



A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF THE VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION OF TRUMP IN SOME SELECTED NEWSPAPERS

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Abstract

This article pragmatically studies the verbal and non-verbal communication of Trump who is one of the most controversial characters in terms of showing power and dominance through his social interactions. The article attempts to study and analyze the way in which Trump exploits spoken language and the sign language to convey his ideas and ideologies both verbally and nonverbally. This talented way of communication contributes to a great extent to the succession of Trump in his presidential elections of 2016. This article provides a creative explanation of how rhetoric (verbal) or non-verbal can be used to show a high extreme of power, political and social status over other political leaders or candidates. Austin's speech act theory and Grice's four cooperative maxims are used for the analysis of the reports selected from the three newspapers. Speech act theory is crucial for the analysis of the verbal and nonverbal communication because effective communication needs a high-level of interactions and speech act theory (SAT) aims to understand how these interactions can be used to achieve actions. While the maxims show the extent in which the speaker obeys or violates the rules of the cooperative interaction. Based on data analysis, the researcher finds out that Trump often employs a unique verbal and nonverbal communication to make his point and influence people's emotions. Such kinds of communications shows control and power rather than a more collaborative method. The article recommends that we should not focus only on the verbal uses of language, instead we have to consider both verbal and nonverbal communication because they are essential to decode a message.

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1. Introduction

Pragmatics is defined by Levinson (1997) as a new field of linguistics studies those aspects of meaning that cannot be understood and dealt with by the semantic theory only. Pragmatics deals with the relationship between language and the context or the situation of the utterance. It also studies the 'invisible' meaning or how the hearer identifies the speaker's meaning even if it is not actually said (or written). Specifically, pragmatics studies language according to the contexts (Yule, 1996). Lunenberg (2010) states that communication is an interaction occurs within a social context. It simply involves a sender (source) and a receiver. It contains the interlocutors exchanging signals. These signals could be graphic or verbal, it could be visual (photographic) or gestural. Substantially, communication involves using codes that are done with body movement, the eyes, or sounds made with the voice. Regardless of the way it is done, there is always a process in which someone creates a meaning intent that is passed to the interlocutor (receiver). Daniel (2016) asserts that the communication process has gone full circle and become complete when the receiver responds to the signal by initiating another circle of meaning exchange and this will be sent to the sender (source). Therefore, communication can be either verbal or nonverbal.

Verbal communication is the communication through the use words. This includes words, sounds, speaking and language. The most effective way of communication is Speaking: it is classified into public speaking and interpersonal communication (Aarti, 2012). Interpersonal communication happens when speaking directly to one another. Here, communication becomes informal because one can say whatever he really feels, though this is bound by the social customs guiding the speaker and the receiver. Public speaking, On the other hand, occurs when one person speaks to a large group of people. In this case, communication becomes formal. In all of these cases, speakers may want to inform, entertain, persuade or argue. Verbal communication can be either oral or spoken and it can make use of non-verbal elements and visual aids to facilitate meaning, achieve high level of understanding and enhance rapport by removing ambiguity and gathering immediate feedback.

Non-verbal communication on the other hand, is the transmission of meaning in the form of non-word messages. It clarifies all the information, ideas and messages fully without using a single word. Nonverbal communication makes use of physical communication such as tone of voice, smell, touch and body motion. It includes music, painting, dance, drama and sculpture. The use of symbols and sign language are also included (Daniel, 2016).

Body language and gestures like facial expressions, clearing of the throat, physical contact and dress convey a lot of information. A clear example of non-verbal communication is sign language,

which could be used by anyone at anytime. One of the examples about a non-verbal sign is the bell ringing. It is a common sign which means something in specific contexts like “change of lesson”, “time for school”, “is somebody at home?”, or “end of lesson”, while it doesn’t mean anything by itself. According to Wilson (1972), almost every sign can be used to communicate many different things in specific contexts. He explains further that everything depends on agreement about and understanding of the ways in which we use signs. Nonverbal actions happen when the speakers replace linguistic expressions by gestures or body movements of daily interaction. Goss (1983) defines nonverbal gestures as "the movements of hands , arms , legs , torso , and other major muscle groups of the body " (p.50). The use of signs are conventionally recognized and goes hand in hand with the entire process of learning. In other words, acquiring nonverbal communicative gestures and body movements may even come before the acquisition of linguistic competence.

Donald Trump is indeed a unique individual, with his own personal style. Trump's way of communicating is unusual and tough. He believes that apologizing is a sign of weakness this is why he does not apologize. Even on tweets, his words are very harsh towards others. He adopts the same style of rhetoric whether in politics or in trade. He uses a rude language with his staff. When he wants to show his thoughts, he employs his powerful rhetoric for the purpose of manipulation and persuasion (Sherman, 2015).

Sherman (2015) discovers that Trump has two different sides in his personality: the dark side and the bright one. This is quite evident throughout his behavior. He is direct, adjusted, and precipitate in making decisions, calm and not nervous when he becomes under pressure. He concentrates on his ambition that he usually wants to win. Socially, he tends to amuse and does not give attention to others while they are speaking but he wants to be listened as he speaks absurdly and shouts off. He knows how to use body language effectively to convey his message, emotions and influence people’s emotions.

Moreover, Trump often employs a unique body language by using upper-body gestures and expressions, staying in place in order to make his point. This indicates a sense of control and power rather than a more collaborative approach. Trump do this intentionally, he knows how to make his opponents look silly, how to be in contact with the audience (even when he’s not speaking) and how to effect the audience’s emotions with one simple look (Riggio, 2015) . In this article, the researcher will analyze pragmatically the verbal and nonverbal way of interaction of Trump. He will adopt Austin’s theory of speech act and Grice’s maxims.

2. Political Communication

Politics is a complicated phenomenon that involves a quest for influence and power. It is also considered as a decision-making process that determines the distribution of social goods and establishes laws, rights and prohibitions. This holds true whether decisions are made by an arbitrary ruler or by a

representative body of elected agents. Politics without interaction is like having blood without arteries and veins: it's not really going anywhere (Romarheim, 2005).

McQuail (1994) has argued that the following features are found in the mass communication process: 'large scale, one-directional flow, asymmetrical, impersonal and anonymous, calculative relationship and standardized content' A communicator who targets a mass audience does so in a calculative – and potentially manipulative – manner. The mass audience has been defined in communication studies as a passive object of manipulation. 'It [the mass] did not act for itself but was, rather, acted upon' (p.38).

Moreover, the content of mass communication is believed to be standardized. One of the important reasons is that access to mass media communication, and opportunities for shaping its content, are to a large extent granted only to a specific elite of professional communicators. Politicians, journalists, media advertisers and producers tend to reproduce procedures and practices, and they follow specific codes of conduct when 'producing' mass communication (Romarheim, 2005). Language is the greatest mean of communication. It is not used directly especially by politicians but they use manipulation to gain their aims and goals in order to persuade the audience with their actions, plans, and policies (Sharndama, 2016). Workers in media and politics use political speeches, political language and rhetorical discourses to control the relation between language and politics (Ulmann, 1962). Furthermore, van Dijk (1997) defines the political discourses in "the talk of political institutions such as presidents, prime ministers, members of government, parliament and political parties on different levels" (p.12). Political discourses concentrate on using language that persuades people to comply with political actions or to make decisions (van Dijk, 2002).

3. Speech Act Theory

Pragmatics studies the linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed. There are two main types of problems to be solved within pragmatics: first to define interesting kinds of speech acts and speech products; second, to distinguish the features of the speech context which help to determine which proposition is expressed by a given sentence. The analysis of illocutionary acts is an example of the problem of the first type and the study of indexical expressions is an example of the second. Accordingly, speech act theory and the study of indexical expressions, make up most, or possibly all, of the domain of pragmatics. Contrasting with these opinions, the second tradition assumes sense rather than denotation to be the core idea of semantics. According to this conception, the meaning expressions are determined by the sense relations (such as antonymy, synonymy, entailment, etc.) that it endures to other expressions within the system. Consequently, the sense of an expression can be distinguished as its context-free, literal meaning from the context-dependent, actual meaning of an utterance of the expression. The meaning of the utterance, although determined by the sense of the uttered sentence, differs from it in different ways, just as the acoustic realization of the utterance differs

from the phonological structure of the uttered sentence. Thus, semantics, according to this view, studies all aspects of the literal meaning of sentences and expressions, while pragmatics studies the conditions according to which hearers and speakers determine the context- and use-dependent utterance meanings (Searle, et al., 1980).

A distinctive expression of this view is in Katz (1977) "Pragmatics is performance theory at the semantic level." According to this position, the analysis of both indexical expressions and speech acts belongs in part to semantics, in part to pragmatics. One of the most theories in pragmatics is Speech Act Theory (SAT). It is a well-known theory in the branch of the philosophy of language that includes the study of the performative function of language and communication. Speech act theory is initiated as a theory of thinking by the British philosopher J.L. Austin (1911-1960) and its origin comes from the British philosophy. Lyons (1977) argues that in order to produce an utterance it is important to be involved in a specific type of social interaction. The idea of speech act theory is described by Taylor (1987) as "reflecting the power of language that makes the world not 'mirror it'" (p.357). It is considered that any sentence expresses states of affairs (Sweetser, 1990). Kess (1992) argues that people's speech is not just a transmission of information, but they convey their ideas and attention with it.

Austin (1962) argues that speech acts are statements that require a kind of performance of a certain action on the behalf of speaker or hearer. He adds that "saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them" (p.101). Accordingly, Austin classifies speech acts into five categories;

1. 'verdictives' (means giving a verdict by jury)
2. 'exercitives' (exercising power, privileges or influence such as appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising, warning)
3. 'commissives' (make a promising or else undertaking)
4. 'behabitives' (indicating attitudes or social behaviors such as apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing, and challenging)
5. 'expositives' (fitting expressions into the course of an argument or conversations such as arguing, conceding, illustrating, assuming, postulating). (p. 150)

Searle (1969;) keeps the same classification with different terminologies 'directives (request)', 'commissives (promise)', 'declaratives (changing a state)' 'representatives (assertion)', and 'expressives (apology)'. On the other hand, he suggests four basic conditions and called them 'felicity conditions' which are necessary for the successful performance of speech acts. These felicity conditions include 'propositional content', 'sincerity', 'preparatory', and 'essential' conditions (p.60-68). However, Searle (1969) focuses on the verbal side of communication, the non-verbal side has not given much attention. The present study focuses on the verbal communication and the performative nature of non-verbal communication (body movements) in the successful performance of speech acts of the president Donald Trump.

4. Grice's Maxims

Paul Grice is the philosopher who contributes to the study of language. He attempts to resolve the concept of truth conditional semantics that is related to language philosophy. He tries to differentiate between speaker's meaning and sentence meaning that arise in any conversation. He proves a contribution from the truth conditions of sentence meaning. Grice proposes a principle that pragmatically leads for inferences on the addressee's part in order to fully understand speaker's meaning (Tendahl, 2009).

Moreover, Cruse (2006) argues that Grice uses his contribution of the cooperative principle to examine the conversational implicatures. Grice thinks that the conversation is a cooperative activity in which all participants agree to hold specific norms. Moreover, Cruse (2006) and Blutner and Zeevat (2004) argue that there are four maxims that are regarded as the rules for any conversation. Speakers do their best to follow these maxims and suppose their conversational interlocutors to follow. Furthermore, Bardzokas (2012) states that Grice makes a distinction between 'what is said' and 'what is implied'(p.37).

Grice (1989) suggests four maxims: the Quantity maxim, the Quality maxim, the Manner maxim and the maxim of Relation. These maxims and the CP are considered to be the basis for successful interaction. The Quantity Maxim states that the contribution should be as informative as is required, don't be more informative than is required. The Quantity maxim is also called 'the maxim of Informativeness' (Kearns, 2000, P. 258).

The Quality Maxim suggests that the contribution should be true; the speaker should not convey information for which you lack adequate evidence. It is also not possible to say what you believe to be false or unjustified. The maxim of Quality is called the maxim of 'sincerity' in which the ultimate goal is truth. That is, the semantic content of an utterance should coincide speaker's intended meaning (Horn and Ward, 2006 & Verschueren and Ostman, 2009). The maxim of Relation states that the contribution should be relevant to the preceding discourse (Mey, 2009 & Bara, 2010). Brown and Yule (1983) argue that this maxim is based on the idea that 'Make your contribution relevant in terms of the existing topic framework' (P.84). Manner maxim states that the contribution should be brief, clear, orderly and lack ambiguity. Manner Maxim is also called the 'Maxim of Clarity' (Kearns, 2000, P.255). This maxim differs from the others because it focuses on the way we say something rather than what to say (Blutner&Zeevat, 2004).

5. Methodology

In order to achieve the aim of the study, it is important to give a clear description of the data that are used for the analysis. The data are extracts of Trump's speeches from four different newspapers:

Psychology Today Newspaper, The Washington Post and The New York Times and The Atlantic. The study aims to show and prove how the way of communication is important in achieving power and dominance. The researcher will analyze pragmatically Trump's verbal and nonverbal way of communication in his political speeches. The news reports are taken from the main websites of the selected news channels and newspapers. The approaches that are followed for the analysis are Austin's speech act theory and Grice's theory of Maxims which are presented in detail in section three and four above. The news reports are analyzed according to the type of speech act and the four maxims of Grice.

6. Data Analysis

This section is concerned with the analysis of the selected news reports which are taken from four selected newspapers, namely Psychology Today Newspaper, The Washington Post and The New York Times and The Atlantic. The news reports are analyzed according to Austin's speech act theory and Grice's maxims.

6.1 The Analysis of Nonverbal Communication of Trump

The analysis of nonverbal behavior will be taken from a report written in Psychology Today newspaper. It is written by (Riggio, 2015). Trump has a number of nonverbal gestures that he uses to show power and authority. Some of these nonverbal gestures are: the Shrug. According to Austin's performative speech act, Trump performs nonverbal action of shrug whenever he can't answer a question, or is trying to deflect criticism, rather than giving a verbal response, he simply shrugs. This is an exercitive speech act in which the speaker performs an action (verbal or nonverbal) to indicate power, influence and rights such as appoint, name, sentence, order, claim, dedicate, dismiss. It is also a commissive one that commit one to do a future action. So, Trump shrugs which is effective in stopping the questioner or the line of questioning. Such act expresses disapproval and threat.

According to Gricean maxims, Trump violates most of Grice's maxims by performing this act because he is not being informative (he doesn't provide enough information), not being relevant (he always dodges the answer by merely acting nonverbally), he is not clear in most of his answers and the most important maxim is that he is not truthful in most of his speeches.

The second nonverbal action of Trump is that of Smirk. The smirk shows disagreement or displeasure, but in a dominating way. Trump performs this nonverbal act so frequently when he wants to discount what others are saying and to make them look or sound foolish. With his big, expressive face, the Smirk is fairly visible, and memorable. This is a behabitive act in which the speaker uses verbal or nonverbal expressions to indicate social behaviour and attitude. Such implicit expressives are directed to persons, since they are interpersonal acts that require hearer's response for predicting their

effects. This speech act expresses insult which is interpreted as impolite behavior that may threaten the negative face of both interlocutors (speaker and hearer). Sometimes, the speaker may use silence to express disrespect to others i.e. one partner may express hostility through facial expressions avoiding any reply to the questioner. This behavior may reveal insult and degradation. Concerning the maxims, when Trump perform this nonverbal act he becomes more informative that he is disgusted by the situation and he doesn't want to proceed. His manner in expressing disapproval and disgust is clear, his nonverbal action is relevant to the situation in which he acts, but he violates the maxim of quality because of truthfulness.

The third gesture is that of Baton or Pointing Gesture. The baton gesture is used to punctuate and enhance speech. Trump performs different baton-type gestures and he uses the more dominating finger-pointing, both to accuse others and to make a point. By acting nonverbally like that, Trump makes himself appear more domineering. His nonverbal speech act is a commissive one because he targets the hearer indirectly to do something such as to stop asking or change the line of conversation. This is also a behabitive speech act in which the speaker uses verbal or nonverbal expressions to indicate social behavior and here Trump shows insult. Concerning the maxims, Trump violates most of the maxims of the cooperative conversation. He is obscure, not truthful, not relevant to the context of conversation and he doesn't give enough information to explain his viewpoint.

The fourth nonverbal gesture are the Parallel gestures which are performed by Trump on the stage. This gesture occurs when his both hands move in unison as opposed to asynchronous gesturing or one-handed motions. Such parallel gestures creates an impression of authority and confidence. Such an act indicates that Trump knows what he's talking about. Such nonverbal gesture is a commissive speech act which indicates confidence and showing power. It is also a behabitive act because he behaves in a way that shows insult and degradation towards other participants. According to Gricean maxims, Trump follows most of the maxims. By performing this act, he is informative, his behavior is clear and lacks ambiguity, he is being relevant to the situation and the most important he expresses himself truthfully.

6.2 The Analysis of Verbal communication of Trump

6.2.1 The First Speech

This speech of Trump is published in The Atlantic by David A. Graham 20 Jan. 2017

"Today we are not transferring power not from one administration to another, or from one party to another, but we are transferring power from Washington, D.C., and giving it back to you, the people. January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day that the people became the rulers of this nation again. The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. At the bedrock of our politics will be a total allegiance to the United States of America. From this day forward, it's

going to be only America first. America first. For many decades, we've enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry; subsidized the armies of other countries while allowing for the very sad depletion of our military; we've defended other nation's borders while refusing to defend our own; and spent trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay, but that will change. We will follow two simple rules: Buy American, and hire American."

This speech is delivered by Trump in his first official press conference. The manner in which Donald Trump expresses power and dominance within the presidential debates is, thus, not solely reflected within his social interaction and discourse, as it is, in fact, enacted through it. Trump said that his election represented the ascension of the people over politicians in Washington. The tone of the speech reflects Trump's negative campaign speeches. Yet the speech also shows a serious contrast from Trump's most remarkable formal speech of his brief political career. In this excerpt, Trump performs a commissive speech act because he keeps promising the American people that this is the time of prosperity for America. His speech also includes verdictive speech act because he gives a cursory judgment about the preceding regime by describing it as a failure and oppressive one. His speech act is also considered as exercitives because he warns anyone threatens America's peace.

Concerning the maxims, Trump's speech was very explicit. He explains in detail his future plans without feeling restrictive. So, he was more informative than is required. He threatens and promises to attack anyone stands against America, so he threatens the hearer's positive-face. Trump does not violate the maxims of relevance because his speech is closely related to the context in which he acts, but he violates the maxim of manner because he was not brief and orderly.

6.2.2 The Second Speech

The second speech of Trump is published in The Washington post by Aaron Blake Jan. 8, 2020

"nations have tolerated Iran's destructive and destabilizing behavior in the Middle East and beyond. Those days are over. Iran has been the leading sponsor of terrorism, and the pursuit of nuclear weapons threatens the civilized world. We will never that happen. Last week, we took decisive action to stop a ruthless terrorist from threatening American lives. At my direction, the United States military eliminated the world's stop terrorist, QassemSoleimani."

This speech is said after the Iran missile attacks and U.S response. Trump gives a short speech addressing these events and declares that he will take an action towards them. The speech act of Trump is a commissive one because he promises Iran to respond against this attack. Trump also performs anexercitives speech act in that he warns and directs the military to prepare themselves for the attack.

According to Gricean maxims, Trump violates the quantity maxim because he is more informative than is required. In this extract of the speech, Trump does not violate the quality maxim

because he gives truthful and justifiable information about the attack of Iran. His contribution is relevant and his manner is clear and lacks ambiguity.

6.2.3 The Third Speech

This speech of Trump is published in *The New York Times* in Aug. 28, 2020 by Glenn Thrush, he said:

“Joe Biden is not the savior of America’s soul — he is the destroyer of America’s jobs, and if given the chance, he will be the destroyer of American greatness”.

This speech is said after the election of 2020. The indications of verbal and non-verbal conversational of Trump and his physical and spatial ownership have contributed so much to his unforeseen triumph. The manner in which Donald Trump expresses himself shows confidence and power. Trump attacks his opponent directly. He performs a verdictive speech act because gives a cursory judgment by describing Joe Biden as a destroyer. His speech act is also considered as exercitive because he warns his opponent directly. Concerning the maxims, when Trump performs this verbal act of threatening he becomes more informative because he explains directly that he is annoyed by the situation. His manner in expressing threat and warning is clear. His action is relevant to the situation in which he acts, but he violates the maxim of quality because he is untruthful. These verbal actions might have contributed to a slight change in the perceptions of the American electorate pertaining to Trump’s leadership capabilities.

7. Conclusion

Pragmatics deals with imply meaning that is not stated directly. That is, how speakers try to communicate more than what they say depending on the contextual factors of the situation. The pragmatic analysis shows that Donald Trump’s salient behavior indeed has a purpose as both the verbal and the non-verbal communicative actions mostly contributed to the enactment of dominance and power of Trump over his opponents. The victory of Donald Trump could, therefore, be partially consequential to the manner in which Trump enacted dominance and power in his verbal and non-verbal communicative actions certain sequences of the presidential debates. The crucial findings of the present study are that Trump uses language for domination and showing power rather than communication. His facial expressions (gaze and gestures) and physical characteristics all served as indications of the expression of power and dominance. These enactments of dominance and power and through communicative action might, subsequently, have a great impression on people’s perceptions of Trump’s leadership capabilities. Therefore, they have contributed to his unexpected victory as president-elect of the United States. The adopted models of Austin and Grice make all these facts evident.

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