

FASCINATION AS A SUPPORTIVE STRATEGY OF POSITIVE COMMUNICATION CLIMATE

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Summary

The article investigates the phenomenon of fascination in the context of modern approach to interpersonal communication in cooperative and nonviolent way. Effectiveness of communication process mainly depends on the quality of interpersonal relations, the degree and quality of emotions, the willingness of communication partners to adjust to verbal contact. We shall undertake linguistic analysis of fascination as one of discursive strategies. Fascination is defined as the person's quality to be liked via peculiar semiotic way of self-presentation, aimed at minimizing unpleasant emotional tone in communication and maximizing positive communication climate. According to fascination's nature to enchant, charm, express sympathy, elicit negative emotions and make positive impression, it can be stated that positive communication climate is created by special fascinating way of communication. Such kind of communication is made up of a system of verbal and nonverbal components and connections between the fascinators and the object of fascination. As fascination is able to change emotional state and create positive tone in interpersonal relations, we consider fascination as supportive strategy of positive communication climate. The purpose of our study is to explore fascination as supportive strategy in relation to making positive communication climate.

Key words: Fascination, communication climate, emotional tone, strategy, tactic, non-verbal signs, approval, appreciation, attention, admiration, acceptance.

DOI <https://doi.org/10.23856/5617>

1. Introduction

Under the conditions of rapid and dynamic changes, communication is considered to be strategic (*Dijk van T.A., 2006*). While studying communication climate particular attention should be paid to the strategic organization of communication. Effective and appropriate communicative actions of communication partners are traditionally thought to be the main criteria of successful speech interaction (*Deetz, 1986: 24*). Entering the communicative contact, speakers try to achieve communicative success, realize their own intentions without damaging others' face (*Goffman, 1967: 30*). It should be emphasized that any communication is strategic in its essence as there is no communication without goal. According to the established goal, language means are selected, communicative techniques are picked, communication channels are established. Generally, strategic communication as the component of paradigm of any communicative action is determined by complexity and a variety of interrelated systems and relations participating in creating communication (*Wilmot, Hocker, 2001: 11*). Only having a clear goal, having developed a strategy, having identified the means of realization of strategic conception, positive tone is guaranteed in communication.

The discursive strategy of fascination presupposes the task to fascinate the listener, influencing his emotions, making them positive and finally enhancing the climate in communication.

We shall lay a special emphasis on fascination as supportive strategy of comfortization of interpersonal relations which is realized due to different language means to get nice attitude.

2. Literature Review

To carry out this analysis it is necessary to explore interdisciplinary approaches existing in modern practices (*Vangelisti 1990, Ting-Toomey 1994, Wilmot 2001, Littlejohn 1989, Burgoon 1996, Ickes 1991*). From Renaissance period scientists have used the word *fascination* to describe the hypnotic power of persuasion (*Dumont, 2015: 80*). Some of them understand **fascination as a neurological state of intense focus**, that creates an irresistible feeling of engagement as if falling in love (*Fenn, 2015*).

Sally Hogshead, the leading American expert on the science of fascination, advanced the contemporary understanding of fascination having found its practical application. She investigated 7 languages of fascination: the language of creativity, the language of relationship, the language of confidence, the language of excellence, the language of stability, the language of listening, the language of details (*Hogshead, 2010: 15*). All these languages of fascination take place in different types of discourse. In S. Hogshead's opinion, knowing in what "language" you communicate, and understanding what "language" those around you are speaking, will get your message out there, and improve your communication in each part of your life.

Communicative-pragmatic approach in linguistics determines the focus on the speaker, his communicative intentions, ways of verbal and nonverbal expression, strategies and tactics that enables to understand the specificity of communication (*Dijk van T.A, 1982: 12 Sidnell, 2010: 5*). Having analyzed sufficient range of scientific literature, we can state the tendency that discursive practices place a human as an object of communication as well as her discursive behavior, improving interpersonal relations. According to E. Goffman, the main goal in interpersonal interaction is avoiding conflicts and maintaining the communicant's face (*Goffman, 1987: 12*).

Theories of discourse are based on the communicative approach that suggests studying speech in the structure of communication. The communicative approach appeals to studying the discourse as "speech plunged into life" (*Dijk van T.A, 2006: 259*), taking pragmatic, situational, social and cultural factors into account. Discourse reflects communicants themselves, their relations, beliefs, thoughts, intentions, feelings and emotions.

While analyzing discourse it is essential to investigate strategy and tactic. They have been under thorough analysis of many scholars (*Dijk van T.A, 2006: 260 Goffman, 1986: 13*). In their opinion, communicative strategy is an optimal realization of speaker's intentions to achieve a certain goal in communication.

3. Database and methodology

The data to process in this article are fragments of discourses from prose of the XX century, linguistic corpus of evaluative words, positive tone words, empathetic, complimentary utterances.

Complex methodology is based on the integral methodological approach, according to which fascination is the object of study. It is a supportive strategy realized through a set of tactics with the help of verbal and nonverbal means. Such approach determines applying basic scientific methods (such as induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis, hypothesis).

Special linguistic methods applies in the article are methods of description, methods of discourse analysis, semantic analysis.

4. Presentation of Basic Material of the research

Communication climate refers to the emotional tone of relationships (*Adler, 2009: 25*) between participants of verbal interaction in all kinds of settings and relations (formal and informal). Communication climates can be positive (supportive), negative (defensive) and neutral depending on the emotional tone of communication. Communication climate is pre-determined by the degree to which people see themselves as valued (*Adler, 2009: 18*). Paraphrasing this thought, communicants perceive others as appreciating and respecting. As a result, they will react positively, experiencing positive emotions that promotes positive communication climate.

Since communication climate is the emotional tone of a relationship, it means it is made and influenced by verbal and non-verbal expression of emotions encoded within interpersonal messages, like "You're important," "You matter," "You exist." Positive emotions like happiness, excitement, joy, and inspiration construct positive climate. The latter prevails in confirming communication (*Adler, 2009: 22*) where messages convey valuing, treating with respect, resonating with each other. The term confirming communication implies messages that transmit valuing (*Beebe, 2007: 20*). For example, in business discourse these kinds of confirming relationships facilitate productive exchange of information and ideas because everyone is open to listening and discussing projects and issues. People tend to see eye-to-eye about things. Everyone attempts to be generous, friendly and likeable. So, such confirmation can create a positive communication climate, characterized by the term supportiveness (*Beebe, 2007: 16*).

To conclude, positive communication climate can be formed due to supportiveness. Supportive communication climate is the importance of providing emotional support when communicating with others. A basic principle of all healthy interpersonal relationships is "the importance of positive, supportive messages that communicate liking or affection" (*Beebe, 2007: 26*).

In literature confirming messages include:

- 1) endorsement;
- 2) acknowledgment;
- 3) recognition (*Costigan, 1984: 113*).

Endorsement means entire support, or communicating someone that they are important. Endorsement is considered the highest form of valuing, one of the strongest type of confirming message.

Acknowledgment indicates an interest, recognizing the thoughts and feelings, offering support.

Recognition means that somebody recognizes the other person. It is the most fundamental communicative act.

We may trace compulsory components of positive communication climate. They are: 1) Supportiveness (through acts of encouragement, acts of sympathy and empathy); 2) Involvement (through acts of support, approval, appreciation); 3) Trust (through acts of acknowledgement); 4) Openness (through acts of recognition, endorsement) (*Deetz, 1986: 127*). It is assumed that in positive communication climate communicants feel valued and respected; they demonstrate confident communicative behavior; they have open, sincere and trustworthy relationships; they are willing to speak to others; they listen carefully; they offer feedback; they convey and perceive information accurately.

When we refer to fascination we mean the ability to create that special feeling for others via verbal and nonverbal signs. Fascination is the phenomenon which makes others feel exceptional. Therefore we suggest fascination as supportive strategy of communication climate as its pragmatic force is to be able to create positive communicative tone.

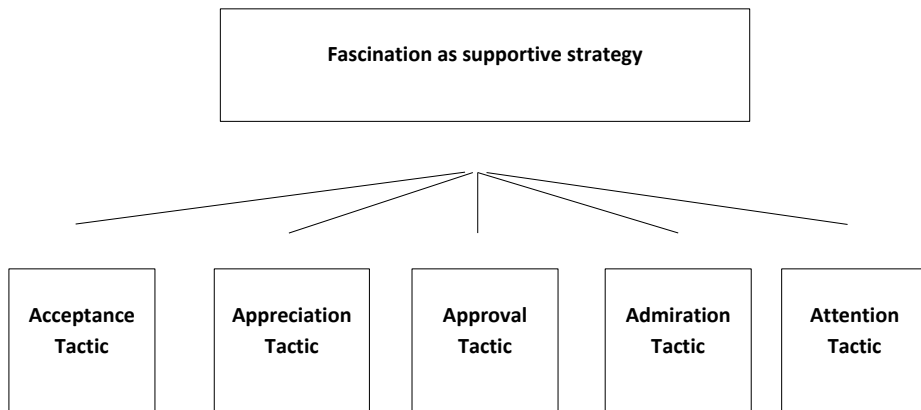
We may point qualities of fascinating speaker: 1. the talent to sweep listeners away with their charm. 2. Seem truly like their interlocutors. 3. Value other's opinion. 4. Devote all of their attention to the listener. 5. Make others feel important like a million and liked.

Since the deepest craving of human nature is the need to feel valued and valuable (Fisher, 1994: 29). The secret of fascination is therefore simple: make others feel important. We can formulate the fascination as supportive strategy in the following way:

“When I fascinate or charm some person with the help of certain verbal and non-verbal signs, I try to make her special powerfully and emotionally”.

The more important a speaker makes somebody, they feel more comfortable in his presence. It leads to comfortization in relationships directly related to friendly attitude and disposition to others, appreciation, desire to speak. A fascinating speaker has a powerful quality to speak to others as though “waving a cocoon” (Fenn). No one else exists in the world for him but his listener. And he listens as though every word is important and needs his undivided attention.

Within the study we have elaborated fascination tactics how to make people feel comfortable and wonderful about themselves.



Pic. 1. Fascination Tactics

This picture demonstrates tactics of fascination: **acceptance tactic, appreciation tactic, approval tactic, admiration tactic, attention tactic.** 1. **Acceptance Tactic.**

Acceptance implies giving other people unconditional positive regard (Onyekwere, 1991: 36). In other words, they are accepted entirely, without limitation. By the way, fascination does not admit criticizing or finding fault. Everything is totally accepted about communication partners, as if they were a “miracle of nature” (Dumont, 2015: 17). To accept another person is the starting point in fascination process.

At the level of linguistics acceptance tactic is expressed via empathetic utterances, compliments, praise, etc.

Empathetic utterances selected from one book: *If I am understanding you correctly. If I were you. I would feel the same in that situation. I understand your feelings. I wish you didn't have to go through that. I'm on your side here. I wish I could have been with you in*

that moment. Oh, that sounds terrible. You must feel so helpless. That hurts me to hear that. I support your position here. I totally agree with you. You are feeling so trapped! That sounds like you felt really disgusted! I'd feel the same way you do in your situation. You are in a lot of pain here. I can feel it. It would be great to be free of this. That must have annoyed you. That would make me mad too. That sounds infuriating. That sounds frustrating. That is very scary. Well I agree with most of what you're saying. I would have also been disappointed by that. That would have hurt my feelings also. That would make me sad too. POOR BABY! Wow, that must have hurt. I would have trouble coping with that. What I admire most about what you're doing is... That would make me feel insecure. That sounds a little frightening (Graham, Kenderick, Gordon, 2008: 176).

As for nonverbal components, smile is a powerful means to show happiness at seeing people (Burgoon, Buller, Woodall, 1996: 187). They feel happy about themselves because they feel important and valuable. Hence, their feedback is to like the person who is making them feel this way. They find a speaker charming and fascinating. As a result, it brings in positive communication climate.

2. Appreciation Tactic. It is expressing high estimation to others for their actions, increasing their self-esteem (Onyekwere, 1991: 171). What does appreciation tactic produce? Eventually, communicants feel more valuable and important; more competent and capable; their self-image improves and their self-respect soars.

Appreciation Tactic is realized through speech acts of gratitude evaluative words (positive emotional nouns, verbs and adjectives). Again smile helps to appreciate others. In this case, self-esteem and feeling of importance highly jump.

Evaluative words selected from different literature: *great able, absolute, aces, adept, admirable, adroit, bad, best, brutal, cold, complete, consummate, crack, downright, dynamite, egregious, exceptional, excellent, expert, fantastic, fine, first-rate, good, heavy, marvelous, masterly, number one, out-and-out, perfect, positive, proficient, skilled, skillful, super dupe, surpassing, terrific, total, tough, transcendent, tremendous, unmitigated, unqualified, utter, wonderful excellent accomplished, admirable, attractive, capital, certified, champion, choice, choicest, desirable, distinctive, distinguished, estimable, exceptional, exemplary, exquisite, fine, finest, first, first-class, first-rate, good, great, high, incomparable, invaluable, magnificent, meritorious, notable, noted, outstanding, peerless, premium, priceless, prime, select, skillful, sterling, striking, superb, superior, superlative, superlative, supreme, tiptop, topnotch, transcendent, wonderful good acceptable, ace, admirable, agreeable, bad, bully, capital, choice, commendable, congenial, crack, deluxe, excellent, exceptional, favorable, first-class, first-rate, gnarly, gratifying, great, honorable, marvelous, nice, pleasing, pleasant, positive, precious, prime, reputable, satisfactory, satisfying, select, shipshape, sound, spanking, splendid, sterling, stupendous, super, superb, supereminent, superexcellent, superior, tip-top, valuable, welcome, wonderful, worthy, etc.*

3. Approval Tactic. This tactic is basic one because throughout life, all humans have a deep subconscious need for approval of their actions and accomplishments (Costigan, 1984: 113). Moreover, the need to be approved is continuous. Praise actualizes approval tactic as praise elevates other people's self-esteem. Praise makes them feel wonderful about themselves. In response they find their communication partner to be more interesting, perceptive, highly likable, and extremely charming.

Praise utterances: *You're an awesome friend. You're smart. You are awesome! You are the most perfect you there is. You are enough. You're strong. You have a great sense of humor. You are really courageous.*

4. Admiration Tactic. Admiration means to regard with wonder or approval. Admiration is expressed by compliments. When sincere and genuine compliments are paid, people feel better about themselves, acknowledged and recognized, valuable and important. Consequently, they like themselves more, and they like the fascinator too.

Complimentary utterances are: *I love talking with you. That was fascinating. That dress looks stunning on you. Your hair just adds to your gorgeousness. You are always so happy and kind to people, it's like a big breath of fresh air when I walk into the building and see you here! I want to compliment you. It was a great success. It was a pleasure to listen to. It was one of the finest meeting. I was enthralled by your speech. I was so impressed with you.* (Golden, 2005: 43).

5. Attention Tactic. Probably attention is the most important quality of all. So, it is the most powerful communication behavior for building self-esteem and is the key to instant fascination. When somebody pays close attention to other people, the more valuable and important they feel they are, and the more they like a fascinator.

Thus, these are the five most powerful communication climate creating tactics, i.e. the climate of trust and openness. In such communication environment interlocutors enjoy their relationships because it is easy to talk together and understand one another.

In communication attention tactic is revealed through attentive listening. The ability to listen well is one of the most important qualities of a fascinator. He gathers information by asking questions and listening closely to what people have to say. The author of Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman, concluded that the ability to connect emotionally with people, to be aware and sensitive to what people say and what they really mean is crucial for creating communication climate (Goleman, 1995: 16). To listen attentively means as if listener is transfixed by what the other person is saying. When a person is intently listened to by another, it makes him feel good about himself. The speaker's self-esteem goes up and he likes himself more. As a consequence, he likes and trusts his listeners.

Examples of phrases that demonstrate active listening: *I'm picking up that... As I get it, you felt... Sort of a feeling that... Sort of saying... Kind of a feeling like... If I'm hearing you correctly... To me it's almost like you're saying... Sort of hear you saying that you... Kind of made you feel... The thing you feel most is... So, as you see it... As I get it, you're saying... What I guess I'm hearing is... I'm not sure I'm with you but... I somehow sense that maybe you feel... You feel... I really hear you saying. I wonder if you're expressing a concern that... It sounds as if you're indicating a concern about... I wonder if you're saying... You place a high value on... It seems to you... Like right now you believe... You often feel... You feel, perhaps, that... You appear to be feeling... It appears to you... As I hear it, you... So, from where you sit... Your feeling now is that... I read you as saying... Sometimes you... Your message seems to be, "I... Listening to you it seems as if... I gather... So your world is a place where you... You communicate a sense of... (Bright, 1988: 33).*

Another technique of attentive listening is pausing before replying. While pausing, three things happen. The first – avoiding interrupting the other person. The second, pausing tells the person that his thoughts and words were important and were being considered carefully. The third, pausing is hearing at a deeper level of mind (Knapp, Hall, 2002: 93).

The next technique is questions for clarification. Questions expand on recent remarks. After questions listener can feed message back; in other words, paraphrase it in his own words.

So, effective listening means listening with a difference, it's about convincing people about being totally involved in what is being said. There is a deep conviction that fascination requires undivided attention especially during listening process. In other words, positive

communication climate is built on empathetic listening. The better partners the listeners are, the better communication climate is established.

In terms of nonverbal communication, the whole body of empathetic listener signals his listening. His nonverbal behavior says: **“I am totally focused on what you are saying; every word you utter is of extreme importance to me.”** Attentive listeners project that “in the moment” focus that makes people feel special and important. While listening attentive listeners turn their whole body toward the other person and gives this person his complete attention. Close eye contact, gentle “flicking” or shifting gaze from one eye to the other; leaning slightly forward and facing the person directly, standing two to four feet away, and unfolding arms (*Knapp, Hall, 1992: 33*) facilitate to make others feel wonderful and loved.

So, positive communication climate is entirely determined by the way a person looks, listens, and speaks to people. Being a focused and patient listener, using a pleasant voice is essential for communication climate.

Another key to positive communication climate is to be sensitive to what others want and don't want to talk about. While having unpleasant news or emotions, it is recommended to change the subject obliquely, into a slightly different direction. In positive communication fascinator talks about what the other person cares about. When people discuss a topic that's important to them, they tend to reveal a great deal about themselves to sympathetic listeners. They show their likes and dislikes, their preferences, beliefs, and ideas. When a listener in a conversation listens closely, he discovers the way to steer the conversation in positive communication climate.

Thus, communication climate is characterized by the following emotions: **joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, elevation, satisfaction, affection, cheerfulness, surprise, confidence, admiration, enthusiasm, eagerness, euphoria, contentment, enjoyment, optimism, happiness.**

5. Conclusions

The modern development of linguistics is determined by intense interest to language mechanisms of effective communication, reflection of emotions and feelings in speech, to functioning of nonverbal components of communication as signs of attitudes of people to each other, finally means of regulating interpersonal relations of communicants in the process of communicative interaction leading to positive communication climate.

The article interprets communication climate as the tone of the relationship expressed by verbal and non-verbal messages between people. The way people feel about each other and themselves stipulates the tone (communication climate) in verbal interaction.

Features of positive communication climate pointed out in this article are: 1) communicants' feelings of being valued and respected; 2) confident communicative behavior; 3) open, sincere and trustworthy relationships; 4) willingness to speak to others; 5) careful listening; 6) offering feedback; 7) conveying information accurately. Communication climate can be characterized by the following emotions: joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, elevation, satisfaction, affection, cheerfulness, surprise, confidence, admiration, enthusiasm, eagerness, euphoria, contentment, enjoyment, optimism, happiness, etc.

Such positive tone in communication is created due to the ability to treat others positively. Fascination provides communication comfort between participants of interaction, performing the so-called magical function in speech. The magic of fascination is in minimizing unpleasant emotional tone in communication and maximizing positive communication climate Fascination

is defined as the person's quality to be liked through charming, expressing sympathy, avoiding negative emotions and making positive impression on people via the whole semiotic complex of verbal and nonverbal means. Qualities of fascinating speakers are: 1. Charming others while caring about them. 2. Showing that they like their interlocutors. 3. Valuing other's opinion. 4. Devoting all of their undivided attention to the listener. 5. Making others feel important like a million and liked.

The work postulates fascination as supportive strategy: "When somebody fascinates another person with the help of certain verbal and nonverbal signs, he tries to make them special and exceptional". The realization of fascination strategy is performed through tactics: acceptance tactic, appreciation tactic, approval tactic, admiration tactic, attention tactic.

Thus, fascination possesses emotional, cognitive, social, communicative and pragmatic potential which determines its discursive importance.

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