

DECODING COMMUNICATION SIGN IN PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the sign of communication in the performance. This study is based on the cultural studies perspective. The subject of the research is the audience of Classic Concert, Musical Theater, and Cultural Carnival in Satya Wacana Christian University Salatiga. The research unit are the behavior of the audience. The audience behavior expresses before, while and ending the performance are considered as verbal and non-verbal signs. A non-verbal sign is the audience gestures that are divided into several categories, namely proxemic, chronemics, kinestics, physical appearance, haptics, paralanguage and artifacts. The way of knowing such process of communication is necessary to decode all of the verbal and non-verbal signs.

This study uses a qualitative approach which consists of three stages: data collection, data processing, and data analysis. It used in-depth interviews to collect the data from s both the audience and the organizers of Classic Concert, Musical Theater and Cultural Carnival. The idea of non-verbal communication can be reflected in the form of proxemic , cronemics , physical appearance, haptics, paralanguague and artifacts. Procemics, indicate distance that people have from other people. Chronemics sign indicates appreciation of time. physical appearance sign shows physical appearance and how to dress up. Haptics sign indicates a need in touch with other people. Paralanguage signs indicate that the performances allow for the expression of the human voice to explore emotions while watching the performance. The results showed that during the performance, the audience communicated in a different ways.

Key words: *performance, communication, sign, verbal, non-verbal*

I. Introduction

A performance is a dialectic process from four players; sources, producers, performers, and partakers (Schechner, 2002:215). A source is parties that create the performance. It could be the writers, composers, choreographers, and drama scripters. A producer is a person who has a task to realize the idea from the sourcers. Marvin Carlson argues that "A play cannot speak for itself; one must conjure its sound from it" (Schechner, 216). Carlson's opinion means that, an

idea or a script or the composition of dance and music will not “be attentive” when it is not played or performed. The performers is the actor itself. It could be the musician, dancer, or the player from the performance. The fourth player is the paratakers, or the audience. The audience could be the people who see the performance, the judges when the performance is a festival, and the admirers (or the fans). Paratakers not only receive the action of the show, but sometimes even actively get involved in the performance. Richard Schechner's name four players mention before in a Performance Quadriloque as illustrated below.

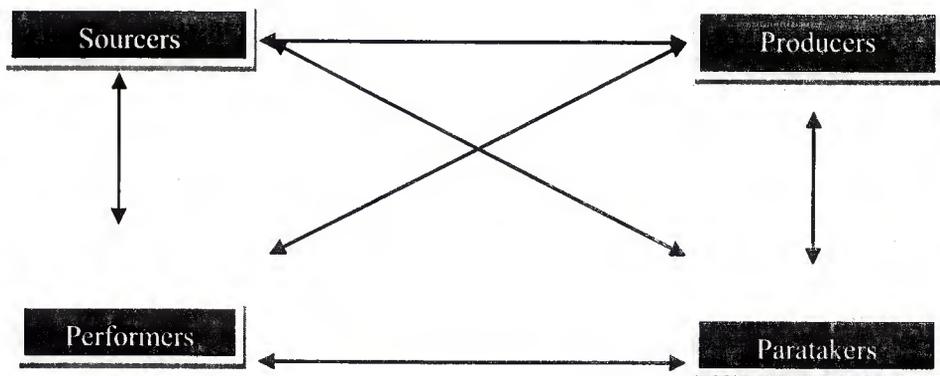


Figure 1. The Performance Quadriloque
(Source : Richard Schechner, 2002: 215)

From the illustration above, the four players are connected each other. The sourcer have an interaction to the producers, performers, and paratakers. This illustrate that the four players connect in a similar ways. In fact, the player moves in a specific process, also the producer. Schechner inclined to choose a model for dialogue to four players the Z-path as below.

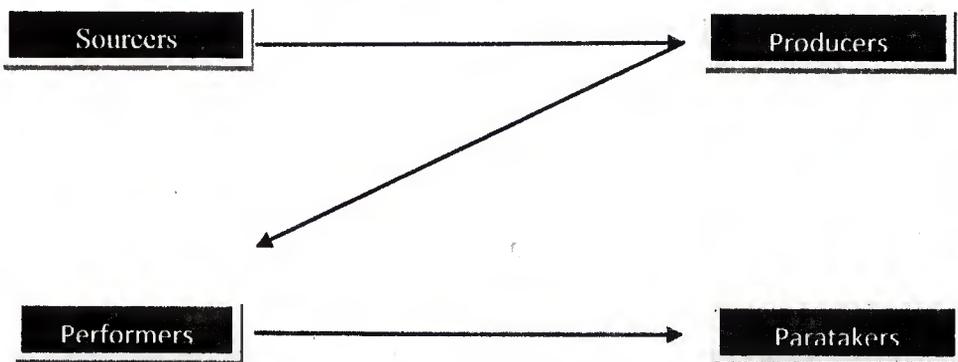


Figure 2. The Z-path Performance Quadriloque
(Source : Richard Schechner, 2002: 215)

Generally, a performance should be started from source, for example, the composition of music by a particular composer. The producers and the theater production team will realize the particular composition of musical offerings from the sources. The player or the performers play all kinds of play which the producers need. The performer presents the performance like a concert in a public performance. This dialectic mechanism above shows us the relationship of communication between the players.

Gregory Bateston believes that any kind of art has a special form of communication (Turino, 2008:3). According Bateston, art has an integrative function because of integrating and uniting the member of social groups. He explained that when an artist presents their imagination, sensation and experience, they communicate through their art forms. The audience or the members of the community will feel a part of the artist world. In this situation, the audience has a connection with the art forms that the artist has created. In this point, Bateston suggested that music and dance create and communicate emotion and meaning through signs. Signs in Charles Sanders Pierce's view can be anything that is perceived by an observer which stands for or calls to mind someone else and which creates an effect in the observer (Buchler, 1955:99). In what case could a sign be expressed by the audience? In this study, the sign is the audience behavior.

When we learn the study of communication which is about the process of communication, we will observe the varieties of model of communication. Many models of communication have been proposed to see how information passes from one point to another. David Berlo proposed a model that emphasizes on how attributes of the four major elements (source, message, channel, and receiver) affect communication (Burgoon and Ruffner, 1977:21-22). In SMCR model, a process of performance is started from the sources. The source is the creator of the message and it could be the writers, composers, choreographers, and drama scripters. The message is the translation of ideas into a symbolic code such as language and gestures. In performance, we will recognize the communication behavior of the audience in a verbal and a non verbal ways. The channel is the medium through which the message is carried. Many kind of art forms in performance that could be recognized as a channel such as concert, recitation, carnival, dance, drama, and theater. The latest, the receiver, is the person (or a group) who is the target of communication. Similar with the Marvin Carlson idea above, performance should be

performed to the people. The people or the audience is the receiver of the communication process or the target. Through the model of communication and in Schechner' Performance Quadriloque we will understand that performance is part of the studies of communication.

Berlo's model emphasizes on the importance of the need for encoders and decoders in the communication process. It should be obvious that encoding and decoding is a continuous process. The encoding function is the situation when people produce a verbal and non verbal message. The decoding function is the situation when people translate a verbal and non verbal message. Since this discussion is about the decoding of communication sign in performance, so the discussion will be focused on the audience behavior.

In a situation of direct communication (face to face) the sign is indicated by the sound of the voice, looks, physical appearance, which is generally regarded as the verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication is communication that is symbolized by languages. A non-verbal communication is embodied in the expression. There are seven models of non-verbal communication expression, namely proxemic, chronemics, kinesics, physical appearance, haptics, paralanguage and artifacts. Proxemic is how people use the area (space) in everyday life. Chronemics is the way people use time. Kinesics is the aspect of appearance (visual) of the behavior (gesture, facial expression, and the expression of the eyes). Physical appearance is how to look attractive to other people. Haptics is the use of touch in communication. Paralanguage is the use of sound communication. Artifacts is how physical objects around shows that the communication is done. This study was conducted to reveal any sign of communication both verbal and non-verbal as well as the interpretation of the signs of the form of communication in the Classic Concert, Musical Theater and the Cultural Carnival.

This research employs a qualitative approach. There are three stage; data collection, data processing, and data analysis. The research instrument used was in-depth interviews to both the audience and the organizers of Classic Concert, Musical Theater and Cultural Carnival.

The scope analysis in this research is the behavior of the audience before, while and after the performance. The behavior, both verbal and non-verbal communication is a sign in this context. In each process (before, while and after) the audience may react in a different kinds of

behavior. All of the reaction is a part of the communication sign. This study will describe the varieties of communication signs.

II. Communication Sign Before the Performance

Audience may react before the performance begins is a about their preparation. What kind of preparation is what kind of physical appearance and choosing a friend who will accompany them. A person who comes in a performance prepares themselves reflect the motivation of their coming. In a verbal communication, the audience can explain their preparation from what kind of cloths, the shoes, accessories, and make up they wear. A photographs could show data of a non-verbal communication. From photographs we could describe how the physical apparence of the audience. It describe that audience uses neat shirts, neat trousers, neat dresses, jackets, t-shirts, trunks, sports shoes, sandals, sports bag, soft make up, simple accessories, and using hat. The informant of the Classic Concert argue that they preparee in a good physical appearance. A Classical Concert usually has a watching etiquette. When watching a classical concert in a Symphonic Hall Jakarta, for example, all the audience should obey the watching etiquette. In the watching etiquette, the organizer usually mentions their policy about the audience duty. For example, the audience should come on time-be 15 minutes before, already have a dinner, could not bring foods or beverages, uses a formal cloths, and wearing a standard accessories/jewelry. All of the audience should understand that regulation before the performance begins.

Since the research was conducted in a three differ events, it shows differences in physical appearance. Audience only uses their daily life cloths when watching the Cultural Carnival. With no preparation, or no regulation, the people come to the street watching the event. Since the Cultural Carnival held in the afternoon when many routine activities is held like schools, offices and bussines activities, many people surprised when the carnival pass them. Some teacher who *uses their batiks uniform came out from their classes to see what happen. Some of the people* who passed by using vehicle just slow down or stopped and watch near their motorcycle or watch in their car. Since the Musical Theater was held in a hall not like held in a street for Cultural Carnival, the audience has prepared for it. Audience should order a ticket for that show. With a ticket, the organizer will set the number of chair. From the research data, the audience prepared themselves. They used appropriate cloths, like a neat t-shirts, shirts, dress, shoes, and

using a soft makeup. Although the audience prepared themselves in a good looking style, but they felt free to choose a physical appearance. This is different from the audience of Classic Concert. The audience prepared themselves, and in addition, they needed to have a dinner before. Since a Classic Concert usually has rules, the audience prepare themselves to obey it. In the information which mentions in the banner, “uses formal cloths” the audience translate that information to wear neat cloths not sport cloths. Although the audience may not notice the policy, the organizer want to show that watching concerts need a physical appearance culture. In a good physical apperrance could express the morality, the religion and the politic perspective of the audience.

Beside physical appearance, who accompany watching the performance is a part of the motivation. The research data explains that there are varieties of ages (all ages) watching performance. Childrens, teenagers, adults, and elders come for watching. Since the tendency of watching performances is not to watching alone, this express a sign that social relationship is needed. This statement is similar with Janet Wolff which mention in her book “The Social Production of Art” that art is a collective product (Wolff, 1981 : 27).

A minutes before the performance began, the audience pay attention each other. In the Musical Theater and Classic Concert, the audience give a smile or shake hands to the people they know. Not only that, they could take a picture or give a gentle kiss in a cheek, and talking each others before the performance begin. This is part a non-verbal sign as a haptics or use of touch (Burgoon, 1977: 141-143). Using haptics in every culture couldn't separate with their contexts. In this case, haptics as communication sign in performance is used to aware for, sympathize with, and interest with (Burgoon, 1977: 142). Using haptics in a Cultural Carnival is not clear enough. From the research data, the audience of Cultural Carnival doesn't shake hands or give a gentle kiss. Mostly the audience concentrate themselves to the performance which will pass near them. They didn't show their interest to other people beside them.

Being on time or not is needed for watching an event which held inside a building as like Classic Concert and Musical Theater. In Classic Concert, the organizer makes a rule of opening and closing the door. When the composition is played, the door should be closed so the audience who are late should wait outside from the door. After the player finished the composition, the committee will open the door and the audience could come inside the building. The organizer of

Musical Theater didn't make rule of this and in actually, people who come late at any time are welcome to go inside the building. This situation is not comfortable for the audience who come on time and sitting in their chair because they saw people mobile in front of their sight. In Cultural Carnival is not being on time or not, but the time dimension of the event. If someone wants to see it, they should come and see it. The carnivals held in the street and people could come from many side of the city at the duration of the event. Use of time or chronemics in non-verbal communication is part of sequencing of activities (Burgoon, 1977: 135). The timing message have an important pattern especially when audience couldn't be on time, they express their disrespect for the performance they seen.

In the Classic Concert, audience could choose where to seat. Choosing seats is an individual decision. Audience could choose in the front line, middle line and in the back line of the seat inside the hall. The audience who come on time, they will have a free decision for choosing seats. But when the performance already begins, the audience has a limited decision of finding the seat. They will sit in a chair that is empty or not sit by someone. A reason choosing a seat could be explained by understanding the territoriality. Territoriality is a part of nonverbal communication as a proxemic or use of space (Burgoon, 1977: 130-133). This kind of distance reflects us and others. A person will sit different side or sit in a long distance to a person who dislike. Distance expresses a sign how people communicate. Choosing seat, both in Classic Concert and Musical Theater is base on of personal space.

III. Communication Sign While the Performance

When the performance is start, audience show a differ reaction for the performance. In Cultural Carnival the audience stands up or sits down anywhere and waits for the line. Since the Carnival was participate in many of cultural groups, the audience need to be patient while watch all the performance. Differ from the performance in the street, inside the building, audience should sit calmly. In this situation, the audience should sit down tight and only react in their sitting. They couldn't walk around inside the building or constantly change places for sitting. Before the performance began, the audience should notice the rules of watching the performance from the committee. Both Classic Concert and Musical Theater announced to the audience to be in orderly manner while watching. Since this kind of rules are not in a detail message, the audience could interpretive widely. In the three events, the audience express their feeling by

showing their smile to the performance they seen, starring to the cultural group, pointing with their finger for the performance which pass, giving an applause, giving comment about the performance to their friends or spouses, sit calmly, eating and drinking, leaning their head in the chair, hugging, and texting a message in their phones. These varieties expressions were part of communication sign of kinesics. Kinesics is the visual aspects of behavior (Burgoon, 1977: 136-137). It could be a movement and posture, gesture, facial expression and eye behavior. Kinesics carries so much information because there are so many different reactions that can be varied as message elements. Every part if the body can be manipulated and gives rise to endless possible combinations of features. Mostly all of the features or the expressions are meaningful. Desmond Morris explained the varieties of signals of human behavior in understanding the non verbal communication (Morris, 1977). All of behavior in Morris perspective has a meaning.

Hence talking of kinesics feature, the sound of voice become important to. While watching Cultural Carnival and Theater Musical, some of audience shout or yelling a name of a person they known. They react is not in a gentle voice but a loud voice. When a hall is constructed in a good acoustic system, the gentle voice could be heard, and especially a loud voice. Some audience reacts in a spontantly reaction, not only yelling, but making noises likesiut...suit....or heem...heem....or ndeso... People use voice in a different volume has a meaning. With a gently voice, people don't want many people hear it. How people use their sound voice is called paralanguage or use of voice (Burgoon, 1977: 134-144). Paralanguage is not talking about the meaning of the word but talking about how people use the voice. From this paralanguage sign, audience in Musical Theater shows deeply involved the performance they seen. In a Classic Concert become more calm, not only there no yelling or loud voice, but the audience only uses applause to react of the composition that the player made.

IV. Communication Sign After the Performance

When a performance haven't end and the audience are leaving quickly, there's a messages. Why they are not comfortable will be the organizer homework. In this study, someone leave before ending the show express a message that the audience is not comfortable. In an interview to the audience who leave earlier, they feel unhappy or bore from watching the event. This is part of kinesic communication sign. Since the door was in an open close systems, the audience of Classic Concert was in a hurry to the door for not make it close when they need to

passed. But not only in Classic Concert, but audience in Musical Theater rushes from the show before it end. Hence Cultural Carnival is held in a public space in a sequence time, public or audience could be on time or not. So time is not the important value in communication sign for a Cultural Carnival.

The audience stands from their seat and walk through the door. While they walk, they speak to their friends or nodding or shake hands or kiss gentle in the cheek. Not only that, they want to capture this moment in a picture so the audience take a photographs. This is part of kinesics as a communication sign. This situation could be seen in Classic Concert and Musical Theater. Ending the Carnival, or ending the line of a group of carnivals, it's hard to see the social relation reactions as we see in the Classic Concert and Musical Theater.

The last nonverbal code is artifacts. Artifacts are the use of the environment and objects within it (Burgoon, 1977: 144-145). Using the hall is part of artifacts. In this case, Classic Concert and Musical Theater use a huge hall which has around 1.000 seats. As a building, the hall have a wall each side. A good lighting and a comfortable chair can be use for the event. Although there are no air condition, but the air is fresh and circular atmosphere. In these artifacts, the policy of organizer is for making the audience comfort, as like neat the lining chair or a friendly usher while the audience enters the door. Since that, the committee arranges a rule to be obeyed by the audience. This is differing to the Cultural Carnival. Since this event is in public space or in the street, the artifacts are the street itself, the sidewalk of the street, and building around the street. The artifacts have no wall so people from different side of city could see the performance. Hence this situation, the organizer don't announce a rule of watching carnival. There is no kind of regulation for the audience or public. People could just stand up, or sit in the small bench or sit on the potter of the plant in the side walk, or sit on their vehicles. People could come out from the building and no worries to be late to see the performance.

V. Conclusion

This study is to explore what kind of verbal and nonverbal communication become a communication sign in performance. Since this research is a qualitative approach, the data of verbal and nonverbal communication been analysis in a descriptive analysis. As like Berlo

suggest, the communication process should be decode and interpretive the communication to find the result of communication.

To understand the nonverbal communication, from the three event shows us a differ communication. Carnival become a relax event for the audience. There is no sign of being on time or not. There is no rule how to prepare the physical appearance and no rule for reacting of the event. The street as the artifact supports this situation. Public don't need a rule for participating in this kind of event.

The physical appearance of audience should still need for a Concert and Theater. With making a rule of physical appearance, the audience will respect for the event. Using haptics and kinetics make the audience comfort while being participating. Haptics involves the audience to bond and to share each other as a part of mass audience. The kinesics shows how the audience react from the message that organizer create. Many sign in kinesics shows audience aware and respect of the show and deeply enrolled on the show. Paralanguage show very clearly in an event that don't use strict rules. Audience will be free to express their feeling without any worries. The procemic sign indicate that carnival audience is not a bound like a string as good social relationship. Differ for Theater and Classic Concert need a bounding since the procemic sign show it. For the use of time or chronemics sign, show us that an event that has a sequencing time and the artifacts support it, and then use of time is still needed. People will respect the event if the event is on and end on time.

This study indicates that the communication sign was produce by audience because of their value and culture. Through this study, this could be used to study the importance of art in human life. Especially when using the approach of how to communicate the performing arts and give meaning through signs.

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