



Communicating Truth or Verisimilitude: Convictive Method or Persuasive Method

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Abstract. The study starts from premise that confused communication corresponds to confused knowing. It argues that in carrying out the essence of a confused knowledge, communication is done over the land ambiguity of language by two methods: convictive method and persuasive method. None of them guarantees the path from the verisimilitude to truth. Instead, the path of the verisimilitude towards falseness always remains open. Figuratively, both are argumentative-discursive. The specificity of conviction is the orientation on the exclusivity of strict ethics of rational cogitation and existential affectivity. Persuasion is featured by using affective or “rationally” seductive arguments, either entirely on their own, or in combination with arguments and convictive procedures. Therefore, on the conviction side there is the process of intentionally rendering the verisimilitude with an ethical definitive foundation, and on the persuasion side there is the process of intentional pseudo-rendering the verisimilitude. Conviction aims at and leads to achieving the authentic truth. The persuasive approach causes verisimilitude.

Keywords: communication, convictive communication method, persuasive communication method

1. Introduction

In order not to turn an actual truth into an abusive proof, which represents a logical-discursive device which, theoretically speaking, we want to detach further on from various linguistic phenomena, we start by simply saying: the range of our cognitive scope is the verisimilitude. All that happens to us, all that goes on, the entire perimeter of the affective, cognitive, volitional and conative events, the universe of experience and thinking, all of them are tailored from the material of the verisimilitude.

“Verisimilitude” is a word that exceeds the daily vocabulary of the ordinary man, which is not at all strange or unjust. A neologism of French origin, “vraisemblable”, with an equivalent in German “wahrscheinlich”, the word semantically covers the scope of “what resembles the truth”.

In the first instance, our world is one of appearances of truth. The fundamental human epistemological situation is as follows: every time by conviction (veritable belief) or persuasion (emotional induced abusive “conviction”), the spirit chooses what is true from what seems to be true. The permanent approach of “confirmation” the cognitive spirit carries, appearing at particular level, Edmund Husserl showed: “it is truth for everyone what seems to be true for them; for one, it shall be something, for another it shall be the contrary, if it appears as truth to them” (Husserl, 1979, p. 124). The world of appearances, of truth similarities includes everything: idea and non-idea, truth and falseness. Therein, the principles of logic do not work, the identicalness and non-identicalness coexist, the third party is not excluded, contradiction is in its own habitat and reason is always insufficient. “That speech which only has the appearance of reality, as Professor Mielu Zlate shows (Zlate, 2004, p. 493), is often considered to be reality”. From this dream of appearances which does not exclude the truth, by using algorithms and heuristics, man selects various aspects as true. The relativity of some of the criteria of his selection chart and the contribution of certain agents for promoting the truth

(Balaban, 2007; Bok, 2011), implicitly for defusing the appearances cause the separation of the truth and verisimilitude areas. The truth detaches from the verisimilitude, it underlines it, just like Hagi of I. Barbu: "Holy flesh and food to the self, Hagi tore of it". The cogitative ego lives the detachment from the verisimilitude as a rescue, as a liberation.

The truth and the falseness are in an apparently indestructible syncretism. The cogitative effort is to focus on verisimilarly processing the "verisimilar" material. For this, as for any substantial enterprise, and not thoroughly ceremonial, an impulse is needed, an internal triggering necessity, a set of working tools, a set of working rules and principles. The process of rendering the verisimilitude works as a result of procedurally engaging some relations and forces of rendering the verisimilitude. The relation underlying the enterprise of extracting, sampling the truth is that of knowing. The intellectual forces assigned to the approach are of cognitive nature. These are triggered by intellectual energies originating from human needs, such as clarity, value, safety, evidence, recognition of the existence and power (Drula, 2009).

Working with similar items and handling the appearances have an increased index of appetite, as it does not require large resources of attention. The generator of the energy triggering the delimiting device is the internal need, the combustion generated by the contradiction between what is possible and favourable on the action range of the principle to act under minimum effort. The appearance overtires. Beyond the appearance, there occurs the need to calmly, evenly, peacefully, slowly and economically separate the truth, in short the great need for order (Brown, 1963; Johnson, 1994; Cialdini, 2001; Cialdini, Goldstein & Martin, 2007).

Detaching the veracity from similarity may be imaged as a progressive nearing to an "unknown" celestial body. Let us say that in the beginning, planet Mars is an unclear spot, then a circle, afterwards a sphere, then a material liquid horizon, and after that the soil unevenness appears, further on one notices long valleys, then high craters, plains, etc. The truths are gradually detached from the truth appearances: some veritable, others just induced. According to Karl Popper,

the decisive test must be falsifiability. The incertitude constantly appears as ambiguity. The fight of the cognitive spirit with the appearances is held to defuse the confusion, ambiguousness, equivocalness and unclearness. Everything before the investigating spirit is created as confusing. Baptising the truth occurs by crossing the unclear waters of Jordan. Before being truth, the appearance is ambiguity. It needs the process of rendering the verisimilitude. The knowing ego uses conceptual tools for disambiguation and follows logical principles, axioms, postulates and theorems specific to the reference range. Communication, as intellectual-discursive enterprise, is no exception.

2. Two ways of communication

Communication occurs only by staging the message and is therefore based on using two methods: conviction and persuasion, convictive communication method and persuasive communication method. The procedure of conviction is specific to some communication types (such as in religious, didactic communication, for example), whereas persuasion is specific to other communication types (for political, advertising, misleading communication), the two methods however acting in parallel or simultaneously or alternatively in others: media communication, artistic communication, etc.

The processes of rendering the verisimilitude and accomplishment form a plan underlying any speech and a coherent structure in every message. Based on the rules and principles of logic (identities, non-contradictions, the excluded third party and sufficient reason), they also have ongoing effects of conviction or persuasion. Related by effectiveness and influence, as performance of the option for an effect, conviction and persuasion diverge on the border of rendering the verisimilitude. This makes it possible only for conviction to be pure and incapable to bear the mixture (Lesutan, 2007; Unguru, 2010). Whenever it procedurally entangles with persuasion, what results is just persuasion. The ethical core of conviction does not survive the lack of purity. Substretching sophisms, lies,

falsehoods, it is structured and has persuasive effects, it leads to pseudo-convictions caused by false arguments, illusions and distorted perceptions. Whenever the persuasive method is used in discursive structures, involving broad psychological stages and technologies, it develops a persuasive speech (Roşca, 2011; Roşca, 2013; Perloff, 2012).

There are also other opinions in this regard, but for the clarity of concepts, it is better to keep the idea of the difference between conviction – persuasion. Thus, Vance Packard believes that persuasion can be: regular and clandestine, the second one being the negative form of the first, and ordinary persuasion meaning conviction.

Conviction corresponds to a communicational act aiming to amend the mental state of an individual in a context where the latter maintains or believes it maintains a certain freedom. The freedom of action of the target (recipient) is an essential component of the convictive interaction (Burgoon & Qin, 2006; Popa, 2011). The fact of using physical force or threatening marks the abandonment of the claims of the source to be capable of convincing the target. A behaviour that only depends on an outer pressure may even lead to effects that are diametrically opposed to the expected ones. Conviction is an efficient method of influence, in that it enables the achievement of goals, but it is not always efficient, meaning it is time-limited and is uneconomic (Bunea, Cojocaru & Cojocaru, 2010).

Persuasion is more subtle. Apparently more mobile, it is directly insidious. Its goals are identical: to ultimately amend an opinion, an attitude or a behaviour, but with the target's agreement and its pseudo-convictive internalisation. The communicational aspect is inherent to all persuasion situations (Kapferer, 1998; Larson, 2010; Macarie, Hînţea & Mora, 2011; Narita, 2013).

Persuasion has always been known, its cultural history begins with the Greek sophists. Verbal method by excellence, it has however been imposed finally in the current acceptance of our century, getting to be theorised and widely used in the postmodernist era within certain complex strategies, such as the manipulation techniques. Its use has been driven by the social successes of the political-

propagandist and advertising communications (Arsith & Tomescu, 2012; Perloff, 2012; Ponea, Alexa & Sandu, 2012). The method has been actually imposed by the persuasive effects of its implementation: achieving the goals related to exchanging opinions, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours. Persuasiveness is related to all components of the communication system. It is a matter of persuasive communicators, persuasive effects, persuasive frames, etc.

Clearly, the affective persuasion is opposed to logic conviction lately, the former being reasonable and the latter emotional (Hintea, 2011; Hintea, 2013; Frunză, 2014; Gavriluță, 2012). Most authors agree that persuasion is an action intended to amend the behaviour by symbolic transactions based on the call to the subjects' feelings. One is to understand from here that the differentiation between conviction and persuasion, as communication methods, is not based on the content (truth opposed to falseness), but on the psychological substance: rational (conviction) opposed to affective (persuasion). Daniela Gîfu and Dan Cristea consider that we may speak about "two plans: of conviction (rational dimension) and of persuasion (emotional dimension)" (Gîfu & Cristea, 2011, p. 65) (also Iliescu, Gavrilovici & Oprea, 2014).

The conviction effect is obtained by considering the interlocutor as a communication partner whom we inform about our point of view in relation to a speech subject. We act on it by staging arguments within certain strategies where we highlight some aspects of things and hide others. The goal of the enterprise is that of amending representations, ideas and opinions which we suspect or know.

The persuasion effect is highlighted in situations of asymmetric communication and consists in determining a change in the representation, opinions, attitudes and behaviour by procedures such as manipulation, rumour, lie, sophism, falsehoods, etc. In this case, the protagonists take part in an unbalanced act of communication, based on authority/obedience. Among the forms of persuasive speeches, A. J. Greimas and J. Courtes (Greimas & Courtes, 1979, p. 275) enumerates those "which appear as such (conviction and manipulation speeches), as well as those indicating a different purpose (searching for or communicating certain

knowledge, for example), however consisting of more or less explicitly included narrative persuasion programs with patterns created on believing or acting (scientific or didactic speeches)".

As it well known, there is a well outlined opposition, which has become classical between "conviction (by reasoning and generally in favour of the truth) and persuasion (by imagination and/or emotion and sometimes in favour of the error)" (Dospinescu, 1998, pp. 275-276). In relation to it, we have two types of communication: conviction and persuasion. They appear within certain specific speeches which they provide special features to. Moreover, when persuasion and rhetoric are identified, another opposition is yet distinguished: between demonstration and argumentation (Oprea, Gavrilovici & Anton, 2013; Oprea, 2013; Caras & Sandu, 2013). The latter has not basis, both terms referring to processes which have no similarity with the first stated opposition. Argumentation and demonstration are used both in the conviction speeches and in the persuasive ones. Within the first process, the ideas are justified by various arguments or logical argumentative procedures or speeches (explanation, definition, example, etc.). Argumentation is based on strategies and tactics that lead to conviction. Argumentation is a well founded objective and a subjective process, it is a dramatisation of arguments. On the other hand, demonstration is a form of argumentation which has a high yield of conviction (Lellenger, 1992; Piazza, 2004; Adam & Bonhomme, 2005; Cavazza, 2009).

G. Miller formulates the methodological principle of communication: "Conviction derives its force from people rationality, while persuasion caters to their irrationality" (Miller, 2002, p. 6) (see also Dafinoiu, 1996; Cialdini, 2001; Dunk, 2003; O'Keefe, 2012).

3. Conclusion

The research was focused on the communication consumer have led to finding some rules according to which the reception of the speeches and reception of messages occur. These rules are useful in delimiting the convictive speeches from the persuasive ones, as well as in the operations of dissuasion (discovery and annihilation of persuasion). The first is the rule of concordance, which refers to the case where new information does not contradict the old ones. The new adds to and completes the old, as effect, it confirms and reinforces the social representations and content data of the system of consumer's expectations. The second rule would be that of building, consisting of the new information making a construction, along with that created by the old information. The third rule, that of restructuring, causes its effects in the situations where the content of the messages contradicts the consumer's informational structures, values, attitudes, opinions and behaviours, so that the only way to coherently integrate them into its communicative scope is their decomposition and reconstructive stylisation according to hybrid and difficult to predict principles, by the effect of cognitive dissonance. Reconstruction appears as a re-conversion: the material provided by speech is processed according to the consumer's principles, thinking ways. This leads to a self construct. Using foreign materials, obtained by the demolition, dissolution of the speech-message that is made available to them, they rebuild a new building according to a new personal grid. It would be almost impossible to make a semiotics of meaning, to the extent where a relevant message of the non-verbal shall actually be just the recipient and shall not be a constituent of the message.

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