

“A Reader, Not a Speaker”: On the Verbal, Paraverbal and Nonverbal Communication Trichotomy

«Es un lector, no un orador»: sobre la tricotomía comunicación verbal, paraverbal y no verbal
“É um leitor, não um palestrante”: sobre a tricotomia comunicação verbal, paraverbal e não verbal

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ABSTRACT. This paper aims to analyze the relevance of verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal communication for a group of students by observing and evaluating a speaker's speech. The corpus analyzed is composed of the notes made by 30 students about the communicative flaws detected in a speaker's speech. The results obtained indicate that 11.27% of such criticisms were aimed at verbal communication, 30.82% at paraverbal communication and 57.89% at nonverbal communication. Therefore, these conclusions are similar to those reached by Mehrabian (1972), although they differ in part from the ones presented in van-der Hofstadt (2005) or Orzáiz (2009). The implications of these results are discussed.

Key words:
message
transmission,
verbal
communication,
paraverbal
communication,
nonverbal
communication,
public speech.

RESUMEN. El presente artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la relevancia que asumen la comunicación verbal, paraverbal y no verbal para un grupo de estudiantes al observar y evaluar el discurso de un orador. El corpus analizado está compuesto por las anotaciones efectuadas por 30 alumnos sobre los déficits comunicativos que detectan en el discurso de un orador. Los resultados obtenidos indican que el 11.27% de tales críticas iban dirigidas a la comunicación

Palabras clave:
transmisión
del mensaje,
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verbal,
comunicación
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verbal, el 30.82% a la comunicación paraverbal y el 57.89% a la comunicación no verbal. Por tanto, estas conclusiones resultan afines con las alcanzadas por Mehrabian (1972), si bien difieren parcialmente de las presentadas en van-der Hofstadt (2005) u Orzáiz (2009). Se discuten las implicancias de estos resultados.

comunicación
no verbal,
oratoria.

RESUMO. O presente artigo tem por objetivo analisar a relevância que assume a comunicação verbal, paraverbal e não verbal para um grupo de estudantes ao observar e avaliar o discurso de um palestrante. O corpus analisado é constituído por anotações feitas por 30 alunos sobre os déficits comunicativos detectados no discurso de um palestrante. Os resultados indicam que 11,27% dessas críticas foram destinadas à comunicação verbal, 30,82% à comunicação paraverbal e 57,89% à comunicação não verbal. Portanto, estes resultados são semelhantes aos obtidos por Mehrabian (1972), embora parcialmente difiram dos apresentados em van-der Hofstadt (2005) ou Orzáiz (2009). As implicações dos presentes resultados são discutidos.

Palavras-chave:
transmissão
da mensagem,
comunicação
verbal,
comunicação
paraverbal,
comunicação não
verbal, oratória.

Since Antiquity, both in Greek and Roman civilizations, the importance of oratory was demonstrated; the documents destined to increase the communicative ability of the speaker are a true reflection of such concern. Although it is true that in ancient times writings of this nature existed, it is now that research of that sort has proliferated. There are authors, like Fernández García (2000), who state that this increase in bibliographic production is due mainly to the fast growth of mass media in the past decades. The relevance of public communication resides in the very sociable nature of the human being, to the point of dedicating its attention, ability, and expectations to that goal (Laborda Gil, 2014). In the same way, in these times it is assumed that personal and professional promotion is achieved by proper public speaking since being a good speaker implies being a good communicator (Martínez Selva, 1994).

There is widespread conviction that the articulated word represents the perfect vehicle for our thoughts (Berlenga and García, 2014). Even more, upholds Cattani (2010), when words captivate an audience they are called "magic," whether understood as a poetic metaphor or a rhetorical argument; for this, communication is to be also interpreted as a captivating means of knowledge transmission, given that "words seduce, deceive, spur, enchant" (2010, p. 25). From a different angle, Hernández and García (2008) defend that, by itself, the word does not result eloquent, but that eloquence is conditioned—in good measure—by the figure of the speaker, his or her life testimony, attitudes, gestures, and facial expressions.

The indisputable common denominator existing in oratory research is the desire to describe the characteristics a good speaker must have. For Laborda Gil (2014), these qualities rest on five

fundamental pillars: (a) knowledge of the topic, (b) surrender to the audience, (c) voice quality, (d) expressive fluency, and (e) actor facet; in this list—besides verbal communication—elements linked to paralinguistic and nonverbal communication are present. Certainly, “What is transmitted is important, but no less important is how it is done.”¹(Ballenato Prieto, 2013b, p. 151).

Reflections on the oral language and written language dichotomy go back to classical times: Aristotle (2001) observed that the spoken word lends itself more to equivocity, as opposed to a greater precision of the written word. The main difference between both communicative planes is that a written message is coded only through verbal communication; as an opposite, paraverbal communication and nonverbal communication also intervene in oral discourse—together with verbal communication—. More than half of all messages emitted and received, specifically between 50 and 70%, are of a nonverbal nature and, also, visual (Martínez Selva, 1994). This type of statements justify that researchers enquire into the codes of message reception; that is, in studying what percentage of relevance verbal, paraverbal, and nonverbal communication assume when an individual deciphers a message. From a practical profile, these results may—or rather must—be internalized by the speaker when coding any message, with the objective of channeling his efforts consciously so that the discourse caused the desired effects.

ABOUT RHETORIC AND ORATORY

It is convenient to start this section clarifying the extended lexical-semantic confusion existing between the terms oratory and rhetoric. On such issue, Dueñas Sanz, Fernández Fernández, and Vela Valldecabres (2010) state:

Oratory is the materialization of the persuasive ability presented by rhetoric and becomes concrete as a specific literary genre, e.g., speeches, conferences and sermons. In a few words, oratory is the art of speaking with eloquence. Now, one can speak well in many ways: the technique that teaches to speak well is rhetoric and oratory is the art of putting it into practice [...] *Rhetoric is the theory, oratory the application of the rhetorical theory in a concrete discourse.* That is why rhetoric and oratory cannot be separated and have led to certain terminological misunderstandings: to talk about oratory theory is to speak of rhetoric, whereas to talk about rhetoric practice is to talk about oratory. Thus, rhetoric is born out of oratory praxis and oratory is enriched with contributions from rhetoric (p. 11).

Traditional studies on rhetoric and oratory have been monopolized by the detailed description of verbal communication, placing paraverbal and nonverbal communication in the background, and in some cases even forgetting them. The usual tendency has been to structure the inquiries as a function of the five phases of the preparation of the discourse: invention, disposition, elocution, memory, and action; such is the case of the well-known manuals of Albaladejo (1990) and Morales (2007). In these studies, the argument usually is the point of reference; in summary, they enquire into the types of arguments as a strategy to create a persuasive discourse.

¹ The use of italics in all quotes in this article is a true reflection of the print style of the original research paper.

In Pérez García (2014), based on Lo Cascio (1998), the most frequent arguments are presented, i.e.: (1) *argumentum ad personam*: promotes the lack of truthfulness of the individual that emitted such statement; (2) *argumentum ad hominem*: attacks and even disqualifies the individual; (3) *argumentum ad verecundiam*: inconsistent arguments of false authority; (4) *argumentum ad baculum*: through fear of negative consequences if not admitted, a false argument is considered true; (5) *argumentum ad misericordiam*: a lie that pursues understanding for the approval of the argument; (6) *argumentum ad populum*: takes as its basis the general opinion of the population; (7) *argumentum ad consequentiam*: argument established over the possible consequences, not the actual facts; (8) *argumentum ad ignorantiam*: given there is no proof demonstrating the opposite, the falsehood of the argument is defended; (9) *petitio principii*: arguments whose validity is given as demonstrated since are falsely presented as axioms; (10) *ignoratio elenchi*: by changing topics, a question or the opponent's thesis is evaded by developing unnecessary data; (11) *post hoc ergo propter hoc*: a nonexistent cause-effect relationship is established; and (12) *non sequitur*: when premises do not allow to deduce the conclusion.

As it is logical, argumentation may contain defects: (1) false: since it is a lie; (2) vulgar: if it is concluded about it other different reasoning after obtaining its acceptance; (3) common: allows to test the conclusions, whether one's own or the other party's; (4) light: with a slight excuse a serious action is tried to be justified; (5) remote: very general premises with broad objectives; (6) bad definition: error arising when defining the whole instead of a part or the group instead of a person; (7) controversial or perspicuous: when the argument is unnecessary, dubious or even demonstrates an issue that had not aroused polemic; (8) not conceded: while still in debate, a particular issue is considered proven; (9) offensive; when the mood of the audience may be hurt; (10) contrary: turns into criticism to the recipients' actions; and (11) inconstant: demonstrates a aspect different to what had been established before (Jiménez Leube, 1997).

From another angle, it is to be pointed out that the big error made by all works about communication and language is not having observed the existing indivisibility in the word-paralanguage-kinesics trichotomy (Poyatos, 1994). In fact, the initial publications on rhetoric and oratory not only analyzed these levels in an isolated manner but centered their study on verbal communication. More current works start from that premise and invert the preference of priorities, in such a way that the analysis of paraverbal and nonverbal communication usually has greater prominence than verbal communication; as shall be demonstrated later with quantitative data, this change of direction occurs when verifying the greater relevance of the voice and body language in detriment of words in the transmission of the message process.

Many research works instruct on communication planes that are not merely verbal, and their point of view is that paraverbal and nonverbal communication is usually coded and decoded unconsciously. Taking into account that in communication, nonverbal elements are emitted involuntarily, it turns to be very complex to lie employing body language and the same occurs with its decoding, which is captured and processed unconsciously; as an aside, for a correct praxis, nonverbal indicators should be analyzed and interpreted as a whole and not in an isolated manner (Ballenato Prieto, 2013a). The

message is transmitted with the entire body, such that the speaker projects energy, life, and strength; the emphasis of the discourse is sustained by the voice, gestures, and movement, for which it can be stated that, “The body has its own language” (Ballenato Prieto, 2013b: 187). In summary, Azauste and Casas (2015) advise that to reinforce voice modulation, one needs to control body movement and especially facial expression. In this sense, one should stress the handling of one’s gaze because authors like Morales (2007) argue that it represents the primary source of communication of the human body, placing it almost at the same level as words.

The correct utilization of the pause shows a good mastering of the oratory possessed by a person who uses it correctly. This resource should not be interpreted as absence of communication but as a reflection upon the possibilities of language (Mortara, 1991). The use of pauses and silences in discourse allows to, on the hand, capture attention and, on the other hand, control the rhythm of the speech. Equally, attention should be paid to the length of the pause, because, if brief, it may be interpreted by the recipient as an interruption, but if it turns out extremely long, it may cause uneasiness (Martínez Selva, 1994). Morales (2007) proposes substituting pet phrases with pauses, which would optimize the discourse with certainty, credibility, and meaning. So, it can be understood that mastering silences shows strength, never weakness, as a consequence of needing to play with silence when interpreting that the absence of pauses indicates nervousness (Dueñas Sanz et al., 2010).

VERBAL, PARAVERBAL, AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION: ITS RELEVANCE IN THE TRANSMISSION OF THE MESSAGE

One issue that has supposed a controversial debate around the transmission of the message has been precisely the distribution granted to the different subtypes of communication. The allusion made by Leith (2012) about reading the Rhetoric of Aristotle evokes that the Hellenic philosopher realized the greater relevance of action as opposed to the elocution or content of the discourse. Along the same line, although with a firmer positioning, is situated Demosthenes, for his insistence on that the first, second and third most important factor in oratory was action (Hernández and García, 2008). Therefore, these classic authors pointed the undeniable role of the pronunciation of the discourse; in that process, aside from verbal communication, paraverbal and nonverbal communication also come into play.

From the behavioral component approach, van-der Hofstadt (2005) offers a classification as a function of their verbal, paraverbal, or nonverbal nature. Table 1 presents this information.

The traditional approach has been characterized for being a staunch defender of these three subtypes of communication as having an equal weight in the transmission of the message so that the three of them have been assigned an even-handed 33.33%. However, after carrying out diverse scientific experiments in the field of social psychology in UCLA, Mehrabian (1972, see Figure 1) distributes the percentages in a very disparate manner: he assigns 7% to verbal communication, 38% to voice (therefore, it does not differ too much with regards to the traditional approach), and to body language he assigns the remaining 55%. As can be observed, in this new distribution verbal communication is minimized and nonverbal communication is maximized.

Table 1
Behavioral components according to van-der Hofstadt

BEHAVIORAL COMPONENTS		
Verbal components	Paraverbal components	Nonverbal components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content • Humor • Personal attention • Questions • Answers to questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice volume • Tone • Timbre • Verbal fluency • Speed • Clarity • Time talking • Pauses/Silences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facial expression • Gaze • Smiles • Posture • Orientation • Distance/Physical contact • Gestures • Personal appearance • Self-manipulation • Nervous movements with hands and legs

Note: Adapted from *El libro de las habilidades de comunicación* (The book of communication skills) (pp. 21-35) by C. J. van-der Hofstadt, 2005, Madrid: Díaz de los Santos. Copyright 2005 by Carlos J. van-der Hofstadt Roman.

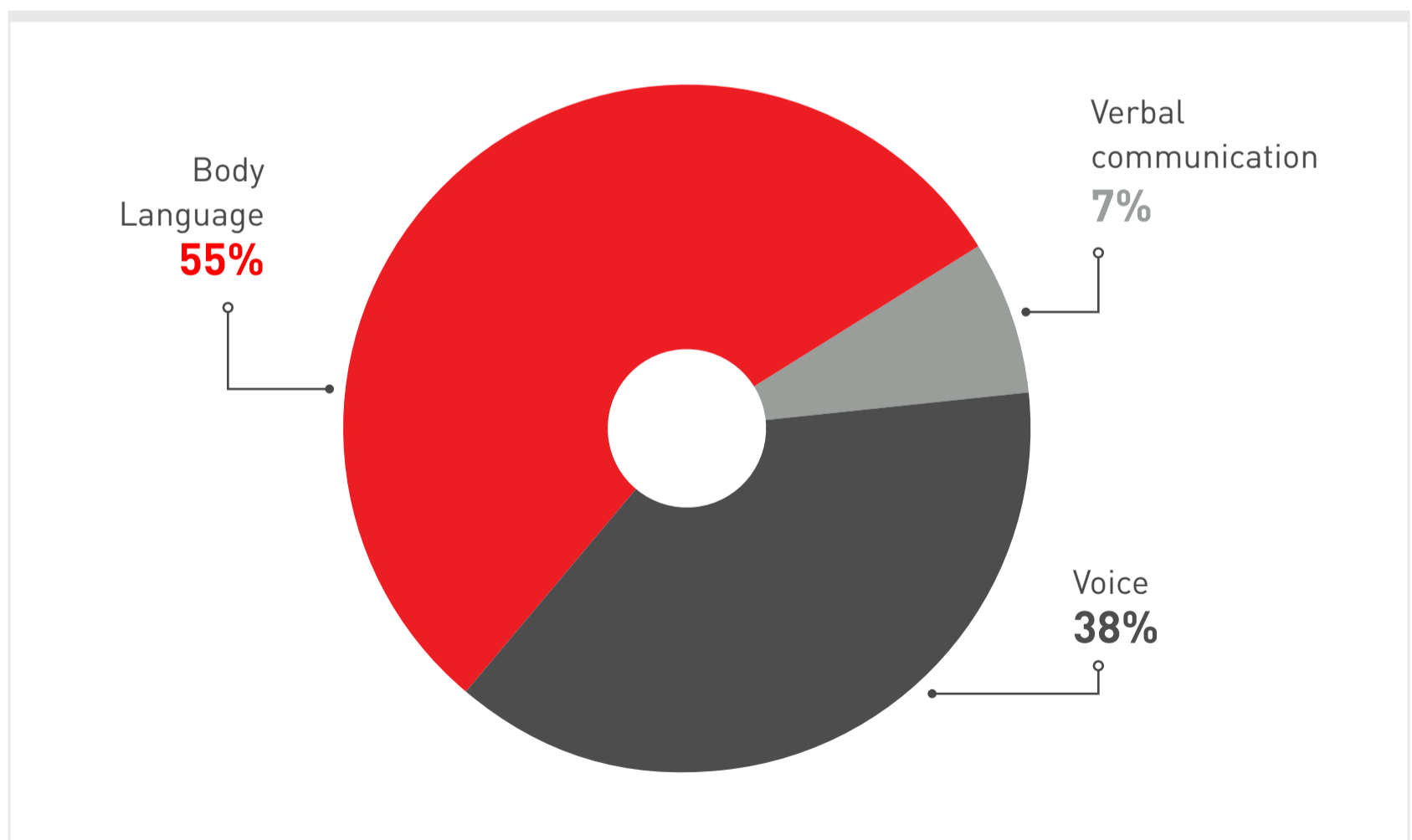


Figure 1. Quantitative data of verbal communication, voice, and body language according to Mehrabian (1972).

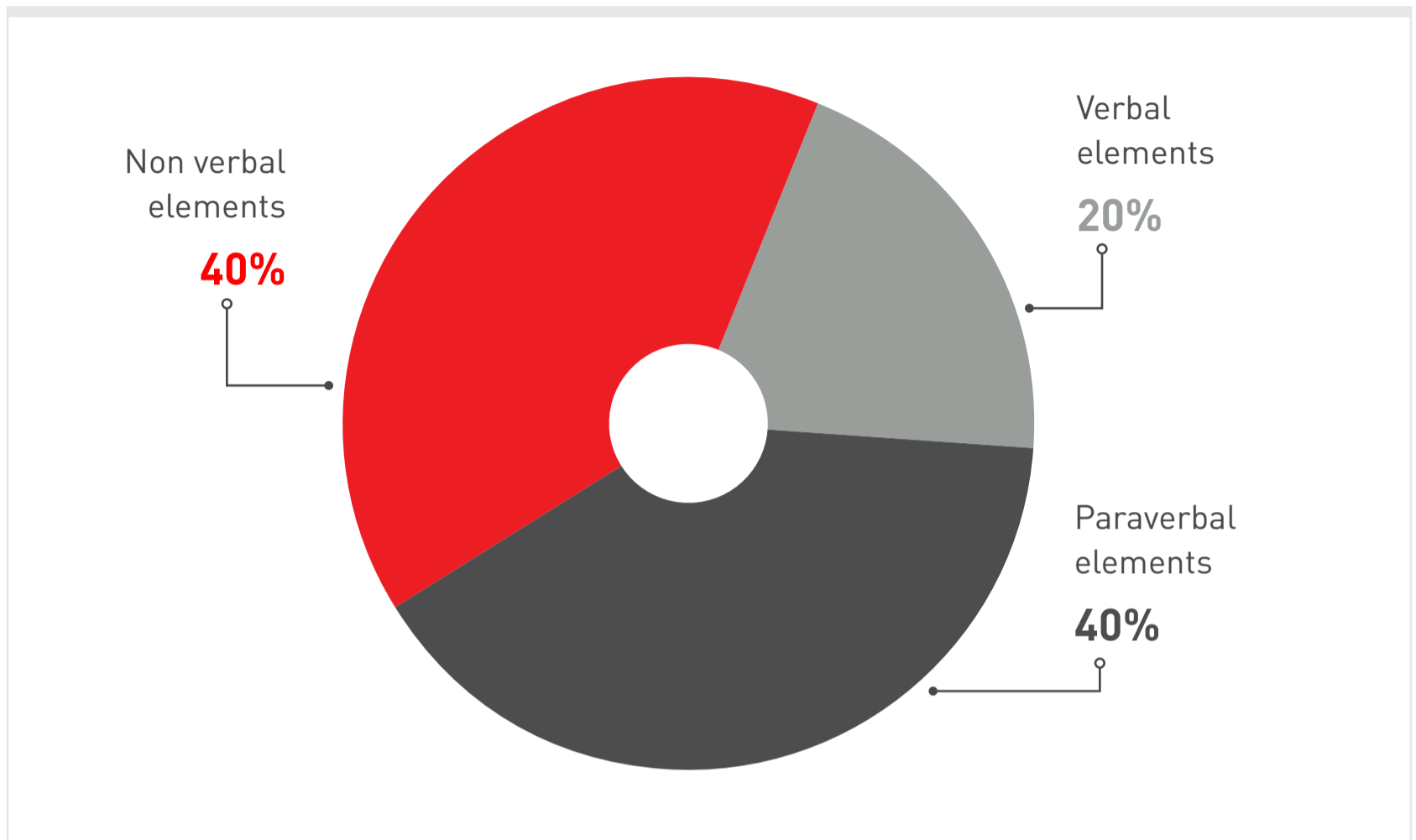


Figure 2. Quantitative data on verbal elements, paraverbal elements, and nonverbal elements according to van-der Hofstadt (2005, p. 20).

In the 21st century and from the communication approach, in van-der Hofstadt (2005, see Figure 2) a slightly different distribution is offered: as in the case of Mehrabian (1972), the divergences found in paraverbal communication are trivial; therefore, the largest discrepancies are situated in the verbal and nonverbal elements, contributing an oscillation fork in verbal and paraverbal elements. Summarizing, the figures given are for verbal elements 20% (10%), paraverbal elements 40% (50%), and nonverbal elements 40%.

Four years later, verbal communication is assigned 20% in Orzáiz's (2009) work; consequently, the remaining 80% falls into the informational capacity communicated through both paraverbal communication—intonation, vocalization and pauses—and nonverbal— gestures, postures and gaze—, although he does not establish a concrete percentage for each of these communication subtypes.

Based on what was expounded above, the objective of this study is to analyze, both from the quantitative and qualitative points of view, the relevance assumed by verbal communication, paraverbal communication, and nonverbal communication in the transmission of the message; that is, the way in which the recipient (a group of university students) receives the message coded by the speaker.

METHOD

Design

In order to attain the objective described in the preceding paragraph, a methodology based on the observation of the speaker's discourse was conceived. The subjects, the students of the course, watched by audiovisual means an official 11-minute speech of a known speaker.²

Context

The corpus analyzed in this research was collected in the course called: *El poder de la palabra hablada: Cómo crear un discurso congruente mediante distintas técnicas* (The power of the spoken word: How to create a coherent discourse with different techniques), taught at the University of Murcia between the 4th and the 8th of May 2015, given that we participated in that meeting. Said presentation, titled "Entre el plano escrito y el oral: el complejo entramado de la comunicación" (Between the written and oral planes: the complex framework of communication), applied an inductive methodology of a participatory nature and the corpus examined here was collected.

Participants

In total, the course had thirty students, eighteen female and twelve male. The requirement to enroll was to be attending the University of Murcia. Although it is true that the majority were students of the Humanities programs, there were isolated cases of teachers and administrative and service staff.

Instruments for Data Collection

The students were asked to work individually or in two or three-member groups. Each group—thirteen were formed finally—had to write schematically, to facilitate the qualitative analysis, the communication deficits they found in the speaker, for which no template was given, but the student's originality was sought. In the same fashion, they were informed of the intentions of carrying out a research with the data obtained, so it was insisted that their notes did not include any personally identifiable information.

Procedure

The 13 groups contributed a total of 133 comments. There were no limits regarding the number of contributions to be handed over. With regards to the time destined to perform this task they were given 5 minutes, also, it is convenient to make clear that in this phase, students had not received any kind of theoretical explanation.

Once the groups had written down their contributions, a detailed explanation was given about how in the transmission of a message there are three sources of information: verbal communication, paraverbal communication, and nonverbal communication; at the same time, emphasis was made on describing the characteristics of those communicative sub-typologies, since previously some confusion had been observed in the students, especially about the competencies of paraverbal and nonverbal communication.

Next, reflection was fostered about the percentage that each sub-typology assumes during interactions, which was sustained by prior research by an inclusive methodology where groups were constantly invited to participate in the conversation. No order was established, but topics were introduced by

² The speaker's identity has been omitted.

the groups mixed in the conversation. Students defended their impressions based on specific cases, such as the discourse displayed in that session or referring to other public individuals. Although in the beginning the students found hard to assume the little relevance of verbal communication, later they were more in agreement with that statement when realizing that they had paid little attention to this communication sub-typology.

RESULTS

As indicated before, 13 work groups were formed, and they contributed 133 comments. Due to the nature of this research, comments have been classified as a function of the topics studied: verbal communication, paraverbal communication, and nonverbal communication. Table 2 specifies numerical data corresponding to each group, in absolute frequency.

Figure 3 proves visually that nonverbal communication represents the largest weight in the transmission of a message, versus smaller numbers of paraverbal communication and nonverbal communication. This data indicates that verbal communication only adds 15 contributions, so it represents 11.27% of the corpus analyzed. In the second place, following an ascending climax list, the 41 comments, whose topics address paraverbal communication, are located, with 30.82%. In the last position is nonverbal communication, whose absolute frequency reaches 77 and its percentage frequency is 57.89%.

At this point, it is convenient to contrast the data collected in this research with preceding studies. Due to topic similarity, Mehrabian (1972), Van-der Hofstadt (2005), and Orzáiz (2009) have been selected.

Table 2

Data on absolute frequency of communication deficits identified according to work groups

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 7
Verbal communication	0	1	0	0	2	3	1
Paraverbal communication	4	6	2	5	2	4	4
Nonverbal communication	7	5	1	6	6	10	6
	Group 8	Group 9	Group 10	Group 11	Group 12	Group 13	Total
Verbal communication	2	1	0	0	3	2	15
Paraverbal communication	1	0	1	3	6	3	41
Nonverbal communication	0	2	5	4	7	18	77

Table 3 shows the percentage divergences that these authors attribute to the different communication subtypes, as well as the results obtained in this article.

Contrasting these results with the ones obtained in Mehrabian (1972), we notice that regarding nonverbal communication there are almost no differences: 57.89% in this research and 55% in Mehrabian (1972). The largest discrepancies are, from one side, in paraverbal communication, which for Mehrabian (1972) is 38% and in this study decreases to 30.82%; on the other side, in verbal communication, which in Mehrabian's (1972) study adds up only to 7% and in the current one, 11.27%.

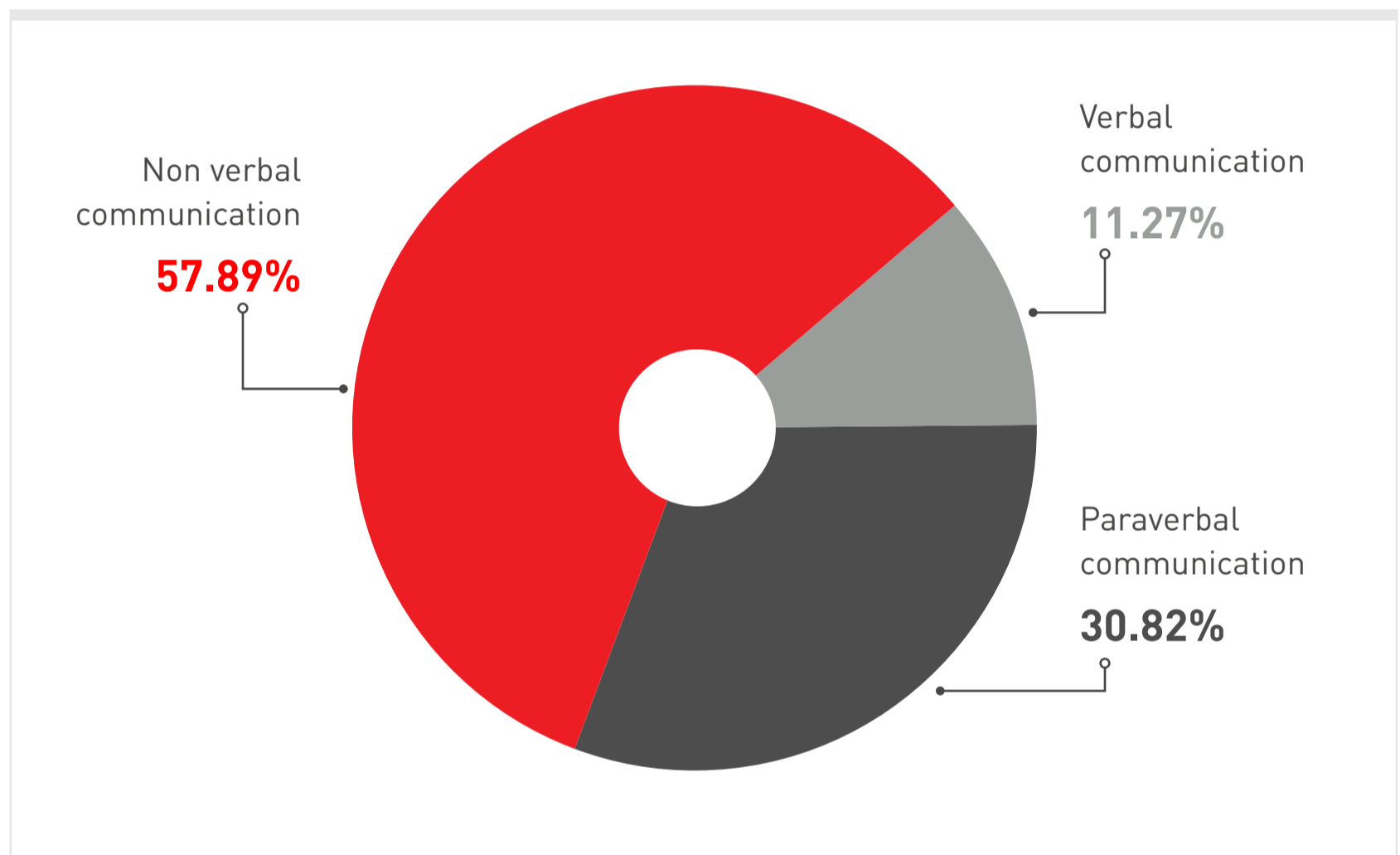


Figure 3. Global quantitative data of the analyzed corpus

Table 3

Percentage comparisons of the three behavioral components of communication

Components	Mehrabian (1972)	van-der Hofstadt (2005)	Orzáiz (2009)	This study
Verbal communication	7%	20% (10%)	20%	11.27%
Paraverbal communication	38%	40%	80%	30.82%
Nonverbal communication	55%	40% (50%)		57.89%

Divergences found in van-der Hofstadt's (2005) work show a different trajectory. Concerning verbal communication, a fork opens between 10 and 20% in van-der Hofstadt (2005) while the results of this research place this sub-typology at 11.27%. Paraverbal communication differs by 10 points, because van-der Hofstadt (2005) assumes 40% and in this study, 30.82%. In a similar line, nonverbal communication for van-der Hofstadt (2005) represents a fork oscillating between 40 and 50% while in this investigation goes up to 57.89%.

Statistical data included in Orzáiz (2009) can be qualified as less accurate, not only because contributes round numbers but also due to the fact of not breaking down paraverbal and nonverbal communications. The difference in percentage between these figures and the ones reached in the corpus examined here is almost 9 points. Specifically, for Orzáiz (2009) verbal communication gets 20% while in the current corpus it represents 11.27%. Regarding the addition of paraverbal and nonverbal communication, in Orzáiz (2009) it obtains 80% and in this analysis, 88.71%.

Next, we proceed with the qualitative analysis of the corpus. For this reason, a selection of the comments contributed by the students grouped as a function of the communication sub-typology alluded is presented.

As can be verified in Table 4, observations about verbal communication place the point of view on the length of the phrase, on the thematic disorder, on the quoting of authors which, when reiterated too much, results confusing and even in a lack of coherence of the topics discussed. A remarkable issue of comments related to verbal communication is centered, precisely, on the fact that no contribution exists (of 15 there are) that gives specific data about the discourse utilized; there is only one comment that addresses the use of rhetorical figures: "Verbiage and excessive use of rhetorical figures. Justifiable for having people with a high educational level as an audience" (group 6).

About paraverbal communication (see Table 5), the contributions discuss mainly existing deficits in voice modulation and intonation, being the more severe criticism: "Tone of voice: no changes in tone, making it a soporific" (group 1) or "He does not change his tone of voice much, making the speech

Table 4
Selection of contributions about verbal communication

Verbal Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long phrases (group 2). • Disarray in the discourse with respect to the topics discussed (group 5). • Verbiage and excessive use of rhetorical figures. Justifiable due to having in the audience people of a high educational level (group 6). • Quotes too many authors, so sometimes you do not know if it is he talking or if he is quoting somebody else's texts (group 7). • He does thematic "leaps" between paragraphs (group 12).

Table 5
Selection of contributions about paraverbal communication

Paraverbal Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tone of voice: no changes in tone, makes it soporific (group 1). • No changes in the tone of voice exist. Changes in tone would capture the attention (group 2) • No pauses exist between the different parts of the discourse (group 2). • Non-fluid discourse (paraverbal language) (group 4). • Improve voice modulation and intonation (group 4). • Speed Varies too much during reading (group 4). • Some repetitiousness and stuttering (group 5). • The 's' is too resounding (group 6) • He does not modulate his voice (group 7). • He does not change his tone of voice much, making the speech monotonous and boring (group 8). • A weak voice, faltering (group 11). • Voice modulation with no intonation, maintains the same tone (group 11). • No changes in intonation, he is too flat and monotonous (group 12). • His voice shakes (group 12). • Very monotonous in his intonation (group 13).

monotonous and boring" (group 8). Other issues highlighted are the lack of pauses ("There are no pauses between the different parts of the discourse" [group 2]), changes in speed ("Speed varies too much during reading" [group 4]), voice problems due to stuttering ("Some repetitiousness and stuttering" [group 5]), weakness ("A weak voice, faltering" [group 11]) or shakes ("His voice shakes" [group 12]). A comment stands out for its concretion at the phonic level at the time of pronouncing this alveolar allophone: "The 's' is too resounding" (group 6).

Contributions linked to nonverbal communication (see Table 6) are referred, above all, to the lack of body movement and the attitude of the speaker because he presents himself as a reader. Within this criticism directed to the lack of movement, observations are made about the arms ("Limited mobility of arms and hands, maybe this would help to emphasize the speech" [group 2]), the hands ("Hands in his pockets" [group 6]), facial gestures ("Impassive, without gesturing" [group 13]) and even his gaze ("Just looks at one point in the auditorium, not at the rest" [group 12]). In the same manner, the attitude adopted when reading the speech is subject to criticism: "He is a reader, not a speaker" (group 1), "Inhibited" (group 4) or "Seriousness" (group 9). There are also contributions related to the improper dress of the speaker: "Ill-fitting suit. Sober colors" (group 6) and "The tone of the suit does not favor the speaker and does not stand out against the background of the room" (group 13). Also, the furniture appears in the list of improvable aspects: "The lectern is too high" (group 13).

DISCUSSION

Since ancient times, man has realized the relevant role that oratory plays when it is time to persuade the recipient with utilitarian objectives but also—undoubtedly—in contributing to project a good image of the emitter. Both issues pertain both to public contexts (such is the case of the working environment) and private ones (family and friends relationships); that is, an efficient communication belongs to all facets of human life. Although the emergence of research works of this sort is recent as a consequence of the awakening of interest in the discourse, writings dedicated to the study of rhetoric have been documented since antiquity.

Table 6

Selection of contributions about nonverbal communication.

Nonverbal Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Static: does not move the torso, barely his hands (group 1) • Facial expression: praises and insults with the same facial expression. He does not express either positive or negative feelings (group 1). • Lack of visual contact because he reads the discourse (group 2). • Limited mobility of arms and hands, maybe this would help to emphasize the discourse (group 2). • Lack of gesturing (group 2). • Inhibited (group 4). • Low gaze (group 4). • Almost at all times holds the paper (group 5). • Lacks facial expression (group 5). • Hands in his pockets (group 6). • Not a straight posture. Transmits little security (group 6) • Since he does not know the discourse well, looks down too often, giving an unprofessional feeling (group 6). • He does not use the game of looks to make the audience feel as participants of the discourse creating a small barrier (group 6). • Ill-fitting suit. Sober colors (group 6). • Static posture (group 7). • Barely addresses the audience (group 7). • Seriousness (group 9). • Use of finger quotation marks while not introducing quotes (group 10). • Looks sideways at his listeners (group 10). • Total immobility, even when emphasizing some phrases with arm gestures (group 11). • Only looks at one point in the auditorium, not at the rest (group 12). • He does not lift his head from the paper, barely looks, directs his voice to the lectern (group 12). • Impassive, without gesturing (group 13). • Looks more to the right because that is where the top official is sitting (group 13). • The tone of the suit does not favor the speaker and does not stand out against the background of the room (group 13). • The lectern is too high (group 13). • He does not make any gestures (group 13). • He does not stand straight (group 13).

While the first research efforts on rhetoric and oratory were mainly about verbal communication and relegated to the background were paraverbal and nonverbal communication, in most recent studies the focus has been inverted, due to the verification of the relevance that the different subtypes of communication have in the perception of a message. Therefore, the first studies based mainly on the preparation of the discourse and the invention of the arguments, have given way to investigations that approach the topic of the discourse execution, in which paralanguage and nonverbal communication are analyzed in detail. Already in the decade of 1970, the prevalence of nonverbal and paraverbal communication as opposed to verbal was ratified in Mehrabian (1972) by means of scientific experimentation.

Data obtained in the corpus analyzed in this article indicate that 57.89% of written comments by students about communication deficits found in the discourse displayed are linked to aspects concerning nonverbal communication, 30.82% with paraverbal communication and only 11.27% with purely verbal communication. Thus, these results are similar, roughly, to the ones obtained by Mehrabian (1972), although they differ partially from the ones established by van-der Hofstadt (2005) in paraverbal and nonverbal communication, existing similarities in verbal communication and discrepancies with the ones contributed by Orzáiz (2009).

In light of these results, it becomes evident not only that there is an urgent need for taking into account such aspects at the moment of emitting a speech, but also that the recipient has to be conscious of how to interpret the message. The assumption of this information turns the subject into a more efficient being from the communication standpoint and, simultaneously, harder to manipulate since he or she will possess a knowledge of persuasive communication strategies. In modern society, every individual is immersed in an almost continuous communication process, in which he is emitting and receiving messages. Consequently, it becomes unavoidable disseminating the unquestionable prominence of paraverbal and nonverbal communication for the correct transmission or interpretation of the message.

Future lines of investigation

Given the small size of the sample in this study (133 comments in total) further research is needed with a similar orientation to shed light from this perspective. The method followed truly collects the weak points of communication observed by the recipients of an oral discourse. At the same time, it would be convenient to evaluate if this experiment can be modified to be carried out in a more guided form, as to facilitate a list of the elements that make up verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal communication, so that the student simply limits himself to point out the elements of that list that the speaker does not execute correctly. Evidently, this type of corpus would only allow an analysis of a quantitative profile and, additionally, does not reflect reliably the recipient's impressions, since when reading the list of elements its interpretation is modified.

It might be convenient to carry out an analogous, more detailed, study, structuring it in three phases; in the first phase the pattern utilized here is used (displaying a speech on audiovisual media); in a second phase, the same speech is reproduced for the students only through audio (not video) and in the third phase, the students read the speech. In the first phase, this research has demonstrated

that students focus above all in nonverbal communication; in the second phase one starts from the hypothesis that paralanguage will prevail, while in the last one only verbal communication will. It is in this last stage—in which the student focuses on the contents of verbal communication—when the student would be invited to reflect on the reasons why attention did not focus on verbal communication in the first and second phase.

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