Dan S. STOICA
"Al. I. Cuza" University of Iași (Romania)

Public Relations: A Rhetoric Approach

Abstract: The present paper tries to put a light on PR from the rhetoric of discourse. Seen as a discursive activity, Public Relations could be better understood and practiced through the lens and with the help of rhetoric. The three ways in persuading an audience – Ethos, Logos, Pathos – are discussed as they are present in PR.

Keywords: PR, discursive activity, discourse, rhetoric.

1. Introduction

Discursive activity should be understood as the human activity of creating discourses as well as perceiving, interpreting and understanding discourses. It is what a PR specialist does. A PR specialist lives in a universe of crossing discourses where s/he inserts, when adequate, his/her own discourse. In order to perform in such conditions, the PR specialist needs to make use of some technique. Or the proven best technique in constructing and understanding discourses is rhetoric, with its ancient pillars: Ethos, Logos and Pathos. Seen as three directions of discursive argumentation, they allow in-depth discussions on every specific activity pertaining to someone on the job: putting out in discourses the image of the organization (Ethos), challenging the public in order to make them react (Pathos), and telling the adequate story (Logos) to reach both the previous targets. This is why, instead of trying to present the domain of PR as a singular one, governed by its own, particular rules and presented in its own singular theories, we could simply accept it is the domain of endless, ever crossing, well made, performative discourses, hence a solid meta-discourse on this discursive activity should take into consideration the rhetoric approach.

2. Organizational communication

(Too) often mistaken for internal communication, organizational communication is a complex type of communication, made of the organization's way of existence (how it is organized and how it functions, as displayed in front of its different publics), as well as of the totality of discourses produced by the management and by the specialized structure of communication (the PR structure). Obviously, there will be verbal communication (together with its paraverbal complement) and nonverbal communication, all together in a complex discourse, aiming to influence both general categories of publics, internal and external.

3. The role of the PR structure

Despite the general description of this profession, Public Relations are not about press releases only.

As stated above, PR is about the management of communication both inside the organization and outside it, its publics being as well internal, as external. PR is the voice of the organization where this latter is assumed as an ideal, virtual entity defined by its assumed mission only. Starting from this image, one could understand that PR specific discourses would go to the organizational management (counselling discourses) and to any other internal public determined as target (a formative discourse), as internal discourse; they also go to external publics, like partners, suppliers, advertising agencies, sponsors (if such is the case, for some kinds of non-lucrative organizations), institutions of central or local administration, the press (and, through it the community) and so on.

On the other hand, PR specialists would incessantly scan the universe around the organization to "fish" any discourse, any bit of information that could be of interest for those they work for. This can be a column in a newspaper, a press conference of the National Bank's governor, a TV interview of the Prime-Minister, a new add of some concurrent organization, new rules for participating in a faire, the launch of public consultation on possible changes in the financial laws, etc. Anything, not just discourses directly addressed to the managers of the organization by the press or by some authority, or attacks by the press concerning the relations of the organization with the community.

Possible problems with the imported gas that could be foreseen due to failed negotiations between Russia and Ukraine are to be signalized to the managers in the PR counselling discourse. It could be

also counselling in the building issues (repairing, reconstruction, enlargement, etc.) in order to make sure the organization's statement as of its status remains consistent with its mission and its initial status[1].

A change in the HR and salaries policy at some concurrent organization is an interesting topic to develop with the internal publics of the own company (if you happen to be a PR specialist), just to show your own personnel one more reason to stay faithful and constant in their relation to the organization.

Some difficulty a bank faces in supporting a concurrent organization can offer a good subject to develop in discourses addressed to your partners, to make sure they understand how solid your organization is also because it had chosen to use the services of a solid bank.

And then, the press. A well trained PR specialist should know that all the journalists are not alike, that media institutions have their own interests, that any media product has its own public. So, as a communicator in Public Relations, one should adequate their discourse to the journalists they are talking to and they should carefully choose what will be the "off the record story" for each of the journalists.

4. The role of rhetoric

Looking back to the examples above, one could imagine the wide range of publics of PR discourses, as well as the problematologic amplitude of those discourses. Again, discourses to make and discourses to perceive/analyze. This is why I always thought of PR as of a (mainly) discursive activity. And when we talk about discursive activity, we cannot avoid talking about the well-known technique developed to ensure the quality of discourses: the rhetoric. When we think of "quality discourse" we mean efficient discourses. This would be the way Aristotle opened more than 2000 years ago. Aristotle's idea of rhetoric is that of a mere technique residing in using anything one can find at hand in order to persuade the interlocutor (or the audience). This technique is explained as being made of three pillars: Ethos, Logos, and Pathos. After crossing the

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[1] An interesting story I heard from a distinguished member of our University says that Yale University was not only built on the image of the University of Oxford, but they hired a specialized team of experts in "aging buildings", which delicately affected the integrity of the newly built university to make it seem centuries old. On the other hand, no one told the managers of our university to recondition the old, big, heavy door at the South entrance, and they changed it into a totally inadequate "modern" door which cannot stand bigger winds, nor can it preserve the image of an old university, the first one in the country.

centuries and after discovering rhetoric reinterpreted by Chaïm Perelman as a theory of argumentation, we can easily assume that the three pillars are but three ways in argumentation (modes of persuasion, as Aristotle put it). Ethos would be the construction of arguments which rely on the qualities of the enunciator (the speaker, the orator)[2], Pathos would be constructing arguments which rely on seducing the interlocutor, making them feel they have all the good reasons to identify with the speaker[3], while Logos would be the construction itself of the argumentative discourse[4]. One can easily remark that the Logos will contain the necessary tools to perform the argumentation with the preponderance, sometimes, of the Ethos as well as of the Pathos (sometimes), not to mention that it contains the tools to make itself persuasive.

We could bring the discussion even nearer, by taking into account what they called "the model of communication" of Roman Jakobson[5]. We now know that all the six functions proposed by Jakobson (emotive, referential, poetic, phatic, conative and metalinguistic) are simultaneously present in any discursive instantiation, but we also know that one or more of these functions can be less perceptible favoring a kind of a prevalence of some other functions. For instance, the news in journalism should not unravel the emotions of the speaker/writer concerning the subject; they should instead present very clearly the referent (the object they are talking about). Looking closer, we can see that Aristotle's Ethos could be present in the emotive function, the Pathos could be present in the conative function, while the Logos could be present in all the four remaining functions (but also in the previously named ones). The argumentation by Logos will bring together the idea of speaking of something (referential function), in an appropriate way for your audience (poetic function),

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[2] "Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible", said Aristotle. Then he added: "We believe good men more fully and more readily than others". (For the English version of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* the following address was used: https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&lei=VT7NXOuWH-f5qwGDkLlw&q=ethos%20pathos%20logos%20stanford&ved=2ahUKEwjwp9WjrIHiAhWN5KQKHbDJAHsQsKwBKAV6BAgAEAY&biw=1088&bih=499)

[3] Aristotle: "awakening emotion in the audience so as to induce them to make the judgment desired."

[4] Aristotle: "the speech itself, in so far as it proves or seems to prove". It is about reasoning and the consistency of the discourse.

[5] In fact, Jakobson described what he saw the functions of language were. Only, he displayed the six functions on the design of any instance of communication and this led to the interpretation of his construction as a model of communication. This passage in the present study is dedicated to the (possible) linguists coming across.

making all the time sure that you are in contact – physically and psychologically – with your audience (phatic function), and talking to them by using the right code, you both understand in the same way (metalinguistic function). Of course, it is still by Logos that the speaker puts himself/herself in the discourse, revealing his/her personal position about the subject treated in the discourse, and also that the speaker gives his/her interlocutor enough reasons to feel they can identify with the addresser (on the topic developed in the discourse). Of course, the Jakobson's model is just for verbal communication, as it is a description of the functions of language.

If we agree to use rhetoric in explaining how PR discursive activity works, we will remark that in all cases one could understand the profession under study through reference to the triad Ethos-Logos-Pathos, or through reference to Jakobson's functions of language. Below, there will be some examples of specific PR activities presented as they fall under the Ethos, the Pathos, or the Logos. When necessary, complementary theories will be evoked.

5. Organizational Ethos in discourses for internal publics

What does Aristotle say about Ethos? He says: "The orator persuades by moral character when his speech is delivered in such a manner as to render him worthy of confidence; for we feel confidence in a greater degree and more readily in persons of worth in regard to everything in general, but where there is no certainty and there is room for doubt, our confidence is absolute. But this confidence must be due to the speech itself, not to any preconceived idea of the speaker's character". But, what if we accept the idea that there is the discursive Ethos, but there is the pre-discursive Ethos, too? Isocrates told us so, and the history of human communication proved him right. Remember that Aristotle himself said: "We believe good men more fully and more readily than others" (see note 2, at the previous page). It is like in Goffman's theory of faces (Goffman 1967): if you plan to be attributed a certain face, you should live accordingly. And now, what if the orator is an organization?

We are talking here of PR techniques used to promote the image of the organization in the eyes of internal publics. From the counseling of the managers to determine them to be truthful, honest and understandable in their annual report presented to the personnel, to the counseling of the HR manager in order to make sure that the stipulations in the individual contract are respected, there are a lot of types of discursive interventions

the PR specialist has to make, just to be sure that the personnel has and keeps a positive image of the organization. That helps when the necessity appears to have all the members of the personnel supporting the policy of the management. It is by inducing such attitude to the managers that the PR specialist can build a powerful Ethos of the organization. Then, when the organization needs the support of its members, it will be heard and believed. This is the argumentation through Ethos (we have here what they call "prediscursive Ethos"). Discursive Ethos would be while choosing the colours for the organization or its logo: the members of the organization wouldn't be comfortable with any idea if they do not feel they can identify themselves with the organization (with its Ethos). Another situation where we can see the Ethos of the organization getting stronger is this activity called "team-building", which is always planned by the specialists in PR. Generally, it is an invitation for the members of the organization to meet outside the common workplace and develop all kind of activities with no relation with their specific domain. Examples are numerous: they can hire a boat and sail it for two days, assuming all the necessary work on board and also the necessary hierarchy of positions, which may not reproduce the one at the workplace; they can meet in the kitchen of a restaurant and make food in cooperation (for themselves or for somebody else); they can simply camp in the mountains and try to make it through the weekend with scarce provisions an nobody to help them. In all these situations, the participants have to prove they can beat the difficulties by working together and also that they can feel good together, with no respect for the actual hierarchy and with (possible) changes in the status of each of them. As different abilities are required in performing the new activities, the CEO could be given orders by someone far below him in the official hierarchy, just because that one knows better the new domain of activity. Experiencing the hardship of trying to perform something you have been ordered to do (when you are in fact the big boss), or, on the other hand, feeling the burden of the responsibility of giving orders (when you are in a humble position, at home), are character formatting situations and also give you perspective: a CEO remembers the times where they were receiving orders, the humble member of the personnel learns that giving orders is not such an easy thing to do. If executed after a well-designed plan, a team-building really counts and the organization gains in the general perception of the internal publics. Its Ethos gains in power. Not only the members of the personnel (included the management) feel stronger at the end of the exercise, but they feel they all belong to a well-established organization.

6. Organizational Ethos in discourses for external publics

We are all familiar with the logo of Shell, that huge company extracting oil from all over the world. It's a shell. And they added some dynamics to it, and the shell opens to let us see a splendid image with an atoll: perfect blue, then perfect green, then perfect emerald. Have you ever seen an oil extracting platform? I have. It's dirty. I cannot remember anything dirtier than that. And yet, the logo of the Shell Company is a shell which opens to let us have a glimpse of the paradise. There is also a text accompanying the opening shell: it says that the company is one of the most important investors in research in ecology. This is true. They have their own institute (with highly appreciated results) and they sponsor other institutes also. What is this? It's called "corporate social responsibility" (CSR, for short). Smart PR takes care of the image the community have of their organization, and they act, meaning they try to compensate for the difficulties they caused to the community and for the good will and support they have had from the community.

It is not always a well-planned activity, and it ends in some kind of a routine which does not communicate much about the organization. Lately, in our country, CSR takes mainly the form of planting trees. It's not bad, but it's so uniform that it can turn invisible. Of course, sponsoring the construction of a new hospital for children is a splendid gesture, and OMV-Petrom have saved their face in the public perception, in a time when nobody really likes companies like them. A new policy started to spread a few years ago. First, the idea was applied at IBM: they changed from striving for visibility, to offering transparency. They remained in the realm of visual, but they changed the philosophy: don't look at us, but come to see through us! Brilliant! The open doors days, the guided visits, the documentaries, but also the presence in fairs, with applications that let the visitors see the "how to" at work. All these are ways of promoting the image of the organization, so it counts as Ethos building. Once they saw how it's done, the people will trust the organization. Once they see the organization's implication in helping their community, the people will trust the organization. CSR is about giving back. The organization gives back something to the community, and its image will grow better in the perception of the people.

Another technique largely used to build a stronger organizational Ethos consists in promoting the image of some important figure of the staff, mainly the top manager. I remember how proud they were at the School of Information and Communication Sciences of the University of

Montreal, years ago, when Jean-Michel Salaün was appointed director there. They knew that having such a personality in the top of the hierarchy was saying a lot of the value of their institution. I paid attention since to such "moves" and I could remark the Central University Library "Mihai Eminescu" from Iasi at the top of its glory when Professor Alexandru Calinescu was appointed general director: all around the world people were interested in staying in relation with an institution having such a great personality in front of it. They even had the Foucault itinerant international seminary there, too!

Now, I have a more recent example: the University of Bucharest, where the Rector is a well-known personality in the study of philosophy, but also a much appreciated person in educational policies in Europe.

Rectorul Universității din București, profesorul Mircea Dumitru, președinte al Asociației Universităților Balcanice
(The rector of the University of Bucharest, professor Mircea Dumitru, president of the Association of the Universities from the Balkans)

Profesorul Mircea Dumitru, rectorul Universității din București, despre viitorul științei și al umanității, la forumul Future Europe.
Between 21-22 of February, 2019, professor Mircea Dumitru, the Rector of the University of Bucharest, took part as a *plenary speaker*, in the forum *Future Europe*. In his address, professor Mircea Dumitru pointed out the need for the implication of the scientific community in fighting the post-truth trend as well as the response the scientific community should ensure to actual challenges, in the spirit of the balance between epistemological norms and the moral ones.

The images above are issued by the PR department of the University of Bucharest, and they are about much honorable positions the Rector, Professor Mircea Dumitru, has had in international meetings on academic education and/or ethical issues in academic research. The

official positions of its Rector strengthen the organizational Ethos, such as in times of social and political troubles, the University of Bucharest becomes a voice in the public arena, as we can see below. On the contrary, an university which is nothing more than "the oldest in the country" has its voice fading away in public matters.

Punct de vedere al conducerii Universității din București privind reglementările recente din domeniul justiției

Conducerea Universității din București a luat act de inițiativele unor cadre didactice și ale organizației studențești din cadrul Facultății de Drept de a formula public o poziție avizată față de reglementările din ultimii doi ani referitoare la administrarea justiției în România, în special față de recenta OUG nr. 7/2019.[6]

What I came to understand more than 15 years ago is now a smart technique of PR: if you want your organization to have a voice in a public debate, make sure its Ethos is well-defined, by promoting the figure of the top. What surprised me in the early 2000s, has become common knowledge for the practitioners in PR. I only hope that they understand what theory this practice relies on.

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[6] The official point of view of the University of Bucharest on the recent regulations concerning the laws on justice. The top management of the UB have noticed the initiatives of students and professors from the Faculty of Law to take a public, informed position against the regulations in the domain of the administration of justice in Romania, with a special stress on the OUG (Emergency Government Order) 7/2019 (translated by Dan S. Stoica).

7. Pathos and the organizational discourse

The saying "know your public" is not an invention of the gurus of the domain of Public Relations. They might have heard it and they forgot the source. The source is – again! – the ancient technique called rhetoric. If the speaker is advised to use whatever is at hand in order to persuade the audience, s/he will make his/her choices according to all the elements of the specific and unique situation of communication. Or, one of these elements is the interlocutor (or the audience, for public discourses). The old idea of "awakening emotion in the audience so as to induce them to make the judgment desired" implies that the speaker should know who they address the discourse[7]. There is no discourse that could produce the same effect in any audience, but they say that there is a public for any discourse. In between these extremes, we have any common situation when a speaker has to persuade an audience and for that they have to try to mentally represent as well as possible that particular audience. Imagine how they all melt when Charles de Gaulle addressed the French people with the phrase "Français, Françaises" (which is kind of saying "French people, men and women"), in a time where they were not paying attention to the politically correct language as for gender equality. Now, let's remark the distinction between a politician addressing his audience with the phrase "My fellow citizens" and another one saying "My fellow compatriots". In the first case, the people in the audience are invited to identify with the speaker on matters pertaining to some administrative point of view over the life in their community. In the second case, the speaker appeals to profound sentiments like patriotism, which means caring more for the country than for oneself. Getting together in the first case could lead to a practical solution, while getting together in the second case means giving one's own life to protect the country. In the first case, the opponents could slow down the realization of the project at hand. In the second case, good patriots will get ready to face whatever danger could menace their country and get ready to sacrifice themselves if necessary. In the first case, people in the audience are called upon to

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[7] Let us remember Jean-Blaise Grize in his "La construction du sens": Thinking of the semantic of the discourse instead of the semantic of the text means to postulate the existence of subjects – speaker and hearer – who deploy a certain type of activity. Looking from a semiotic point of view, I place myself from the very beginning in that ‹‹totality of the exchange circuit›› of F. François [François, 1980: 189], which makes me consider that any discourse is essentially dialogue and argumentation. […] … one is talking or writing only to interfere in the knowledge, the opinions or the emotions of people they address" (translated from French by Dan S. Stoica).

help in reaching some goal in the everyday life of the community. In the second case, a danger is assumed as imminent and the need is to resemble all the good patriots to protect the country against that danger.

If the leader of some political party goes in the countryside to mingle at a popular festivity, dressed in traditional outfit and addressing each and every one by saying "my fellow countryman", he will have the instant identification of all the people gathered there. The nonverbal as well as the verbal used in his discourse help him melt into the population around. He is one of them, so they will listen to him and they will help him. It's what one does for one's peers.

Of course, the addressing phrases are not the only way to get to the heart of your public. Using words like "together" or saying"we" (with an inclusive sense, as the totality speaker-hearer) or "us" to name the speaker and the audience are other powerful tools one could use to create this belief that they can all identify in the support of the idea slid through the discourse.

8. The Logos

The Logos is about the ideas presented in the discourse, about the way they are presented and the rational construction of the whole discourse. It is the story itself, the myth, as Stefan Bratosin (2007) called it. It proves or it seems to prove, said Aristotle. Communicating is a tricky endeavour. They say that speaking is kind of a game of make believe. The only thing that could keep it right is ethics (which relies with the speaker, the Ethos). And yet, ill thinking has nothing to do with ethics. It is just wrong. Moral, but ill thought. But even if it's right, speaking, making discourses is an art that has too little to do with classical logic, the art of reasoning. Paul Grice, a well-known logician had said it in his works (Grice 1989), while Dan Sperber talked about the difference between logical inference (the reasoning) and communication inference (Sperber 1995). The former, said Dan Sperber, is an occasional, conscious, difficult, and rather slow mental activity; the latter is something we do permanently, unconsciously, painlessly, and fast. The problem with the inferences in communication is that we perform them even when they are not necessary (all has been explicitly said in the discourse itself) or they can point in the wrong direction. We cannot fight that, so we'd better assume that the discourse is a sign and all the speaker can hope is that the addressee will have the mind following the desired path in decoding it.

So, we shall start from Grize (see Note 8, *supra*) and try to find a way around to talk about how discourses work, what Logos is. This way around is semiotics (see above the opinion of Jean-Blaise Grize) and we know that the semiotic rectangle is quite different from the logical one, the one created by Boethius. This is why this part, dedicated to the Logos, will be dominated by theories from semiotics. We should bear in mind the logic of conversation of Grice, the natural logic of Jean-Blaise Grize, the endless semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce or the behaviorism based semiotics of Charles Morris. I could walk into the footstep of Andrej Skerlep (Skerlep 2001) and talk of the theory of argumentation as a continuation of the old art of rhetoric, with examples from Toulmin's theory of argumentation applied in PR. As a *hors-série*, I saved the mentioning of Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca and their new rhetoric (Perelman 1958, 2012). These latter authors have sum up all that has been done since Aristotle and gave a new existence to rhetoric as theory of argumentation. It was a new beginning for scholars studying rhetoric. Persuasion is no longer suspicious (as it was for Plato), but natural influence through discursive argumentation (as seen by Aristotle).

The main idea was that one cannot argument but through discursive activity, as arguments lie within discourses only. I will point out that the situation remains the same when looking from all the way around, meaning that one cannot make a discourse without making an argumentation. So, under this light, we can observe the role of the ancient Logos in constructing the Ethos, realizing the Pathos and being captivating by itself. One of the possible examples would be looking to discourses through the lens offered by Charles Morris' typology of discourses (Morris, 1946). In short, we will observe primary and then secondary usages of some types of discourses, in order to see if the latter are indeed more effective than the former, through their form and content, meaning through their intrinsic qualities. We know that Morris had undertaken empirical studies and tried to extract kind of rules as for what type of discourse to use for reaching that or that target[8]. Morris proposes to find types of discourses at the crossing of modes of signifying with usage modes. He presents four modes of signifying and four usage modes. The first category would have: designative, appreciative, prescriptive and formative modes, while the second would have: informative, evaluative, injunctive and systemic modes. Obviously, we will have primary usages of signs (discourses) at the crossing of:

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[8] One of my personal findings about communication is that there is just one rule to be applied in using it, and it says: there are no rules.

designative with informative, appreciative with evaluative, prescriptive with injunctive, and formative with systemic.

Empirical studies showed that primary usage of discourses (as signs in communication) was of low efficiency. In reverse, secondary usages were found to be more efficient. I thought of some examples in order to test this theory.

During the religious service in any Christian church, the Ten Commandments might be evoked. This is a prescriptive-injunctive kind of discourse. After nine "you shall not" and just one "you shall", we can imagine the believers not so happy and not really inclined to listen to those rules. Instead, a well-chosen story from the Biblewill be a successful homily (a kind of secondary usage: a designative-injunctive discourse), and one or maybe more of the commandments will touch the minds and the spirits of the congregation. It seems that Morris had it right.

Let us think of another example. In 1960, at the Olympia theater in Paris, Jaques Brel was touching the souls of his audience with his "Ne me quitte pas". The lyrics are like this:

"Ne me quitte pas
Ne me quitte pas…"

which is an obvious primary usage of a discourse (prescriptive-injunctive). But, here, we are in the presence of a crisis in the author's love life, and he has to be direct in order to save the situation. So, this a case where primary usage has the best chances to produce the desired effect.

Some years later, the American jazz singer Ray Charles came with an English version of the tune, "If you go away" and the lyrics were like this:

"If you go away,
If you go away,
Then you might as well take the sun away
All the birds that flew in the summer sky
When our love was new and our hearts were high",

in what we can remark a secondary usage of the discourse (designative-injunctive): the description of the world in the case the loved one decides to leave is supposed to invite them to think again and maybe make another decision. It is not direct enough, considering the state of crisis. It seems to take too long to describe the whole picture of the world after the separation. The elements of the description building up give a strong image and this can produce the desired effect, but it lacks of the punch effect. Personally, I would vote for the French version, which means that Morris' empirical findings do not apply all the time.

In fact, the main issue in communication is adequacy. The Logos is the way of argumentation where one can see how adequacy works and how important it is as fundamental principle. Well choosing the words (in accordance with the audience's expectations and cognitive assumptions), arranging them in the proper order to get the maximum of effect are just part of the effort.

Then there are so many levels adequacy can be discussed at! Take the wording. There are many ways of phrasing. I opted again for lyrics I have many times heard. Let's look to two ways of retracting previous discourses between lovers.

First, *No more I love you's*, by Annie Lennox:
"No more I love you's
The language is leaving me
No more I love you's
Changes are shifting
Outside the words".

And then, Eamon, the rapper:
"F**k what I said, it don't mean s**t now".

They both say the same thing, but they address different music fans. In fact, each of us could come up with a personal phrasing for the same idea[9]. The differences will be explained by the state of mind of the speaker, by their representation of the state of mind of the interlocutor, by the culture they belong to (both or separately), by the moment, the place, the presence or not of a third party, by the level of education of the protagonists, etc. At the end of the day, a good, long moment of silence could do it.

We talked about the words, but what about the order of the words in the utterance? There is this scene in the film *Looking for Richard*, where the film makers point out the brilliant choice Shakespeare had made for the opening word. We all remember the beginning of the play: "Now is the winter of our discontent / Made glorious summer by the sun of York". Untwined genius, Shakespeare! This "now" at the beginning of the first verse and so at the beginning of the entire play is like a summon to be there, to be in that moment, and it is not only for the other

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[9] The myth (cf. Bratosin 2007) is the same: the androgyny, we remember from Plato. The problem occurs when one of the members of the couple (or both) discover that they were wrong, that the other is not their soul mate. Hence the discourses like those evoked in the text.

characters, but for the reader and for the audience in the theatre, too. It is so powerful that he who said that captures all the attention and becomes the central figure of the entire play.

So, this is how the order given to the words counts. The poetic and the referential functions of the language, would have said Jakobson. And the phatic function, too.

Then, there is the coherence and the consistency of the discourse. They say one should be clear, straight forward, honest, and able to persuade, too. It is not always true and I am not talking just about jokes, ironies or other language turns consisting of saying different things from what we mean. I would like us all remember a fragment of any piece from the absurd literature. Is there any coherence and/or consistency in the so-called dialogue between Estragon and Vladimir? None! And yet, reading Beckett's text or looking at a representation of it in a theatre we have the understanding of the hardship of any waiting situation, not only what it means to be waiting for Godot. Well, this was extreme. I could have chosen to take into analysis Grice's conversational maxims, not one by one, but just the idea that sometimes – as the logician said – one or more of the four maxims could be hardly even present in order to favor the role of another one. In natural language use (in discourses), we may have almost total suppression of the maxim of quantity, or of the maxim of quality, etc. and the discourse could still be good, valid, efficient.

Anything at hand, said Aristotle. The challenge will always be obeying to the main principle in communication: adequacy.

9. The Logos in PR

Known as "spin doctors", the Public Relations professionals should indeed be able to extract as many senses from the discourses crossing one another in the universe of their respective organization, and to produce adequate discourses for any target audience they may have determined within the horizon of their territory. That means decoding discourses: understanding the Logos other enunciators have produced (and perceiving their Ethos while guessing their Pathos), and, at the same time, preparing discourses (through this process of simulation, which is constructing and testing scenarios). This latter process consists of choosing the Logos in such way that it presents a just Ethos, furnishes the anchors to attract the Pathos of the targeted audience and seduce by itself through its own elements of persuasion.

10. Logos and the internal publics of the PR professionals

This will be hard to say in English, but I feel I need to discuss it here. The way people are addressing each other in Western cultures (mainly in Anglo-Saxon ones) vs. the way people are addressing each other in Romanian culture. The distinction cannot be clearly described in English as this is a language where the pronoun has the same form for the second person, singular and plural. In Romanian, there are different forms for the polite addressing, which is a form of plural drawing the use of the distinct plural form of the second person of the verb. A simple English "you are here" would claim for distinct forms in Romanian: one for the familiar discourse (allowed in conversations among pairs, or close family members), one for persons occupying higher positions in the social hierarchy (older persons outside the family, important figures in the society, like professors for example, people of the same age but who share not a common history with the speaker).

The issue (or should I say the problem) is that together with all the multi-national business, the Romanian managers imported new habits which troubled the balance of the polite behavior of Romanians. Middle aged and elderly people had to face situations when they were called by their Christian names and addressed to as if they were already familiar with a newly met youngster at the work place. (The situation expanded, and we had everybody from banks to mobile phones companies, etc. calling us by the first name and addressing us all at the second person singular). The problem (it is not just an issue!) lies within the mentality. In our culture, once you call somebody by his/her first name (which, traditionally, never happens fast or easy), a sense of equality (or worse, of superiority) appears in the mind of the speaker, and this is not always the right way to see the social relations in a big power-distance society like ours (cf. Hofstede 1996). So, it is not only giving up politeness marks, but making a shift in the traditional perception of social relations which comes too suddenly. I take the opportunity to remember my (possible) reader that mentality has a fabulous inertia: if it changes – at all! – it happens in generations (two, three). Trying to shock it is not a smart move.

This is an example of wrongly constructing the Logos, by ignoring the cultural patterns of each society.

11. Logos and the external publics of PR professionals

I remember an excellent PR move suggested by Adriana Saftoiu (then, head of the Communication Department at the Romanian Presidency) to help the President with his speech in the Parliament where he had to defend himself against the accusation that he would have said: "The MPs are making laws for criminals". Speculations were made: he will retract his saying and present excuses; he will argument in favor of the idea that all the MPs were making laws for criminals. All he needed was for the President to repeat himself by uttering clearly the part which was incriminated. Instead of what they thought they had heard, the members of the Parliament received the phrase "MPs are making laws for criminals". Grammar and clear uttering were enough to bock the reaction of the audience: those who would have reacted would have implicitly confessed to be of that part of MPs incriminated by the presidential discourse. This Logos has presented a strong image of a powerful Ethos – the President didn't change his discourse, so he showed courage and the sense of authority, and also his already well-known good command of the Romanian language – while presenting the necessary elements to create the right emotion within the target public (which was not in the hall of the Parliament, but outside, the population of the country). As for itself, this Logos was coherent with the policy of the President, it was almost the same in content with his previous (incriminated) discourse, it is clear but harsh, polite (at the limit) but tough. This is real PR: discourse, rhetoric, argumentation.

12. As a closing paragraph, …

… I would say that I planned this presentation of mine as a designative-injunctive discourse. I have presented my perception of the PR as a discursive activity, where rhetoric should be the main technique professionals are expected to apply and *in spe*-s should study. I am not the first to preach this, but this was my way of doing it. I do hope we will witness an evolution of PR as a profession, from a mere practice where almost anybody can be a guru (because it is so easy to talk about talking) to a real profession claiming solid, verified, valid theoretical basis.

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