

# 2B Lost in translation

GRAMMAR | reporting

VOCABULARY | summarising verbs; multi-word verbs for reporting

PRONUNCIATION | using intonation to show contrasting opinions

## VOCABULARY

### summarising verbs

#### 1 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 In what situations might people need a translator or an interpreter?
- 2 What do you think is meant by the phrase 'lost in translation'? Give some examples.

#### 2A Read the summary of a TV programme about translation. What challenges to effective translation are mentioned?

A fascinating programme yesterday evening **raised** the issues involved in translating, whether it be simultaneous interpretation for speakers or of the written word. One contributor to the programme **voiced** a concern that the intonation of an original utterance cannot be translated, which can open the door to misunderstanding. Ron Davis, a poet, **echoed** this point and was also insistent that certain types of writing, such as poetry, simply cannot be translated. According to Davis, whenever you 'translate' a poem from one language to another, you end up with two poems, because a poem is created through words, sound, rhythm and visuals. He **illustrated** his point by referring to poems that use line length to help impart meaning. Another guest, Anna Parton, a linguist, **called for** all translators to have a real awareness of the importance of cultural differences when translating. She **acknowledged** the difficulties that translators face and **accepted** that these may never be completely overcome. She **maintained** that it is often nearly impossible to find equivalent translations for words that express shades of meaning or concepts that differ from one culture to another. She **cited** the fact that the Irish language has thirty-two different words for the English word 'field', and **pondered** the difficulty of expressing all the feelings contained in the one Portuguese word 'saudade' – longing, nostalgia, hope, melancholy and emptiness. She went on to **question** whether training courses for translators and interpreters focus enough on this aspect of this specialised work. Viewers' posts following the programme **commented** on the valuable insights the programme offered.

#### B Work in pairs. Match the infinitive form of the verbs in bold in the summary in Ex 2A with their definitions 1–12.

- 1 express an opinion or attitude .....
- 2 agree with a statement .....
- 3 give something as an example .....
- 4 repeat another point or opinion .....
- 5 ask or wonder .....
- 6 ask for action .....
- 7 admit the existence of .....
- 8 express a firm belief .....
- 9 start to talk about a topic .....
- 10 clarify with an example .....
- 11 think carefully .....
- 12 give a reaction to something .....

#### C Choose the correct summarising verbs to complete the report.

#### Dubbing or subtitles: Which is best?

In the discussion a student <sup>1</sup>**raised** / **commented** the issue of dubbing in films and mentioned how disjointed this can make a film feel.



Another student <sup>2</sup>**echoed** / **illustrated** this concern, saying that her preference is always for subtitling. A third student <sup>3</sup>**voiced** / **accepted** that this reflected the views of most students but <sup>4</sup>**called for** / **questioned** the accuracy of subtitling and <sup>5</sup>**maintained** / **cited** that it often took viewers' attention away from the main action on the screen. Some students <sup>6</sup>**wondered** / **pondered** the degree of concentration required to follow subtitles, and one <sup>7</sup>**explained** / **illustrated** the point by mentioning falling asleep while watching a subtitled film the previous week.

#### D Work in pairs. Discuss the title of the report in Ex 2C. Then summarise your ideas using the alternative verbs not used in Ex 2C.

#### E Learn and practise. Go to the Vocabulary Bank.

▶ page 137 **VOCABULARY BANK** multi-word verbs for reporting

## LISTENING

- 3 A** You are going to listen to a radio interview in which an interpreter is talking about simultaneous interpreting at international conferences. What problems might he mention?
- B**  **2.02** | Listen to the interview and check if any of your ideas in Ex 3A are mentioned.
- C**  **2.02** | Listen again and complete the sentences in your own words.
- 1 Alan begins by describing the source of most problems for interpreters as being a lack .....
  - 2 According to Alan, the volume levels of the microphones mean that they are appropriate .....
  - 3 Alan mentions a high-powered professor to illustrate .....
  - 4 Alan prefers to summarise fast-paced speech rather .....
  - 5 He believes that ideally ..... However, it isn't always possible to do this.
  - 6 He finishes by adding that his habit of predicting a speaker's thoughts and words also affects .....
- D** Complete the summaries of the interview with the correct form of verbs you found in Ex 2B. There may be more than one alternative.
- 1 Alan ..... whether speakers ever consider the interpreters.
  - 2 He ..... concerns for the health of the interpreters and ..... education for the speakers.
  - 3 He ..... one point by mentioning a particular incident.
  - 4 He ..... that there is no point in asking speakers to slow down and ..... that there will inevitably be cultural differences.
  - 5 He ..... the issue of speakers using slang and ..... his earlier point that speakers need to be educated.
  - 6 He ..... that most problems are fixable.
- 4** Work in pairs and discuss the questions.
- 1 Would you like to be a translator or an interpreter? Why/Why not?
  - 2 What phrases and topics in your language or culture would be difficult to convey in English?



## GRAMMAR

## reporting

- 5 A** Match the examples (1–4) from the summary in Ex 2A with the advice (a–d) on how to add variety to reporting.

- 1 He was insistent that certain types of writing, such as poetry, simply cannot be translated.
  - 2 According to Davis, whenever you 'translate' a poem from one language to another, you end up with two poems.
  - 3 She pondered the difficulty of expressing all the feelings contained in the one Portuguese word 'saudade'.
  - 4 She maintained that it is often nearly impossible to find equivalent translations for words that express shades of meaning or concepts that differ from one culture to another.
- a use a range of summarising verbs that carry the main meaning of the statement  
b use adjectives instead of a reporting verb  
c use nouns rather than clauses to follow the reporting verb  
d use phrases to start the sentence

- B** Rewrite the statements in reported speech using the words given.

- 1 'There's no way that can be translated,' said Sarah.  
Sarah was insistent .....
- 2 'Translating can be very problematic,' said John, and gave examples.  
John pointed out that .....
- 3 'It's a really enjoyable job, in spite of the difficulties,' said Maire.  
Maire maintained .....
- 4 'The variety of challenges makes the job interesting,' said David.  
According .....

- C** Report the statements in as many ways as you can. Then compare your reactions to the statements with a partner.

- 1 The difference between interpreting and translating is interesting, but I would think that they require the same skills.
- 2 For me, it's the translating of certain cultural concepts that is tricky.
- 3 I agree completely and I think the fact that English has so many words for different types of rain is fascinating.
- 4 I wonder how people translate whole novels so quickly and easily. They must be completely bilingual, surely?

- D** Learn and practise. Go to the Grammar Bank.

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