# THE ISSUE OF SUBSTITUTION RELATED TO NONVERBAL MEANS OF COMMUNICATION IN TRANSLATION OF LITERARY TEXTS

**Ziynat Djumanazarovna,PhD student ,Urgench State University,Urgench**

**Introduction**

The problem of substituting lexis used to represent nonverbal communication means in translation is a complex issue that arises from the challenges of conveying nonverbal cues across different languages and cultures. As we know, nonverbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions, body language, and other forms of nonverbal behavior that are integral to conveying meaning in both verbal and nonverbal forms. When translating literary texts, these nonverbal elements can pose significant challenges due to differences in cultural norms, linguistic expressions, and contextual understanding. Here's a detailed look at the problem:

**Research methods**

**1.** Cultural Differences

**Issue:** Nonverbal communication often varies significantly across cultures. For example, a gesture that is considered polite in one culture might be seen as rude or meaningless in another.

**Example:** In some cultures, a thumbs-up gesture is a positive sign, but in others, it can be offensive.

**Substitution Problem:** Translators must find equivalent nonverbal expressions that are culturally appropriate for the target audience. This might mean substituting the original nonverbal cue with a culturally relevant one or providing a verbal description that explains the nonverbal action.

**2.** Linguistic Limitations

**Issue:** Some languages have specific words or phrases that describe nonverbal actions or expressions, which might not have direct equivalents in the target language.

**Example:** The English phrase "rolled her eyes" to show exasperation may not have a direct equivalent in some languages.

**Substitution Problem:** Translators often need to use descriptive language to convey the meaning of the nonverbal cue. This can involve adding explanatory text or choosing a different phrase that captures the same emotional or situational nuance.

**3.** Contextual Understanding

**Issue:** The meaning of nonverbal communication can depend heavily on the context in which it occurs. A gesture or expression might have different meanings based on the situation.

**Example:** A character's smile might signify happiness, irony, or nervousness depending on the surrounding context.

**Substitution Problem:** Translators need to ensure that the substituted nonverbal cues accurately reflect the intended meaning within the context of the scene. This might involve modifying the nonverbal cue to fit the context or adding narrative detail to clarify its meaning.

**4.** Narrative and Stylistic Choices

**Issue:** Literary texts often use nonverbal communication to build characters or create atmosphere. The choice of nonverbal cues can be an integral part of the author's style and narrative voice.

**Example:** In a novel, an author might describe a character's habitual gesture as a key trait, such as a nervous habit of fiddling with a pen.

**Substitution Problem:** Translators must balance maintaining the author's style and narrative voice with the need to convey nonverbal communication in a way that resonates with the target audience. This can involve creatively adapting or describing the nonverbal cues to preserve the original intent and style.

**5.** Emotional Nuance

**Issue:** Nonverbal communication often conveys subtle emotional nuances that are challenging to translate.

**Example:** A character's sigh might indicate frustration, relief, or resignation, depending on the situation.

**Substitution Problem:** Translators need to carefully choose words or phrases that convey the same emotional weight and subtleties as the original nonverbal communication. This might require adding context or modifying the expression to capture the same emotional impact.

**6.** Literal verses Figurative Meaning

**Issue:** Nonverbal cues can sometimes have figurative meanings that are not immediately apparent.

**Example:** The act of "biting one's lip" can indicate nervousness, hesitation, or contemplation.

**Substitution Problem:** Translators need to determine whether to translate the nonverbal cue literally or figuratively. This involves understanding the figurative meaning in the source language and finding an equivalent expression in the target language that conveys the same figurative sense.

**Strategies for Addressing the Problem**

1.  **Cultural Adaptation:** Choose nonverbal cues that are culturally relevant and understood in the target culture. Provide additional context if necessary.

2.  **Descriptive Translation:** Use descriptive language to explain nonverbal actions when direct equivalents are unavailable.

3.  **Contextual Adjustment:** Ensure that nonverbal cues align with the context and narrative of the target text.

4.  **Maintaining Style:** Preserve the author's style and voice by adapting nonverbal communication in a way that maintains the original tone and character.

5.  **Emotional Accuracy:** Focus on conveying the emotional nuance of nonverbal cues, using words or phrases that reflect the same sentiment.

6.  **Consultation and Feedback:** Work with native speakers or cultural experts to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of translated nonverbal cues.

Addressing these issues requires a deep understanding of both source and target languages, as well as sensitivity to cultural differences and narrative context. Effective substitution in literary translation involves balancing clarity and authenticity while preserving the original text's style and intent. By using footnotes, endnotes, glossaries, and collaborative approaches, translators can provide necessary context and explanations without overwhelming or altering the original narrative. Properly managed substitution helps ensure that readers of the translated work receive a faithful and comprehensible rendition of the original text.

## Reference

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