / Класифікація (Ньюмарк)	Ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations, customs, gestures and habits.	Екологічні, матеріальної та соціальної культури, інституційні, звичаї, жести, звички.	lyceum, Rust Belt, Second Amendment rights
5	Cultural Markedness / Культурна маркованість	Realia are culture-loaded signs reflecting history, values, and identity.	Реалії – культурно насичені знаки, що відображають історію, цінності та ідентичність.	Churchill's armchair – symbol of British leadership.
6	Functional Equivalence / Функціональна еквівалентність	Translation aims to preserve communicative and cultural effect rather than literal form.	Мета перекладу – збереження комунікативного ефекту та культурного резонансу, а не буквальне відтворення.	Industrial action legislation → законодавство у галузі трудового права
7	Translation Strategies / Стратегії перекладу	1) Transcription/transliteration; 2) Calque; 3) Descriptive translation; 4) Adaptation; 5) Combined strategies.	1) Транскрипція / транслітерація; 2) Калькування; 3) Описовий переклад; 4) Адаптація; 5) Комбіновані стратегії.	Downing Street → Даунінг-стріт; Backbencher revolt → бунт рядових депутатів парламенту
8	Multimodal Aspect / Мультимодальний аспект	Meaning arises through interaction of verbal, visual, auditory, and kinesic codes.	Значення формується через взаємодію вербальних, візуальних, аудіальних і кінесичних кодів.	Churchill's armchair in Zelensky's address gains meaning through words, visuals, and audience reaction.
9	Audiovisual Translation / Аудіовізуальний переклад	Requires synchronizing text with non-verbal elements (gestures, tone, laughter).	Вимагає синхронізації тексту з невербальними елементами (жести, міміка, інтонація).	Political satire shows – need cultural and timing accuracy.

10	Translational Competence / Перекладацька компетентність	Multimodal competence ensures recognition of the interplay of verbal and non-verbal meaning.	Мульти模альна компетентність забезпечує усвідомлення взаємозв'язку вербальних і невербальних компонентів.	Enables preservation of communicative effect across media.
11	Cultural Value / Культурна цінність перекладу реалій	Translation preserves national identity, cultural continuity, and intercultural communication.	Переклад реалій підтримує національну ідентичність, культурну тяглість і міжкультурну комунікацію.	Translation of realia safeguards symbolic and historical values.

Conclusions and Perspectives.

The analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that nationally-biased lexicon, or realia, cannot be adequately addressed in translation without consideration of its multimodal nature. The case studies confirm that meaning in audiovisual discourse emerges from the integration of verbal, visual, auditory, and kinesic codes, making realia complex semiotic phenomena rather than isolated linguistic units.

The study provides a theoretical contribution by synthesizing insights from translation studies and multimodality, thereby establishing a framework in which realia are conceptualized as culturally saturated signs embedded in multimodal communication. This approach extends traditional understandings of realia beyond the notion of “equivalent-lacking units” and emphasizes their cultural and communicative functions.

The findings also have practical implications for translation practice. They highlight the necessity of multimodal competence, which enables translators to recognize and convey the cultural significance of realia across languages. The preservation of communicative effect and cultural resonance requires strategies that move beyond lexical substitution and instead account for the broader semiotic environment in which realia operate.

From a cultural perspective, the study demonstrates the role of translation in safeguarding national identity within the global circulation of media texts. By reproducing the cultural specificity of realia in multimodal contexts, translation contributes to the maintenance of symbolic values, historical memory, and collective experience across linguistic boundaries.

The research underscores the importance of integrating multimodality into both the theory and practice of translation. Such integration not only advances the scholarly understanding of nationally-biased lexicon but also strengthens the professional capacity of translators to mediate meaning effectively in intercultural communication.

Taken together, the results demonstrate that a multimodal approach to realia advances theoretical understanding, informs translation practice, and reinforces the preservation of cultural identity. This tripartite contribution positions multimodality not as an auxiliary perspective but as a core component of translation studies in the twenty-first century.

The findings of this study highlight that nationally-biased lexicon must be addressed as a **multimodal cultural phenomenon**, rather than merely as “equivalent-lacking units.” Meaning in audiovisual discourse emerges from the interaction of verbal, visual, auditory, and kinesic codes, which jointly shape the cultural resonance of realia.

The research offers three key contributions:

1. **Theoretical.** It extends the understanding of realia by conceptualizing them as culturally saturated multimodal signs. This reconceptualization bridges linguistic and semiotic perspectives within translation studies.
2. **Methodological.** It develops a coherent framework grounded in the postulates of interdisciplinarity, cultural markedness, and functional equivalence, operationalized through a three-step interpretative procedure. This framework is transferable to other areas of audiovisual translation.
3. **Practical.** It demonstrates how translation strategies that account for multimodal framing—rather than relying solely on lexical substitution—safeguard both the communicative effect and the cultural identity encoded in realia.

More broadly, the study shows that translation of multimodal realia plays a significant role in maintaining national identity within global media circulation. By preserving symbolic values and cultural memory across languages, translators contribute not only to intercultural communication but also to cultural continuity in the twenty-first century.

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