

## "TRANSLATING" PEOPLE'S FEELINGS THROUGH PARAVERBAL SIGNS

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### Introduction

Negotiation is a process of communication between partners who have different points of view regarding the reality they both share. Negotiation, as an aspect of oral communication, becomes the most obvious place for the manifestation of personal implication, identified at multiple levels (the paraverbal one being included), as the speaker permanently tries to adapt to his message, to the situation and to the interlocutor. The speaker qualifies, judges, comes up with arguments, persuades, and influences his partner, provoking him to a reaction, transforming him into an active factor of the verbal exchange.

The speaker's choice of paraverbal signs is, from a stylistic point of view, strongly related to the expression of his feelings. By choosing a certain tempo of speech, a high or a low voice, a powerful or a weak intensity or an emphatic accent, the speaker follows the logic of affectivity, translating his feelings, indicating his position towards himself, towards his message but also towards the interlocutor from whom he expects a certain action.

### 1. Tempo of speech

#### 1.1. Rapid tempo

Depending on the pragmatic context and on the effect that the speaker wants to create upon the interlocutor, the rapid tempo of speech gains different stylistic values.

a) It can be the expression of the speaker's *intense emotion*. In the context of a negotiation between the government and the education unions, the union leader uses a rapid tempo of speech to express his *irritation* for having been interrupted by the interlocutor:

Ex [1]: X: for fifteen years] =

Y: = I want to say something =

X: = <R for fifteen years all kinds of social budgetary categories have had [their salaries raised >=

Z: = mister X]

The irritation marked by the rapid tempo of speech is also underlined by the insistent repetition of the time reference (*for fifteen years*), whose implication is that nothing has changed regarding the level of salaries in education since the Revolution up to the present day. The use of the noun phrase *all kinds of*, with a minimizing, even pejorative value, as well as the use of the verbal construction *have had their salaries raised* complete the discontent expressed by the rapid tempo. The effect is not immediately felt at the level of the interlocutor, because the context of negotiation (a TV programme) allows the TV host to interfere. He tries to calm X down through an interruption in order to remind him that he should let Y speak.

In the context of the same negotiation, the rapid tempo of speech suggests the speaker's *discontent* regarding the present situation in the field of education:

Ex [2]: X: = <R *the young people do not want to join the system anymore*> [...] <R *the valuable people leave the system*>

The parallelism created, on the one hand, between the noun phrases *the young people* and *the valuable people* and, on the other hand, between the negation of the verb *to join* and the verb *to leave* creates an implication (*the system is left without people*) which emphasizes the discontent.

In a negotiation between the headmistress of a kindergarten and a parent regarding the acceptance of the latter's child in a class (the list being already closed), the rapid tempo becomes the expression of *determination*, finding a linguistic support in the verb of volition:

Ex [3]: X: I have a little girl and I <R *want to enrol her in this kindergarten*>

In the context of the same negotiation, as a result both of the verbal expression (which denotes insistence) and of the nonverbal expression (the attempt of bribery by placing some money on the desk), the same tempo is the proof of the pragmatic effect of these acts upon the interlocutor and it signifies *anger*:

Ex [4]: Y: [...] come on please take this (pushes the money away) and <R *leave the office immediately*>

The first part of the interlocutor's intervention takes the form of two precipitated expressions (interjection + imperative), separated by *please*, that has the role of a politeness marker. The second part of the intervention, at the level of which the rapid tempo of speech interferes, is an imperative that has in view the interlocutor's intimidation.

In a negotiation with a man who threatens to jump from a statue, the rapid tempo of speech expresses his *fear* of not being taken down from the statue before his requests have been fulfilled.

Ex [5]: Z: look we'll all go away, come on  
(he approaches the statue)

X: <R *don't touch me*>

Z: <S *nobody nobody's going to touch you*> stay calm

The negative imperative, together with the rapid tempo, has as an effect the interlocutor's discouragement, paraverbally marked by a slow tempo and a stressed uttering of the negative pronoun *nobody* (in association with the verb *to touch*).

The rapid tempo of speech can mark *despair* in a situation where a man threatens to jump from a building:

Ex [6]: X: <R *I'm on the verge of despair*> I can't stand it anymore

b) The rapid tempo of speech can also be an *expression of the lack of interest in the things discussed*.

Ex [7]: Y: there are no places available anymore and I *can't do anything for you*.

The deontic *can* used in the negative, in association with the verb *to do* whose direct object is the indefinite pronoun *anything*, emphasizes the idea of the lack of interest in the interlocutor's request, the effect being the break-off of the negotiation.

c) In a negotiation based on a conflict of opinions, the rapid tempo can be the *expression of irony*.

Ex [8]: X: mister A <R *did a thing which SURPRISED*> ++ the delinquent NAMELY he <R *took a GUN*>

Y: <L *yes*> <R *and he went hunting*>

In the negotiation between X and Y regarding the degree of guilt of X's client, Y (the prosecutor) uses the rapid tempo, in an ironic attitude. To X's arguments in his client's defence, Y answers with a metaphor (*yes and he went hunting*). The irony is towards the act as

such, in an attempt to dramatize, once more, what happened. The presupposition is that X's client is a person who enjoys killing, considering it a sport.

## 1.2. Slow tempo

a) When the participants do everything to maintain cooperation in negotiation, the slow tempo becomes the *expression of insistence*.

Ex [9]: Y: = <S yes but you must realize> that if there are any wounds this means they are <P OLD> otherwise there wouldn't have been WOUNDS

Z: <W you are right but>

Y: = <S you KNOW this thing>

The slow tempo appears as a mark of the speaker's peaceful attempt to convince the interlocutor to accept the arguments presented.

b) When the interlocutor does not understand (or pretends not to understand) a refusal, the slow tempo can be the *expression of the desire for precision*.

Ex[10]: X: <R but you will accept my little girl AS WELL> won't you?

Y: I'm sorry but <S we also have some rules>

X's request is politely refused by Y, but the refusal is completed by the justification which brings about its legal grounds; the justification is uttered in a slow tempo, in order to be better understood.

c) In the context of a negotiation between the education unions and the government, negotiation where the government representative tries to come up with a suggestion, this one is uttered in a slow tempo, which becomes the *expression of solemnity* trying to convince the interlocutor.

Ex [11]: Y: I absolutely agree <S I suggest the following> let's just sit down and talk things over but I want ONE thing let's pay attention to [the problems

d) When it is accompanied by pauses, the slow tempo can be considered as the *expression of hesitation* regarding the object of negotiation.

Ex [12]: Y: could you offer me a discount? <S let's say> ++ a ++ <R six per cent>?

X: six per cent? I'm sorry but I don't think ++ <L it's a> ++ we =

Y: = <S let's say> ++ <S four per cent> ++

The repetition in a slow tempo of the familiar *let's say* marks the speaker's wish to convince the interlocutor. The pauses strengthen the idea of hesitation regarding the effect the speaker's suggestion may have on the interlocutor.

e) When the interlocutor, raising his voice, expresses irritation, the slow tempo used by the subject is the *expression of his intention to calm down* the interlocutor.

Ex [13]: X: <H I won't come down> until you release MY brother

Y: <S if you come down> we'll call the lawyers and in their presence <R we go together to the prosecutor's office>

f) In a negotiation (at a fair) regarding the price of a pair of shoes, the seller, facing an implicit refusal from the customer to buy the shoes at the requested price, uses a slow tempo as an *expression of resignation*. The intended effect is that of defeating the interlocutor's resistance and of determining him to continue the negotiations.

Ex [14]: Z: how much do you want for them?

X: <P six hundred>

Z: oh (puts down the shoes)

X: <S as you wish> take it or leave it

Z: can't you sell them cheaper

## 2. Voice

### 2.1. High voice

The high voice can also be related to the speaker's feelings or to his attitude towards the interlocutor in the process of negotiation.

a) In the negotiation between the government and the education unions, the high voice becomes the *expression of the discontent* when the union leader gradually presents the causes that led to the discrepancies in the education system.

Ex [15]: X: [...] <R so here we're not talking about the policy in Romania> or <R about a political party> but we're talking about a constant policy against the <H education system> against <H the teacher's stimulation> a policy which leads to a <H counterselection in the education system>

The intended effect is that of the interlocutor's conviction regarding the seriousness of the situation in the education system caused by faulty governing.

b) The high voice can be the *expression of concession* when it is used with the imperative *let's* in the context of reaching an agreement.

Ex [16]: Y: yes. <H let's reach an agreement> we do like this

The effect is that of calming down the interlocutor in order to reach a mutually advantageous agreement.

c) Being forced to face his sister, who came to convince him not to jump from a building, the speaker uses the high voice in order to express *irritation*. The expected effect is that of the interlocutor's intimidation.

Ex [17]: X: <H what are you doing here?> get out of here

### 2.2. Low voice

a) From a stylistic point of view, the low voice can express *surprise*.

Ex [18]: Y: I'm sorry but <S we also have some rules> =

X: = come on who's obeying rules the rules nowadays? come on you'd better say how much it costs ++

Y: ++ <L I don't understand> ++

The idea of rules, or orders that the speaker invokes in the argumentation of his refusal is minimized by the interlocutor. Through the first interjection *come on*, continued with a rhetoric question, he emphasizes the generalization of the attitude. Through the second interjection *come on* X addresses a request that intends to initiate a negotiation.

b) The interlocutor's excuse referring to the misunderstanding of a possible question from the speaker gets an answer from the latter through which he expresses the *disagreement* by using a low voice.

Ex [19]: Y: good evening Mr. X

X: good evening Mr. Y

Y: first of all I'm sorry but I couldn't hear the answer and the question you asked anyway [in this context

X: <L I didn't ask] any question>

c) The use of the personal example as a persuasion strategy intends to make the interlocutor aware of the reality and gravity of his intentions; through the negative answer to the speaker's (rhetorical) question, uttered in a low voice, the interlocutor verbalizes his feeling, that of *shame*.

Ex [20]: Z: you don't trust your sister <S think about me> I'm ill do you want me to die?

X: <L no>

d) The low voice can be the expression of the speaker's *surprise* when he has to face a direct attack from the interlocutor.

Ex [21]: X: [...] we have a problem with <P YOU>

Y: ok <L so you have a problem with me >

### 3. Intensity

#### 3.1. Powerful intensity

As a stylistic marker, the powerful intensity can suggest:

a) The speaker's *trust* in his own opinion

Ex [22]: X: Mrs. Z you can't be entitled to such a thing <P I think>

The verb *to think* is uttered with a powerful intensity. Thus, the speaker assumes the subjectivity of his opinion through a directive illocutionary act.

b) The speaker's *conviction* regarding the arguments presented

Ex [23]: Y: = <S yes but you should have realized> that if there are any wounds this means they are <P OLD> otherwise they wouldn't have been WOUNDS

The speaker utters with powerful intensity the adjective *old*, considered to be the logical argument in supporting the personal point of view.

#### 3.2. Weak intensity

a) The weak intensity of voice, accompanying the indefinite *one can see*, becomes the *expression of distrust* when it constitutes an answer to an implicit order masked by a question, followed by an interdiction and a new order, explicit this time, formulated with the help of the imperative:

Ex [24]: X: = are you listening to me? you can't be entitled. stop [saying =  
Z: = but <W one can see marks in the photos>

b) The weak intensity can suggest *the hesitation* regarding the acceptance of the arguments presented, hesitation which also results from the use of the adversative *but* immediately after a presupposed acceptance of the interlocutor's opinion.

Ex [25]: Y: = <S yes but you should have realised> that if there are any wounds this means they are <P OLD> otherwise they wouldn't have been WOUNDS  
Z: <W you're right but>

c) When the interlocutor's idea is repeated under the form of an interrogative sentence, the weak intensity accompanies an element about which the speaker asks further information.

Ex [26]: Y: OF COURSE you give me arguments + in order <R for me to see> ++ <P WHY> you want FIVE NIGHTS instead of THREE  
X: instead of FOUR  
Y: instead of <W four>? did we say FOUR from the very beginning?

### 4. Emphatic accent

The emphatic accent can affect a word or two and can coincide with powerful intensity, but this is not compulsory.

Ex [27]: Z: I was asking you about the percentage. it was an <P EASIER> question

The emphatic accent can be used with an argumentative function when the speaker emphasizes the elements which underline his needs and which will constitute the starting point for negotiation:

Ex [28]: X: [...] I'm going to open a new *FIRM* which will have as shareholders two persons a Romanian, myself, and an Italian. at this moment, in order to start the working, we need *SPACE* and *MACHINES* and we have money just for *ONE* of the two.

The emphatic accent can appear in repetitions, to underline the desire for cooperation:

Ex [29]: Y: [...] we'd like to find solutions for this strike together + I repeat + *TOGETHER* + with the representatives of the unions

## 5. Conclusions

In our paper we have tried to demonstrate how the paraverbal signs differ depending on the context. Thus, the tempo of speech can suggest the speaker's intense emotion, his discontent, determination, insistence or lack of interest. A high voice can be the expression of concession, anger or irritation, while a low voice can indicate surprise, disagreement or shame. The intensity of voice also varies depending on the context, but also depending on the speaker's emotions, underlying his conviction, distrust or hesitation. All these emotions, expressed paraverbally, have different pragmatic effects on the interlocutors, influencing the development of negotiations towards and ending with or without an agreement.

## Notes

- [1] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (Observator, Antena 1, November 22, 2005); the participants: X (union leader), Y (prime minister), Z (TV host)
- [2] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (Observator, Antena 1, November 22, 2005); the participants: X (union leader), Y (prime minister), Z (TV host)
- [3] Negotiation in a kindergarten (Stirile PRO TV, September 3, 2005); the participants: X (parent), Y (headmistress)
- [4] Negotiation in a kindergarten (Stirile PRO TV, September 3, 2005); the participants: X (parent), Y (headmistress)
- [5] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (Observator, Antena 1, June 14, 2006); the participants: X (protestant), Y (friend), Z (friend)
- [6] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (Stirile PRO TV, July 5, 2006); the participants: X (protestant), Y (mother-in-law), Z (X's sister)
- [7] Negotiation in a kindergarten (Stirile PRO TV, September 3, 2005); the participants: X (parent), Y (headmistress)
- [8] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (OTV, Dan Diaconescu in direct, November 15, 2005); the participants: X (lawyer), Y (prosecutor)
- [9] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (OTV, Dan Diaconescu in direct, November 15, 2005); the participants: X (lawyer), Y (prosecutor), Z (prosecutor)
- [10] Negotiation in a kindergarten (Stirile PRO TV, September 3, 2005); the participants: X (parent), Y (headmistress)
- [11] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (Observator, Antena 1, November 22, 2005); the participants: X (union leader), Y (prime minister), Z (TV host)
- [12] Negotiation recorded at the computers warehouse (March 21, 2004); the participants: X (producer and seller), Y (customer)
- [13] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (Observator, Antena 1, June 14, 2006); the participants: X (protestant), Y (friend), Z (friend)
- [14] Negotiation recorded in the market (April 8, 2006); the participants: X (seller), Z (customer), Y (Z's friend)
- [15] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (Observator, Antena 1, November 22, 2005); the participants: X (union leader), Y (prime minister), Z (TV host)
- [16] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (OTV, Dan Diaconescu in direct, November 15, 2005); the participants: X (lawyer), Y (prosecutor)
- [17] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (Stirile PRO TV, July 5, 2006); the participants: X (protestant), Y (mother-in-law), Z (X's sister)
- [18] Negotiation in a kindergarten (Stirile PRO TV, September 3, 2005); the participants: X (parent), Y (headmistress)
- [19] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (Observator, Antena 1, November 22, 2005); the participants: X (union leader), Y (prime minister), Z (TV host)

- [20] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (Stirile PRO TV, July 5, 2006); the participants: X (protestant), Y (mother-in-law), Z (X's sister)
- [21] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (OTV, Dan Diaconescu in direct, November 15, 2005); the participants: X (lawyer), Y (prosecutor)
- [22] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (OTV, Dan Diaconescu in direct, November 15, 2005); the participants: X (lawyer), Y (prosecutor), Z (prosecutor)
- [23] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (OTV, Dan Diaconescu in direct, November 15, 2005); the participants: X (lawyer), Y (prosecutor), Z (prosecutor)
- [24] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (OTV, Dan Diaconescu in direct, November 15, 2005); the participants: X (lawyer), Y (prosecutor), Z (prosecutor)
- [25] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (OTV, Dan Diaconescu in direct, November 15, 2005); the participants: X (lawyer), Y (prosecutor), Z (prosecutor)
- [26] Negotiation recorded at home (July 28, 2005); the participants: X (wife), Y (husband)
- [27] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (Observer, Antena 1, November 22, 2005); the participants: X (union leader), Y (prime minister), Z (TV host)
- [28] Negotiation recorded in a bank (November 20, 2005); the participants: X (the manager of a firm), Y (representative of the bank)
- [29] Negotiation recorded from a TV programme (Observer, Antena 1, November 22, 2005); the participants: X (union leader), Y (prime minister), Z (TV host)

## Annex

### Conventions for the phonetic transcription (Hoarță-Cărăușu 2005: 11-13)

TEXT	emphatic accent
text =	intervention started by a speaker and continued, after interruption, by another speaker
= text	
+	short pause
++	longer pause
<S>	slow tempo of speech
<R>	rapid tempo of speech
<H>	high voice
<L>	low voice
<P>	powerful intensity
<W>	weak intensity

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