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## THE ROLE OF MULTIMODALITY IN LOCALIZATION OF UKRAINIAN TOURIST WEBSITES INTO ENGLISH

*Nowadays tourism is one of the fast-developing industries that constantly require high-quality translation to reach multicultural audiences. Tourism services frequently change and adapt to emerging conditions of operation. One of such conditions that gained even more importance during the last two years, is the rapid development of digital and Internet technologies that shifted most of content creation and consumption into the online mode. This article touches upon some issues of localization of Ukrainian tourist websites into English. English is chosen here as a target language because English is presently a lingua franca understood and spoken worldwide. Hence, translation of any content into English provides the best coverage and helps the content to reach the largest audience possible. State of the art content creation is characterized by a wide use of digital resources and amplifying the written text by a variety of graphics, images, font types and sizes, audio and video materials, etc. Hence, these different modes of presentation work together in a multimodal text to convey information, meanings, and ideas. Therefore, the article describes the shift of tourist websites' creation moving forward to completely multimodal content as well as briefly outlines the notion of multimodality from the translation viewpoint. It also discusses the role of multimodality in the localization of Ukrainian tourist websites into English. This article also attempts at determining whether the multimodal elements are usually preserved or eliminated while localizing a tourist website. Four pairs of web pages (Ukrainian and English versions) were compared to trace similarities/differences in content presentation and to serve as an example of how preserving or missing multimodal elements in the process of website translation influences the final product.*

**Key words:** tourist website, web page, multimodality, translation, localization.

**Introduction.** The 21<sup>st</sup> century is often referred to as a digital era with tons of content being created, presented, and consumed every day. Our world appears under a massive influence of the Internet and digital technologies that covertly shape the performances, standards, and behaviors of both society and separate individuals. This tendency has grown even more important during the last two years when previously unexperienced conditions have been gradually changing the way people interact with digital content. Tourism is one of the spheres of modern life that is characterized by the ability to rapidly change, acquire new technologies and modes of expression, develop new services and adjust to the tendencies and needs, prevailing at the current stage. According to the data of UkraineInvest, "Since 2017, Ukraine had the fastest rate of Travel&Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) score growth in the Eurasia subregion, rising 10 places to rank 78th globally. In particular, as the country stabilized and recovered economically, Ukraine drastically improved its business environment (124th to 103rd), safety and security (127th to 107th), international openness (78th to 55th), and overall infrastructure (79th to 73rd)" [5]. This report only

confirms that our country possesses vast cultural, historical, and recreational resources, which can become a huge potential for tourism and the economy. To have successful communication with international audiences who possibly visit the country's tourism facilities, the institutions working in the sphere of tourism try to provide their websites with meaningful content in several languages, including English to be easily accessible for people from all over the world. At the same time, the quick development of digital technologies has pushed the websites' content from being created predominantly in the text form to being presented in a variety of modes, including text, audio, and video materials. Such multimodality poses a need towards not simply translating the website, but localizing it, adapting towards a target language and culture. While translation deals mainly with text, website localization occurs at three levels, the first one framing the translation of all the texts, second dealing with linguistic and cultural adaptation of illustrations, video materials, website layout, colors, and many other elements for the target audience. The third level is internationalization, it deals not with the content, but with the adaptation of the software to different

regional peculiarities and technical requirements of a target market. For our investigation, the first two levels (translation and localization) are meaningful as these are the levels where all the actual content is rendered into a different language. Tourist websites are characterized by providing a wide variety of content through different modes that work together to create a unique experience. Therefore, such websites benefit greatly from proper localization that takes into account all the multimodal elements. The **purpose of this article** is to analyze Ukrainian tourist websites and their localized English versions from the point of view of their multimodality as well as to determine the role multimodality plays for the final localized product.

**Literature review.** According to Kress & van Leeuwen, multimodality refers to the interplay between different representational modes, for instance, between images and the written/spoken word. Some other examples of modes are font choice and colour, video, and even the interactions between them [1, p. 20]. In the sphere of tourism, this is especially relevant for the websites where different modes of expression become inseparable meaningful constituents of message creating. Kress & van Leeuwen have long ago stated that there is a need to move away from the idea that the different modes in multimodal texts have strictly bounded and framed tasks [1, p. 2]. Hartmut Stöckl went further, supposing that “purely mono-modal text has always been an exception while the core practice in communication has essentially been multimodal all along” [4, p. 10]. In multimodal texts, such as illustrated texts, films, or websites, verbal language is accompanied by other kinds of visual and auditive information that interact with words and influence reception and understanding of the multimodal text. Modern tourist websites aim at providing scenarios of what prospective tourists would find and in which contexts they would be situated. In this sense, a website requires easy navigation from one part of a web page to another, as well as across multiple web pages interweaving stories in different forms such as descriptions of tourist attractions, accommodation and transport information. This navigation should also be clear enough to serve for providing the prospective tourists with useful tips about the needed locations, costs, routes, places they can book an excursion or a guide, get assistance in ongoing situations. This is reached by a careful website design including various menus and contents classification approachable by hyperlink icons leading to the requested information in other web pages or websites.

Additionally, Lyons in her theoretic and methodological research of multimodality provides an assumption that resources used by the communicants are “socially shaped over time to create a shared cultural sense of the way in which they can convey meaning” [2, p. 269]. In this light, she concludes that any multimodal expression highly depends on the context in which it was created because multimodal meanings are constructed within specific social and cultural contexts based on the communicative needs of different communities and cultures. This presents an additional task for those working with website localization – to properly and masterfully convey the Ukrainian cultural context both preserving its unique features and making it understandable for a multicultural audience. As Carol O’Sullivan stated, “multimodal meaning-making is deployed for promotional, political, expressive and informative purposes which must be understood and accounted for by technical translators, literary translators, copywriters, subtitlers, localizers, publishers and other professionals working with language and text” [3, p. 2].

**Results and Discussion.** Analysis of tourist websites shows that their verbal element (text) closely interacts with images, videos, diagrams, audio recordings, and typography or web page layout. Different modes of presenting information do not stand alone as separate sections of the website; they are combined to convey some meaning. Moreover, there are cases when the absence of some constituents can prevent readers from decoding the text producer’s initial intent properly. The multimodality of websites, thus, plays a very important role in the process of localization. It acts as a tying core for all the meanings, combining them in a unique story, a unique experience.

The key task in analyzing Ukrainian tourist websites and their English versions was to analyze the role multimodality plays in both creating content that would speak to prospective tourists from all over the world and localizing it. It is important to mention that in practice, the localization of tourist websites faces some additional requirements. First, it is performed for a multicultural audience as websites usually operate in three to five most learned and spoken world languages. Secondly, the localizers usually face a very ambiguous task: they should adapt the content according to the preferences of a target audience and preserve the uniqueness of this content conveying its cultural context at the same time. Therefore, it is often the case that many multimodal elements are simply transferred to the target web page version without major changes.

To select the websites for our analysis was not a casual task and there were several reasons for it. First, a great number of interesting tourist websites operate in Ukrainian only, or Ukrainian & Russian and a couple of other languages such as Slovak, Hungarian, or Czech without being localized into English. Thus, they merely fall out of our area of interest. Secondly, a lot of other websites about Ukraine that are easily accessible for foreign tourists operate in English only, hence not suitable for our analysis. Finally, we have chosen the following websites: ua.igotoworld.com, which is a large web portal containing tourism information from all over the world, <https://ukrainer.net/> which is the website of an increasingly popular project Ukrainer. Its authors aim at “rethinking historic and cultural DNA – the ethnic, geographic, and anthropological features – of our native lands” [6]. The website operates in 12 languages, many web pages are presented in at least 2–3 languages. Additionally, the authors aim at not only showing the places but also the people behind them, their lives, hopes and desires.

The further selection of the pairs of web pages (one in Ukrainian and one in English) was completed in such a way that different types of locations contributing to different tourism choices would be covered.

The analysis was conducted by comparing a web page in Ukrainian with its English counterpart. The following features were looked for: correspondence of the text, layout equivalence, keeping all the photos, conveying any audio/video content (if present), localization of functional parts (hyperlinks, menus, icons, etc.).

The first analyzed pair (Гора Говерла – Mount Hoverla) of web pages is extracted from IGoToWorld website and presents the information about the highest mountain in Ukraine, a location that could be attractive for those interested in green tourism, ecotourism, hiking, etc.

The web page consists of several different parts: the header where the main menu is provided, the body area (the biggest part of the webpage where most of the content is given) for main material presentation, highlighted content, side menu with several hyperlinks leading to other connected web pages, and the footer with additional information about the web project such as careers, partners, contacts, cooperation, etc. This structure will be relevant for almost all web pages within the entire website. It should be noted that the functional parts such as the header, the footer, and the side menu are well operating in both languages.

The Ukrainian web page presents quite a clear manner of the material presentation: the body area contains the main material that is the article about the Mount Hoverla (*Гора Говерла – Hora Hoverla*) [9; 14] which is well-structured through headings, subheadings, even distribution of photos throughout the text. Important information is given on what tourists would need during their trip as well as information on prices, GPS coordinates; schemes of tourist routes are provided. The highlighted content area provides the address of the tourist destination as well as some useful links (where to book an excursion, find a hotel nearby, etc.). Additionally, the link to the map is available. The side menu is found when scrolling down the web page and sends the reader to other related web pages.

When comparing the English web page to its Ukrainian counterpart we have traced the following features:

First, the main material in the body area of the English web page does not correspond to the source material. The text is extremely abridged and laid out with no subheadings. Additionally, the text translation was taken from Google Translate, which is evidenced by a corresponding icon placed at the beginning of the text and a suggestion to rate the translation. This caused mistranslations, leading the tourists to Montenegro, instead of the Chornohora mountain range. There are numerous spelling mistakes with the word *Hoverla*, which is an accepted spelling for the mountain's name, being spelled as *Goverla*, *Goverlu*, *Goverly*, etc. It is felt that it is not a human-translated text, because the word order, verb forms, sentence composition as well as stylistics of the sentences do not comply with the rules of the English language. In addition, most of the text tells about a different mountain – Petros. (e.g. *Climbing the Petros available even experienced travelers*, or *The mountain Petros – 2,020 meters*). Little of the useful information is presented. Only one picture is placed after the headline. Some other pictures become available after clicking it, but this is not made obvious for the reader. Some of these pictures are doubled in the gallery down at the bottom of the web page. Secondly, the highlighted content area is only half-translated (the address is provided in Ukrainian and the map also operates in Ukrainian only) which is not very helpful for potential tourists. Thirdly, hyperlinks to some related pages are not localized but are given in Ukrainian or Russian. Therefore, most of the multimodal elements of the web page are not preserved during rendering it into English.

The second pair of the compared web pages (49 причин, чому не варто їхати в Україну – 49 reasons you shouldn't visit Ukraine) [8; 12] is a blog article published at the same IGoToWorld website. Its idea and structure are very interesting as it presents some stereotypes about Ukraine in the form of the text, each sentence describing a separate stereotype. Then, each sentence is followed by a picture that ruins the described stereotype, thus changing the meaning of the provocative headline into reasons why our country is worth visiting. Each photo is followed by the information about the source and the author of the photo as well as the place or object depicted (where applicable).

The comparison of Ukrainian and English web pages showed that the majority of the content is fully

rendered into English preserving all the multimodal elements, thus truly conveying the author's initial idea. The highlighted content provides information about the author of the blog and the date it was published. It is only half-translated, however, readers are not much influenced, since the main idea is placed in the body area of the web page. The side menu contains links to the last and most popular articles, some of them available in Ukrainian only. Conclusively, the main message of the article, created by its multimodal content is carefully rendered into English, however, part of the web page navigation might slow down for English-speaking tourists, because of the need to fish out some available information.

The third pair of the web pages from IGoToWorld website is also a blog article (19 місць, які необхідно

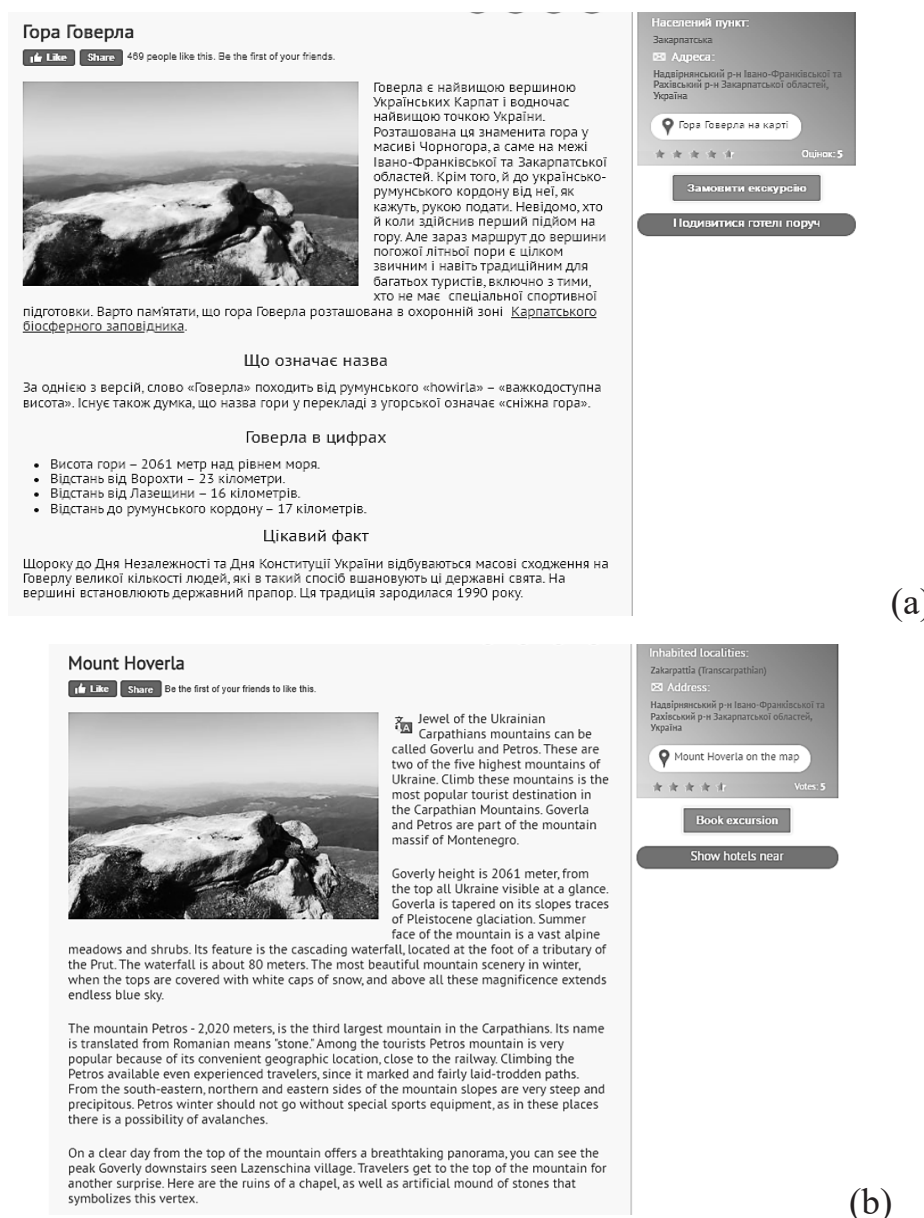


Figure 1. Ukrainian (a) and English (b) versions of a webpage “Mount Hoverla”



*відвідати у Львові – 19 places to visit in Lviv*) [7, 11]. It is an expanded list of places that might be equally attractive for those who come to this wonderful city for the first time as well as for those who have already visited it before. This article provides a fair amount of multimodal content for our research as it contains text, links, photos, etc. The material is presented in a convenient concise manner. Every location from the list serves as a subheading, followed by a short explanation on what the tourists would experience there, photos of the place, its address and best ways to get there, interesting facts, costs, opening hours, GPS coordinates, thus providing tourists with a wide range of requested information. Additionally,

the article contains a lot of links to the places nearby each of the locations from the list, that might present some interest for the readers. The comparison of both analyzed versions of the web page showed that the process of its localization included preserving all the multimodal elements including text, photos, text fonts, hyperlinks, and the general layout of the article, making it convenient for all the readers. The webpage is fully localized and its text is masterfully translated.

The fourth pair of web pages (*Кам'янець-Подільський. Жива фортеця – Kamianets-Podilskyi. The living fortress*) [10, 13] was taken from the Ukrainer project's website. The story presented tells about one of the popular tourist

7. Forget about castles. You won't find any. And even those that existed, have long been destroyed.



Photo source: zharii.kiev.ua. Photo: Oleg Zharii. On the photo: [Kamianets-Podilskyi Castle](#).

(a)

7. Про замки забудьте. Їх немає і ніколи не було. А навіть ті, що були, вже давно знесли.



Джерело фото: zharii.kiev.ua. Авто фото – Олег Жарій. На фото: [Кам'янець-Подільська фортеця](#).

(b)

Figure 2. Ukrainian (a) and English (b) versions of a webpage “49 reasons you shouldn't visit Ukraine”

attractions in Ukraine – Kamianets-Podilskyi fortress, as well as about great efforts paid by people to revive this place, give it some modern meaning, and involve communities in preserving this architectural and historic monument. The given web page operates in 7 languages (Ukrainian, English,

German, French, Spanish, Russian, and Polish). It has an appealing layout that makes it convenient to read. The text is typed in different fonts and font sizes, various kinds of typeface are used to emphasize certain parts of the story. The selection of pictures complements the text well, adding a special coloring

### Площа Ринок і Львівська ратуша

Найвідоміша площа Львова – площа Ринок. Розташована в центрі, в старій частині міста. Тому тут є на що подивитися, адже тутешні будиночки ще пам'ятають події минулих століть. Будувати за часів середньовіччя на площі Ринок мали право тільки представники знаті.

Перші згадки про центральну міську площу датуються далеким 13 століттям. Багато років вона була центром життя міста. Тут влаштовували культурні заходи, процесії, продавали на ринку овочі, фрукти і квіти, які вирощували місцеві жителі.



*Площа Ринок, Львів. Автор фото: Tetiana Smirnova iGotoWorld Photo Group.*

(a)

### Rynok Square and Lviv City Hall

Rynok Square is the most famous square of Lviv. It is located in the centre, in the old part of the city. There is a lot to see, because the local houses still remember the events of the past centuries. During the Middle Ages, only noblemen had the right to build on Rynok Square.

The first mention of the central city square dates back to the distant 13th century. For many centuries it has been the center of the city's life. Cultural events, processions were organized here, and vegetables, fruits and flowers grown by local residents were sold on the market.



*Rynok Square, Lviv. Author of the photo: Tetiana Smirnova iGotoWorld Photo Group.*

(b)

**Figure 3. Ukrainian (a) and English (b) versions of a webpage “19 places to visit in Lviv”**

to it. The pictures are evenly distributed through the text they illustrate.

All these multimodal elements are carefully preserved when rendering the web page into English. Up at the top of the web page, one can find an interesting 10-minute video, telling about the current history of the fortress. This film is done in Ukrainian with subtitles in English, German, Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian. It is worth mentioning that this video was purposefully subtitled, and no automatic subtitling was used. Therefore, multimodality is also preserved for the foreign audience, as a wide range of people can watch and enjoy this content. Down to the bottom of the page, the information about the team working on the project is provided, available also in English. The only part of the web page that is left in Ukrainian only is a vlog-style video at the very end of the material. In general, it is obvious that the project is initially created as a multilingual one and its authors want it to work for a multicultural audience. Therefore, the multimodality of its content is preserved through the working languages on a high level.

**Conclusion.** Multimodality is an inherent feature of most content nowadays, as text is rarely created in the isolation from non-verbal elements that belong to different modes of presenting the information. It is an important feature to be considered in the process of website localization, since all the contemporary digital content is multimodal, and different modes contribute different pieces of information that complement each other to convey some meaning. Four pairs of web pages were analyzed to serve as an example of how preserving or missing multimodal elements in the process of website localization influences the final localized product. In the first pair of web pages, little of the multimodality is preserved, which along with some mistranslations makes the web page not very helpful for foreign tourists. The second pair of web pages under analysis shows a purposeful effort on preserving the multimodality of the web page's body area and the main material located. However, some of the navigation links sending the reader to other articles are not translated, creating an annoying experience for visitors. The third and the fourth of the analyzed pairs of web pages show

Олег Храпан — гончар. В одній із кімнат фортеці він має свою майстерню, де проводить майстер-класи для дітей та дорослих і продає глиняні вироби. Він видає всі необхідні матеріали туристам і вимагає від них лише одного: прагнення створити щось нове та цікаве.

Oleg Khrapan is a potter. He has his own workshop in one of the rooms of the fortress, where he organises masterclasses for kids and adults and sells pottery. He provides all of the necessary materials to tourists and asks for one thing only: a desire to create something new and interesting.



Раніше майстерня Олега була розташована в каньйоні біля Руської брами, тобто теж у старому місті, але подалі від фортеці. Людей там завжди гуляє мало, і мало хто заходив на локацію. Майстер змусився її вирішив перебраться в фортецю.

Previously, Oleg's workshop was situated in the canyon next to Ruska Brama - another old settlement, but farther out from the fortress. Few people travel there, and hardly anybody would drop by the place. The craftsman got bored and decided to move to the fortress.

— В мене от зима — нема людей, я навіть мало працюю. Я прихожу, я можу поспати, можу булку півдня з чаєм їсти, музику слухати, читати. Тобто коли є люди, починається рух, хочеться щось робити, люди приходять, запитують, цікавляться, а ти розкажеш, майстер-класи проводиш, тоді хочеться щось робити, бо ти знаєш, що ти комусь потрібен.

— When it's winter, there's no one around, I hardly even work. I turn up, I can have a nap, spend half a day having tea and buns, listen to music, read. I mean, the action starts when there are people around. You want to do something. People visit, ask questions, show their interest, and you go on with a story, arrange classes. That's when you want to do your job, because you know that someone needs you.

Figure 4. Ukrainian and English versions of a webpage “Kamianets-Podilskyi. The living fortress”



the highest level of keeping the content multimodal, being enjoyable and attractive for prospective tourists. Multimodal elements of a tourist website offer a wider range of different experiences and relevant information to a prospective tourist than simple text usually does. In this respect, multimodality, as a harmonious combination of a story, told by a text, and images,

audio, and video materials that contribute to the variety of information presented plays an important role in making content and a website enjoyable and attractive for prospective tourists. Additionally, analysis has shown that keeping content multimodal is a conscious effort and its highest level is reached for the projects that were initially created for a multilingual audience.

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### Маняца М. С. РОЛЬ МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНОСТІ У ПЕРЕКЛАДІ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ТУРИСТИЧНИХ ВЕБ-САЙТІВ УКРАЇНСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ

У наш час туризм є однією з галузей, що швидко розвиваються, та постійно потребують якісного перекладу, щоб охопити багатокультурну аудиторію. Спектр пропонованих туристичних послуг часто змінюється та адаптується до нових умов функціонування. Однією з таких умов, яка набула ще більшого значення протягом останніх двох років, є швидкий розвиток цифрових та Інтернет-технологій, які перевели більшість створення та споживання контенту в онлайн-режим. З огляду на це, у цій статті розглянуто деякі питання локалізації українських туристичних сайтів англійською мовою. Англійська мова вибрана тут як цільова, оскільки саме вона зараз є *lingua franca*, яку розуміють і якою розмовляють у всьому світі. Отже, переклад будь-якої інформації англійською забезпечує найкраще її висвітлення та допомагає контенту досягти якомога ширшої аудиторії. Створення сучасного контенту характеризується широким залученням цифрових ресурсів, а також підсиленням тексту графікою, зображеннями, типами та розмірами шрифтів, аудіо- та відеоматеріалами тощо. Такі різні способи викладу об'єднуються у мультимодальному тексті для передачі інформації, значень та ідей. Тому в статті описано перехід створення туристичних веб-сайтів до повністю мультимодального контенту, з погляду перекладу коротко окреслено поняття мультимодальності, та обговорено її роль в локалізації українських туристичних сайтів англійською мовою. Також в цій статті зроблено спробу визначити, чи зазвичай мультимодальні елементи зберігаються чи відбувається їх втрата при локалізації туристичного сайту. Порівняння чотирьох пар веб-сторінок (українська та англійська версії) зроблено, щоб простежити подібність/відмінність у представленні контенту та показати, як збереження або втрата мультимодальних елементів при перекладі веб-сайту впливає на кінцевий продукт.

**Ключові слова:** туристичний веб-сайт, веб-сторінка, мультимодальність, переклад, локалізація.