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Embodied Stereotypes: A Linguocultural Analysis Of Non-Verbal Representations Of National Culture

Dr. Anya Petrova

Department of Slavic Semiotics, Humboldt University of Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Prof. James Caldwell

Centre for Intercultural Communication Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom

Abstract: Background: National stereotypes are powerful social constructs that significantly impact intercultural communication. While extensive research has focused on their verbal and conceptual dimensions, the systematic ways in which they are physically embodied and communicated non-verbally remain undertheorized. The field of linguoculturology provides a robust framework for investigating the deep integration of language, culture, and communication, yet a specific focus on the non-verbal codification of stereotypes is a notable gap.

Aims: This article aims to bridge this gap by analyzing how national stereotypes are represented and reinforced through non-verbal means. It seeks to show that stereotypes are not merely abstract beliefs but are actively performed and communicated through a culturally specific "bodily code" [2].

Methods: Drawing upon a theoretical framework that integrates ethno-psycho-linguistics [5] and linguoculturology [6, 7], this study employs a qualitative, multimodal discourse analysis. The analysis is performed on a corpus of video-recorded dialogic speech, focusing on the pragmatic features [8] of non-verbal cues.

Results: The analysis reveals a systemic correlation between specific non-verbal behaviors and prevalent national stereotypes. Findings indicate that culturally-defined "facial speech" [4] and gestural patterns function as key components of a coherent linguocultural

code [3] for representing national identity. These embodied cues are shown to pragmatically reinforce in-group cohesion and the "image of the enemy" [1] in intercultural dialogues.

Conclusion: The study concludes that national stereotypes are deeply embodied phenomena, systematically encoded and expressed through a shared, non-verbal bodily code. This indivisibility of stereotype, body, and culture has profound implications for theories of intercultural communication, highlighting the need to look beyond words to understand the persistence and power of national archetypes.

Keywords: Linguoculturology, National Stereotypes, Non-Verbal Communication, Bodily Code, Ethno-psycho-linguistics, Intercultural Communication, Facial Speech.

Introduction: 1.1. Background: The Pervasiveness of National Stereotypes in Intercultural Communication

National stereotypes are a ubiquitous and resilient feature of human social cognition. They function as cognitive shortcuts, simplified schemas that categorize and process information about entire populations, often based on nationality, ethnicity, or cultural affiliation. While these schemas can sometimes facilitate rapid social judgment, they are more frequently a source of prejudice, misunderstanding, and conflict in intercultural communication. The formation of stereotypes often culminates in the creation of a rigid "image of the enemy," a concept that defines an out-group in opposition to the in-group, thereby justifying hostility and intolerance [1]. Gasanov's work on the psychology of national intolerance highlights how these images are not merely individual biases but are often cultivated and sustained at a societal level, serving political and ideological functions. This process transforms complex, heterogeneous populations into monolithic, often negative, caricatures, creating significant barriers to genuine intercultural understanding.

In an increasingly globalized world, where interactions between people of different national backgrounds are constant, the influence of these stereotypes is more pronounced than ever. They operate not just at the level of explicit belief but also subtly shape expectations, attributions, and interpretations during communication. An innocuous gesture, a particular tone of voice, or a culturally specific conversational style can be filtered through the lens of a pre-existing

stereotype, potentially contributing to misinterpretations that range from minor faux pas to serious diplomatic incidents. Therefore, understanding the mechanisms through which stereotypes are communicated and perpetuated is a critical task for scholars of communication, linguistics, and cultural studies.

1.2. The Shift from Verbal to Embodied Cognition in Cultural Studies

Traditionally, the academic study of stereotypes has been dominated by a focus on their verbal and conceptual content. Research has extensively documented the adjectives, narratives, and jokes used to describe national groups, analyzing their linguistic structure and semantic content. While this line of inquiry has been invaluable, it presents an incomplete picture. It largely overlooks the profound insight from embodied cognition: that human understanding, culture, and communication are fundamentally grounded in physical, bodily experience. Culture is not an abstract set of ideas floating in a disembodied ether; it is lived, performed, and communicated through the body.

This perspective prompts a necessary shift in the study of stereotypes—from what is said to what is done. The "bodily code of Russian culture," as conceptualized by Gudkov and Kovshova, provides a powerful example of this paradigm [2]. Their work suggests that culture is inscribed upon the body, dictating postures, gestures, and uses of space that are deeply meaningful within a specific cultural context. These bodily codes are not random but form a semiotic system that communicates identity, values, and social relations. It is within this embodied, non-verbal dimension that stereotypes find one of their most powerful and insidious modes of expression. To truly understand how stereotypes function, we must move beyond the lexicon and into the realm of the physical, guided by the principles of ethno-psycho-linguistics and linguoculturology [5, 6]. These fields compel us to examine communication as a holistic act where the verbal and the non-verbal are inextricably intertwined.

1.3. Defining the Linguocultural Framework

Linguoculturology emerges as the central theoretical framework for this investigation. Defined as the study of the manifold manifestations of culture as reflected and fixed in language [7], linguoculturology posits that language and culture are not separate domains but are

mutually constitutive. Language does not merely describe a pre-existing cultural reality; it actively shapes and creates it. Maslova emphasizes that linguoculturology focuses on the "cultural semantics" of linguistic units, exploring how words, phrases, and grammatical structures are saturated with cultural memory, values, and worldviews [6].

This framework extends beyond verbal language to encompass all forms of symbolic communication. A crucial concept within this field is the "linguocultural code," which refers to the grid of cultural meanings that speakers use to interpret the world and produce meaningful communication [3]. According to Iskhakova, these codes are what allow members of a cultural community to understand not just the literal meaning of an utterance but its deeper cultural resonance, its connotations, and its appropriate use in social contexts. This article extends the concept of the linguocultural code to explicitly include the non-verbal. We argue that the body itself is a primary carrier of this code, where gestures, facial expressions, and proxemics function as "text" that can be read and interpreted according to shared cultural conventions. Stereotypes, in this view, are not just mental representations but are actively encoded and decoded through this embodied linguocultural system.

1.4. Statement of the Problem and Literature Gap

The existing body of literature has firmly established the content and social consequences of national stereotypes [1]. It has also, in parallel, developed sophisticated theories for understanding culture's relationship with language [5, 6, 7]. However, a significant gap persists at the intersection of these domains. There is a lack of integrated research that systematically connects abstract, cognitively-held national stereotypes to the concrete, observable, and patterned non-verbal behaviors that express them. While scholars have analyzed "facial speech" [4] or the pragmatic function of non-verbal cues in dialogue [8], these analyses are often not explicitly linked to the broader systems of stereotyping that they may reinforce.

In essence, we know what stereotypes are, but we have a far less developed understanding of the systematic, non-verbal how of their communication. This article addresses this gap by positing that the non-verbal expression of stereotypes is not a collection of random, isolated behaviors but appears to constitute a coherent and structured system. This system, the embodied dimension of the linguocultural code, seems to be a primary mechanism through which

stereotypical representations of national culture are performed, recognized, and perpetuated in real-time interaction.

1.5. Research Questions and Objectives

This study is guided by a central research question: How are national stereotypes non-verbally encoded and represented through the "bodily code" of a specific culture?

To answer this overarching question, the following objectives have been established:

1. To identify and categorize specific, recurring non-verbal behaviors (kinesic, oculesic, proxemic) that are demonstrably associated with prevalent stereotypes of selected national cultures.
2. To analyze the pragmatic function of these non-verbal behaviors in dialogic speech, exploring how they are used to manage interactional dynamics and reinforce stereotypical perceptions [8].
3. To synthesize these findings into a coherent model that explains how a culture's "bodily code" [2] serves as a primary vehicle for representing and communicating stereotyped versions of national identity.

1.6. Structure of the Article

Following this introduction, the article proceeds in four main parts. The Methods section outlines the theoretical framework grounded in ethno-psycho-linguistics and details the multimodal discourse analysis approach used. The Results section presents a qualitative analysis of the corpus, identifying and interpreting key non-verbal patterns associated with national stereotypes. The Discussion section synthesizes these findings, considering their theoretical implications for linguoculturology, their practical implications for intercultural communication, and the limitations of the study. Finally, the Conclusion summarizes the central arguments and reiterates the importance of an embodied perspective in the study of cultural representation.

METHODS

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in a synthesized theoretical framework that combines the principles of Russian ethno-psycho-linguistics with the broader field of linguoculturology. Ethno-psycho-linguistics, as

articulated by Krasnykh, investigates the interplay between language, consciousness, and culture, focusing on how national-cultural worldviews are reflected in communicative behavior [5]. A central tenet of this approach is that communication is never a purely linguistic event; it is always a psycho-cultural one, deeply embedded in the collective consciousness of a people. This perspective provides the necessary lens to view non-verbal behaviors not as mere physiological reflexes but as culturally meaningful acts laden with psychological significance.

This is complemented by the foundational concepts of linguoculturology, which provides the tools to analyze the systematic nature of these acts. By treating culture as a semiotic system, linguoculturology allows us to move beyond anecdotal observations to identify patterned and rule-governed behaviors [6, 7]. Within this framework, we operationalize two key concepts as our primary analytical lenses:

- **The Bodily Code:** Borrowed from Gudkov and Kovshova, this concept refers to the culturally-specific system of meanings associated with the body, its parts, its postures, and its movements [2]. It is the "grammar" of non-verbal communication within a culture.
- **Facial Speech (Govor lica):** As described by Kostić, this concept treats the face not as a passive display of emotion but as an active articulator of meaning, capable of producing complex "utterances" through nuanced muscle movements [4].

By integrating these concepts, our framework allows us to analyze non-verbal communication as a form of cultural discourse that is both psychologically resonant and systematically structured.

2.2. Analytical Approach

A qualitative, multimodal discourse analysis was selected as the most appropriate analytical approach for this study. This method is uniquely suited to investigating how meaning is constructed through the interplay of multiple semiotic modes—in this case, verbal language, gesture, facial expression, gaze, and the use of space. Unlike purely linguistic analysis, which would bracket out non-verbal phenomena, multimodal analysis treats all communicative modes as integral to the meaning-making process. The analysis is interpretive and focused on understanding the function of non-verbal behaviors within their specific interactional and cultural contexts. The goal is not to quantify the frequency of behaviors but to qualitatively describe their form, function, and contribution to the communication of stereotypical meaning.

2.3. Corpus and Data Collection

The corpus for this study consists of a curated collection of 50 hours of high-resolution video recordings. The data were sourced from publicly available archives of televised political debates, diplomatic meetings, and in-depth interviews featuring prominent Russian and Serbian public figures interacting with counterparts from other cultural backgrounds (predominantly Western European and North American). This corpus was selected for several reasons:

1. **High-Stakes Communication:** Political and diplomatic contexts are arenas where national identity is often explicitly performed and contested, making them rich sites for observing the communication of cultural archetypes.
2. **Intercultural Contrast:** The intercultural nature of the dialogues provides a natural context for the emergence and reinforcement of stereotypes, as participants navigate differing communicative norms.
3. **Visual Clarity:** The professional quality of the recordings ensures high fidelity in the visual data, allowing for detailed analysis of subtle facial expressions and gestures.
4. **Cultural Relevance:** The choice of Russian and Serbian contexts aligns with the cultural focus of much of the foundational literature cited in our theoretical framework [1, 2, 4, 5].

Segments for close analysis were selected based on moments of visible communicative friction, overt displays of emotion, or explicit discussion of national or cultural identity.

2.4. Coding and Annotation Scheme

A detailed coding and annotation scheme was developed to systematically analyze the selected video segments. The scheme was derived from the theoretical framework and refined through an initial pilot analysis of the data. Each segment was transcribed, capturing not only the verbal content but also annotating it with time-stamped descriptions of non-verbal behaviors. The primary coding categories included:

- **Kinesics (Body Movement):**
 - **Gesture Type:** Categorized into illustrators (accompanying speech), emblems (direct verbal translation), and regulators (managing interaction).
 - **Postural Configuration:** Openness/closedness of posture, bodily orientation, and shifts in stance.

- Oculistics and Facial Expression (Facial Speech):

- Gaze Direction: Direct eye contact, gaze aversion, mutual gaze.

- Facial Action Units: Based on the "facial speech" concept [4], coding for specific muscle movements (e.g., brow furrow, lip corner pull, eyelid tightening) and their combination into meaningful expressions.

- Proxemics (Use of Space):

- Interpersonal Distance: Measurement of space between interactants.

- Territoriality: Use of objects and space to claim territory (e.g., leaning over a table).

- Pragmatic Function:

- Each coded non-verbal behavior was assigned a pragmatic function within the dialogic context, drawing on Xasanova's work on non-verbal means in dialogic speech [8]. Functions included emphasis, contradiction, turn-taking cues, and expressions of affiliation or disaffiliation.

The annotation process was conducted by two researchers independently, and any discrepancies were resolved through discussion to ensure inter-coder reliability.

RESULTS

The multimodal analysis of the corpus revealed systematic and recurring patterns of non-verbal behavior that align with and appear to reinforce common stereotypes of Russian and Serbian national cultures. These behaviors are not isolated tics but function as integrated components of a coherent "bodily code" [2], performing specific pragmatic work within intercultural dialogues. This section presents the key findings, organized by the primary non-verbal codes identified.

3.1. The Kinesic Code: Gestural Stereotypes of National Identity

A significant finding was the patterned use of specific gestures that appeared to perform stereotypes of Russian assertiveness and resolve. A frequently observed behavior among Russian speakers, particularly in moments of disagreement or emphasis, was the "downward palm chop"—a sharp, vertical motion with a flat hand, often timed precisely with a stressed syllable. In the context of the dialogue, this gesture pragmatically functioned to signal finality, dismiss a counter-argument, or assert an

incontrovertible point. This kinesic act serves as an embodied metaphor for cutting off debate, physically enacting a stereotype of Russian intransigence and directness.

Another key pattern was the minimal use of placating or open-palmed "illustrator" gestures that often characterize Western conversational styles. Instead, gestures were typically more contained, precise, and often symmetrical (using both hands in mirrored movements). This gestural economy contributes to an overall impression of gravitas and seriousness, which can be interpreted through a stereotypical lens as coldness or unfriendliness. This aligns with the concept of a distinct cultural "bodily code" [2], where the gestural repertoire itself carries deep-seated cultural values—in this case, perhaps valuing stoicism and control over overt expressiveness.

3.2. The Facial Code: "Facial Speech" and the Expression of Cultural Archetypes

The analysis of facial expressions provided strong support for the concept of "facial speech" [4], where the face operates as an active articulator of culturally-specific meaning beyond the universal emotions. A predominant feature observed in Russian speakers was the "neutral face at rest," characterized by a lack of smiling when not actively speaking or listening to a specific, engaging point. In intercultural contexts with North American counterparts, who often maintain a slight, continuous smile as a marker of social engagement, this Russian facial neutrality was often a point of communicative friction. The lack of a smile was not indicative of displeasure but functioned as a baseline of seriousness and attentiveness. However, it was frequently interpreted as disapproval or unfriendliness, thereby reinforcing the stereotype of the "stern Russian."

In contrast, Serbian speakers in the corpus often employed a more dynamic facial repertoire, particularly involving the eyebrows and forehead. A common pattern was the rapid "eyebrow flash" used not as a greeting (its typical function in many Western cultures) but as a marker of emphasis or to signal a rhetorical question. This highly mobile facial activity, combined with intense and direct eye contact, aligns with stereotypes of Serbian passion and emotional intensity. Kostić's framework allows us to read these facial configurations not as mere emotional leakage but as deliberate "facial utterances" [4] that are central to the pragmatic force of the verbal message. For an outsider, this intensity can be misread as aggression, another instance of the bodily code activating a pre-existing

national stereotype.

3.3. The Pragmatics of Non-Verbal Stereotyping in Dialogic Contexts

The pragmatic function of these non-verbal behaviors was crucial in reinforcing in-group/out-group dynamics. This was particularly evident in the use of gaze and proxemics. Russian speakers frequently utilized prolonged, direct, and unblinking eye contact during moments of confrontation. Pragmatically, this functions as a dominance display, a non-verbal challenge to the interlocutor's position [8]. While this may be a standard conversational norm within their own culture, in an intercultural setting, it was often met with gaze aversion from their counterparts, who interpreted it as overly aggressive. This dynamic is associated with a non-verbal feedback loop: the direct gaze enacts a stereotype of assertiveness, which prompts the interlocutor to react with discomfort, which in turn may be interpreted by the Russian speaker as weakness, confirming the initial power dynamic. This process shows how non-verbal means are central to constructing what Gasanov calls the "image of the enemy" on a micro-interactional level [1].

Furthermore, proxemic behaviors, such as leaning forward across a table or minimizing interpersonal distance when making a point, were used to assert presence and control the conversational space. These acts of subtle territoriality served a clear pragmatic function: to add weight and urgency to the verbal message [8]. However, they were also physical manifestations of stereotypes related to being "overbearing" or "invasive," demonstrating how deeply ingrained cultural norms about personal space can trigger negative stereotypical attributions.

3.4. Integrating the Codes: A Holistic View of the Embodied Stereotype

The most powerful expressions of stereotypes occurred when these different codes were integrated into a single, cohesive performance. For instance, in one analyzed segment, a Russian diplomat refutes a point made by a journalist. He does so by simultaneously:

1. Leaning forward into the journalist's space (Proxemics).
2. Making a sharp, downward "palm chop" gesture (Kinesics).

3. Maintaining intense, unblinking eye contact (Oculistics).

4. Keeping a completely neutral, unsmiling facial expression ("Facial Speech").

5. Delivering his verbal refutation in a monotone voice.

No single one of these behaviors is sufficient to convey the full force of the stereotype. However, their combination results in a powerful, multimodal "text" that performs the archetype of the unyielding, formidable Russian official. This holistic performance is an example of the linguocultural code [3, 7] in action, where the body becomes the primary medium for communicating a complex, stereotyped national identity. It is a fully embodied argument, where the non-verbal channels carry as much, if not more, of the stereotypical meaning than the words themselves.

3.5. A Micro-Analysis of a Contested Interaction: The 'Gas Transit' Negotiation

To demonstrate in granular detail how kinesic, facial, and pragmatic codes integrate to perform and reinforce national stereotypes, this section presents a micro-analysis of a single, 90-second segment from the corpus. The chosen segment is from a televised panel discussion on energy security, featuring a senior Russian energy official, here anonymized as "Mr. Volkov," and an experienced British journalist, "Mr. Davies." The interaction is a moment of heightened tension, where Davies directly challenges the reliability of Russian gas supplies to Europe, and Volkov provides a refutation.

This micro-analysis deconstructs the interaction into three phases: 1) The Initial Challenge, 2) The Embodied Refutation, and 3) The Interactional Aftermath. By examining the interplay of verbal and non-verbal behaviors on a second-by-second basis, we can observe the "linguocultural code" [3] in action, witnessing how abstract stereotypes of the "unflinching, powerful Russian" and the "inquisitive, persistent Westerner" are not merely represented but are actively and systematically enacted. This deep dive provides a powerful illustration of the theoretical concepts—the "bodily code" [2], "facial speech" [4], and the pragmatics of non-verbal dialogue [8]—at the core of this paper.

Phase 1: The Initial Challenge (Segment 0:00-0:45)

The segment begins with the moderator turning to Mr. Davies, who immediately directs a pointed question to Mr. Volkov.

- Transcript (0:05-0:30):

- Davies: "Mr. Volkov, the core of the issue for your European partners isn't the volume of gas, it's the issue of reliability. There's a perception, a very strong one, that the supply can be, and has been, used as a tool of political leverage. How can you guarantee that the flow of gas tomorrow won't be subject to the political winds blowing from Moscow? It's a question of trust, isn't it?"

Davies's verbal challenge is direct and uses loaded terms ("political leverage," "political winds"). His non-verbal performance is equally significant. Throughout his question, he leans forward, elbows on the table, creating a sense of intrusion into Volkov's personal space. His hands are active, using open-palm "illustrator" gestures that seem to invite a response while simultaneously emphasizing his points. His gaze is locked on Volkov, persistent and unflinching, a common Anglo-American conversational norm for signaling sincerity and demanding attention. From a Western perspective, his performance is a textbook example of robust, investigative journalism.

Mr. Volkov's reaction to this challenge is the first crucial piece of non-verbal data. His response begins not with words, but with a profound and deliberate silence that lasts a full eight seconds.

- Analysis of Volkov's Initial Non-Verbals (0:31-0:45):

- The Pragmatics of Silence: In a fast-paced media setting, this extended pause is a powerful pragmatic act [8]. It fundamentally rejects the conversational rhythm established by Davies. It non-verbally communicates that the question is not a simple query to be answered quickly but a serious accusation that requires a composed, authoritative response. The silence itself appears to wrest control of the interactional floor, forcing everyone—the journalist, the panel, the audience—to wait for Volkov. It is a performance of gravitas and an implicit dismissal of the journalist's sense of urgency.

- The Shift in "Facial Speech": During this pause, Volkov's face becomes a canvas of subtle but significant meaning. Initially holding a neutral, listening expression, his facial muscles shift. There is a visible tightening of the masseter muscles (the jaw), and his eyelids narrow slightly, a movement that is distinct from a squint of confusion. Within the framework of "facial speech" [4], this is not an emotional leakage of anger but a controlled "utterance" of intense concentration and seriousness. It signals a transition from a passive to an active, formidable stance, preparing a rebuttal. The absence of any emotive expression like a frown or a sneer is key; the expression

is one of pure, cold focus, which in itself begins to enact the stereotype of the calculating and unemotional Russian official.

- Reconfiguring the "Bodily Code": The silence is accompanied by a slow, almost imperceptible shift in posture. Volkov, who had been slightly slouched, deliberately straightens his spine until he is sitting perfectly erect. He leans back slightly, subtly reclaiming the space Davies's forward lean had encroached upon. Simultaneously, his hands, which had been resting apart on the table, come together and clasp firmly in front of him. This sequence of movements is a classic example of the "bodily code" [2] being used to signal a change in status. The posture shifts from relaxed to guarded, from open to closed. This "closed" configuration is a non-verbal armor, a physical manifestation of impenetrability that serves as a prelude to his verbal defense. He has, without speaking a word, established a non-verbal perimeter.

Phase 2: The Embodied Refutation (Segment 0:46-1:15)

After establishing control through silence and posture, Mr. Volkov begins his verbal reply. His speech is measured, formal, and devoid of emotive language.

- Transcript (0:46-1:15):

- Volkov: "The Russian Federation has always fulfilled, and will continue to fulfill, all of its contractual obligations. The transit of gas is a commercial matter, governed by legally binding agreements. These agreements are transparent. The concept of 'political leverage' is an external narrative. We operate based on the paragraphs of the signed documents."

The verbal content is a direct refutation, but the true force of his argument is carried by its multimodal delivery. His body and face are not accompanying his words; they are an integral part of the argument itself.

- Analysis of Volkov's Multimodal Performance:

- Verbal-Kinesic Synchrony: Volkov's clasped hands remain largely still, a stark contrast to Davies's active gesticulation. The stillness is a performance of control and economy of motion, a key feature of the "bodily code" being enacted [2]. However, at two key moments, he employs a single, precise gesture. When he says the words "contractual obligations," his clasped hands perform a sharp, downward rap on the table. When he says "signed documents," the gesture is repeated. This is not an illustrative gesture meant to paint a picture; it is an emphatic beat that functions like a non-verbal full stop. It embodies the solidity and unchangeable nature of the contracts he refers to. It is a gesture of finality, pragmatically used to crush any

ambiguity [8].

- The Strategic Use of Gaze: Throughout his statement, Volkov's gaze is masterful. He begins by looking directly at Davies, a direct acknowledgment of the question. However, after the first sentence, his gaze breaks from the journalist and sweeps slowly across the other panelists before settling directly into the main television camera. This is a crucial pragmatic shift. He is no longer in a dialogue with Davies; he is making a public proclamation. By addressing the camera, he elevates his audience from the journalist in front of him to the nations of Europe. This act non-verbally marginalizes Davies, recasting him from an interlocutor to a mere prompt for a much grander statement. This use of gaze is a powerful tool for controlling the narrative and asserting a higher level of authority.

- The "Facial Speech" of Authority: Volkov's facial expression remains fixed in the state of controlled seriousness he established during the initial pause. There is no smile, no frown, no raising of eyebrows. According to Kostić's theory of "facial speech" [4], this sustained neutrality is a powerful utterance in itself. In this context, it communicates unwavering resolve and absolute confidence. It suggests that the topic is not open for emotional debate or negotiation; it is a matter of fact. This facial performance is perhaps the single most potent element in constructing the stereotype. For an audience accustomed to Western norms of affective display—where a smile signals agreeableness and a frown signals concern—Volkov's expression can be easily misread through a stereotypical filter as cold, arrogant, or dismissive, even as it projects strength and reliability to a domestic audience. It is a culturally coded performance that invites stereotypical interpretation.

- Holistic Embodiment: The verbal message (reliability) and the non-verbal performance (controlled, solid, unmovable) are in perfect synchrony. He is not just saying that Russia is a reliable partner; his entire body is performing a specific, culturally coded version of reliability—one based on stoic strength and immutable principle, rather than affable cooperation. This is the linguocultural code [3, 7] operating at its most potent, where the body validates the words, and together they construct a powerful, stereotyped image of national character.

Phase 3: The Interactional Aftermath (Segment 1:16-1:30)

The final phase of the segment solidifies Volkov's communicative victory and cements the stereotypical performance.

- Transcript (1:16-1:25):

- Davies: "But if I may, the contracts themselves have been disputed in the past... that's the core of the trust issue..."

- Volkov: (Holds up a single finger, signaling 'stop', without looking at Davies. He then turns to the moderator).

- Analysis of the Concluding Acts:

- Davies's attempt to interject is immediately curtailed by Volkov's non-verbal blocking. The gesture of raising a single finger is a universally understood regulator, but its execution here—slow, deliberate, and without making eye contact with Davies—is pragmatically dismissive [8]. It is the act of a superior silencing a subordinate.

- Having silenced Davies, Volkov performs his final, and perhaps most telling, non-verbal act. He concludes his statement to the camera, gives a single, slow, and final nod, and then calmly reaches for his glass of water. He takes a slow sip, his posture remaining erect but his focus now entirely removed from the debate. This simple act of drinking water is a masterstroke of non-verbal communication. It pragmatically signals, "I have said all that needs to be said. This matter is closed." It is an act of profound closure and self-possession.

This final sequence is crucial for reinforcing the stereotype. The calm, deliberate sip of water in the face of a persistent challenge is the ultimate performance of being unflappable and in total control. It can be interpreted as arrogance or as unshakeable confidence, but in either case, it completes the picture of a formidable, implacable figure who operates entirely on his own terms. This act of closure appears to solidify the stereotype and can be seen as a micro-performance that resonates with the broader "image of the enemy"—someone who is implacable and operates by their own rules [1].

In conclusion, this 90-second interaction serves as a dense, rich text. The national stereotype of the unyielding Russian official is not merely a prejudice held by the audience; it is actively and skillfully constructed in real-time through an integrated suite of non-verbal behaviors. The strategic use of silence, the controlled "facial speech," the minimalist yet powerful "bodily code," and the masterful control of pragmatic cues all combine to create a coherent and compelling performance of a specific national identity. It is a clear indication that to understand stereotypes, one must

look beyond words and learn to read the complex grammar of the body.

DISCUSSION

4.1. Interpretation of Findings: The Systematic Nature of Embodied Stereotypes

The results of this study strongly suggest that the non-verbal expression of national stereotypes is not a haphazard or idiosyncratic phenomenon. Instead, it appears to be a systematic, patterned, and culturally-ingrained process. The kinesic, facial, and proxemic behaviors identified in the corpus are not random; they form a coherent repertoire—a "bodily code" [2]—that is deployed with pragmatic precision in intercultural dialogue. This system functions as a powerful, often unconscious, mechanism for performing and reinforcing cultural identity as understood through the lens of stereotypes.

The findings challenge a view of stereotypes as purely cognitive or linguistic entities. They are, in fact, embodied phenomena. The "stern Russian" is not just an idea; it is performed through a neutral facial expression, contained gestures, and direct gaze. The "passionate Serb" is enacted through dynamic facial speech and intense eye contact. This perspective aligns with the core principles of ethno-psycho-linguistics, which posits a deep connection between a nation's collective psychology, its cultural worldview, and its communicative practices [5]. The bodily code is, in this sense, the physical manifestation of the national "ethos." The consistency of these patterns across different speakers from the same cultural background suggests that these are not individual styles but shared, learned communicative norms that have become fused with stereotypical representations of the group.

4.2. Theoretical Implications: Advancing the Linguocultural Model

These findings have significant theoretical implications, particularly for the field of linguoculturology. Much of the foundational work in this area has focused on the cultural semantics embedded within the lexicon and grammar of verbal language [6, 7]. This study expands upon that work by providing empirical grounding for the inclusion of the non-verbal, embodied dimension within the concept of the "linguocultural code" [3]. Our analysis suggests that this code is inherently multimodal and that to understand its full power, we must analyze the "texts" produced by the body with the same rigor we apply to

verbal texts.

Specifically, this research enriches the linguocultural model in two ways. First, it operationalizes concepts like "bodily code" [2] and "facial speech" [4] as concrete, analyzable components of a broader cultural semiotic system. It moves them from being descriptive metaphors to being analytical tools. Second, it explicitly connects these non-verbal systems to the social-psychological phenomenon of stereotyping, drawing a clear line from Gasanov's "image of the enemy" [1] to the micro-behaviors that enact it in dialogue. This integration provides a more holistic and ecologically valid model of how culture is communicated and contested in real-world interaction. It argues that any study of cultural representation that ignores the body is missing the primary site where culture is made visible.

4.3. Practical Implications for Intercultural Communication

Beyond its theoretical contributions, this research has profound practical implications. Misunderstandings in intercultural communication are often attributed to language barriers or differences in values, but our findings suggest that conflicting bodily codes can be a major, and often overlooked, source of friction. When a behavior rooted in one culture's norms of politeness (e.g., a neutral, attentive face) is interpreted through another culture's stereotypical lens (e.g., as coldness and hostility), the potential for conflict is immense.

Therefore, this work can inform training programs in diplomacy, international business, and education.

- **Intercultural Training:** Rather than simply teaching lists of "dos and don'ts," training can focus on developing "multimodal literacy"—the ability to recognize and interpret different cultural bodily codes without resorting to stereotype. Trainees can be shown video examples and taught to distinguish between idiosyncratic behavior and patterned cultural norms.

- **Media and Journalism:** Journalists and media professionals can develop a more nuanced understanding of how their own non-verbal cues, and those of their interviewees, can shape a narrative and potentially reinforce harmful stereotypes.

- **Conflict Resolution:** Mediators working across cultural divides can be trained to identify moments where non-verbal miscommunication is escalating a conflict, allowing them to intervene and reframe the interaction for the participants.

Ultimately, making these unconscious bodily codes conscious is the first step toward mitigating their potential for negative stereotypical attribution.

4.4. Limitations of the Study

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. First, the analytical approach is qualitative and interpretive. While we have sought to ensure rigor through a systematic coding scheme, the interpretation of non-verbal behavior is inherently subjective and context-dependent. Second, the corpus, while rich, is limited to a specific genre of communication (public political discourse) and two primary cultural groups (Russian and Serbian). The behaviors observed in these high-stakes contexts may not be representative of everyday, informal interactions. The findings, therefore, should not be generalized to all members of these cultures or to all communicative situations.

Furthermore, there is a risk of circularity in this type of research: of seeking out behaviors that confirm pre-existing stereotypes. We have attempted to mitigate this by focusing on the pragmatic function of the behaviors within the dialogue [8], rather than simply labeling them. Finally, the study does not account for the role of individual personality, which undoubtedly interacts with cultural norms to produce unique communicative styles.

4.5. Directions for Future Research

These limitations point toward several fruitful avenues for future research.

- **Cross-Cultural Comparison:** Expanding the analysis to a wider range of cultural groups, particularly from non-European backgrounds, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity of bodily codes.
- **Varied Contexts:** Future studies should examine different communicative contexts, such as business negotiations, classroom interactions, and informal social gatherings, to explore how the performance of stereotypes varies by situation.
- **Reception Studies:** A crucial next step is to investigate the reception side of the equation. Experimental studies could be designed to test how individuals from different cultural backgrounds actually interpret the specific non-verbal cues identified in this research.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Research that tracks individuals' non-verbal behavior as they acculturate to a new environment could provide insights into the plasticity and learning of new bodily codes.

By pursuing these avenues, a more complete and nuanced picture of the role of the body in communicating culture and stereotype can be developed.

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