

New Trends in Nonverbal Communication Used in Croatian Public Discourses

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Abstract: Communication is the transfer of information from one person to another. The nonverbal communication is an important part of every communication process and this forms the basis for this analysis. This paper analyzes the nonverbal communication which is used to reinforce the emotional states conveyed through verbal communication in the Croatian public discourses. The corpora are taken from Croatian public media in the area of politics and TV broadcasting. This analysis considers all aspects and elements of nonverbal communication such as positions of body, appearances, hairstyles, make up, color preferences, hand positions, emotion simulations etc.

Key words: Nonverbal Communication • Code • Public Discourse

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the transfer of information from one person to another and nonverbal communication is an important part of every communication process. As the political changes in Croatia in the last 20 years have created a new and unfamiliar public and political landscape, which require the Croatians to adjust cognitively, linguistically and physically, an analysis on the nonverbal communication in the Croatian public discourse was deemed necessary. For this purpose, 10 speeches from Croatian politicians for the 2013 elections and 4 fifteen minute television news¹ were analyzed. A conclusion was then made on the changes and directions of the Croatian public discourse.

Public discourse is a category which demands several defining levels. In order to characterize a communication as public communication, we need to recognize multiple factors and the characteristics of the language as the main media in which the communication is realized. Public discourse is socially determined as it depends on the status and role of the communication participants.

This paper analyzes the nature of the message and the chiffe (code) of the analog message as a foundation of nonverbal communication [1]. All aspects and elements of nonverbal communication such as positions of the

body, appearances, hairstyles, make up, colors preferred, hand positions, gestures and emotion simulations are considered important [2].

The Ambiguity of Language: If we speak about discourse and discourse analysis we have to study the ways how sentences and utterances are put together to make texts and interactions and also to see how those texts and interactions fit into our social world. Discourse analysis is therefore a study of language that focuses on how people use the language to do things in real life. The public discourse analyses done on speeches made by Croatians show that people of the same social groups manage and realize their discourse in a similar manner. This leads us to the fact that language is ambiguous and every communication may result in different interpretations made depending on different experiences, knowledge, goals, cultural surroundings, landscape surroundings, gender views, social groups, social backgrounds etc. In short, what a language means is always a matter of where, when and what it is used for and how it is interpreted. Language is used to display different kinds of social identities and belongings to different social groups. More importantly, language is never used all by itself because it is always combined with other things such as tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions,

¹ Two broadcastings are taken from the Croatian national TV- channel (HTV1) and two broadcastings from a private TV channel (NOVA TV).

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clothing, make up, hair, colors that we wear etc. What language means and what we achieve with it is a matter of combination of these other things [3].

The Ambiguity of Discourse: When we speak about discourse, we actually speak about a language that is situated. It is situated within the material world and in where it is encountered which then contributes to how it is interpreted. Language is also situated within relationships. It helps us to understand what people say and mean by referring to who they are. It also helps us to understand how well we know them and whether or not they have some kind of power over us. In addition, language and thereby discourse is situated in the history, in relation to what happened in the past or what will happen in the future. Discourse production is also situated in relation to other languages in a kind of discourse network.

The conclusion is that in every communication through the communicated public discourse, the participants demonstrate who they are and what their relationship is to other communicators while enacting their identities which are almost always multiple and fluid but rarely singular and fixed.

Ideology in Croatian Public Discourse: Everything that is said or written in our communication can never be neutral. It always represents the world in a certain way and creates a certain kind of relationship with the communicators. This happens especially in the media, in the public discourse. For this reason, the public discourse always to some degree promotes a particular ideology². In Croatian public discourse, certain globalization and europeization ideologies provide the Croatians with models of how the world, the country, the society, every man and woman and their children according to “modern European trends” are supposed to be. This ideology helps in a certain way to create a shared worldview and sense of purpose among the Croatian citizens. But this implemented ideology limits the way they look at the reality and tends to marginalize or exclude people, things, ideas, behavior or appearances that do not fit into the models.

This research goes from the presumption that TV and broadcasting is still the most powerful medium that goes into people’s home, convinces them in different ideologies and makes them implement the same things in

their life and thinking, despite the fact that the web and other social networks and tools like the internet, facebook, twitter and linkedin are overtaking the majority of public media spaces. TV- broadcasts are still addressing the people of all generations, of different social groups and educational backgrounds. That is the reason why this research is based on broadcasted news from different channels³. Television that captivates the people and becomes their center of attention was labeled as a global village in 1960 [4]. It enhances ideology and power when it is used for imposing personal views and trends on the society. Television and political developments do influence each other but professional TV reporting and the accountability of television to the public and not to the political institutions is of a recent development [5]. After going through a medium, messages change fundamentally because different kinds of media favor different kinds of meaning. So, the medium is a message [6]. Also, all public discourses in Croatia are somehow mediated through different cultural tools. Because of the recent Croatian approach to the EU (1st July 2013), many Croatian cultural tools come from the German cultural circle which include technological tools such as television and computers; and abstract tools like verbal and nonverbal language, counting systems, diagrams and mental -schemes⁴. The German culture is penetrating into the Croatian culture and resulting in the Croatians to ignore their Mediterranean roots and copy a culture that is mentally and geographically far away from the Croatian state of mind.

Corpora Analysis: 10 fifteen minute speeches made by Croatian politicians in the 2013 elections which were broadcasted in Croatian HTV1 and NOVA TV, were analyzed. The new trends in Croatian public discourses were observed in the nonverbal language of the politicians while they sent promising political messages to the people. Also analyzed were the nonverbal language of TV news moderators while they inform the public about the recent political happenings in Croatia.

Analytical Framework: In order to investigate the new trends in nonverbal communication used in Croatian public discourses, 4 analytical categories have been determined. The assumption was that Croatian identities, relations and beliefs are reflected in and constructed by

² An ideology is a specific set of beliefs and assumptions people have about things such as what is good or bad, what is right or wrong and what is right or wrong etc. (Jones 2012:11).

³ Here are TV/news from Croatian channels HTV1(www.htv.hr) and Nova TV (www.novativ.hr) analyzed.

⁴ A cultural tool can be considered anything an individual uses to take action in the world.

the specific way, how and which nonverbal tools are used. This analysis focuses on the following 4 analytical categories:

- Verbal and nonverbal language presence/absence: The public discourse produces both. The visible ones which are important and the invisible ones which are not. Their presence or absence demonstrates the specific power relations and beliefs of the society [7].
- Voices: Who is talking, who has got a chance to talk or who is considered relevant and trustworthy to talk is of extreme importance. It sets up standards of subject's competence and authority as a vital marker of a subject's position within society. Here we can recognize who is an active and who is an passive creator of media discourses.
- Social Relations - Occupation: Occupation is one of the key markers of a person's identity and their status in the society.
- Visual representation: The media photographs or any other kind of visual representations that are present support the communicated content by offering additional information and by attracting the attention of the public. It is a marketing strategy and represents those who are photographed in a particular way- depicting their facial, bodily or style characteristics, expressions, positions, movements etc.

Section Analysis 1 – Politicians' Speeches: In this analysis, the results are divided into 2 sections. The first section interprets if the intentions of the politicians (recognized through the analyzed 10 political speeches) are true or false. They are recognized through their use of hands and body; and the frequency of specific repeated words to underline their intentions or to gain credibility. Their make up, hair and the way they dress will not be taken into consideration as this is determined by the political protocol. This research lays on [8] scheme which presents politician's credibility through the following complex structure:

- Acts (movements) of hands (x), body (y) and frequency of specific words (z)- positive or negative nonverbal actions made with x, y or z,
- Classification presumption - x, y, z are signs that the speaker has an unchangeable positive or negative characteristics in convincing people about the content of the communication,

- Classification of the politician - the politician transfers successfully/unsuccessfully the content of the communication,
- Prediction presumption - using x, y, z is a direct sign for a politician's future positive or negative actions or truthful or false promises,
- Predictive conclusion - politician will presumably fulfill/ not fulfill future actions based on the content of the nonverbal message.

Despite all shortcomings of such public presentations of political ideas for political campaigns and elections, this way of addressing the public using the advantages of the public discourse is the purest form of interaction between the politicians and the public. The public discourse helps the politicians to directly convey their message to their voters. However, it is evident that Croatian politicians who prepared their verbal communication and content, did not prepare enough or were not entirely professional in their nonverbal communication and content, as reflected in their performances (Table 1). The Croatian politicians did not use the opportunity to broadcast their message, breach new topics, correct prior mistakes, or present themselves in a more favorable light, which is partly responsible for the false message or image perceived. This is corroborated by some verbal and nonverbal gaffes they performed with their hands, body and frequency of certain phrases.

Section Analysis 2 – Moderators' Performances: The second section of analysis interprets how the messages were communicated to the public by the TV moderators. This was recognized through the analyses of 4 TV - broadcastings, body language, gesticulations, make up, hair and way of dressing using the following complex structure:

- Movements of hands (x) and body (y) – the speaker uses positive or negative nonverbal actions with x or y,
- Classification presumption - x,y are signs that the speaker has an unchangeable positive or negative characteristics in convincing people about the content of the communication,
- Use of make up (a), hair (b) and dressing style (c) - through it the moderator successfully/unsuccessfully transfers the content of the communication,
- Using a, b, c is a direct sign for future positive or negative premises,

Table 1:

Name of the politician, theme, date of speech	Acts/movements of hands (x), body (y) and frequency of specific words (z)	Classification presumption	Classification of the politician	Prediction presumption	Predictive conclusion
Zoran Milanovic About negotiations with the Slovenian bank <i>Ljubljanska banka</i> to Croatian citizens, 12 th March 2013, 17 th March 2013, 18 th March 2013, 1 st April 2013.	x-hidden while speaking (all the time), y- movement of the torso in front, left/right adding with the head, z- repeating the words <i>mi cemo (we will)</i> (f= 20x in 3min) and <i>ovom prilikom obećajem</i> (in this occasion I strongly promise) (f=11x in 3sec.)	Hidden hands = speaker hides the truth, left right/ heading = uncertainty in the content, word frequency = trying to convince the public in facts that he also cannot embrace entirely.		Signs for future negative actions and false promises.	Presumably will not fulfill future actions based on the content of the nonverbal message.
Vesna Pusic, about taxes on houses and luxury weekend houses, 23 rd March 2013, 15 th April 2013, 25 th April 2013.	x-open, visible, slightly gesticulating to the left, sometimes pointing out with the finger crucial phrases which have to convince us, y-straight, slightly movement of the torso in front to the audience, z-only the phrase <i>mi u HNS</i> <i>smo sigurni da ce ministarstvo</i> <i>financija povuci prijedlog</i> (we in our party HNS are sure that the ministry of finances will withdraw this proposal) (f= 5x in 5min).	Open visible hands-the speaker has no false intentions, slightly moving to the left= maybe calculating with answers to questions of the journalists, frequency of phrase starting with pronoun we = the speaker doesn't take personal responsibility for actions/non-actions, but transfers it to the whole party.	Successful transfer of communicated content.	Signs for truthful actions.	Presumably will fulfill future actions based on the content of the nonverbal message.
Tomislav Karamarko, about the elections in local communities and the winning of the party HDZ, 12 th May 2013, 15 th May 2013.	x-open, visible, gesticulating on the left and right, y-open body and torso, always moving in front towards the audience, z- <i>mi cemo pobijediti</i> (we will win) (f= 9x in 5min) and <i>oni nisu nista</i> <i>napravili (they haven't</i> <i>done anything)</i> (f=12x in 5min).	Open, dynamic, almost aggressive hands gesticulating left and right- speaker is convinced in the content of the message and he is sure he has convinced the audience too, moving body in this way- almost attacks the audience, frequency of the phrases- he is almost sure he will win and convinced in the idea that everybody follows him.	Very successful transfer of the communicated content.	Signs for real actions.	Will fulfill future actions based on the content of the nonverbal message.
Milan Bandic, about running for the major of Zagreb, 16 th May 2013.	x-lying in front of the speaker, on the table, very calm, no gesticulations, y-shoulders down, very flexible, no body moving, head down almost like a priest by a mass, z- <i>mislili su me izloziti i</i> <i>razapeti gradanima Zagreba</i> (they thought they could crucify me in front of inhabitants of Zagreb) (unusual phrase, f= 4x in 5min)	x- very difficult to interpret, he is calm, he made everything that is necessary for winning, convinced in the idea that people had already recognized him as the best option, body shows self-confidence, phrase repeating shows that he thinks that they (maybe media, other political parties) have done to him injustice.	Not so successful transfer of the communicated content, but he probably made all pre- arrangements and ensured himself on all fronts.	Signs for future uncertain actions, maybe not false, but also not truthful all along. He made some deals and therefore he has to pay them back.	Presumably will fulfill future actions based on the content of the nonverbal message, but will also do actions hidden from the public.

Table 2

Name of broadcasting channel, theme, date of broadcasting	Movements of hands (x) and body (y)	Classification presumption	Make up (a), hair (b), dressing style (c)	Premise	Evaluation
HTV1, introduction of new taxes for Croatian citizens (evening news), 25 th January 2013. (female moderator)	Robotic movements, x- sometimes no gesticulations at all, y- body not moving, only sometimes slightly towards front.	The moderator does not transfer her personal opinion, keeps distance from the content of the message.	a- light rose lipstick, smoke distinguished eye make up, lightens up the femininity and sex appeal of the moderator (maybe too much for evening news), b- long blond hair, c- nurturing business look but with a silk blouse.	Negative premise, possible misleading the communication partner.	Nonverbal language does not successfully transfer the important political issues.
NOVA TV, ratification of Croatian's final entrance in the EU by the government of Slovenia (evening news), 15 th February 2013. (male moderator)	x- no gesticulations at all, professional phonetic pronunciation, y-none body movements.	The moderator transfers the content of the message.	a- none, b- male short haircut, c- gray suit with light-blue tie.	Positive premise, clear transfer of the communication content.	Successfully transfers the issues.
HTV1, ratification of Croatian's final entrance in the EU by the government of Slovenia (political talk show), 20 th February 2013. (male moderator)	x- intensive gesticulations, head moving very dynamically left-right and in front, y-intensive body movements to all sides, intensive walking through the studio.	Makes the audience dynamic, makes the conversation dynamic and aggressive, argumentative fights between the participants.	a- none, b- male short haircut, c- black suit, red tie, almost by protocol.	Premise is between positive and negative, the communication content is forwarded confused and diffused.	Semi- successfully transfers the important issues of the debates.
NOVA TV, The problem of Slovenian bank <i>Ljubljanska banka</i> and its debts to Croatian citizens (political talk show), 11 th March 2013. (female moderator)	x- elegant movements of hands, sometimes touching her hair, sometimes pointing her finger or hand to the participants to give them the word, y-walking through the studio in slow motion.	The audience is calm, no aggression is present during argumentation and debates, everyone has the chance to present their opinion.	a- intensive make up, red lipstick, b- bob hair cut, dark brown hair, c-gray dress, high heels.	Positive premise, communication content is forwarded clearly and is fully acceptable to the audience.	Successfully transfers the important issues.

- Evaluation of the moderator based on the content of the nonverbal messages.

The findings on the Croatian public discourse displays the process of European integration in the Croatian media shows and the moderators were more or less successful in adopting it. This was visible from their appearances too. The moderators associated positive messages more strongly with dominant hand gestures and negative messages with non/dominant hand gestures, revealing a hidden link between action and emotion. This nonverbal communication model presented in the Croatian public discourse can fairly be explained by conventions in language or culture, which associate for example good with right and otherwise with left, rather with results that support and extend the body - specific communication. Also, results of the analysis in Table 2 show that the hand gesture used by moderators may have unintended

communicative values, providing the public with a subtle content of how they felt about the communicated message.

CONCLUSION

The analysis has shown that the Croatian public discourse in the sphere of politics, advertising and media in general suffers from a growing invasive europeization and globalization. The code of nonverbal communication imports all new trends from the Anglosaxon and partly German cultural circle. The results show regularities of physical looks and face expressions, body positions, hair styles, make up and frequency of typical political phrases while transferring the communicated content. The analyses of 10 political speeches have shown that the knowledge about truth or falsity can be recognized through the way the politicians used their hands, body

and through the frequency of repeated words to underline their intentions or to gain credibility. This gives a possible classification presumption which is in the case of the analyzed politicians and their speeches a prediction presumption and a sign for future negative actions and false promises. Also, it is a sign for truthful actions, for real actions and a sign for uncertain actions. This research leads to predictive conclusions that the speakers will presumably not fulfill future actions or will fulfill future actions based on the content of the nonverbal messages. Further analysis has shown how certain political messages were communicated to the public by TV moderators through their body language, gesticulations, make up, hair and way of dressing. Results show that movements of hands and body give certain classification presumptions in the way that the moderators did not transfer their personal opinions and kept their distance from the communicated content, or included their personal opinions and attitudes towards the content of the messages. Further analyses on use of make up, hair and dressing style give negative (in the way of misguiding the communication partner) or positive (clear transfer of the communicated content) premises and finally give a certain evaluation of a successful, semi-successful or unsuccessful transfer of important political issues.

This research also shows that Croatian politicians were fully prepared with their verbal communication content, but were not prepared and did not work enough on their professional nonverbal communication. The nonverbal code is capable to send the public very significant messages, more powerful than any other verbal communication form. The media are strongly aware of those possibilities and they use them in a very voluminous and extended form. All public discourses in Croatia use some aspects of nonverbal communication more or less successful depending on the status and positions of the communication participants.

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