

Peculiarities of Rendering Nonverbal Elements in Film Discourse

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Abstract: The paper introduces the field of audiovisual translation, examines the functions of nonverbal components in film discourse and their consideration in the process of audiovisual translation. Nonverbal elements such as facial expressions, gestures, intonation, eye contact, camera angles, lighting, and background music play a significant role in delivering meaning, emotion, and cultural context in cinematic storytelling. These elements often work alongside spoken language to create a deeper, multimodal layer of communication that is essential for fully understanding a film's narrative and emotional tone. Nonverbal elements are clearly seen in scenes involving humor, irony, sarcasm, or culturally bound behaviors. The research concludes that effective audiovisual translation should go beyond verbal content and include awareness of nonverbal communication.

Keywords: Audiovisual translation, nonverbal communication, film discourse, multimodal analysis, subtitling, dubbing, cultural context, gestures, emotional meaning, cross-cultural communication.

Introduction: Audiovisual materials are present and relevant everywhere in our lives that they have become one of our main leisure activities, as various movies appear on screen. In addition, with the development of new technologies, the researches on audiovisual translation are being implemented during last decades. The technological advancement opens the door to new ideas and notions in the field of audiovisual translation. Audiovisual translation, also known as multimedia translation, is the process of adapting content from one language to another in multimedia formats like films, TV shows, and video games. It involves translating not just the spoken words, but also the visual and auditory elements, making it distinct from traditional text translation.

Audiovisual translation encompasses several ways to translate from a source language to a target one. The most popular types include dubbing, subtitling, and voice-over. All these types of rendering a language have their own characteristic features that don't resemble with one another.

Dubbing is the replacement of the source dialogue by a dialogue in the target language. Subtitling is the translation of what people are saying in a foreign

language film or television program, which appears at the bottom of the screen. Dubbing and subtitling have been compared from several aspects. Those who are against dubbing assert that it diminishes the effect of the film on the audience and makes censoring possible while those who are against subtitling stress that it pollutes the screen and distracts the attention. From the financial side, dubbing is considered high-cost and has several steps in order to reach a high-level dubbing goal. On the other hand, subtitling process is cost-effective and truly relies on subtitler and technology. The preference which one to employ is purely depends on countries.

Translation for dubbing and subtitling might have different approaches and strategies depending on the context as well.

Translation is an activity shifted in writing text messages from one language to another language text. [1] According to Catford, minimal translation includes two languages. It is further stated that the translation of Catford is the transfer of textual material in one language (the source language) with the textual material that is worth in another language (target language). The same with Larson that the forms of

redirection include translation, i.e. the form in the source language is replaced with a form of the language target or the target language.[2]

Subtitling is not only a translation between languages but also between modes of communication—from the spoken word to the written word. Subtitling also presents difficulties in time and space constraints that limit how much can be said. Subtitling often excludes phrases or entire sentences and the most exact translation is frequently ignored for a more concise translation. There are parallel problems in dubbing. The main issue with dubbing is synchronization, where the translation is matched to the movements, both lip and gestures, of the original visual work. Phrases are reworded to match the movements better, but perhaps not to better match the meaning of the original. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that, in any kind of audiovisual text the following elements establish a basis for its semiotic texture:

- The acoustic-verbal: dialogue, monologue, songs, voice-off.
- The acoustic-nonverbal: musical score, sound effects, noises.
- The visual-nonverbal: image, photography, gestures.
- The visual-verbal: inserts, banners, letters, messages on computer screens, newspaper headlines.[3]

In the process of translation of film texts, translators need to consider all the above listed elements. This means, the language is not the only factor to render the meaning, but the nonverbal components are of crucial importance in order to take into account culture of a source text.

According to Gonzale's, audiovisual texts contain visual elements as well as linguistic elements. Cultural characteristics are delivered via both visual and linguistic channels. On top of the difficulty of translating linguistic channel of cultural characteristics, translating these elements coming on multichannel makes translator's work even more difficult. How to deal with and what kind of translation strategies to apply to transfer these cultural characteristics are the questions that scholars have been trying to find answers. [4]

Translating nonverbal components in film, such as facial expressions, gestures, and body language, is important for conveying meaning and cultural context to the second audience. These elements, alongside verbal language, create a rich, multimodal layer of communication in cinematic storytelling. However, their translation presents challenges, and often requires adaptation or even loss of the original nuance. The process of translating nonverbal elements involves

various strategies, including codification, adaptation, and omission. Codification refers to the practice of representing nonverbal cues in a written form, such as describing a gesture or a facial expression in the subtitles. This approach allows the translator to convey the intended meaning of the nonverbal cue, albeit in a different modality. Adaptation, on the other hand, involves modifying the nonverbal cue to suit the cultural context of the target audience. For example, a gesture that is commonplace in one culture may be substituted with an equivalent gesture that holds the same meaning in another culture. Omission may occur when the nonverbal cue is deemed unnecessary or untranslatable, leading to its exclusion from the translation. The significance of nonverbal components in film discourse extends beyond their role in communication; they also serve as cultural markers that reflect societal norms, values, and beliefs. For instance, the use of space, touch, and eye contact can vary greatly across cultures, influencing how characters interact and how their relationships are perceived by the audience. Therefore, translating nonverbal elements requires not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural sensitivity and awareness. [5]

This is particularly evident in scenes involving humor, irony, sarcasm, or culturally bound behaviors. The study concludes that effective audiovisual translation should go beyond verbal content and include awareness of nonverbal communication. Translators need to be sensitive to multimodal elements and their functions within the source film. Incorporating these aspects can improve the cultural and emotional accuracy of translated content, leading to more authentic and engaging viewer experiences across languages and cultures. In conclusion, nonverbal components play a crucial role in film discourse, serving as vital conveyors of meaning, emotion, and cultural context. Their consideration in the translation process is essential to preserve the integrity and impact of the original work to the audience. Future research should explore the development of strategies and frameworks that enable the effective translation of nonverbal components, ensuring that films can be experienced authentically by audiences worldwide. [6]

Unlike verbal language, nonverbal communication does not have direct equivalents in other languages. The translation of nonverbal cues requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural awareness and sensitivity. The strategies employed by translators – such as codification, adaptation, and omission – each come with their respective strengths and limitations. Codification, or the description of nonverbal cues in subtitles, proved effective in conveying some nonverbal cues, particularly gestures or sounds that

could be verbalized. However, this approach often falls short in conveying the full emotional state of the original nonverbal cues. For instance, a character's facial expression of distress cannot be fully captured by a brief subtitle description like "looks worried". As a result, important nuances of the character's emotional state can be lost, reducing the depth of the viewer's emotional engagement. Adaptation, allows translators to adjust nonverbal cues to the cultural context of the target audience. While this strategy helps make the film more relatable, it runs the risk of altering the original meaning and emotional tone. For example, gestures that are culturally significant in one context may not carry the same weight in another, leading to potential misinterpretations. Additionally, the adaptation of nonverbal cues can sometimes result in a dilution of the original emotional impact, as the target audience may not experience the same emotional resonance as the original viewers. Omission, a common strategy employed when nonverbal cues are deemed untranslatable, has significant implications for the audience's understanding of the narrative. In the analysis, it was observed that when nonverbal elements were omitted – especially those related to emotional expression or character relationships – the translation became less effective in conveying the film's emotional depth. This is particularly visible in the dubbed versions, where the lack of facial expressions and gestures in the voice acting resulted in a loss of authenticity and emotional intensity.

Cultural differences further complicate the translation of nonverbal components, as gestures, expressions, and body language can have different meanings in various cultural contexts. Translators must, therefore, strike a balance between preserving the original intent of the film and making the nonverbal cues culturally accessible to the target audience. This delicate process requires a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures, as well as the ability to adapt nonverbal components without compromising their emotional significance. Translators must be trained to recognize and handle nonverbal elements, ensuring that the meaning and emotional intent of the original film are faithfully conveyed. The development of best practices for the translation of nonverbal cues would be a valuable contribution to the field of audiovisual translation, ensuring that films remain engaging and emotionally impactful for global audiences. In conclusion, the translation of nonverbal components is not a mere technical task but a fundamental aspect of maintaining the emotional and narrative integrity of films. By adopting a multimodal approach to translation that considers both linguistic and nonverbal elements, translators can enhance the

cross-cultural viewing experience, ensuring that the universal emotions and narratives embedded in films are accessible to audiences worldwide. As the global film industry continues to expand, the importance of effective and culturally sensitive translation of nonverbal components will only increase, making this area of study essential for future research in audiovisual translation.

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