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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AS A PHENOMENON IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

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**Abstract.** In today's hyper-connected world, effective public speaking is a crucial skill that extends beyond traditional arenas. It's not limited to politicians, CEOs, or gifted speakers; it's now indispensable for professionals, students, and everyone else. However, public speaking isn't merely about charisma; it hinges on strategic communication. Integrating strategic communication into public speaking elevates it beyond words and gestures. It empowers speakers to create compelling narratives, connect with diverse audiences, and achieve their goals. Whether the aim is to inspire, educate, motivate, or inform, mastering communication techniques can significantly enhance your impact as a speaker. In this article, we explore the vital connection of strategic communication and public speaking. We delve into principles, strategies, and practical tips to turn any speech or presentation into a captivating and influential experience. From audience understanding and message customization to mastering body language and rhetoric, we uncover the multifaceted facets of strategic communication that every public speaker should embrace.

**Key words:** communication theory, strategic communication, public speaking, communication skills, rhetoric

### Introduction.

In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, effective public speaking is more than just the art of eloquence; it is a powerful tool that can shape perceptions, influence opinions, and drive change. At the heart of this art lies a fundamental pillar that often goes unnoticed but is crucial for success: strategic communication. Public speaking, at its core, is not merely about delivering a speech; it is about conveying a message that resonates with your audience, compels them to listen, and prompts them to act.

Strategic communication is a multifaceted field that can be studied from various perspectives and viewpoints. From the point of linguistics, it is defined as “the main line of speech behaviour within a specific communicative event, determined by the general purpose of communication, the situational context and ideas about the recipient” [2, p. 161].

Public speaking involves the act of presenting an idea to an audience, utilizing one's voice as the primary means of communication. The term 'public' encompasses a broad spectrum, ranging from small gatherings to large audiences. Interestingly, while many individuals tend to associate greater fear with larger audiences, some experience an equal level of anxiety when speaking to smaller groups [5].

When we contemplate public speaking, our minds often conjure images of inspirational or educational speeches, reminiscent of TED Talks. However, the definition extends beyond this narrow perception. Public speaking can manifest in various forms, including delivering workplace presentations, pitching ideas to potential investors, leading school assemblies, or participating in job interviews.

Considering the diverse applications of public speaking, it becomes evident why



this skill holds such significance. The reality is that nearly everyone will find themselves addressing an audience on multiple occasions throughout their lives. Consequently, it becomes imperative to hone these skills, ensuring that anxiety doesn't restrict one's abilities and allowing individuals to thrive in diverse situations.

Adopting a broader perspective, the importance of public speaking lies in its capacity to harness the power of voices for positive impact. Discussing a wide array of engaging and informative subjects serves as an educational tool, and a well-delivered speech possesses the potential to be profoundly influential.

### **Main text.**

Communication and the communicative competence are subjects of continuous investigation across various fields, including linguistics, education, artificial intelligence, and media. The enduring interest in communication stems from its fundamental role in nearly all aspects of human interaction. Indeed, human communication is intricate, encompassing linguistic, pragmatic, cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions, making it a subject worthy of ongoing research.

In broad terms, communicative competence of a public speaker can be divided into four primary components:

1. Grammatical competence, which pertains to syntax.
2. Sociolinguistic competence, addressing the social appropriateness of communication.
3. Discoursal competence, which deals with cohesion and coherence in discourse.
4. Strategic competence, focused on the pragmatic functions of communication [3, p. 2].

Pragmatic functions, therefore, refer to the practical purposes and goals of communication. In public speaking, the pragmatic functions are multifaceted and may include informing, persuading, motivating, inspiring, or even entertaining the audience. Strategic competence involves the ability to align these pragmatic functions with the overall objectives of the speech.

Strategic communication involves adapting messages to suit different contexts and audiences. Public speakers often find themselves addressing diverse audiences with varying levels of knowledge and perspectives. The ability to tailor your message while remaining true to your communication objectives is a shared skill between the two disciplines. A successful public speech can be classified according to its intended purpose, and, therefore, this purpose can significantly influence the content and style of the presentation. According to the communicative goal, a public speech can be classified according to the following strategic goals:

- *informative presentations*: these are designed to provide comprehensive information about a particular topic. The emphasis is on delivering informative content while considering the audience's existing knowledge. The aim is to make the subject engaging and informative, either to expand the audience's knowledge or to help them acquire specific skills.
- *persuasive presentations*: in persuasive presentations, the speaker takes a clear position on a subject and presents information that supports that viewpoint. Material is selected and organized to align with the audience's opinions, with the goal of persuading them to change their thoughts or actions.



- *inspirational presentations*: inspirational presentations revolve around public events, either ongoing or recent. The speaker structures their remarks to convey values associated with the event. The objective is to build upon the audience's existing knowledge and attitudes, deepening their appreciation for specific ideas, individuals, or events [4, p. 14].

The term "strategy" finds its origin in the Greek word "strategein," which literally meant "building roads" (stratos agein). Over time, it has also taken on meanings like "being a leader" and "employing tactics to achieve victory." As scholars such as Mintzberg (1994), Whittington (1993), and more recently, Koch (2011), have noted, the conceptual foundations of strategy development have evolved. Classical strategy theory emphasized rational, long-term planning, whereas contemporary strategy theory prioritizes ongoing adaptation, emergence, and incremental changes.

Although these theorists don't explicitly discuss strategic communication, we can infer that in classical theory, strategic communication likely serves to present and promote long-term plans. Conversely, in emergent and incremental strategy development, strategic communication clearly plays a pivotal role in shaping and constructing strategy [6, p. 377].

From a research perspective, strategic communication is an emerging field of knowledge bringing established research fields such as public relations, organizational communication and marketing communication [1, p. 6]. This interdisciplinary fusion has opened up new avenues for exploration and has broadened our understanding of how communication functions in contemporary contexts. Furthermore, strategic communication research recognizes the importance of audience analysis and engagement. It acknowledges that effective communication is not a one-way process but a dynamic interaction between organizations, individuals, and communities. Researchers in this field investigate how messages are received, interpreted, and acted upon by diverse audiences, shedding light on the nuances of persuasion, influence, and information dissemination.

### **Summary and conclusions.**

Strategic communication, in linguistics, refers to the systematic and purposeful use of language and discourse with the intent of achieving specific communicative objectives. It involves the careful selection of linguistic elements, such as words, tone, style, and rhetorical devices, to convey information, persuade, or influence an audience. Linguistic strategies are employed to ensure that the message is coherent, effective, and aligned with the communicator's goals.

Communication and communicative competence are continuously explored in various fields like linguistics, education, artificial intelligence, and media. This enduring interest is driven by the central role that communication plays in human interaction, which is multifaceted, encompassing linguistic, pragmatic, cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions. Consequently, researchers continually investigate these aspects.

When it comes to public speaking, communicative competence can be thought of as a set of skills that involve understanding language structure (grammatical competence), knowing how to communicate appropriately in different social contexts (sociolinguistic competence), maintaining coherence in discourse (discoursal



competence), and using communication effectively for various practical purposes (strategic competence). This last aspect, strategic competence, is crucial in public speaking as it involves aligning communication goals with the overall objectives of the speech.

Strategic communication, a key component of strategic competence, requires adapting messages to suit different situations and audiences. Public speakers often face diverse audiences with varying levels of knowledge and perspectives. Hence, the ability to customize the message while staying true to the communication objectives is a shared skill between communication and public speaking. The success of a public speech depends on how well the message is tailored to the intended purpose, which can be classified into informative presentations, persuasive presentations, or inspirational presentations, depending on the speech's strategic goals.

In essence, the study of strategic communication and communicative competence remains a subject of ongoing research due to their fundamental roles in human interaction, while public speaking relies on these competencies to effectively convey messages to diverse audiences and contexts, aligning with the intended speech objectives.

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