

THE INFLUENCE OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN THE MEDIA PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC FIGURES

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Abstract

This paper examines how the conscious and unconscious non-verbal communication of public figures affects the shaping of attitudes and impressions of the audience. The widest audience forms an impression of public figures based on their media appearances. For the majority of citizens, the media is the primary source of information and a means by which they can indirectly meet prominent figures. Media-recognizable individuals from various professions appear in traditional media - in the press, on radio and television, as well as in new media. For these people, appearances in the media represent an opportunity for successful communication with the public. During these performances, public figures use their verbal and non-verbal communication to create an image of themselves and convey certain messages to a mass audience.

Media performance can be seen as one of the most important forms of public performance. Every appearance in front of an audience is considered a public performance in a broader sense, while the specificity of media performance is reflected in the existence of numerous conditions related to the technical and technological characteristics of specific media. Non-verbal communication in media appearances often has a greater impact than verbal communication, because it is more difficult to control. That is why it is believed that this form of communication is more sincere and in this sense significantly affects the perception of public figures by the audience. A successful media appearance by public figures implies the harmony of verbal and non-verbal communication.

The research was conducted to determine how much non-verbal communication of public figures affects the audience's opinion of them. Four figures from the public life of Serbia were chosen: actor Miloš Biković, singers Jelena Karleuša and Konstrakta, host and comedian Ivan Ivanović, sincerity, trust, as well as the impression of a person based on the way they dress. The importance of non-verbal communication is particularly reflected in the perception of sincerity and trust in public figures. The survey showed that respondents trust the singer Konstrakta the most, who is also considered the most honest. Her restraint, consistency, and distance in public speaking played a significant role in this research result. The research confirmed previous findings that the most positive impression is achieved by public figures whose non-verbal communication is in line with verbal communication.

Key word: communication, non-verbal communication, public performance, media, public figures.

UTICAJ NEVERBALNE KOMUNIKACIJE NA MEDIJSKE PERFORMANSE JAVNIH LIČNOSTI

Apstrakt

U ovom radu se ispituje kako svesna i nesvesna neverbalna komunikacija javnih ličnosti utiče na oblikovanje stavova i utisaka publike. Najšira publika stvara utisak o javnim ličnostima na osnovu njihovih medijskih nastupa. Za većinu građana, mediji su primarni izvor informacija i sredstvo preko kojeg se posredno mogu upoznati sa istaknutim ličnostima. Medijski prepoznatljivi pojedinci različitih profesija pojavljuju se u tradicionalnim medijima – u štampi, na radiju i televiziji, kao i u novim medijima. Za ove ljude istupi u medijima predstavljaju priliku za uspešnu komunikaciju sa javnošću. Tokom ovih predstava javne ličnosti verbalnom i neverbalnom komunikacijom stvaraju sliku o sebi i prenose određene poruke masovnoj publici.

Medijski performans se može posmatrati kao jedan od najvažnijih oblika javnog nastupa. Svaki izlazak pred publiku smatra se javnim nastupom u širem smislu, dok se specifičnost medijskog nastupa ogleda u postojanju brojnih uslova vezanih za tehničko-tehnološke karakteristike pojedinih medija. Neverbalna komunikacija u medijskim nastupima često ima veći uticaj od verbalne komunikacije, jer ju je teže kontrolisati. Zato se smatra da je ovaj oblik komunikacije iskreniji i da u tom smislu značajno utiče na percepciju javnih ličnosti od strane publike. Uspešan medijski nastup javnih ličnosti podrazumeva harmoniju verbalne i neverbalne komunikacije.

Istraživanje je sprovedeno kako bi se utvrdilo kako neverbalna komunikacija javnih ličnosti utiče na mišljenje publike o njima. Izabrane su četiri ličnosti iz javnog života Srbije: glumac Miloš Biković, pevači Jelena Karleuša i Konstrakta, voditelj i komičar Ivan Ivanović, a ispitivana je percepcija iskrenosti, poverenja, kao i utisak o ličnosti na osnovu načina oblačenja. Značaj neverbalne komunikacije posebno se ogleda u percepciji iskrenosti i poverenja u javne ličnosti. Istraživanje je pokazalo da ispitanici najviše veruju pevačici Konstrakti, koja važi za najpoštenije. Njena uzdržanost, doslednost i distanca u javnom govoru odigrali su značajnu ulogu u ovom rezultatu istraživanja. Istraživanje je potvrdilo dosadašnje nalaze da najpozitivniji utisak postižu javne ličnosti čija je neverbalna komunikacija u skladu sa verbalnom komunikacijom.

Ključne riječi: komunikacija, neverbalna komunikacija, javni nastup, mediji, javne ličnosti.

JEL codes: D83, L82, L25

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this paper is the non-verbal communication of public figures and the role of this form of communication in media appearances. The goal of the work is to determine how gesticulation, body position, facial expressions, manner of dressing, as well as a series of unconscious movements influence the creation of different impressions about a person. For the purpose of the analysis, public figures who communicate in the media space and about whom the audience creates an impression solely on the basis of media appearances were selected.

1. THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The type of communication in which you can communicate without words is non-verbal communication. It reveals the emotions, intentions, desires, and moods of the interlocutor. They include voice volume, facial expression, body position, and appearance, and exert a powerful influence on face-to-face communication. The words in the message have less meaning for the sender than the corresponding non-verbal symbols that accompany them.[9]

Verbal and non-verbal communication are closely related and it is impossible to see them as two separate entities. It is a misconception that verbal communication is more important than non-verbal communication because words are used to express our thoughts. With words, we say what we think, but with our movements, we complete it and give a kind of life to what is spoken. We can manage and say, what we say, but movement, facial expressions, and gestures cannot so easily agree. That is why in communication the mutual connection of verbal and non-verbal is observed.[11]

Non-verbal communication can be divided into conscious and unconscious. In communication, they try to hide feelings with words, however, unconscious non-verbal communication reveals hidden feelings. By using conscious verbal communication, gestures, body position, and facial expressions, what we want and think is shown and highlighted. With conscious non-verbal communication, non-verbal signals sent to the interlocutor can be controlled. The skill of conscious non-verbal communication is learned, and applied by public figures, politicians, professional speakers, etc.

Unconscious non-verbal communication is a series of movements that are often involuntary and we don't even know we are making them, such as louder breathing, sighing, exhaling, moving eyebrows, twitching lips, grinding teeth, raised voice, body position, and small movements.[7]

Non-verbal communication can be divided into four categories according to the type of signs:

- Paralinguistic: signs such as tonality, pitch, volume, and voice tremor. It doesn't matter what someone said, but how they said it.
- Kinesic: body movements with the help of which people show their wishes, intentions, and feelings. These are movements of arms, legs, hands, eyes, and eyebrows that help in interacting with people. They show the interlocutor whether the person is nice or not, whether they are sincere and well-intentioned or whether they have something against them.
- Tactile: is the earliest form of communication between humans. Touch is one of the most important things for us besides water and food from birth. Kisses and hugs, and rocking are necessary for a child's development. Touch can have a healing effect on a person, when they are sad or lonely, a friendly hug or a simple pat on the shoulder can make a person feel safer and better. [1]
- Proxemic: speaking of space. Physical proximity and the relationship of our body in relation to the interlocutors.

We can conclude that it is not easy to control body language. No matter how hard you try, it is impossible to maximally control every muscle in your body at the same time. [2]

This research was done with the aim of showing how respondents interpret the body language of media personalities even though they do not have any theoretical knowledge in the field of non-verbal communication. In practice, people recognize non-verbal signals based on the experience they had in communicating with other people. Our brain remembers and connects our emotional reaction to the interlocutor and his non-verbal communication.

2. MEDIA PERFORMANCE AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

2.1. Specifics of media appearances

Public figures, regardless of profession, communicate in the public space, primarily through the media. Today, media presence is considered a necessary factor in gaining fame, popularity, and reputation in the public. In other words, public figures are the product of the enormous influence of the media in today's society. In an age in which citizens have at their disposal a large number of traditional and new media and in a time in which a huge amount of information is exchanged every day, public figures are becoming those persons who are constantly present in the media. Celebrities can be seen as media texts, because their existence is inseparable from the media and the images that mass communication media create about them.[12] Fame is gained by public appearances and maintained by planned communication with the public.

The media play a major role in the formation of the identity of public figures. Media appearances are a way for a person to express their authenticity through verbal and non-verbal communication and in front of the widest audience, but also shape an image by which they will be recognizable. Any impression the audience will have about a specific person largely depends on the media presentation. The paradox is that the audience can never really get to know public figures through their media representation because the media image is constructed like all public appearances of media figures.[12]

Knowing communication skills and possessing a culture of communication is usually considered a prerequisite for quality media performance. Another important factor is thorough preparation. Politicians and other public figures go through years of training in order to master verbal and non-verbal communication skills. They are assisted by public relations advisors in planning their media presence. The strategy of media appearance in practice is based on the following parameters:

- Analysis of the target public - media audience
- Formation of key messages. Usually, two or three most important messages related to the occasion of the media appearance and adapted to the target audience are sufficient.
- Getting to know the basic rules of verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication can be improved by practicing diction and warming up the jaw muscles in order to precisely articulate each word in a sentence. In non-verbal

communication, facial expressions and gestures should be controlled in particular.[5]

Media performance implies a number of conditions that can affect the safety and persuasiveness of the speaker. This is most obvious during a live television or radio appearance, when the size and complexity of the devices themselves, such as television cameras, radio microphones and lights, causes fear of public speaking in some individuals. However, it can be concluded that actually the very act of media performance and the fact that a person addresses an audience of millions creates pressure and reduces self-confidence, which then manifests itself as nervousness.

The characteristics and legalities according to which the media function determine how the widest audience will interpret the behavior of public figures. Certain actors in public life have a talent for public speaking and experience in communication with the media, but the experience of a certain person's media performance depends very much on the nature of the specific media.

2.2. The role of non-verbal communication in media performance

Meditated communication is based on different parameters of face-to-face communication. It is a mediated form of communication. Verbal communication consists of words that are spoken, and they will be the most effective in the media presentation and will have a greater effect if they are spontaneous. Non-verbal communication in a media performance often has a greater impact than verbal communication, because it is more difficult to control. Psychologists believe that it originates from the unconscious and therefore reveals true feelings. That is why it is believed that the form of communication is more honest and in that sense significantly affects the perception of public figures by the audience.

Media and communication theorists often cite the example of the first televised debate between the presidential candidates in America in 1960, John Kennedy and Richard Nixon, as a key study of how media as a channel of communication affects the perception of messages. [3] In addition, the aforementioned debate confirms the importance of non-verbal communication in media performance. Specifically, when he appeared in front of the cameras, Kennedy was young, handsome, tanned, and wearing a dark suit that made him stand out against the dark background. Nixon, on the other hand, looked pale and tired, and his gray suit made him seem like he was fading into the background. Although both candidates presented their arguments well, according to the polls at the time, Kennedy took the lead in the election race after this televised debate and was later elected president. [6]

The given example is one of the best proofs of the consequences of inconsistency or conformity of the verbal and non-verbal message being sent. Nixon's messages were inconsistent with his body language and he lost the debate. In addition, the nature of the specific medium played an important role in the experience of the two politicians. The characteristics of television as a medium fit into John Kennedy's performances as a candidate. The audience that followed the debate on television had a positive impression of Kennedy, who was the prototype of a televised president, while radio listeners favored Nixon. [6]

Recent research also shows that citizens evaluate politicians precisely on the basis of non-verbal signals such as gestures, facial expressions, and body movements, while hairstyles and clothing strongly influence the decision to vote for a particular candidate in the electoral process. [13]

Research shows that appearance plays an important role in media appearances. It is known that the audience will form an impression of a person based on how they looked during a television appearance, before they will remember what they said. Also, the color of clothes sends certain messages in a public performance, because the public unconsciously and on the basis of the first impression decides whether they will like the speaker or not. [10] It is obvious that the positive or negative perception of a person depends on the overall image that a public figure projects in the media. People trust more public figures whom they perceive as likable, and this impression is primarily created on the basis of non-verbal communication.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

Through this research, an attempt was made to determine how much non-verbal communication of public figures affects the audience's opinion of them. Four personalities from the public life of Serbia were chosen. Miloš Biković was chosen as an actor, Jelena Karleuša and Konstrakta were chosen as singers as opposites, both in the style of music performance and in the style of dressing and public performance. Ivan Ivanović was chosen as a host and comedian because of his long-term presence on the public stage. The first question was about whether the person seemed authoritative or shy with his overall appearance and non-verbal communication. The next question is whether the given person can be trusted. Respondents evaluated the openness and closedness of a public figure based on his gestures. Then they evaluated what kind of impression a public figure leaves on the basis of clothing. The last question was about which person they trust the most.

79 subjects between the ages of 19 and 60 took part in the research. The majority of respondents are female, 65.8%. The age structure of the respondents is quite uniform. Respondents in the age group of 19 to 25 and 36 to 45 are the most represented at 30.4% each, followed by respondents from 46 to 60 years and the smallest percentage is respondents from 26 to 35 years with 17.7%.

When asked if Miloš Biković is an authoritative person, 44 answered that he is not and 35 that he is authoritative person. Jelena Karleuša is authoritative in the opinion of 40 respondents, and Konstrakta also with 44 answers. Ivan Ivanović has the least authoritative behavior, only 29 respondents consider him to be authoritative.

When asked if a person is shy, according to the respondents, all public figures are not shy, only for Konstrakta the percentage is significantly lower compared to others because 29 people answered that they think that she is shy. For Jelena Karleuša, not a single respondent thinks that she is shy, for Ivan Ivanović only 3. We can conclude that based on the non-verbal communication of observed public figures, the possibility that they are shy is almost excluded.

The question of whether a person can be trusted gave very interesting data for certain observed public figures. According to the results of the research, the only one that can

be trusted is Konstrakta, 59 respondents answered that they could trust her. Respondents cannot trust other public figures, and the fact that Miloš Biković cannot be trusted is considered by 44 respondents, Ivan Ivanović 49 respondents.

When asked what impression a public figure leaves on the basis of the way they dress, 59% of respondents think that Miloš Biković is modern. According to respondents, Konstrakta leaves a relaxed impression on 38% and modern on 24%. Ivan Ivanović is marked as relaxed with 45% and modern with 39% of respondents. Jelena Karleuša with 82% of respondents leaves a provocative impression. It is interesting that the interviewees rated Ivan Ivanović as relaxed, regardless of the fact that in most cases, his clothes include a suit and a shirt, which are mostly a symbol of seriousness and conservatism.

The results of the research are also very interesting for the next question, where the respondents gave answers based on gestures whether people are open, closed or something else. Most respondents, even 93%, believe that Jelena Karleuša is an open person. Ivan Ivanović is considered as open person by 92.6%, Miloš Biković by 53% of respondents. On the other side, 59% of respondents consider only Konstrakta to be closed. This question had the option to enter a different answer for each public figure. A small percentage went to other options and we consider them insignificant and uneven to be considered for this research,

On the last question: Which of the listed public figures do you consider to be the most honest, Konstrakta was rated the highest, as many as 59% of respondents believe that she is the most honest. We can look at this result in several ways. First, Konstrakta was considered the only closed person in this research, and the largest number of respondents believed her. Her restraint, consistency and distance in public speaking played a significant role in this research result. Also, there are no scandals associated with her, which contributes a lot to the fact that people trust her in addition to her non-verbal communication.

CONCLUSION

The conducted research is in correlation with previous research that shows that one of the key elements of good communication is the harmony of verbal and non-verbal communication. Since verbal and non-verbal communication interpenetrates and complements each other, their harmony primarily affects the formation of a positive impression of a person. Performances of public figures should be in accordance with their emotions and attitudes and those persons who achieve this conformity gain the highest degree of trust from the audience.

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REZIME

Sprovedeno istraživanje je u korelaciji sa dosadašnjim istraživanjima koja pokazuju da je jedan od ključnih elemenata dobre komunikacije harmonija verbalne i neverbalne komunikacije. Pošto se verbalna i neverbalna komunikacija međusobno prožimaju i dopunjuju, njihov sklad pre svega utiče na formiranje pozitivnog utiska o ličnosti. Nastupi javnih ličnosti treba da budu u skladu sa njihovim emocijama i stavovima i one osobe koje postižu taj konformitet dobijaju najveći stepen poverenja publike.