



CONFERENCE ARTICLE

Stylistic And Pragmatic Functions Of Paralinguistic Means In Television Journalism Discourse

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ABSTRACT

Television journalism is multimodal, combining verbal content with paralinguistic elements including voice quality, prosody, gaze, facial expression, and gesture. Communication and nonverbal research show that paralinguistic signals alter speech interpretation, affective responses, and credibility. This article analyzes the stylistic and pragmatic uses of paralinguistic techniques in television journalism. Based on contemporary pragmastylistics, nonverbal communication studies, and media discourse analysis, the paper discusses how vocal and visual paralinguistic cues shape channel identity, genre-specific styles, and a journalist's professional persona while serving interpersonal and persuasive purposes. The interaction of prosodic patterns, gaze behavior, and gesture with news values like objectivity, emotional framing, and audience trust is examined, including empirical findings on how voice pitch and gesture intensity affect public speech effectiveness and attractiveness. The paper proposes that media literacy and professional training should clearly address the multimodal side of journalism in television news and discussion forms, where paralinguistic techniques bridge style expressivity and pragmatic influence.

KEYWORDS

Paralinguistic means; TV journalism; media discourse; stylistic, pragmatic, nonverbal, news anchor; prosody.

INTRODUCTION

Television news and current affairs programs use highly written and fact-checked narration, but the audience never hears "just words." Television uses complicated voice quality, intonation, rhythm, gesture, facial expression, gaze, posture, and spatial arrangement to accompany spoken discourse. Paralinguistic means—non-verbal voice and body language that accompany speech—add emotion, emphasis, and nuance, influencing how viewers understand and evaluate journalistic messages.

Paralinguistics includes vocal characterisers like laughing and sighing, vocal qualifiers like pitch, volume, and speech rate, and vocal segregates like filled pauses and hesitation markers in linguistic and communication research. Kinesics (gestures, facial movements, body position), proxemics (space), and visual appearance support these cues on screen. TV anchors and reporters use professional vocal techniques, occupy specific studio spaces, and use gaze and gesture patterns that reflect the channel's institutional identity and audience expectations. Studies of TV news anchors have revealed that nonverbal behavior is highly connected to professionalism and believability and that gaze, posture, and gesture repertoire separate competing broadcasters.

Paralinguistic means' stylistic and pragmatic roles in television journalistic discourse are the focus of this essay. It shows how prosodic and visual signals create news and conversation forms and pragmatically regulate audience engagement, develop posture, and build confidence in journalistic information. The study proposes a multimodal perspective of television journalism that centers paralinguistics by drawing on pragmastylistics, nonverbal communication, and media discourse analysis.

This study is conceptual and analytical, not statistical. A qualitative assessment of scholarly literature on paralinguistic

aspects in communication, functional approaches to paralinguistic tools in English language, and nonverbal behavior in television news performance informed it. A pragmastylistic approach views style decisions as aesthetic and communicative, whereas multimodal discourse analysis examines how linguistic, audio, and visual resources interact in media texts.

Case studies of anchors' nonverbal communication on international television news and chat shows and experimental research on voice pitch and gesture intensity in public speaking influence the subject. Instead of creating a new corpus, the essay synthesises empirical knowledge to describe paralinguistic stylistic and pragmatic roles in television journalism. The interaction of prosody, gaze, and gesture with spoken content, broadcast segment structure, and professional ethos are considered.

Voice prosodic traits are the most obvious paralinguistic tools in television journalism. Neutral, somewhat variable pitch contours, regulated loudness, and clear articulation convey professionalism and clarity, whereas monotony is dull and unengaging. Public speaking research shows that medium pitch modulation and gesture intensity are most effective and attractive, eliciting positive emotions without looking overblown. These findings explain why television news anchors use balanced prosodic patterns that emphasize essential points with a calm, controlled tone. Such prosody emphasizes key information, identifies subject transitions, and distinguishes hard news, soft features, and commentary.

Visual paralinguistic signals, notably facial expressions and gaze, shape television journalism alongside voice. Sincerity, participation, and accountability are sometimes shown by maintaining direct camera look. Anchors can show measured concern, empathy, or critical detachment without breaking professional conventions by changing eyebrow movement, head

tilt, or lip tightness to shift the emotional tone of a tale. Television journalism uses controlled, economical motions to convey seriousness and adhere to the institution's unbiased reporting ethics, unlike entertainment programming, which uses wide gestures and lively facial expressions.

From a pragmatic perspective, paralinguistic means serve several interrelated functions in the interaction between journalists and audiences. One important job is to keep track of both epistemic and affective stance. Variations in pitch, tempo and loudness allow anchors to differentiate between reported facts, evaluative comments and speculative elements within the same segment, guiding viewers toward particular interpretations while formally maintaining neutrality. Gestures that go along with verbal emphatics or deictic expressions can help people remember information and make abstract ideas more real. These cues do not replace verbal content but work alongside it as an additional layer of meaning, often operating below the level of conscious awareness.

Another practical use is to build trust and alignment between people. Research on the nonverbal behavior of news anchors shows that an open posture, a steady gaze, and moderate gesturing can make people think the person is credible and competent. On the other hand, rigid or chaotic movements can make people lose faith in the speaker. In crisis reporting or emotionally charged stories, controlled paralinguistic cues help anchors balance professionalism with empathy. For example, a softer voice and slight facial tension may show compassion for victims, while an overly animated style may be seen as sensationalism.

Paralinguistic means are especially important in hybrid formats like political talk shows and live interviews, where they serve both stylistic and practical purposes. Here, journalists switch between being neutral moderators, critical questioners, and sympathetic listeners. Paralinguistic cues are very important to these changes. When a guest avoids a question, a sustained, slightly slowed tone and narrowed gaze can mean insistence or doubt. When someone disagrees, a relaxed posture and brief smiles of affiliation can help keep the conversation going. These cues are not just decorations; they help to organize turn-taking, show agreement or disagreement, and set the tone for the interaction as hostile, cooperative, or ironic.

In television journalism discourse, paralinguistic means are not peripheral embellishments but fundamental resources that confer stylistic uniqueness and pragmatic efficacy to news and commentary. Prosody, gesture, facial expression, and gaze collaborate with verbal text to emphasize essential information, create genre-specific rhythms, and shape the professional identity of journalists. Simultaneously, these paralinguistic cues fulfill essential pragmatic roles: they govern epistemic and affective stance, oversee interactions with guests and viewers, and aid in cultivating trust, empathy, or skepticism towards the news source.

The integration of insights from nonverbal communication research and media stylistics indicates that balanced, moderately expressive paralinguistic patterns are typically regarded as the most effective and credible, while extremes of monotony or exaggeration may hinder comprehension or incite distrust. But you can't just use simple decoding rules to figure out what paralinguistic behavior means. It always depends on the situation. For journalism education, this means that vocal and nonverbal training should be included in the curriculum along with skills for writing and interviewing verbally. It also means that future journalists should be encouraged to think critically about the moral implications of their paralinguistic choices. For viewers, better media literacy about how television news uses different styles is important for not falling for manipulative uses of style and for being more aware of how words, images, and bodies work together in modern television journalism.

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