THE THEORY OF MULTIMODAL CLUSTERS
(ON THE MATERIAL OF MODERN BRITISH POLITICAL TEXTS OF DIFFERENT VIDEO GENRES)

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The social and political life of Western Europe countries, Great Britain in particular, attracts the attention of a large number of researchers, including linguists, who consider political discourse as a dynamic multimodal structure. One of the important roles in the study of such multimodal structures play 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 nationally-biased lexicon units in the context of developed conservative states, which include Great Britain. The following research is aimed at representing the multimodal paradigm of language in terms of nationally-biased lexicon in modern British political texts of different video genres. An analysis of political programmes, talk shows and interviews makes it possible to single out a peculiar notion in terms of linguistic studies, "multimodal cluster". Such clusters are dominant in the formation of linguistic and ideological identity of the speaker since they include both the factual and empathic information in order to bind the addressee to act in a certain way or manipulate with the public opinion. Speaking about units of nationally-biased lexicon, they are considered by researchers as the elements of national and cultural identity of the nation, the nation of the UK in this particular research. The article is aimed at characterising the main peculiarities of nationally-biased lexicon representation in terms of multimodal theory, analysing main typological paradigms of multimodality, reflecting extra- and intralinguistic specifics of British political texts and to identify theoretical setbacks in theory of multimodality related to the research of nationally-biased lexical units; identifying and describing main criteria of nationally-biased lexicon functioning in political texts of various video genres; demonstrating some peculiarities of multimodal clusters construction in terms of political discourse and presenting the new notion of "multimodal cluster" in Ukrainian linguistic studies and the typology of multimodal clusters in political discourse in terms of video genres represented in research.

Keywords: *multimodal cluster, multimodality, political texts, video genres, political discourse.*

The statement of the problem. A great number of scholars, including linguists, are interested in the social and political life of Western European countries, particularly Great Britain. Nationally-biased lexical units play an essential part in the study of such multimodal structures as a way of expressing the everyday existence. Researchers are particularly interested in the study of nationally-biased lexicon units in the setting of established conservative governments such as the United Kingdom. Each multimodality theory faces two fundamental issues: first, consider the issue of compositionality, i.e. what does each particular mode add to the general meaning of a discourse, and how do they interact? Multimodality studies has focused on the issue of compositionality. According to these two issues, a theory of multimodality needs two theoretical approaches, a theory of meaning to explain compositionality, and a theory of communication to explain how various modes or sign systems can foster mutual understanding. Multimodality in politics also poses several challenges and problems. Some of these include may include misinformation, since the use of multiple modes of communication can make it easier to spread misinformation and propaganda, as messages can be more easily manipulated and disseminated across various platforms; polarisation, because multimodal political communication can also contribute to political polarisation by reinforcing existing beliefs and values, as people can choose to consume information and media that aligns with their existing beliefs; it is also reasonable to mention inequity as the use of multiple modes of communication can also exacerbate existing inequities in political participation and representation, as access to technology and resources is not evenly distributed across populations; fragmentation in multimodal communication can lead to fragmentation of political discourse, as people can choose to consume media that aligns with their existing beliefs, leading to echo chambers and a lack of diverse perspectives; ethical concerns in the use of multiple modes of communication leads to raising of ethical concerns related to privacy, data security, and the appropriate use of personal information for political purposes.

Overall, while multimodality has the potential to enhance political communication and engagement through various video genres, it also poses several challenges and problems that must be addressed to ensure equitable access, ethical use, and effective communication.

The relevance of research is determined by several factors. First of all, by the specific use of nationally-biased lexical units in political units in terms of various video genres, interviews and talk shows in this particular research. Secondly, the innovative approach to the theory of multimodality determines the formation of the notion of multimodal clusters being the main problem of the research that has not received a systematic description in modern multimodal studies. Each person experiences this world by transforming objects into cultural phenomena and turning them into signs. Such process combines the development and appropriation of nationally-biased lexical units, makes it possible to consider objects as things, and signs as social facts of human communication. Such referentiality also poses some problems, since the correspondent object or notion being presented by a politician may not be connected with the actual mindset pattern of speech, which, in turn, may cause misinformation or manipulation with facts. Researchers have not come to consensus how the multimodal constructions, including both verbal and non-verbal means of communication, may reflect the public opinion on social and political matters of the UK and create the linguistic picture of the world. To represent the model of the lifeworld's reflection in the verbal language, it is suggested to apply the concept of life-sustaining activity which is defined as a dynamic process of self-realisation. The latter involves three types of self-deployment products of the universe, in which the life of a person goes on, namely, physical body ("natural" world), semantic construct (spiritual world), system of attributes, caused by public relations (social world). The study of this problem may contribute to the solution of important problems related to the notion of multimodality and multimodal construers of real world.

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

The subject of the research is the peculiarities of multimodal clusters formation in terms of political discourse of the UK.

The aim of the study is a comprehensive description of the multimodal clusters fnctions in the English language by using nationally-biased lexicon as one of the dominant elements in scope of multimodality and its formation in modern British political discourse.

In accordance with the set goal, the following **tasks** are defined: to characterise the theory of multimodality and its functioning in modern linguistics; demonstrate different points of view on the term "multimodality"; to describe the main peculiarities of British political discourse; provide the notion of "multimodal clusters" as the new point of view on the usage of lexically-biased lexicon in British political discourse; analyse practical material represented by the recordings of different British talk shows and interviews.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The basic notions are presented of the theory of nationally-biased lexicon (S. Vlakhov, S. Florin, F. Aixela, R. Leppihalme, C. Nord); multimodal theory (K. O'Halloran, G. Kress, F. V. Lim, H.-J. Bucher, P. Niemann, Y. and others); theory of discourse (T. Van Dijk) etc.

Presentation of the main research material. Since person is a natural entity, its biological characteristics can be used to describe it.

Nord stresses that culture specificity is only a legitimate idea when comparing particular cultures. That is, a culture-specific phenomenon does not definitely appear only in that culture: it "might be observable in cultures other than the two in question" (Nord 1997, p. 34). In response to this criticism, it is important to emphasise that in the article units of nationally-biased lexicon are regarded as a relative (culturally dynamic) category: i.e., while the list of Ukrainian nationally-biased lexical units may be more or less constant in relation to most languages, each given lexical item can only have or lack a direct correspondence in relation to a specific language. Certainly, the social distance between the source language and target language groups plays an important role.

Aixela (1996), Leppihalme (2011), and Vlakhov and Florin (1980) highlight another dynamic element of nationally-biased lexicon: it changes its cross-cultural and cross-linguistic relationships change over time. As a consequence, lexical items may gain or lose nationally-biased lexical units status as "...objects, habits, or values that were once restricted to one community come to be shared by others" (Aixela, 1996, p. 58). Although it is not always simple to determine whether previously "alien" lexical items have been well incorporated in the recipient language and can thus no longer be deemed translation-resistant, the diachronic aspect must be considered. Lexis, which is currently classified as nationally-biased, may no longer be classified as such in the future.

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" (Влахов & Флорин, 1980, p. 432). The term "realia" or "nationally-biased lexicon" has been suggested by S. I. Vlakhov and S. P. Florin (Влахов & Флорин, 1980). The term has evolved to refer to objects, customs, habits and other cultural and material aspects influencing the shaping of a certain language.

Frames of equivalent-lacking units can be used to analyse units of nationally-biased lexicon. The ideas lacking in the target language and society are referred to as equivalent-lacking units. They are also known as untranslatable units at times. Several classifications of realia are differentiated in the present linguistic research, depending on the criteria used.

Efficient communication is impossible "without deep and wide background knowledge of native speakers cultures which implies way of life, mentality, vision of the world, the national character, customs, beliefs, systems of values, kinds of social behavior" (Ter-Minasova, 1995). There are close relationships between language and culture, and text is a means of studying culture, it is the main source of cultural knowledge and information.

In this vein we take into consideration the notion of multimodality. Previous multimodality studies has focused on the issue of compositionality. It is referred to as "intersemiosis" (O'Halloran, 2008, p. 470), "semantic multiplication" (Lim, 2002), or "modal interrelation" (Lim, 2002). (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2010, p. 165). The fundamental premise underlying all of these ideas is that the whole of a multimodal ensemble is greater than the total of its components. Second, there is the issue of acceptance, which is essentially a mirror copy of the first. The question is how do receivers combine the various modalities and gain a coherent grasp of multimodal discourse?

According to these two issues, a theory of multimodality needs two theoretical approaches: a theory of meaning to explain compositionality, and a theory of communication to explain how we can foster mutual comprehension by using various modalities or sign systems. In contrast to most sign-oriented or semiotic approaches to multimodality, we will offer an action-oriented theory of meaning based in speech act theory, linguistic pragmatics, and Wittgensteinian notions of language games.

The theory of communication is founded on an interactional approach to communication that incorporates ideas such as purpose, reciprocal knowledge, selection, focus, and affordance. (Bucher & Niemann, 2012).

Multimodality, defined as "the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 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.

Taking research into multimodality a step further, Baldry (2008) conducted in-depth multimodal analyses of car advertisements, films and TV documentaries using an innovative corpus-compiling and concordancing tool concluding that such research "leads to the identification of what is recurrent in the meaning-making processes of film texts". This ties in with the theories of Kress & Van Leeuwen that modes are shaped socially and culturally and are familiar to those within a particular culture through their appearance and reappearance in what constitutes the concept of intertextuality.

Multimodality encourages semiotic analysis, in which the interplay and reciprocal dependencies of various semiotic modes are equally legitimate and pooled together to enable the development of a final coherent meaning. It is believed that communication involves several concurrent channels intertwined in the act of perception/conception, and that interactants are aware of both verbal and visual cues. (e.g. gaze, spatial positioning, gesture, posture). It even goes so far as to argue that the traditional binary model of analysis juxtaposing linguistic versus nonlinguistic signals, or linguistic versus extralinguistic signals (which emphasize the central role of language), should be replaced by a plurimodal approach with linguistic signals as one of many elements, with a dominant visual impact.

Political leaders use a variety of language and style methods, as well as rhetorical tactics, in their talks to share their views with the audience and influence their awareness. The fight for supremacy is at the heart of political debate.

It is fair to concentrate on how and in what ways political leaders use national and cultural values in their statements to accomplish the goals outlined in British political dialogue. The theory is that the manner the citizens of the United Kingdom, one

of the world's largest English-speaking countries, think has a significant impact on their political discourse.

The British nation has a distinct national political discourse. Along with the general characteristics of this political debate, each of them has unique mental characteristics due to their linguocultural way of reasoning. TV helps them to reach the goal which lies in manipulating the public opinion or presenting vital information to the constituents. Indeed, "in order for something to "be a mode," there must be a common cultural sense within a society" (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010, p. 184). Cultures, on the other hand, may be impacted by modes, which can develop new trends and habits (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2010). The format is a type of matrix that contains all of the pieces that make up a show.

The TV writers in charge of the project define the different aspects that make up the concept in a manuscript called "the Bible", including specifics of story structure, duration, settings, music, dress code, languages, and even non-verbal means of commnication used by the hosts. The TV format has an intriguing history that is quite helpful in understanding the inherent nature of its multimodality.

Because these traditional media use a unidirectional method of communication, also known as "top-down", which implies that there is a single and strong source conveying the message to an inert recipient, "traditional" is an eloquent way of saying "ancient." This method of contact has been made obsolete by new media since the 1990s.

Most significantly, contemporary communication has moved closer to the human brain. In fact, the new bottom-up communication is based on a network of links (especially if we speak about links to websites).

Modes can also be politically significant by supporting or opposing popular political views (Fleitz, 2010). In his studies, Bourdieu (2003; 2005) has established that neoliberal policies have consolidated power in a few hands and that technology and the media are important tools for power consolidation.

Furthermore, Bourdieu (2003; 2005) describes globalisation as the expansion of the economic sphere to encompass the entire globe.

Considering the theoretical foundations of the problem, we present the innovative approach to the problem by creating the notion of *"multimodal cluster"*.

The multimodal cluster is a special construction which includes such elements as *discourse parameters of the text* (type of discourse, genre of the text), *visual/audial set*, which is aimed at representing the multimodal side of the text nucleus and *specific lexical units* aimed at representing the core idea of the text or utterance.
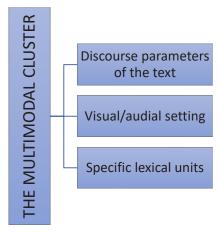

Fig. 1. The multimodal cluster diagram

As we can see from the following diagram, the multimodal cluster can be considered as the *concept in the concept*, which is used to ensure the synergy between verbal and non-verbal elements of the utterance by using specific vocabulary, including units of nationally-biased lexicon.

Multimodal clusters are closely attached to video genres, such as interview and talk show as the main video genres of this research.

An interview is a formal or informal conversation between two or more people, where one person, usually called the interviewer, asks questions of another person, called the interviewee, to gather information or assess their suitability for a particular role, position, or opportunity.

Interviews can take many different forms, such as job interviews, college admissions interviews, media interviews, research interviews. They can be conducted in person, over the phone, or online, and may involve a range of questions, from general knowledge and behavioral questions to technical and situational questions.

The primary goal of an interview is to gather information about the interviewee's qualifications, experience, skills, personality, and other relevant factors, to determine whether they are a good fit for the role or opportunity being offered.

In order to make a huge influence on the interviewer and to give him some information, the interviewee may use a plethora of nationally-biased units in order to give the big amount of information which reflects all aspects of British life. Furthermore, British politicians use a manipulative effect in order to make the biggest impression on interviewer. The two

criteria for nationally-biased lexicon differentiation in video interviews are defined, namely, the abundance of information and manipulative effect on the interlocutor. For such differentiation the first type of multimodal clusters, the ***multimodal cluster of an interview***, is under consideration.

For example, Mr. Mark Austin, the Sky News journalist, used a lot of politics-based units of nationally-biased lexicon when he spoke to Mr. Boris Johnson, the former Prime Minister of the UK (Sky, 2022). The main topic (and, needless to say, the part of multimodal cluster) is the Russia-Ukraine war. Of course, the nationally-biased units included were ***Russia, Ukraine, war, humanitarian aid, nuclear arms*** to name a few. These lexical units form the respective policy towards Ukraine and Russia being fully integrated into the British worldview and the multimodal cluster of an interview, because the actual conversation is based on eye contact and the use of gestures, which represent a certain kind of modality, be it agreement, disagreement or fear.

On Picture 1, the severe setting and upright yet relaxed position of both speakers demonstrates that the problem under consideration is quite important for both speakers. Along with visual setting, verbal components, which make up the concept of the conversation, ensure the "concept in concept" communication paradigm.

Pic. 1. Mr. Mark Austin and Mr. Boris Johnson during the interview

Pic. 2. Mark Austin's reaction to Mr. Johnson's answers

Mr. Austin seems to be satisfied with Mr. Johnson's answers and wants to establish even less formal contact with the guest in order to receive more information and personal point of view from the interviewee.

On the contrary, Mr. Johnson is very nervous, since the topic of the Ukraine-Russia war disturbs the Prime Minister, and he tends to cope with his emotions by using a lot of rapid and harsh gestures, and, of course, using the most dominant units of nationally-biased lexicon which form both the semantic and multimodal nucleus of the conversation.

Furthermore, we may conclude that this interview fully conforms to the idea of multimodal cluster, since it includes all of the necessary elements of the diagram. The actual multimodal perspective of this interview is the following: the utterance of political discourse is presented by a video interview with special visual setting and enriched by the use of specific nationally-biased topical vocabulary.

To make the "speech formula" more comprehensible, we represent it in the form of the multimodal cluster scheme, as it has been presented in Figure 1.
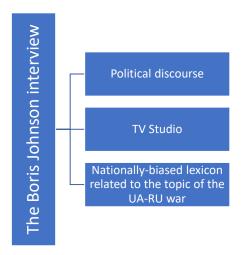

Fig. 2. The Boris Johnson interview multimodal cluster diagram

Pic. 3. Mr. Boris Johnson's gestures in the process of speaking

The second video genre under consideration is ***talk show***. Talk show is a television or radio programming type centered on the act of spontaneous dialogue. Certain characteristics separate a talk show from other television programs. On a talk show, one person (or a group of people or guests) debates various topics proposed by the talk show host.

This conversation can take the form of an interview or a simple conversation about significant social, political, or religious issues and events. The personality of the host shapes the tone of the show, which also defines the "trademark" of the show. A common feature or unwritten rule of talk shows is to be based on "fresh talk", which is talk that is spontaneous or has the appearance of spontaneity. In this case we observe the mixture of audiovisual perception of the information (Van Dijk, 1977).

Similarly to the previous video genre, we establish the ***multimodal cluster of talk show***. It includes such elements as the ***discourse parameters of the text, visual/audial setting, interaction and specific lexical units***. Since talk

shows tend to be conducted in front of the live audience, it is important to include the element of interactivity into the scheme, since some members of the audience may ask quite provocative questions.
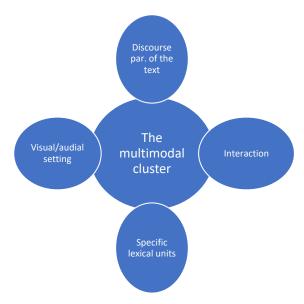

Fig. 3. The multimodal cluster of talk show diagram

The setting of TV talk-show studio carries out multimodality itself by means of *colour pattern, furniture setting, and technical parameters of the studio* (lighting, audio supplying etc.), as well as members of the target audience who listen to the conversation between the participants. Moreover, the setting may influence the psychological state of the interviewee and forms his/her speech and use of lexical units.

In this case it is possible to single out the next criteria of choosing the nationally-biased lexicon: the *psychological application of the nationally-biased unit and the multimodal setting of the conversation*.

As for example we take the conversation between Mr. Robin Day, the BBC presenter, and Mr. Harold Wilson, the former Prime Minister of the UK from 1964 to 1970 (BBC, 1979). In talk shows, audience response takes many forms, including applause, laughter, questions, comments, and criticism. The response of the audience can provide valuable insight into how well the message or performance was received and can help to gauge the level of engagement and interest.

It is important for Robin Day to pay attention to the audience response on Mr. Heath's answers and adjust his approach as needed. If the audience is not engaged, the presenter changes the way of interaction to make the message more interesting or relevant.

The peculiar moment is that the interviewer and the interviewee swapped roles to create the comic effect on the show which was highly appreciated by the audience by clapping. It is, of course, the interaction in our scheme. Mr. Wilson asked Mr. Day about the life of an *MP* and the *Prime Minister* and we consider this as the use of specific lexical units of political discourse, since the aforementioned units of nationally-biased lexicon are unique and can be used in speech only for nomination of the British administrative posts.

The multimodal cluster of talk show diagram is presented in Figure 4.

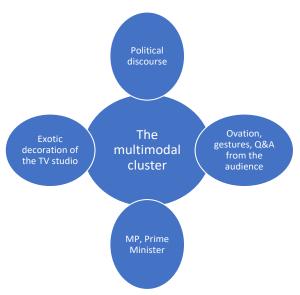**Pic. 4. Mr. Day and Mr. Wilson during the interview**

Fig. 4. The talk show multimodal cluster diagram

Conclusions and further perspectives. The notion of multimodality is very important in establishing effective communication between the interlocutors. The selection of lexical units, visual and audial setting along with specifics of discourse forms quite a unique construction, which is the multimodal cluster. Two types of multimodal clusters under consideration, regarding interviews and talk shows, demonstrate the essential difference in the way of communication involving no audience in the first type and depending on live audience in the second one. Although the article covered some specific notions on the formation of multimodal constructions, the problem is still urgent and demands further research of the political discourse texts interpretation in terms of the theory of multimodality.

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ТЕОРІЯ МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНИХ КЛАСТЕРІВ (НА МАТЕРІАЛІ СУЧАСНИХ БРИТАНСЬКИХ ПОЛІТИЧНИХ ТЕКСТІВ РІЗНИХ ВІДЕОЖАНРІВ)

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Соціально-політичне життя країн Західної Європи, зокрема Великої Британії, привертає увагу значної кількості дослідників, у тому числі лінгвістів, які розглядають політичний дискурс як динамічну мультимодальну структуру. Одну з важливих ролей у дослідженні подібних полімодальних структур відіграють національно-обумовлені лексичні одиниці як засоби відображення повсякденного життя такого важливого суспільного утворення як держава. Особливий інтерес для дослідників становить вивчення реалій у контексті розвинутих консервативних держав, до яких належить Велика Британія. Дослідження спрямоване на репрезентацію мультимодальної парадигми мови з точки зору національно-обумовленої лексики в сучасних британських політичних текстах різних відеожанрів. Аналіз політичних програм, ток-шоу та інтерв'ю дає змогу виокремити своєрідне з точки зору лінгвістичних досліджень поняття «мультимодальний кластер». Такі кластери є визначальними у формуванні мовної та світоглядної ідентичності мовця, оскільки містять як фактологічну, так і емпатичну інформацію, яка використовується задля спонукання суспільства до певних дій або маніпулювання суспільною думкою. Якщо говорити про одиниці національно-обумовленої лексики, то вони в цьому дослідженні розглядаються як елементи національно-культурної ідентичності Великобританії. Мета статті – охарактеризувати основні особливості репрезентації національно-обумовленої лексики з погляду теорії мультимодальності, проаналізувати типологічні парадигми мультимодальності, що відображають екстра- та інтралінгвістичну специфіку британських політичних текстів, а також визначити недоліки у теорії мультимодальності, які пов'язані з дослідженням національно-обумовлених лексичних одиниць, виявити та описати основні критерії функціонування національно-обумовленої лексики в політичних текстах різних відеожанрів та відобразити специфіку побудови мультимодальних кластерів в умовах політичного дискурсеу, представити нове в українській лінгвістиці поняття «мультимодального кластеру» та типологію мультимодальних кластерів в політичному дискурсі відповідно до відеожанрів, репрезентованих у цьому дослідженні.

Ключові слова: *мультимодальний кластер, мультимодальність, політичні тексти, відеожанри, політичний дискурс.*