



Communication Strategies: Interdisciplinary Tools of a Public Speaker

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RESEARCH FINDINGS

Learning outcomes at the 'Villain-Victim-Hero' stage stemmed from realising how salient and simple the Good and the Evil are in fiction and how complex, ambivalent, and systemic they are in real life, in the elites' speeches, which was quite educative.

Learning outcomes at the 'Identity' (P1-P4) stage started with disillusionment and peaked at visible self-development. This stage was the most transformative. Learners became fully aware that impactful speeches are not only about the magic of rhetoric. Such speeches, in essence, are quite calculated. And they 'calculate' the speaker's achievements and potential: an impact is always cognitive-affective. This stage signified critical self-revisioning, reflection, and plans for self-development.

At the 'Discursive-Linguistic' stage we managed to unite two distinct processes: intrinsic motivation of learners to be perceived as credible and impactful speakers and their practical work with oratory tools and socio-psychological frames, which resulted in a meaningful and meticulous construction of their speeches.

CONCLUSION

This module is one part of formal in-class ESP education. It suggests that young people should learn to have a voice in identifying matters of common concern and identifying ways to address them. They need to be given a safe space to ask bold questions. It is not only about listening, discussing, and memorizing what 'powerful others' have said – it is also about what they can say as impactful speakers and how they can frame today's social reality to be taken seriously.

The next module will encompass both formal and informal practices with an aspect of entering a larger 'arena' for agency on big issues – sustainability, long-term impact education, digitalization, etc. – which are not fixed states to be achieved one day, but rather on-going communication processes [10]

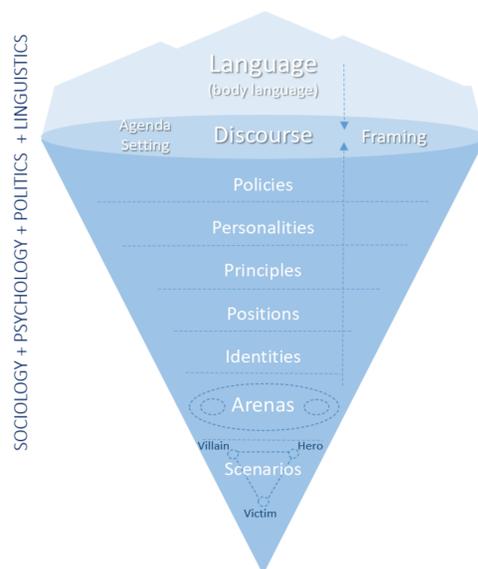
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RESEARCH DESIGN / METHODOLOGY

Site: MGIMO-Odintsovo; an experimental module within ESP Course; 6 groups of 3rd year students majoring in International Law (2020)

Iceberg as an image of constitutive elements of an impactful speech act



SOCIOLOGY + PSYCHOLOGY + POLITICS + LINGUISTICS

Instructor's role: a cognitive guide, a facilitator.

Organizing process: engaged discussions, guided discovery, decomposition of impactful speeches of elite groups, composition of students' speeches based on communication strategies provided by the speakers.

Learning process: 1) each speech is divided into distinct parts of meaningful social constructs; 2) each part is consolidated with a semiotic sign (Id/P1/P2/P3/P4/H/Vil/Vic) into a coherent 'knowledge structure' to fix a relation between a sign and a social construct; 3) each knowledge structure is tested in different contexts to prove that while contexts may differ, an underlying social construct and its interpretive sign remains the same; 4) students exploit all the signs and learn to work with trans-contextual abstractions of social realities; they make impactful combinations of signs and construct their speeches; 5) semiotic signs become students' working tools providing two boundary-crossing functions: hierarchical or interdisciplinary and horizontal or across contexts [4,5].

Content: A speech that produces a marked impact on listeners is always about matters of common concern; otherwise, listeners would not be affected, only informed. Impactful speeches take place in contexts of divergent interests and values, uncertainty and risk. They offer a better rationale of the reality; make a shift to a new logic. In its broadest conceptual sense, such speeches are always political since they induce listeners (audience) to make a judgement, a choice, a decision, an individual or collective social action [1,8].

How can a speaker make a particular logic dominant? How can (s)he frame others' perception?

Research results are consolidated in an 'iceberg logic' and explained in the table below [2,3,4,6,7,8].

Note: It makes sense to study the table from the bottom up.

Language Oratory Tools	The language level unfolds as the resultant of learners' <i>rational and skillful calculation of means and ends</i> , where 'means' are linguistic tools and 'ends' are the purpose and message of their speeches with constitutive socio-psychological and political underpinnings.
Discourse elite Agenda Setting Framing smart mix of P1 / P2 / P3 / P4	The main focus is <i>elite discourse</i> , which is per se an <i>exercise in power</i> as it is designed to have an effect on an audience. <i>Agenda setting</i> implies the ability of speakers to exploit the urgency, resonance, and scale of some larger social issues and effectively embed their own agendas and issues. <i>Framing effects</i> occur when small changes in the presentation of an issue produces large changes of opinion. Any issue has implications for multiple values. Alternative phrasings of the same issue can significantly alter its meaning; a particular conceptualization can reorient thinking about an issue. Psychological mechanisms work at individual level. Beyond the individual, there are social and political processes that can reduce or aggravate framing effects. <i>Public opinion often depends on how elites choose to frame issues</i> .
Policies P4 key texts	Policies in forms of key texts (charters, regulations, business contracts) are resultants of exercise in (persuasive) power of actors performing on arenas. In formulating their positions and arguing for specific outcomes, actors seek to increase the legitimacy of their issues and normalize a certain way of believing, speaking and behaving. <i>Legitimacy and normalization (institutionalization) will reduce further criticism and questioning and serve as a 'natural way' to have someone do something</i> .
Personalities P3 what is said, what is done	Personalities can be viewed as practical manifestations of values, norms, skills, experience and status of a certain person or a collective (legal) personality. To execute meaningful acts and perform impactful speeches, personalities have to possess a high level of integrity and trustworthiness, which is difficult in contexts of divergent interests and values, uncertainty and risk. In their speeches, <i>persuasive speakers may highlight the lack of real acts and other 'imperfections' of their opponents, thus reducing their credibility, and they may increase their own credibility by exploiting 'accomplishments, transparency, inclusiveness, and openness' discourse</i> .
Principles P2 values and norms	Principles (values and norms) are crucial. If everyday processes run smoothly, our principles work at subconscious level. In case some serious disruptors come in sight and in case rational argumentation from all sides causes tension, persuasive speakers seek to modify perceptions of what is right and good. They make <i>normative judgments about what ought to be done, linking their propositions to higher-order social values</i> , and seek to legitimate their propositions as the best rationales (see: P4).
Positions P1 student, teacher, professional, president	Positions can be posts with formal power (the right to speak and decide), critical resources (information, credibility), discursive legitimacy (an acknowledged right to be heard). Or it can be the process of deliberate switching between positions when speaking (e.g. from a position of a student to a position of a professional). Learners' outcome: understanding that while positions are in power struggle, with ones having structural advantage over others, they make sense only in relations to one another, and what is acceptable from one position may be inappropriate from another. <i>Structural disparities can be utilized in speeches to exert certain effects on an audience</i> .
Identities Id constitutive of P1+P2+P3+P4	Identities are complex social categories. They can be stable (e.g. identities of organisations, states), or fluid, in the process of development (e.g. students' identities). Identities are underpinned by intrinsic logics, organizing principles, guidelines for practical action and experience (P1,P2,P3,P4). When two different identities meet on one arena, <i>one can constrain the other in relations of power and legitimacy, or one can enable the agency of the other in relations of trust</i> (teacher / student; partners).
Arenas Id(1) vs Id(2)	Arena is a collective image of an audience, ranging in scale and in power. The media, social platforms, and even a group of students are arenas. Elites and other powerful speakers need access to an arena to <i>strengthen their credibility and increase the legitimacy of their issues</i> (in a monologue, or in a dialogue with an opponent). Some individuals or institutions may have a structural advantage over others to be exposed to various arenas. Many of them prefer the role of a Hero.
Scenarios Vil Vic	Key social scenarios draw on dominant cultural archetypes and myths. These scenarios have been reproduced so many times that now they are taken for granted by our collective mind. In essence, these scenarios reflect how the world is run. In practice, they aim to <i>retain or reconfigure power relations and challenge the status quo</i> . "Villain-Victim-Hero" scenario is almost omnipresent in society and can be found in every impactful speech. A speaker decides which role to choose and to what effect.

ABSTRACT

'Communication Strategies' is a new ESP module with an emphasis on 'essential skills' of generating and deliberating powerful ideas in multiple contexts and processes. The module adopts Critical Discourse Analysis and Framing Theory. The main contributions are:

- We elicited and consolidated constitutive elements of an impactful speech act and sketched interconnectedness of the elements.
- We introduced semiotic tools with their interdisciplinary boundary-crossing potential.
- We managed to create a transformative learning space with visible and measurable interdisciplinary learning outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Business and political leaders are increasingly seeking for graduates who can *communicate across domains, translate and legitimate a new vision and logic, accomplish tasks across multiple areas of skill and knowledge*.

This type of communication is never an end in itself: it makes sense only in relation to *grounding certain ideas into a common policy to ensure further coordinated collective actions*. Such competency is complex and it calls for transformative practices – *learning 'on the edges'* – when learners enter unfamiliar territories and face the challenge of negotiating and combining knowledge from different domains [4].

Powerful speakers from various elite groups with their communication strategies might be a good resource to learn from. But is it possible to extract a persuasive impact from one speech and transfer it to another? To a certain extent, it is a *boundary-crossing process*, and to do the crossing learners need *boundary-crossing tools* that provide a bridging function [9]. Critical Discourse Analysis with its multimodal semiotic emphasis as a point of entry into the interdisciplinary [3] and Framing Theory [2] provide an approach to this challenge.

A *research question is*: how to organize a learning space to make it more transformative and which boundary-crossing tools to introduce to ensure that learners take full advantage of the resourcefulness of professional speakers and make themselves effective communicators?