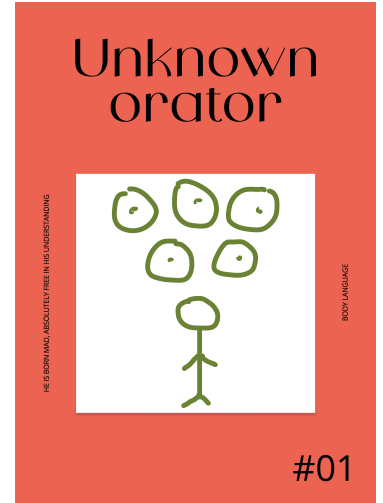


HOW I ANALYZE GESTURES: FROM INTUITIVE TO PROFESSIONAL OBSERVATION

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ANNOTATION

This article presents the author's methodology for analyzing body language — from intuitive observation to the systematic professional approach developed through years of teaching public speaking. The author argues for introspection as the foundation of intellectual growth and describes his own framework for evaluating nonverbal behaviour, built around three criteria for an effective speaker's gesture: openness, justification, and meaningfulness. The pedagogical format of initial body language analysis — a short speech followed by structured feedback — is examined as a tool for bringing childhood-ingrained nonverbal patterns into conscious awareness and enabling their correction. The article integrates the theoretical foundations of rhetoric with practical teaching experience and the author's personal reflection.

KEYWORDS

body language analysis, public speaking, nonverbal communication, self-observation, pedagogy of rhetoric, speaker's gesture, nonverbal patterns, feedback, professional observation.

Observation is a key quality that every speaker needs. The ability to notice details, analyze other people's behavior, understand their techniques for persuasion, attracting attention, and establishing contact with the audience is the basis of successful communication. I have always been interested in observing others, discovering their personal qualities and the secrets of public speaking.

Introspection as the basis of intellectual development

In my opinion, the ability to analyze one's own actions, actions and manifestations of thoughts is the foundation of intellectual growth. The main goal of each of us is to continuously enrich our knowledge and experience in order to think effectively and

improve throughout our lives. This process begins with self-observation and reflection, which make it possible to realize our strengths and weaknesses, and to determine directions for development.

From intuitive to professional body language analysis

With the experience of teaching public speaking and a deeper immersion in this field, my observation has moved to a new level – from intuitive to professional. Studying the history of rhetoric, in particular non-verbal communication, and analyzing hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of speakers allowed me to form a system for analyzing body language as an unconscious source of information about a person.

Therefore, at the very first public speaking lesson, I pay special attention to body language, talking about the categories of gestures and the requirements for modern non-verbal communication. My goal is to give students the tools to consciously use their own body language so that they do not become the object of analysis by others. Armed with basic knowledge, they can begin to observe the non-verbal behavior of their colleagues and interlocutors, and I give them an example of how to do it professionally.

Criteria for effective speaker body language

We define the main purpose of a speaker as motivating and inspiring others. If we treat our audience with respect, as intellectual equals, our gestures should reflect openness and willingness to engage in dialogue, not aggression or superiority. Therefore, an effective speaker's gesture should be:

1. Open, demonstrating a willingness to interact
2. Justified, i.e. appropriate and related to the content of the speech
3. Meaningful, not monotonous or meaningless

At the same time, we should avoid gestures that convey withdrawal (fear, aggression), anxiety, or uncertainty. These include:

- Arms crossed, fists clenched
- Hands in pockets or behind your back
- Fine motor skills of hands, feet, eyes
- Inclined poses, support on one leg
- Lack of eye contact with the audience
- Flabby, inexpressive gestures

Body language analysis practice

To reinforce this knowledge, I ask course participants to give a short speech of up to one

minute and give an initial analysis of their body language. In this format, people often display familiar, childhood-ingrained nonverbal patterns: leaning on a back leg, clenching their hands into fists, rubbing their palms, swaying, aimlessly walking around the stage. I draw attention to this after the speech and explain how these gestures can affect the audience's perception of the speech.

After 10-15 such feedback sessions, listeners begin to independently analyze the body language of others, and, later, to notice and correct their own nonverbal manifestations that may interfere with the achievement of their goals.

Red flags:

- Defensive, closed, aggressive gestures
- Overly comfortable, sloppy postures that indicate a degradation of oratory skills

Blue flags:

- Developing a professional, systematic analysis of body language instead of relying solely on intuition
- Constantly working on improving your own non-verbal communication
- Using open, meaningful, and justified gestures to enhance your impact on your audience