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Listen Carefully! Fallacious Auditory Arguments

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Abstract: In some cases, prosodic features (or other forms of sound) which accompany verbal message might be an essential part of an argument. The same as verbal, auditory arguments can also be fallacious. Prosodic features (e.g., word emphasis, pause) may contribute to making an auditory straw man fallacy or by manipulating voice quality, pitch or intonation one can make an auditory *ad hominem.* Also there are many potentially fallacious appeals to emotion.

Keywords: Auditory arguments, fallacies, multimodal argumentative discourse, prosodic features

1. Introduction

For the past several years, it has been recognized that sound (both human and non-human) can play a significant role in an argumentative discourse. Based on the analysis of real life argumentative situations (including advertisement (Kišiček, 2014, 2016), news coverage (Kišiček & Groarke, 2017), judicial argumentation, (Van den Hoven & Kišiček, 2017), it has been concluded that sound, i.e. the auditory mode of an argument, is one of many various nonverbal modes, such as visuals, tastes, movement (gesture and facial expression), which should be included in a multimodal argumentation analysis and which might have an essential role in providing support for the conclusion. Groarke (2018) defines auditory arguments as "an attempt to provide rational evidence for a conclusion using non-verbal sounds instead of or (more frequently) in addition to words."

Auditory elements in a multimodal argumentative discourse can vary in terms of their importance. They can support the verbal argument, they can strengthen it, or in some, most-interesting cases, they can be essential in (re)constructing verbal argument. Among all sorts of sound that may appear as important in an argumentative discourse (sirens, alarms, animal sounds), this paper will focus on prosodic features of spoken language. Prosodic features refer to both voice and speech cues of the speaker. They include features such as pitch, pitch range, temporal structure, intonation, intensity (i.e., loudness and voice quality), emphasis, and accentuation, but also (non)fluencies of the speaker.

Prosodic features generally make some additional, broadly situated contribution to what is, in the abstraction thereof, some non-situated argument-content. For instance, the higher pitch of a verbal massage and a faster tempo may illustrate the speaker's happiness; lower pitch, and quiet and slow speech may indicate depression or sadness; a staccato rhythm may indicate a speaker as strict, bossy, dominant, and representing an authority, etc. Prosodic features are frequently used in television commercials to stress certain selling points, or to establish one. As a part of nonverbal communication, they play an important role in the persuasion process, which has been long-established by numerous empirical studies showing that voices prompt spontaneous evaluations related to attractiveness, as well as to character traits such as

trustworthiness and dominance (Willis & Todorov 2006; Vukovic et al. 2011). These evaluations are highly consistent across observers (Oosterhof & Todorov 2008). Rezlescu et al. (2015: 367) confirming that the perception of trustworthiness and the credibility of the source (speaker) is highly influenced by vocal cues: "Voices, just like faces, can lead to the formation of consistent trait impressions of trustworthiness, attractiveness, and dominance".

The most recent work by Groarke (2018) aimed to analyze and understand ways of using and evaluating auditory arguments as a significant part of everyday argumentation. As Groarke (p. 18) explains:

> The proposed account of auditory argument can significantly expand the scope of informal logic and the range of arguments it is able to encompass. In dealing with complex arguments, it allows us to deal with the auditory components of multimodal arguments which support conclusions with many kinds of evidence: verbal, auditory, visual, and so on. The most important reason for including auditory arguments in the corpus we consider is because this is a way to subject them to critical assessment.

So, after establishing the mere existence of auditory arguments and examining their role, i.e. identifying auditory arguments in an argumentative discourse, the next logical step was auditory argument reconstruction. Kišiček (2018) proposed a tool for argument reconstruction and critical assessment by borrowing it from traditional, verbal argumentation, believing that argument schemes and their application to multimodal argumentation can help in identifying different types of non-verbal (primarily auditory) argument. In so doing, Kišiček (2018) distinguishes important and reasonable auditory argument from sound that has a purely esthetic or any other kind of non-argumentative role, in reconstructing auditory argument (translating sound into words) and in assessing its defeasibility by using a set of critical questions.

Several examples of different argument schemes were reconstructed and assessed with a set of accompanying critical questions. For instance, argument from sign (sounds of domestic abuse, sounds captured by NASA "proving" the existence of extraterrestrial life…), argument from consequences (sounds of a car crash in a television commercial), argument from correlation to cause, etc. The main goal was to show how argument schemes designed for (re)constructing verbal arguments, and critical questions designed for assessing them, can be successfully applied for auditory arguments as well. It actually showed how auditory arguments can also be more or less defeasible, that they can be stronger and weaker. For instance, sounds of crying, yelling and screaming coming from next door are used as auditory argument from sign, providing evidence for domestic abuse. Argument can be reconstructed as follows:

> SPECIFIC PREMISE: Crying, screaming and yelling is coming from the neighbor's house.
> GENERAL PREMISE: Sounds of crying, screaming and yelling generally indicate domestic dispute.
> CONCLUSION: There is a domestic dispute in the neighbor's house.

As Walton (2006, p. 113) writes: "It is easy to see why argument from the sign, in the scheme displayed above, is defeasible. The general premise is not an absolute universal generalization."

So, let us examine the general premise of domestic abuse: do sounds of crying, screaming and yelling indicate domestic abuse? Is it possible that there are just passionate people having a heated discussion? Our question for this example corresponds with a critical question suggested by Walton (p. 114): "Are there other events that would more reliably account for the sign?" We can answer that sounds of crying, screaming and yelling are more likely to be connected to abuse than to any other event. This is the reason why the neighbor suggested calling the police in the first place, because he immediately recognized the auditory sign of domestic abuse.

We can compare this auditory argument from the sign with a different example. Believers in extra-terrestrial life claim that there are other living forms in our galaxy. To prove this, they used a recording capturing sounds from out of space, which NASA had allegedly recorded for years, and which cannot be explained scientifically. It is also an argument from sign reconstructed in the following way:

> SPECIFIC PREMISE: Sounds are detected on different planets in our solar system.
> GENERAL PREMISE: Sound generally indicates the existence of living forms.
> CONCLUSION: There are living forms on planets in our solar system.

In this example, compared to the first one, the general premise is weaker, making the argument defeasible. There might be (and are) other ways (electronic, artificial) to produce sounds. Ways which do not include living forms. So, the correlation between unidentified sounds and living forms is weak.

The auditory arguments from sign reconstructed above were assessed by the audience (neighbors, public sphere) and based on their critical assessment, the results were as follows: neighbors in the first example suggested a police intervention, while extra-terrestrial followers in the second example did not get much attention.

The next step of auditory argument analysis, which this paper will focus on, will be to examine the possibility of making a fallacy with auditory arguments. It will be considered if there is an auditory *ad hominem* argument for instance, or a straw-man auditory fallacy, and how do we recognize it as a fallacious argument?

2. Are there fallacious auditor arguments?

Through the centuries, from Aristotle to contemporary times, argumentation scholars gave a lot of attention to fallacies. Hansen (2002) writes:

> Being able to detect and avoid fallacies has been viewed as a supplement to criteria of good reasoning. The knowledge of fallacies is needed to arm us against the most enticing missteps we might take with arguments.

Let us start with several definitions of fallacy. Rieke and Sillars (2001, p. 279) write: "A fallacy claim asserts that an argument must be rejected because it violates a significant rule of argumentation relevant to the appropriate decision makers." Johnson (1995, p. 116) puts it this way: "A fallacy is an argument that violates one of the criteria/standards of good arguments and that occurs with sufficient frequency in discourse to warrant being (specifically named)." Copi (1961, p. 52) defines a fallacy as "a form of argument that seems to be correct but which proves, upon examination, not to be so." Walton (1995, p. 256) defines a fallacy as "a deceptively bad argument that impedes the progress of a dialogue"

Hansen (2002) distinguishes formal and informal fallacies.

> Formal fallacies are those readily seen to be instances of identifiable invalid logical forms such as undistributed middle and denying the antecedent. Although many of the informal fallacies are also invalid arguments, it is generally thought to be more profitable, from the points of view of both recognition and understanding, to bring their weaknesses to light through analyses that do not involve appeal to formal languages.

While extensive work on fallacies of verbal arguments has been done, discussed and published, this paper examines whether there is a possibility to make a fallacy with an auditory argument. My belief is that we can find several examples of different fallacies in which error in reasoning is based on the misuse of prosodic features.

However, the approach to fallacious auditory arguments must be a little bit different than to verbal arguments. First and foremost, prosodic features are linked to the verbal part of the message and cannot be isolated or analyzed regardless of the verbal content. Second, to understand and to recognize fallacious argument, and to be able to reconstruct it, one must be aware of the connotations, i.e. stereotypes, that certain prosodic features carry. Although, stereotypes are generally recognized and accepted by many people (the Collins dictionary definition of stereotype is "a fixed general image or set of characteristics that a lot of people believe represent a particular type of person or thing"), we need to include them into the argument reconstruction. If we recognize and accept them, we can then easily see how stereotypes can be (mis)used and become a part of fallacious arguments.

2.1 Stereotypes on accents and *ad hominem* argument

Extensive research conducted in sociolinguistics confirmed that people tend to perceive some varieties of a language as more prestigious and more socially attractive. In addition, certain varieties of a language are connected to specific personality traits. Coupland and Bishop (2007) conducted one of the largest quantitative research projects on values connected to 34 different accents of English. Results showed that accent types associated with 'standard' speech are strongly favored in the prestige and attractiveness dimensions, while some urban varieties (such as Cockney English) are downgraded. Results also showed that people speaking RP English are going to be perceived as more educated, having a higher social status, being more sophisticated and more intellectual. All these characteristics are important in the rhetorical sense because they contribute to the speaker's *ethos*. People who use a standard type accent are perceived as more credible. On the other hand, accents which are connected with the opposite values (such as Cockney) diminish a speaker`s *ethos* because accent creates an impression that a speaker is uneducated, unsophisticated and inappropriate for intellectually challenging work.

In many other languages, sociolinguists examined language attitudes, i.e. values, contributed to the vernaculars of a certain language (e.g., Labov 1966, 1972) and Lippie-Green (1997) for American English; Hawkings (1993) for French; Kontra (2003) for Hungarian; Pomerantz (2002) for Spanish; Bezoojien (2002) for Dutch; and Kišiček (2012) for Croatian, etc.). All research results showed that in every language there is a variety (usually the standard type accent) which is perceived as more prestigious and socially more attractive. Every language, on the other hand, has its own non-standard accents and its own stereotypes connected with each

specific variety. For instance, in American English, a strong southern accent is stereotypically connected with uneducated people (pejoratively called red necks). “Stereotypes of American Southerners, for instance, are common in cultural media and artifacts, such as the cartoon ‘Li`l Abner,’ which suggest American Southerners are of low intelligence and wealth, and high aggression and friendliness” (Phllips, 2010, p. 53). Phillips conducted a study which suggests that a social cue, such as an arbitrary accent, may influence discrimination in the job market, since accents can activate stereotypes, negative social perceptions, and therefore behavior influenced by these social perceptions. In Croatian, the same stereotype is held for the Kaikavian dialect spoken in the Northern part of the country.

However, contemporary times and migration of population put in focus stereotypes of speakers belonging to different native languages who speak English. So, we deal with the Russian English accent, the French English accent, the Italian English accent, and so on. Have people developed a certain stereotype for specific accents? The best explanation of accent perception (of course based on stereotypes) is given by the comedian Trevor Noah[1]. Although his impressions are not empirically proven, nor are they supported by sociolinguistic research, they perfectly correspond to what we can now consider imbedded impressions of different speakers of the English language. Several international studies have suggested that not only language differences (lexicon, idioms, etc.), but accent differences alone (prosody, pronunciation) can trigger stereotype activation and subsequent social perception changes (Bourhis, Giles & Lambert, 1975; Dixon & Mahoney, 2004; Giles, 1971;).

English spoken with a French accent sounds sexy, while English spoken with a Russian accent sounds scary. People with a French accent are perceived as romantic, sexy lovers, while people with a Russian accent as criminals and drug dealers. Trevor Noah[2] continues with stereotypes on a specific vernacular focusing on Black English, which is connected to being a cool and relaxed person.

Therefore, we can conclude that accents are a source of many stereotypes which may affect a speaker`s *ethos*. RP English is sophisticated and connected with higher education and social status, especially in Great Britain, while elsewhere in the world it could be considered as pompous and snobbish. Russian English is scary and connected with lower social status and the criminal milieu, French English is romantic and sexy. In every language, however, the standard accent is always the one which is connected with education, culture, and seriousness, while any other non-standard vernacular sounds are perceived as a sign of under-education. Even though Black English might sound cool, it will be perceived as inappropriate for public speaking, i.e. the speaker will not be perceived as a serious, educated person. So, can all this information be valuable in the analysis of argumentative discourse? Can it be used or misused to make an argument?

A good example of accent use for argumentative purposes is the Get happy Volkswagen Super Bowl 2013 Commercial.[3] In this commercial, a specific lifestyle, or an attitude to life, is connected to the specific accent of a speaker. The main character speaks English with a

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OB72GZOS4c

[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXje3oJ8T8o

[3] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09JTtVxztv4

recognizably Jamaican accent, stereotypically connected with a particular life-philosophy that values being relaxed, easygoing, carefree, and happy. Other people in this commercial, being his colleagues, are depicted as being frustrated, in a bad mood, frowning, while the protagonist spreads joy wherever he goes (in an elevator, by the coffee machine, at the meeting, etc.), constantly reminding others to look at the bright side of life. At one of the important moments in this commercial, his colleagues ask whether he isn't in fact from Minnesota, something which he confirms. So, why does a white American from Minnesota speak his native language with a Jamaican accent? The answer: because he is happy, carefree, and easygoing. Why so? Because he drives a Volkswagen, or so the viewer learns when his moody co-workers, after having taken a drive in his Volkswagen car, return in a much better mood, smiling, and also speaking with a Jamaican accent. Jamaican English is here presented not only through vowel pronunciation, but also through its specific syntax. In this commercial, then, the manner of speaking is more important than the verbal message. The argumentation in this commercial can be reconstructed, Toulmin-style, as follows:

> Ground: Happy person in a firm speaks with Jamaican accent (but is not from Jamaica).
> Warrant: People with Jamaican accents are perceived as happy.
> Claim: Volkswagen automobile brings happiness to people.
> Final claim: Buy a Volkswagen automobile.

On the other hand, we can imagine accent stereotypes being used to attack or diminish an opponent's character, their expertise, and make what is traditionally known as *ad hominem* fallacy.

As Walton (2004, p. 237) explains:

> The ad hominem argument is basically a use of personal attack, where one party in a dialogue exchange argues against the argument of another party by saying to the audience, He is a bad person (meaning he has a bad character in some respect), therefore you should not accept his argument.

By mis(using) a speaker's accent, we might not explicitly say he is a bad person, but we can imply it. Imagine the following scenario:

> **Speaker X** is saying: We should build new apartment buildings on this block because we have many new inhabitants, people who moved into our city and have no adequate living facilities.
> **Speaker Y** repeats the exact words of speaker X, but adds a Russian accent to the statement.
> **Speaker Y** didn`t explicitly say that X is a criminal, but adding the accent which is stereotypically connected to criminals, the intention is obvious. Implying that X is a criminal or has criminal intents.
> So, **Speaker Y** misused the accent to make an *ad hominem* argument.

The same argumentative move can be made by hyperbolizing the actual accent of a speaker. A speaker at the scientific conference (a medical doctor from France) presents his argument for curing the COVID-19 disease. Among the people in the room, an American scientist disagrees and starts his speech by citing the French scientist and hyperbolizing his French accent. Does he make an *ad hominem* argument? Well, he certainly diminishes the *ethos* of the French scientist depicting him as a less serious expert. In the scientific conference context, this might not be a successful tactic for disqualifying a person with a different opinion, but we can imagine similar scenarios in the media; when one speaker discredits the other using one`s accent against him or her. We can imagine politicians in the media during an election campaign using accents with negative stereotypes to discredit one`s opponent, to present them as less qualified, less educated, less bright, and less competent.

2.2 Voice quality stereotypes and *ad hominem*

Although accents are used or misused most frequently to illustrate someone`s character (or credibility), this can also be efficiently done by using other prosodic features, especially voice quality. Nonverbal communication scholars provided us with many useful empirical research which confirms the existence of the stereotypical perception of a person based on their voice quality. It has been, therefore, proven that prosodic features are connected to the perception of a speaker's personality. Attractive voices include lower pitch, absence of nasality and extreme harshness, and are connected to positive personality traits credibility (Berry 1991, 1992; Hickson et al. 2004; Kramer 1977; Kimble & Seidel 1991; Zuckerman et. al, 1990, Zuckerman & Miyake 1993; Zuckerman & Sinicropi, 2011). Speakers with more attractive voices are more favorably perceived by others. On the other hand, especially unattractive are highly nasal voices which are always connected with negative personality traits, and people with nasal voices are perceived as lazy, argumentative, whiny (Hickson et al., 2004). Further on, as Bloom, Zajac & Titus (1999, p. 279) state:

> Highly nasal voices were rated as being lower in "status" (occupation, ambitious, intelligent, educated, influential), lower in social solidarity (friendly, sympathetic, likeable, trustworthy, helpful), and were negatively correlated with perceptions of persuasiveness. (…) For example, in training for job interviews, applicants can adjust nasality of voice to possibly increase perceptions of competence, warmth, and persuasiveness, and to possibly decrease perceptions of arrogance or weakness.

One of the pioneer studies was conducted by Heidenberg in 1964 (according to Hickson et al., 2004), who theorized 11 voice types and their stereotypes. Of the 11 voice types, only one was perceived as "good," and it is the one associated with proper breathing, articulation, tongue position, control of pitch, and resonance. The other 10 voice types are:

Table 1. Vocal types and stereotypical perception

VOCAL TYPE	MALE	FEMALE
Breathy	artistic, younger, feminine	Sexy
Tense	anxious, nervous, uncooperative, less intelligent, high-strung	anxious, nervous, uncooperative, less intelligent, high-strung
Breathy-tense	weak, nervous	weak, nervous
Nasal	whiny, argumentative, lazy	whiny, argumentative, lazy
Denasal	stuffy, boring, speaker with a cold	stuffy, boring, speaker with a cold
Orotund	energetic, pompous, humor-less, proud, authoritative	energetic, pompous, humor-less, proud, authoritative
Flat	bored, withdrawn, sluggish	bored, withdrawn, sluggish
Thin	immature, sensitive, emotional	especially for women: immature, sensitive, emotional
Throaty	sophisticated, less intelligent, careless, older	sophisticated, less intelligent, careless, older
Fronted	artificial, aloof	artificial, aloof

Based on what we can call an auditory dictionary (more on this in Kišiček, 2018), we can imagine someone trying to diminish an opponent's *ethos* to alter his or her vocal type. In this video example (0:22-0:25), Donald Trump[4] quotes a reporter but by altering the voice quality and adding gestures, he mocks the reporter, makes fun of him, and ultimately discredits him.

This sort of *ad hominem* is usually used by standup comedians who make fun of politicians. For instance, former Croatian president, a woman named Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, was frequently discredited on the basis of her gender and physical appearance (blonde hair), so her words were repeated with adding more breathiness in her voice or by raising the pitch so she would sound very "feminine," "fragile," less intelligent, and ultimately as incompetent.

So, "playing" with vocal stereotypes, using the prosodic features, specifically voice quality types which are connected with negative stereotypes, we make a speaker`s character negative, hence, making an *ad hominem* argument.

2.3 Prosodic features and appealing to emotions

The previous video of Donald Trump focusing on his "anger issues" is also one of the examples in which prosodic features can contribute to making a fallacious argument.

Appeals to emotions are traditionally seen as diversions, counterparts to logical arguments. As Walton states (Walton, 2004, p. 100): "According to this tradition, it was a

[4] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q27GQN16KV0

sufficient refutation to say of an argument "Your argument is based on an emotional appeal and is, therefore, not a logical argument."

However, contemporary argumentation scholars recognize that in everyday argumentation appeals to emotions can be both relevant and reasonable arguments. Brinton (1988, p. 78) calls them pathotic arguments:

> That the emotions often interfere with, or take the place of, a careful weighing of reasons for belief or action seems beyond dispute. And it is a stock complaint against appeals to emotion that they are at best diversionary tactics and at worst attempts to get people to act from unreason rather than from reason. On the other hand, in ordinary life we do sometimes refer to fear or anger or other emotions as justified or unjustified, as reasonable or unreasonable, and even as blameworthy.

Brinton (1988, p. 79) pays special attention to angry emotions: "The harsh or "angry" emotions or passions are those which are directed against other persons" and explains the logical correctness of an argumentum *ad indignationem*, which will be:

> the matter of two things (1) whether the reasons given for the emotion are good ones, whether the truth of certain propositions, namely those which are appealed to, would in fact justify the feelings which they are supposed to arouse; and (2) whether the degree or intensity of the emotional response (or intended emotional response) is appropriate to the reasons given, in the context of the rhetorical situation considered as a whole. The usual sort of distinction between truth of premises and logical correctness can be made as well. (p. 81)

However, with prosodic features like accent and voice quality, which are the sources of stereotypes and therefore used to discredit the opponent making an *ad hominem* argument, recognizing fallacious appeal to angry emotions based on prosody is more complex. The most obvious reason is the different mechanism in which prosodic features participate in fallacy. Appeal to anger or to pity or any other emotion is based on the verbal message. Donald Trump, for instance, on various occasions repeats how angry he is, even emphasizing it by saying that "everybody should be angry." Prosodic features in cases like this do not solely represent anger, but accompany it, contributing to the verbal message, strengthening the verbal argument. The role in fallacious appeals to emotions is not as significant as it was in the previous examples of *ad hominem*, but nevertheless they play their part in it. Especially because they are a good signal for what Brinton refers to as a "degree or intensity for emotional response". Let us examine the other Donald Trump[5] appeal to anger.

Donald Trump talks about a golf championship that was moved from Miami to Mexico City. They are furious about this in Miami and he concludes how this is not good. But, if people vote for him as president, all this is going to stop. He refers to this golf tournament change as unfair and unbelievable (repeating several times: "Can you believe it").

So, in this example, the prosodic features of Donald Trump's speech are: the intensity of his voice (very loud), dramatic pauses, intonation (which changes by the end of his statement

[5] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTcRek5-SZs

when saying "all this is going to stop"), and staccato rhythm, which contribute to making it a fallacious appeal to anger, because the intensity of anger is inappropriate to the reasons given.

The second example of emotional appeal is Greta Thunberg`s UN Climate Action Summit speech.[6] Greta Thunberg states:

> *You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words and yet I am one of the lucky ones. People are suffering, people are dying, entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are at the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money.*

This first part of her speech could be seen as an appeal to pity. Climate change is caused by humans and our irresponsible exploitation of natural resources, and generations to come are faced with negative consequences (also a slippery slope argument). Greta Thunberg, as a representative of this young generation, is pleading with people in high functions to stop chasing profit and start thinking about people and animal suffering, and the collapse of ecosystem.
As Walton states (2006, p. 290):

> Appeal to pity is another one of those arguments that is not inherently fallacious but is often suspect, because it is sometimes used as powerful distraction that is emotionally compelling, even when it is not relevant to the issue under consideration. But in some cases, appeal to pity is materially relevant as an argument.

Again, prosodic features do not function on their own, but accompany verbal argument. Intonation, tone (higher pitch), voice quality (shaky, trembling voice), and slower tempo, which all correlate with sadness, strengthen the verbal argument making the argument as a whole more powerful and persuasive.

Appeal to pity changes to appeal to anger as the speech continues.

> *For more than 30 years science has been crystal clear. How dare you continue to look away? And come here saying you are doing enough. When the politics and solutions needed are nowhere in sight. You say you hear us and you understand the urgency but no matter how sad and angry I am I do not want to believe that because if you really understood the situation and still kept on failing to act than you would be evil and that I refuse to believe.*

She explicitly states how sad and angry she is and her prosodic features correspond with this. The intensity of her speech increases when she asks "How dare you" (prosodic cue for anger), and the pitch rises, the voice is tense (which corresponds with higher intensity) and trembling.

If we again refer to Brinton`s idea of logical correctness of the appeal to anger, we can conclude that the reasons for anger are appropriate with its degree. And, again, prosodic features are those that signal the degree of anger which helps us determine logical correctness.

[6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAJsdgTPJpU

2.4 Word emphasis and straw man

Word emphasis is a prosodic feature that helps to signal the importance of a certain part of the message. In commercials, for instance, it might signal the selling point, whereas in news reporting it signals the important information. However, it can also have a significant role in everyday argumentation. Let us examine the possible meanings of the sentence: John is writing a book. It can be said in three different ways, depending on the information we wish to communicate:

1. John is writing a book (when we are discussing the scientific activity of the project members, we want to emphasize that John is one writing the book, not Michael, or Steve, or someone else)
2. John is writing the book (while everyone else in our project is reading books, John is writing one)
3. John is writing a book (when everyone was given an assignment to write a contribution for a project and all are writing papers, we want to emphasize that John is writing a book).

So, word emphasis is important because it signals the main information in a sentence and it can direct argumentation on, for example, who is the most valuable project member. However, the misinterpretation of word emphasis might in some cases open a door for the misinterpretation of the statement and attribution of a position which can then be dismissed. Which means, it opens a door for a possible straw man fallacy. Tindale (2007, p. 20) writes:

> The Straw Man fallacy involves the attribution or assumption of a position, which is then attacked or dismissed. The problem is that the position dismissed by the argument is not the real 'man' or 'person', but a caricature of the real position held. In a dialogue, a position may be explicitly attributed to an opponent.

Imagine a Politician X who claims that the capturing of Pablo Escobar was a successful mission in which only ten civilians died. And he can defend his standpoint with the criminal record of Pablo Escobar, the danger he presented for Columbian society and for the whole word.

However, a Politician Y can repeat his words, but change the word emphasis. Then, the words of Politician X are repeated as: Only ten civilians died. It changes the argumentation and gives Politician Y a reason to accuse Politician X for insensitivity and a lack of humanity, which then gives him a reason for asking questions like, what were you preparing for? More dead civilians? If so, how did you organize and prepare this mission? Aren`t you capable enough to have a mission of capturing the criminal without innocent people dying? Were you even interested in public safety when you started this mission of capturing one man? These questions can then open a discussion on police competence, organizational skills, community care, etc. And the straw man becomes a red herring.

Let us examine another example. A woman refuses a marriage proposal and her friend asks her why. She then replies: When my boyfriend asked me, he said: "I know you feel strongly about the marriage, so tell me, would you like to marry me." A woman explains her refusal: I do not want to marry him if the marriage isn`t important to him. It turns out that he is asking me just because I want it. But, if I am going to get married, I need to know it means something to the other person also.

Then the same friend asks the boyfriend for an explanation and gets a different view: I asked her, with these exact words: I know you feel strongly about the marriage, so tell me, would you like to marry me. I meant, I know she doesn't have strong feelings about whether we should have children or not, or where we should live, or what house to buy. But I know that marriage is the one thing she finds important and that is why I wanted to get married before deciding on anything else in life.

The second example might be trivial and pure misunderstanding, but we can imagine a dialogue in which word sentences are (mis)used as an aid for misinterpretation of an opponent's position so this position could be dismissed or attacked.

2.5 Pauses and ambiguity

The most famous example is the prophecy of Pythia in ancient Delphi, which gave an answer to an unknown person who was inquiring as to whether it would be safe for him to join a military campaign; the answer was: "Go, return not die in war", which can have two entirely opposite meanings, depending on where speech pause or (in written text comma) is supposed to be – before or after the word "not". One explanation is, go to war, you will not be killed in war. And the other is the opposite, go but you will not return because you will die in war.

Ibis redibis **|** *nunquam peribis in bello.*
Ibis redibis nunquam **|** *peribis in bello.*

We can also imagine this kind of ambiguity arising in everyday argumentation. For instance, people talking about one of the project members (John) stating that the book he wrote was his first significant book. Depending on the pause, we can have two different opinions of John.

This is his first **|** *significant book.* Implying that all the books he wrote before were insignificant. And if John is a senior member of the faculty or otherwise known scholar, a claim like that might not be well received, or it would require serious support.

The other way of expressing this information is: This is his first significant book.| This claim has a different implication. We are saying that although this is John`s first book, it is already significant. And the argumentation will go in a different direction giving support to why his book is significant. While in the first example we might need to provide arguments supporting the different claim – that all his previous books weren`t significant.

Ambiguity might also arise in news reporting. Imagine two different reporters making a speech pause in a different place in the sentence.

In Venezuela there is a fight between the army **|** and the enemies **|** dictator Maduro.
OR
In Venezuela there is a fight between the army **|** and the enemies of dictator Maduro.

We have two completely different sets of information. In the first case, the army is against the dictator Maduro, they are on opposite sides. And in the second example, the army is supporting the dictator and fighting against the rebels. Following the news from Venezuela, this is quite important information – which side did the army take.

One more example could be:

> A king has to decide on whether he will pardon the convicts. There are two possible answers to that question: yes, or no. However, a pause might cause ambiguity. "Execute | not pardon" or Execute not | pardon. Of course, this may sound grammatically incorrect, but we can imagine a situation in which ambiguity is intentional for whatever reason.

A speech pause may, therefore, cause ambiguity and influence the direction of argumentation. It can be unintentional or a deliberate strategic move.

3. Conclusion

Auditory arguments do exist and may have an important role in the analysis of argumentative discourse. They provide evidence for a conclusion in the form of sound, both human and non-human. However, human sound, i.e. prosodic features of the speech, is connected to the verbal part of an argument, which makes it challenging to decide on their importance. Sometimes, prosodic features contribute to a speaker's *ethos* and sometimes they form an essential part of a *logos*. An argumentation analyst must identify the auditory argument (distinguish between relevant and non-relevant prosodic features), must reconstruct the argument and asses it. This paper dealt with fallacious auditory arguments, claiming that just as verbal, auditory arguments can also be fallacious. It some situations (e.g. stereotypes based on accent or voice quality), prosodic features solely contribute to a fallacious argument. In other cases, they are analyzed together with the verbal argument where prosodic features can be helpful in establishing the intensity or degree of a certain appeal to emotions, hence contributing to determining the logical correctness of the emotional appeal.

In this paper, I wanted to present prosodic features as an important part of multimodal argumentation. They can be identified, analyzed, and evaluated, and although different and specific compared to verbal arguments, some of the tools used in verbal argumentation analysis can be successfully implemented in auditory argument analysis.

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