

## Using Nonverbal Communication in Politics

### UTILISATION DE LA COMMUNICATION NON-VERBALE DANS LA POLITIQUE

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#### Abstract

Nonverbal communication as being a fundamental aspect of communication, meaning “nonverbal symbolic codes applied in relations in daily life”, is used mostly unconsciously but continuously. It is revealed in the researches that 38% of communication is comprised of audio codes, 55% body language and 7% words. As can be seen, importance of nonverbal communication is undeniable. General opinion in society is that nonverbal communication is comprised of just gestures and mimics. But voice, word accent, silence, colors, body posture and angle, touching, smell, use of objects, sense of place and time, dressing, accessories used, walking style etc. are included in nonverbal communication. As can be seen, nonverbal communication covers items which are non-verbal and cannot be expressed with words.

In addition to rhetoric, when a community is evaluating political leaders they resorts to some other information. This information is usually obtained from nonverbal communication. Voters in the society and other national societies take into account when communicating face to face with politicians the tone of voice, rhetoric, dominance of the mother tongue language, as well as the dress style, jewelry, accessories, body posture, gestures and facial expressions as non-verbal communication and persuasion factors. In the presentations and international relation conferences the non-verbal elements, as stated before, are much more effective, easier to recall, cogent and persuasive than elements of written communication of

the political leaders messages.

“How are the non-verbal communication items used by political leaders” is the starting point and the question for this article. Because today nonverbal communication items are effective to create political image and has an important dimension in the international politics. In this article, these items are reviewed with examples in communication literature.

**Key words:** Nonverbal communication; Politics; Political leader

#### Résumé

La communication non verbale comme étant un aspect fondamental de la communication, qui signifie «non verbale codes symboliques appliquée dans les relations dans la vie quotidienne», est utilisé plus souvent inconsciemment mais continuellement. Il est révélé dans les recherches que 38% de la communication est composé de codes audio, le langage corporel de 55% et les mots de 7%. Comme on peut le voir, l'importance de la communication non verbale est indéniable. L'opinion générale dans la société, c'est que la communication non verbale est composée de gestes et mimiques simplement. Mais la voix, l'accent parole, le silence, les couleurs, la posture du corps et de l'angle, le toucher, l'odorat, l'utilisation d'objets, le sens du lieu et de temps, l'habillement, les accessoires utilisés, la marche de style etc sont inclus dans la communication non verbale. Comme on peut le constater, la communication non verbale couvre les éléments qui sont non-verbale et ne peut pas être exprimé avec des mots.

En plus de la rhétorique, quand une communauté est d'évaluer les dirigeants politiques qu'ils recourt à certaines autres informations. Cette information est généralement obtenu à partir de la communication non verbale. Les électeurs de la société et d'autres sociétés nationales de prendre en compte lors de la communication face à face avec les politiciens du ton de la voix, la rhétorique, la

dominance de la langue maternelle, ainsi que le style vestimentaire, des bijoux, des accessoires, la posture, les gestes et les expressions faciales que la communication non verbale et les facteurs de la persuasion. Dans les présentations et les conférences internationales concernant les éléments non-verbaux, comme indiqué précédemment, sont beaucoup plus efficaces, plus faciles à rappeler, forte et persuasive que les éléments de la communication écrite des messages des dirigeants politiques.

«Comment sont les éléments de communication non-verbale utilisée par les dirigeants politiques » est le point de départ et la question de cet article. Parce que les éléments de communication non verbale sont aujourd'hui efficaces pour créer l'image politique et a une dimension importante dans la politique internationale. Dans cet article, ces articles sont revus par des exemples dans la littérature de la communication.

**Mots clés:** La communication non verbale; La politique ; Dirigeant politique

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## INTRODUCTION

Today, understanding and consumption are based on images. Based on targeted group, images are prepared and it was perceived as successful perspective. This is also valid with regard to political leaders. Human being, as a social entity, is affected by changes and developments around himself/herself. These primary changes and transformations in social life generally occur in the area of politics, communication and economics. Today, together with changes in many aforementioned elements characteristics, behaviors and attitudes of leaders also change. Since expectations and types of leadership change, images also change.

In Turkish political history, there are many examples that images of leaders head off the images of the parties. As is known, political leaders designing images and performing management appeal to the community are preferred more. Like society embracing Süleyman Demirel and staying in politics for 40 years... In these years, in the beginning of 1960s, Demirel was Representative in Turkey for a contractor company, Morrison Knudsen Inc. In this term, since Demirel's name was expressed very much together with Morrison, Demirel was called as 'Morrison Süleyman'. Besides this nickname, especially in the beginning of 1970s, he was called as 'Shepherd Sülü', which is also embraced and approved by him. This imputation is mainly a nickname to emphasize that he is 'joe public'. Moreover, Demirel continuously

speaking with Anatolian mouth is an intensifier element for 'Shepherd Sülü' nickname (Akdeniz, p. 2007). When advertising agency conducting Turgut Özal's election campaign noticed during test shots that Özal's hand moves cover almost all of his face, it was deemed suitable to hold a pen in his hand. This pen did not only remove a disadvantage, but also strengthened the image that he had the control in what he did (Özkan, 2004, p. 68).

True Path Party Chairperson, Tansu Çiller, is the only woman leader and the first woman as Prime Minister in Turkey. Çiller draws attention generally with wearing white clothes. Çiller, through climbing up stairs quickly, wanted to give image "She is such dynamic". She is smiley and has discourses on Turkish public value judgments. Leaning on the desk with her two hands gives a masculine image. While she draws attention with her tongue slips, she makes interesting references" (habervitrini, p. 2002). Her unforgettable image item is her scarf. Her masculine style, using her body language as masculine (like speaking with putting her hands on the sides of the desk...) are in mind.

Bülent Ecevit, until 70s, contrary to the accustomed politicians, managed to become an idol with his proper, undisguised attitudes and his very carefully used Turkish in a short period of time. Ecevit benefited mostly from Turkish that many politicians badly use wittingly or unwittingly, and contributed to the language. He added utility, possibility, coordination words to living language. This proficiency in using words skillfully provided an advantage. Until 1970s, Bülent Ecevit stigmatized as 'Karaoğlan' symbol. Bülent Ecevit, being the inventor of 'Left of the center' discourse, met the need for peace, freedom and brotherhood in seventies with her blue colored shirt and pigeons he let fly (Özkan, 2004, p. 39).

It is observed that parties integrated with leaders loose votes after the leader stays away from the politics. Qualifications of charismatic leaders attain more importance today. It is due to grasping this importance by the leaders; today many political leaders get trainings to improve their charisma and image. Elements of nonverbal communication like physical features, character, temperament, walking, posture, education, dressing style are effective factors in image making. For example accessories used by many political leaders stand out in their images. Accessories used and colors identified with the leaders such as Süleyman Demirel's hat waved to the crowds, Bülent Ecevit's blue shirt and cap, Necmettin Erbakan's shining ties, Mesut Yılmaz's white-collar shirts, Tansu Çiller's scarf, Cem Uzan wearing white-collar shirt during election campaign are the symbols distinguish politicians from other candidates and stay in the minds of the electorate (Kırlı ve Ünal, 2004, p. 58-59).

In Ottoman history, like today's history, we also can see using nonverbal communication in politics. "Glorious Medal (Nişan -ı Zışan)" given by Sultan Abdülhamit to Theodor Herzl, founder of Zionism, accordingly The

State of Israel, provided Herzl a prestige when he wore in state receptions. When Pope was Herzl's Great Medal given by Ottomans called him as "Commander"; Herzl used his medals as proof to persuade his ethnics to found State of Israel. As is seen, a medal or tiepin given by Ottoman Empire in that time, as the element of nonverbal communication, bears the meanings "prestige, power with regard to convince, admittance in high state officials".

This article presents the place of nonverbal communication which acquires great importance in the design of political leaders' images and in national and international political arena and its usage with examples. At this point, starting from discussion on 'what is the usage of the elements of nonverbal communication?' in order to present the usage of these elements by political leaders and countries, it is intended to review nonverbal communication literature which has a great place in science of communication and convincing communication.

## 1. ELEMENTS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Human as a social entity, carries on his/her life in continuous communication since his/her birth. Starting from the birth until the end of life with a certain structure and order, individual, through diversification in socialization, continues to communicate due to reasons such as to give information to those around him/her or take information from them, to joy, to integrate, to express his/her attitudes, ideas and feelings or learn theirs or just to be a listener.

If interpersonal communication is defined as a process of transferring information, emotion, idea, attitude and opinions, behaviors for change through a relationship between resource and receiver from one person to another using some channels, it can be said that even the most simple speech is also a way of persuasion. As can be seen in daily life, in many circumstances that communication takes place, people try to persuade someone to the accuracy of the information they give or to change their behavior or to persuade in something else. Because, persuasion is an important and common factor in communication. Moreover famous thinker Aristotle defines communication as "all proper meanings of persuasion" (Yüksel 2005, p. 4).

If it is considered that the biggest factor contributing to the success and failure in communication is "persuasion", positive result of persuasion efforts of the politicians on huge crowds is based on their success in the communication they build with such crowds.

Nonverbal communication constituting a primary aspect of communication, meaning "nonverbal ones in the symbolic codes applied in daily relations", is mostly unconsciously but continuously used in meaning making, sharing and persuasion. For nonverbal communication, it

took time to be subject matter for scientific research and to be used by public opinion leaders especially politicians.

This delay is inherent in societies where verbal and written languages are considered as primary categories of communication, and art of speech and writing are sublimated. False assumption saying that interpersonal face to face communication is a fact that starts with talking is also effective in this delay. In short, regarding nature of communication, this fallacy, for a long time led to not emphasize enough nonverbal communication codes that annotate through the most developed visual channels of human together with hearing. In fact, using visual codes constituting the most important part of nonverbal communication is as old as communication history of human. Humans of primitive and traditional societies developed very capable codes for religious origin ceremonies as much as for daily practices. Besides, naturally intonation, facial expression, mimics, kinesics, gestures in interpersonal face to face communication are always effective in the formation of sphere and meaning of nonverbal communication. On the other hand, in the formation of impressions and decisions with regard to others, visual codes bear an important function as intuitional evaluation tool (Yüksel 2005, p. 155).

It is revealed in the researches that 38% of communication is comprised of audio codes, %55 body language and 7% words. As can be seen, importance of nonverbal communication is undeniable. General opinion in society is that nonverbal communication is comprised of just gestures and mimics. But voice, word accent, silence, colors, body posture and angle, touching, smell, use of objects, sense of place and time, dressing, accessories used, walking style etc. are included in nonverbal communication. As can be seen, nonverbal communication covers items which are non-verbal and cannot be expressed with words.

Primary instrument of communication is language. But besides the language spoken using language, intonation, style of writing in written communication are also instrumental keys for the individual/s who are sender or target audience for what they want to transfer. These are factors contributing to communication in receiving and sending message.

Features of nonverbal communication that is the subject of our article, political leaders frequently even professionally use, can be compiled as follows: (H.Tutar, K.Yılmaz 2005, p. 63-67), (Yüksel 2005, p. 156).

• Nonverbal communication is effective. As can be understood from statistics given before, people send their messages via nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication can be expressed more effective and in directive way. The most effective messages related to emotions and relationships are nonverbal ones. Sometimes a look, a posture and a touch are most effective than speaking.

• It precludes inexistence of communication. We can

understand the behavior of an angry, tired, unhappy or excited person from his/her body language. Two people looking at each other, measures of their distance, their facial expressions, hand or foot moves (e.g. holding hands tight, making fist or knocking on the table with hands or hitting the ground with foot rapidly) provide us information about whether nonverbal communication resulted positively or negatively.

- Nonverbal communication indicates feelings. Ideas are expressed with verbal communication, while feelings are expressed more easily with nonverbal communication. It helps us to express feelings and enthusiasm competently.

- It provides communication with different meaning. For whatever reason, an angry person saying “I am not angry” with yelling is an example of this. Intonation, hand-arm moves, facial expressions of a person verbally expressing that s/he is not angry may show that s/he is angry.

- Messages sent via body language are more effective compared to verbal communication. Vibration in the voice, starting to falter, flushing, sweating, wringing hands, clicking fingers or knocking on the table rapidly in the person trying to tell a lie result to reveal the truth s/he tries to hide through nonverbal communication.

- Nonverbal communication is vague. In nonverbal communication, it is hard even impossible to explain the meaning of some messages. For example, it is not possible from body language to understand the reason of unhappiness of one of the couples or friends living together. Because this unhappiness can arise from reasons like tiredness, illness, and hatred.

- Moreover, personal and cultural differences can increase uncertainty in nonverbal communication. Because, nonverbal communication is formed in culture. Body language is universal but this universality does not mean that same behavior is used in every culture in the same meaning but body language is used in every culture. While some nonverbal communication behaviors provide a common language among cultures, some of them vary from culture to culture. Roger E. Axtell, analyzing differences in cultures also gave some examples from Turkey in his book titled “Gestures – The Do’s and Taboos of Body Language around the World”. According to Axtell’s evaluations, while the sign made by forefinger and middle finger standing tight and other fingers twisted, looking like letter “V” means “victory” in Europe, in Turkey it is used to show number “two”. A common hand move in Europe and America meaning nothing for an Asian (e.g. making quotation mark (“) in order to show that the topic is important.

- It ensures us to define and specify relationships between individuals and to get information about the content of verbal communication. Distance – stability relationship and especially hand – arm moves ensure us to define relationship between individuals.

We can resolve nonverbal communication into its

elements as “silent communication (body language)”, vocal communication (voice tone, speed and rhythm etc), objective communication (dresses, accessories, colors, distance, walking and way of sitting, time etc.). Before coming to how politicians use them, first of all, shortly we should look at what they mean in general (Ker Dinçer, 2001).

## 2. SILENT COMMUNICATION (Posture, Moves of Eyes And Body)

### 2.1 Body

Chest center is an important body language indicator openly expressing what we think about us and those who around us. We use our body in three main ways: Open (arms are sided freely and loose), closed (arms put around chest, looking over shoulder, shoulders situated in lower position or buttons of the jacket are fastened) or peaceful (arms are sided; shoulders are situated in lower position).

### 2.2 Head

In order to understand the use of head in body language, it is mentioned about two lines dividing head into four. These lines are **ego-line** assumed to pass through ears and **others line** passing from top to chin. If the head is upward on the ego-line, it is superiority; if it is downward it is peacefulness, subjection. If it is towards others on the others line, it means agreement; if it is contrary to the person it means disagreement.

### 2.3 Posture

People are in different body postures in communication with one another. But posture that must be basically known and be applied is the posture of taking communicated person directly to face and a straight body.

### 2.4 Gestures

Generally, all hand and arm moves are called as gesture. Gestures are the features that color and strengthen the given message, speech made. In this matter, noteworthy point is that gestures should not be used to complete missing words. Since gestures are sum of hand and arm moves, both organs should be mentioned separately.

#### 2.4.1 Hands

Hands are the most effective and sensitive organ in expressing oneself. Through opening the hands, readiness to communication, through showing palm friendly approach it can be reflected on individual/s. **Arms** also have a special emphasis with regard to body language. Self confident people move their arms in naturality and confidence. Half closing (one hand under arm, other hand free) reflects readiness to communication, waiting for persuasion, crossing legs reflects you are closed, crossing fingers your stressful, tense situation, putting finger or

an object into the mouth (earpiece, pen etc) reflects your need for confidence, supporting chin from down reflects your effort to gain physical support in order to prevent to loose attention from the topic, scratching the chin reflects your decision making process.

## 2.5 Mimics

The most precise meanings of body language occurs in the face. Mimic is another name for facial expression or moves. People can easily express their feelings through their mimics at that moment. The reason of this is putting face muscles into 250,000 different styles. **Eyelids:** They are the signs of being on the alert and natural. Thick eyelids reflect sleepy, cool blooded, slowly moving, and controlled personality. **Eyes:** Called as “the mirror of the spirit”, they are the most speaking organs with regard to body language. From the colors of eyes to sight direction, theirs sizes, there are many researches on several subjects and several findings are held. While looking at interested objects and people, pupillars get bigger, and while looking at uninterested objects and people, pupillars get smaller unawares. If their direction is towards the person spoken to, it expresses intimacy and interest, if it is towards down, it expresses accepting the superiority. When it is analyzed from sight duration, it should be used carefully. Long and straight looks bore the person, short ones than reflects apathy. There is a difference between sincere simile and smiling to keep up appearance. In a fake smile, eye muscles are not tightened, do not move, there is just a move of the lips. **Lips:** As motion, curling, turning up expresses the feelings like superiority and frowning. The best motion with lips is smile.

Face is also sum of parts in itself. Parts constituting this sum are generally facial style and ratio, forehead, eyebrows, eyelid, lips, chin, ears and skin color. A confident expression is compatible with the given message. In expressing feelings like anger, bitterness or happiness, facial expression and feeling situation must coincide with each other. If one is aware of the facial expression, bitterness, happiness, sadness feelings etc can be sent in appropriate facial expression and accurately to the individual/s spoken to.

## 2.6 Legs

Like in body and head moves, the posture of the foot may also transmit interest or disinterest to the communicated person or the topic. Crossing legs towards the person spoken with, supporting this move with the posture of foot reflects being interested in the communicated person. While the direction of legs towards the door means the wish to go, stepping down the foot continuously expresses stress or excitement.

## 3. VOCAL COMMUNICATION (The Color, Tone and Rhythm of the Voice Etc.)

Features like tone, rhythm, going up and down, monotonousness, softness, harshness, resonance of the voice are nonverbal communication elements revealing feelings and enthusiasm. In each type communication (interpersonal, intergroup etc.) we emphasize the word we use. However; instead of what we say, how we say is more important. The tone, high or low volume of the voice, stresses, impression on the person, image assist in defining relation-distance (formal-informal relationship) equilibrium between individuals. In a political speech, while persuasion possibility increases with a strong voice tone and suitable stresses, tone of and rhythm of the voice used by a couple having an emotional relationship will be the auxiliary elements.

## 4. OBJECTIVE COMMUNICATION (Dresses, Accessories, Colors, Distance, Time Etc.)

### 4.1 Place Usage

Although the place has a very important place in communication, due to being generally effective in covert ways, its importance and value in communication are not understood very much. In fact, it is one of the factors affecting communication environment. Too big or too small, crowded or too desolate places have different impacts on communication. Spatial characteristics like organization of a room, shapes, colors of furniture, sitting plan are effective in interpersonal communication. Personal place perception existing in each person, while mentioning about psychological place perception and defining distance-equilibrium relation with others, office, furniture and sitting plan used as physical place also have an important place in place usage in communication.

Besides personal distances composing a psychological area, physical place usage takes an important place in communication as mentioned before. Types of place usage can be an indicator of friendship and also means status. Being in front, sitting in high place, sitting in the right mean high status. In a meeting table, person sitting on the right of the president of the meeting is in the highest status after president. In conferences and meetings, individuals sitting in the first row are also the most authorized people. “Sitting in high place” also is an indicator of status especially in political relationships, as we will discuss later in using nonverbal communication in politics. Though an office with dark color, big leather chairs is an indicator of the authority of the person, talking from the back of the table also is an indicator of authoritarian position. During interview, person is sat right across the table again in order to declare status difference.

## 4.2 The Language of the Time

Time is also part of communication like place. Each society has a time perception and understanding. While it is observed that in some societies, time is spent unimportantly, in some of them price of each second is evaluated as money. In developed countries like America, Canada, England, Germany and France it is observed that distance social life reflecting on society's general body language and intimacy level is also reflected on material and sharing issues. In South America and Middle Eastern countries and Turkey that can be called less as developed or developing countries, the situation is on the contrary. Making someone wait, being late or spending time for each other is perceived as normal or can be compensated.

In interpersonal communication, being on time and in requested place or not reflects the emphasis shown to the person. If the situation of not showing up on time and in the requested place occurs continuously, executor of this situation can be qualified as "irresponsible", and person subjected to this situation can be qualified as "affronted, counted worthless". Although this is a greatly encountered subject in interpersonal relationship in daily life, later we will also discuss examples in political life.

## 4.4 Nonverbal Communication: Silence

Silent communication, i.e. stop talking, is the most important and inseparable parts. Because, in order to

communicate with other people, at least one should shut up and listen (Yüksel 2005, s.94).

## 4.5 Types of Sit and Walk

Sitting and walking, like other nonverbal communication elements, are kinds of sending several messages. While sitting next to door indicates less confident people, one sitting in the first place on the table is perceived as leader, the one sitting on the first right is the person closest to the leader, holding the highest status after the leader. In a rectangular meeting table, the person sitting on the narrow side is the leader of the group. The ones sitting next to that person are the supporters of the leader. Person sitting in the opposite side of the table is in the position of the rival to the leader. There is a balance among the people sitting in a square table. If there is balance and equality between the participants in the meeting, round tables should be preferred. According to nonverbal communication principles; if the walking of a group is observed, person walking in front and in the middle is the leader.

## 4.6 Language of Colors

Colors being important in communication as the symbols of feeling, thinking and even the political ideologies, they are also used in defining social status in their societies. In a University, all academicians wear dark blue robes with school logo, rector wearing white one, chairperson wearing red colored one can be given as example.

**Table 1**  
**Colors, Created Spirituality and Their Symbolic Connotations**

Colors	Spiritual condition they create	Symbolic connotations
Brown	Sad, unfragile, sorrowful, languishing, melancholic, being notr	Melancholy, protection, fall, deterioration, sensitivity, apologize.
White	Cheer, ease, being notr, cold	Seriousness, purity, cleanness, femininity, sensitivity, joy, light, innocence, loyalty, accuracy, pusillanimity.
Black	Sad, stressful, fear, sorrowful, languishing, melancholic	Dark, power, leadership, protection, deterioration, secrecy, wisdom, death, apologize.
Green	pleasure, doing business without hurry, being controlled	Security, peace, jealousy, hatred, silence.
Purple	Depressive, sad, sober, noble, splendid	Wisdom, victory, show off, richness, tragedy.
Orange	Displeasure, excitement, disturbed, distress, simulative	Sun, fruit, appetite, being thoughtful (gentle).
Yellow	Displeasure, excitement, hostility, joy, brilliant	Sun, light, wisdom, masculine, nobility (China), sorrow (Greece), using a bad thing for a bad reason (Italy), hunger (Egypt).
Red	Hot, affectionate, angry, opposite, hatred, live, excitement, love	Happiness, relish, intimacy, sin, blood, fury, formality, disturbance
Blue	Calmness, pleasure, doing business without hurry, distance, security, superiority, being easily hurt, being easily get sad	Dignity, sadness, compassion, reality.

**Source:** Loretta A. MALANDRO, Larry BARKER, D. Ann BARKER, "Nonverbal Communication", 2nd Edition, New York: McGraw Hill, 1989, sf: 158.

## 4.3 DRESS, ACCESSORY USAGE AND PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS

In interpersonal communication, physical attractiveness, dress and accessory usage are the most important factors in identifying individuals' communication style. Many sayings starting from "People are welcomed with their dresses, sent off with their ideas" mention about its

importance in first impression. Today image covers all areas of life and information, experience and specialty in physical attractiveness, body language, dress, accessory usage, listening, speaking, courtesy became puzzle parts that should be gathered. Now, appearance is perceived as a "label" and constitutes an important part of impression on people.

Since physical appearance, body shape, posture, dress, and height and weight ratio are the first elements observed, individuals, before starting to communicate, place cognitive templates in their minds on the information they gather from appearance. After this cognitive placement, type of address is decided. It is observed that sometimes addresses such as “miss, mister”, and sometimes “sister, uncle, aunt, fellow” can be used. In our business or private life, placing people in “friendship” concept, accepting them in our social area occurs after evaluating them firstly with regard to “appearance, physical appearance. Prevalent in history, one of the most important problems of the societies which still exists today is “black-white” distinction that also originates from hair and skin differences and perceiving this as “the sole and the most important element” in personal distinction.

## 5. EXAMPLES OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN POLITICS AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Moving from Wilbur Schramm’s saying “each section related to human community and behaviors should deal with communication”, we can say that politics also will and must be in continuous interaction. Communication, as process starting with birth and runs through the life, has many functions like integration meaning unification. Communication being a fact unifying individuals, organizations and societies, is social, and it is the base of the social life.

Politics, on the other hand, is an art of management or science, meaning social science. It is a business of affecting, changing or directing government/state performance. It is the knowledge or the art of seizing and holding state governance. What is related to power and leadership between individuals and groups is competition. It is the sum of relation complex between individuals living in a society.

When considering all human activities maintained with communication, individuals should develop their communication skills, use verbal and nonverbal communication in unity in order to express themselves, understand others or change their ideas, feelings, attitudes and behaviors. As mentioned before, politics being an art of management is at the same time application of technique of communication and its methods, communication processes and skills. Today’s world, understandings and consumptions are based on images. In the formation of an image which is a concept met in each area and each term of life, factors mentioned in the beginning of the article have great importance. In the course of time, politicians also understood the importance of communication and began to cooperate with professionally serving institutions in this area. They work hard to apply communication techniques in the best

way to organize successful election campaigns. Based on target audience, images are prepared. As expectations and leadership types change, similarly images also change. Political discourse creates leaders as actors, too. In Turkish political history, there are examples in which their images are beyond the parties they belong. It is also observed that when leaders of the parties that unified with their parties stay away from the political arena, they lose the votes of the electorate. Characteristics of charismatic leadership gained more importance in today’s society (Ünal, 2010). Although they receive help from most of the Professional person or institution, it is observed that they cannot use successful communication techniques. The ones comprehending the importance of using nonverbal communication elements in reflecting feelings, thinking and ideologies to the vast majority of public choose using image making and visual elements in high level in their election campaigns. Besides successful ones, there are also the ones who can not comprehend what, where to use completely. For example, in the opening of new party building, assigning Russian models without considering negative impact on the voters, is nothing but image making effort. In 1999, Republican Peoples’ Party (CHP) leader Deniz Baykal imitating the scene appearance of Ricky Martin whose albums were on top of the lists, led to failure in passing the threshold. In 2002 election campaign term, Mesut Yılmaz stressfully eating cookies during an open session in a TV program, made him listed among the political leaders that could not use nonverbal communication elements, primarily body language. So, which communication skills that political leaders should have? (Gökcan, 2011)

- Before the speech, one should identify the needs and beliefs of the audience, build a communication as if s/he is a member of the targeted audience.
- should speak good Turkish.
- should have the capacity to arrange intonation well.
- should make good breath control.
- should have persuasive characteristics and know persuasive communication techniques well.
- should use nonverbal communication well.
- should not ramble.
- should be ready for possible protests and certainly should not oppose the protests.
- should control body language.
- should use time effectively.
- should prefer speaking with examples instead of theoretical speaking.
- should give the impression of audience control.
- should speak with considering social features of the targeted audience, understanding their feelings and opinions, with making empathy.
- should reflect sincerity in speeches, should give feeling of trust.
- should stay away from making disordered sentences time to time.

- should reflect a unity in feelings, opinions and behaviors.

- should not be criticizing all the time, but explain what s/he can do.

- should stay away from impractical and attacking discourse.

“Image management” creating a business area itself and finding a place especially in advertising sector as a miracle of making expected impact on the other side, also provides to be understood in political arena in the course of time. Today, together with many elements changing, the qualifications that leaders should have, their behaviors and attitudes also changed. At this point, ‘image’ helps the leaders. Image is used as a gun by political leaders in order to create an impact on the society. Political leaders designing images valid for targeted audience and accomplishing governance are preferred by such leaders more. Thus, candidates should be careful in their personal images. Symbols like physical qualifications, character, temperament, walk, posture, education, dressing style are important factors in individual’s image making. In this manner, accessories used in image making can come to the forefront. In Turkish political history, some political leaders are remembered with their accessories. Identified colors and used accessories such as Süleyman Demirel’s hat waved to the crowds, Bülent Ecevit’s blue shirt and cap, Necmettin Erbakan’s shiny ties, Mesut Yılmaz’s white collar shirts, Tansu Çiller’s scarf, Cem Uzan wearing white shirt along his election campaign are the symbols to differentiate politicians from others and recalled easily in voters’ minds. (Kırlı ve Ünal, 2004, p. 58-59). Leadership, in simple meaning, can be defined as a process of impressing and directing others’ activities in order to achieve personal or group targets in certain circumstances. Leadership is a process related to what leaders do. Leader is, then, a person leading to the behavior within specific goals. Impressing others is placed in the basis of leadership. (Sabuncuoğlu ve Tüz, 2005, p. 204).

In today’s politics, having leaders which are mostly colorful, the power of ‘charismatic leadership’ concept on the voter, with taking impressive power from personality qualification and posture, took its place among important identifiers of image making efforts. Image fact, frequently used in daily life, in order to create targeted perception level on voter especially in political arena, appears as the sum of target series which require professional work, and must not be left to the coincidences. Political leaders use professional image making in effort to transform their representative pictures, as much as their party programs, into positive visuals to be created in the minds of their targeted audience (Ünal, 2010). According to Prof. Dr Albert Mehrabian from University of California, impact of words on communication is 7 percent, voice tone is 38 percent, and body language is 55 percent. If your eyes do not coincide with your words, what you say is

not important. If your eyes movements, moving your hands, arms while talking make you be listened and ensures trust to what you say or on the contrary, make them think that what you say is not right. Body language expert Ercan Kaşıkçı also says that “A manager building empathy bridge is a person reached to manager status, free from manager logic and adds that: “Even slaves do not like to be managed, why employers like a chief like a manager? Motivation factors have an important place among performance development techniques. A manager can give motivation to his/her personnel through making empathy, listening and understanding him/her. But using body language does not mean that some memorized moves placed without a meaning. Verbal and nonverbal communication a complete sum.”

When we Orient subject to the politics, Turgut Özal is a man for all places, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is aware of the importance of nonverbal communication, Deniz Baykal is tough and furious, Devlet Bahçeli is tense and stressful; Bülent Arınç is a politician with confusing mimics. Expert Kaşıkçı commenting the body languages of the politicians, reveal his conclusions regarding political leaders in Turkey as follows: (Hürriyet Daily Newspaper)

**ATATÜRK:** A leader in which not only body language but also nonverbal communication is the most challenging leader. Very much fashionable, decisive looks, charismatic posture, confident walk. His fit dresses, accessories, hat, chain watch, cigarette box, stick, all of them are chosen most accurately and in harmony.

**TURGUT ÖZAL:** He managed to be the man for all places. With his citizen short, he was a rare politician who could be a citizen with his short and a leader with his suit. As an accessory, he used the pen like a maestro. His salutation with holding his hands in the air was, then, became the symbol of the party and citizens.

**SÜLEYMAN DEMİREL:** Süleyman Demirel is another leader who used his mimics and gestures successfully. As accessory, his hat and salutation is very effective and catchy. Despite his old age, he still uses his mimics and gestures successfully. On the other hand, he successfully uses his glasses as an accessory.

**RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN:** During time that he was the mayor and in the first terms of his political life, he did not use his body language very effectively. In the course of time, he improved himself. He behaves with being aware of the importance of the mimics and gestures. He knows the importance of nonverbal communication. During election campaigns, there was a body language show. He has his original salutation. He welcomes salutation with putting his right hand on his heart. His hands are always open like hugging. Tense is not observed on his face very much but tiredness. On the contrary to that, his negative side is that he cannot control his feelings and reacts emotionally. As an accessory, using red tie,



white shirt and a flag pin on his jacket are also very harmonious. He frequently and effectively uses touching during communication.

**DENİZ BAYKAL:** Although he is a political leader that smiling fits best, he is also the leader having the harshest mimics and gestures. In his gestures and mimics, he always has an anger and fury. Sometimes, he becomes ready to attack with his hand put on the sides of his body in the belt line. Sometimes he uses a threatening sign (Just like a gun sign with his hands holding up thumb, other fingers closed). Sometimes with putting his right hand's forefinger to his right temple, he enters into a style like lecturing "there is mind and logic". While doing all of these, he misses to make empathy with public. Public

does not want an angry, reactionary but a hugging leader with his solutions and confidence giver. But these are not reflected on verbal and nonverbal communication.

**DEVLET BAHÇELİ:** He is one of the leaders that has the most stable mimics and gestures. He does not make an open communication. Generally he speaks with holding his hand on the platform; he reflects the most stressful, tense waiting situation. In many speeches, then, he tries to keep his interest awake, wishing to not move away from the topic with supporting his head, chin with his palms. He is a leader whose smile would give trust but he never smiles.

Hurriyet Daily Newspaper analyzed body language of the leaders participated NATO Summit organized in 23 November 2010 as follows.



Very sincere picture. Obama leaned front and authoritative impression is not important for him. David Cameron also does not feel forced to look at Obama and smiles. Closed friends can behave like this.



Karzai looks at Rasmussen in a self-confident and somehow condescendingly. Lips closed, moved upward, stress in the eyebrows and leaning head down, all shows that. With Karzai's body, he's wide with body in the area he covers. Rasmussen's hand and his space, meaning his authority is limited.



Berlusconi, completely entered into Russian President Dimitri Medvedev's private space. He put his hand on his nape and their faces touch each other. Berlusconi entered into the most sensitive private space. Medvedev does not seem so happy about this situation.



Merkel and Sarkozy are hugging very intimately. Merkel can comfortably put her hand on Sarkozy's shoulder, Sarkozy's hand is on Merkel's back. Putting hand as such reflects friendship. Sarkozy directing Merkel towards him seems superior in this picture. He sends messages that he accepts her in his place.



Same finger sign. It is indicator of anger, lecturing and sensitiveness. At the same time, it is an authority indicator.



Obama sends more comfortable and authorities message. He tells something using his hands easily. Australian Prime Minister Gillard tight his hands, and turns to Obama with his body and, listens to him.



Having hands put in this way reflects stopping and narrowing the topic. Putting head back as such is indicator of challenging.



Very sincere picture. Rasmussen comfortably put his hand on Berlusconi's shoulder. It is complete reflection of sincerity. In the same way, Berlusconi also puts his hand around Rasmussen's reins.



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Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) also analyzed colors that are subject to several scientific researches. According to "political and social meanings of colors", yellow-red-green colors becoming a taboo since it recalls terror in Turkey, were placed in the logo of the court of appeal in Ottoman period. According to the research, color of passion and anger, red, at the same time, is the main color of politics in Turkey and is the color used most by political parties, yellow is identified with liberalism, white, then, symbolizes state in Turks. While British holds red, French blue, Dutch orange, Irish green; religions and beliefs also political parties are symbolized with different colors.

In a research conducted by Murat Bilgin from TGNA Research Center, the meanings of colors used by some states and in Turkish political history are revealed as follows:

**White:** Historically, groups advocating absolute monarchy choose white color. Supporters of Bourbon dynasty in France and Tsar Supporters in civil war after October Revolution in Russia used white color as symbol. White colored flags representing Sultan in Ottoman Empire for a long time. In the conquest of Istanbul, it was a white flag that Ulubatlı Hasan put to walls. State officials and high commanders wearing white and riding white horses occur frequently occur in Turkish culture. In Turks, white symbolizes "state" as convenient to these meanings.

**Black:** It is used as a symbol of power and authority over centuries. In Islamic philosophy, black symbolizes "God". It is thought that it is due to obscurity, invisibility, incomprehensibility meanings. Black as the color of Muslims Qabe is also due to symbolizing "God". Black is one the most important symbols of anarchy. Black is also used to symbolize fascism. Almost none of the political

parties in Turkey, even none of the social movements (generally accepted) do not deem black color suitable.

**Brown:** It recalls ground/soil and symbolizes fall. Moreover, time to time, it may have serenity, passivism, conservatism or dependence meanings.

**Red:** It is the symbol of fire, passion, anger, danger and destroy. In politics, it is identified with left ideology, more specifically, with socialism and communism. Many nations choose red color as their symbol color. The most well known examples of this identification are British and Turks. The color used by the most of the political parties in Turkey to represent them is red. Republican People's Party (CHP) and parties in this tradition, Democratic Party and parties in this tradition, Nationalistic People's Party (MHP) and parties in this tradition and many more small to big parties choose red color as their main color. Choosing the colors of Turkish flag is the primary reason for showing how patriotic or, according to circumstance, nationalistic they are. In Turkey, leftist and radical leftist parties also choose red color as the symbol color of leftist ideology, but it is also observed that they choose yellow with red. Worker's party transforming the color of star from yellow to white in the emblem with yellow single star on red ground is also an example.

**Green:** There are arguments on green representing Islam is due to perceiving green as mirage, oasis, a desire and the biggest treasury for the soils that Muslimism is born and expanded. Green is also acknowledged as the symbol of religion and prophet. In political arena, referring Islam with green, it can be used for Islamic political movements, also referring the color of environmentalists, it can be used by environmentalist parties.

**Yellow:** It is identified with liberalism and liberal

parties more. The biggest reason for this is that British Liberal Democrats which has a very important place in British and world democracy history choose this color. In Turkey, Motherland Party identified with liberalism when it is established and in power choosing yellow color also can be perceived as an interesting and conscious choice. Today, yellow as being the color of Justice and development Party (AKP) which is close to liberal values is also notable.

**Blue:** In monotheistic religions, blue symbolizes Christianity and more frequently Judaism. In Islam, blue is “community color”. This blue is not a blue in general meaning but turquoise blue. In Turkish politics, blue is identified with Bülent Ecevit and Democratic Left movement he represents. This identification has reached such a point that light colored tone that Bülent Ecevit especially prefers is even called as “Ecevit blue” by the public. Moreover, Liberal Democrat Part chooses blue color as their symbol color.

**Dark Blue:** It symbolizes infinity, authority, productivity. Thus, more than half of the companies in the world use dark blue in their logo.

**Gray:** While it may mean neutrality and humbleness, it may also symbolize depression. In Christianity, gray symbolizing immortality of the spirit besides mortality of the body, in Judaism it means wisdom.

Also in referendums holding an important place in Turkish political life, “impact of colors” is also emphasized. In 1987 referendum, the color of “no” was orange; the color of “yes” was blue. In 2007 and 2010 referendums, “yes” was represented with white, “no” was represented with Brown. In the whole world, “red” as being international sign of “no”, and symbol of refusal also recalls the same meaning in traffic and games as is known. As the usage of white for “yes” is understandable as being the color of peace and holding brightness, neutrality, purity meanings; using brown instead of red is due to recall “feeling to leave in a short period of time” as mentioned above in the goals of using it in the fast food restaurants. In 2007 referendum organizing Presidency election and making to be held in every four years, using white in “yes”, Brown in “no” and winning the referendum, is due to AKP believing in the impact of “color” as important elements of nonverbal communication.

Physical characteristics, are effective nonverbal communication factors in image making and message sending symbols such as character, disposition, walking, Education, dressing style. In this manner, accessories used by political leaders may stand out. Some leaders in our Turkish political history, like one of our former Presidents Turgut Özal’s “Address to the Nation” with his pen, are remembered with their accessories. Accessories and identified colors such as Süleyman Demirel’s hat waved to the crowds, Bülent Ecevit’s blue color shirt and hat,

Necmettin Erbakan’s shiny ties, Mesut Yılmaz’s white collar shirts, Tansu Çiller’s scarf, Cem Uzan’s wearing white shirt along his election campaign are the symbols that differentiate politicians from other candidates and catchy in the voter’s mind (Kırlı ve Ünal, 2004, p. 58-59).

Besides all of these, “time” perception is also important as we mentioned in nonverbal communication elements and holds serious messages in political atmospheres. US President Barack Obama delaying the meeting with Prime Minister Erdoğan during G-20 meeting in Toronto, Canada due to one hour extension of USA-Ghana World Cup Quarter Final game is an important example in Turkish and world political history. Uranium Exchange Deal with Iran, Israeli attack on Gaza Flotilla, and PKK as topics to be revealed in the meeting, while media did not cover Prime Minister Erdoğan waiting for Obama for an hour due to Ghana-USA game, what is significant in the agenda of the media was the ‘body language’, and focused on ‘self-confident posture’ of Erdoğan towards Obama.

Another case in which body language constituting an important type of nonverbal communication was effectively used and appeared in the media was that in Erdoğan-Obama meeting before Toronto, in another critical meeting, Erdoğan crossing his legs towards Obama during his Washington visit. In media, Bülent Ecevit’s posture in the meeting with US President George Bush of that time was reminded, and argued that Turkey with Erdoğan has ‘more equal’ relation, there was an attempt to prove that Turkey is US’s ‘model partner’.

Again there was a deep interest from the media on Obama sitting next to Prime Minister Erdoğan in Nuclear Energy Summit held in April 2010. It was emphasized that US President attached great importance to Turkey with such choice.

During Obama’s visit to Istanbul, Obama speaking with “touching Erdoğan’s shoulder” and “looking into his eyes” was again an expression of “sincerity” in bilateral Relations, according to press.

Within year 2010, another influential nonverbal communication and crisis making case happened between Israel and Turkey. Inviting Turkish Ambassador to tell Aviv to the Foreign Ministry in order to express reaction to Prime Minister Erdoğan’s speeches and Israeli opposition in soap operas in Turkish televisions, Israel reacted with disregarding diplomatic practices. Israeli Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Danny Ayalon, called upon to pay attention that “Turkish Ambassador Oğuz Çelikkol sitting on a chair lower than theirs in the room” in his speech to Israeli journalists in Hebrew. Moreover, Danny Ayalon did not shake hands in the meeting with Turkish Ambassador to Israel Oğuz Çelikkol despite journalists’ insistence. Diplomatic crisis occurred due to not making a statement in common language, not shaking although being in a formal relationship, trying to give the message to the other side “being in a lower position”

with hosting in a lower chair, and holding meeting with journalists being sent out.



When we come to the subject on how space perception in nonverbal communication is used, again, US President Obama is a good example. Obama, after presidential elections, redecorating Oval Office which is decorated by Laura Bush, wife of Former US President George W. Bush, paid attention to use pastel colors. Obama, taking away the carpet which is the favorite item of Bush in the presidency room, saying that it spreads ‘optimism’, Obama put cream colored carpet again with presidency seal. In Oval Office, mostly green colored textures with yellow colored wood furniture, Obama ensured a cozy place. Instead of Winston Churchill’s statue, putting Martin Luther King was another nonverbal communication message. Bush’s light green sofa, velvet chairs in yellow tones is placed. It was the center table changed the mood in the room most. A fruit plate is put on the table made of walnut and mica in order to soften the room’s seriousness. Classic lamps were replaced with modern ones. Wallpapers in yellow tones also contributed to the cozy atmosphere in the Office.



Argument advocated by many designers in the world on that colors express feelings, was used also during Barack Obama and Joe Biden’s election campaign. In the pictures given below it is seen that Obama wears red, Biden wears blue tie, and both of them use their shirts without jacket. Red tie transmits power, offensiveness; blue tie transmits trust and faith. Like in the first picture, hugging arms is a behavior often observed among politicians when they wish to introduce themselves to the people as “fighter” and to announce that they are ready to help American people. As can be seen in the second picture, while Obama draws more soft and idealist image; Biden is talkative and aggressive. (<http://dickgoodnuts.blogspot.com/2008/08/non-verbal-communication-in-politics.html>)





## CONCLUSION

Question of 'how political leaders use nonverbal communication elements' as the starting point of the paper, nonverbal communication elements with increasingly affecting the image making of political leaders today, and also undeniably important in international politics, its place in communication literature are revealed with a general look. At this point, what must be argued is that the impacts of nonverbal communication elements such as place, time, color, accessory, body language and their usage. As mentioned before, communication, basically an activity of humans, is a fact unifying people, organizations, and societies. It is social because it enables social life and the basis of social life. Politics, on the other hand, is an art or science of governance, meaning political science. It is a business of affecting, changing or directing government/state performances. It is the knowledge or the art or seizing and holding state governance or control. It is competition between individuals and groups related to power and leadership. It is the sum of relationship mixture of people living in a society. In societies governed with democracy, political parties and their leaders take governance function. Political leaders are the ones who take governance decisions of the society and wish to contribute, affect governance decision/s of a society. Political leadership dimensions, and also political leaders' nonverbal communication usage dimensions are in international, national or local levels. Just like Bülent Ecevit designing 'Popülist' and 'Karaoğlan' images, Süleyman Demirel designing 'Sombrero' and 'Father' images, using these elements against Turkish people or being used in the attitude that Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister and USA President developed against Turkey and the ones in crisis occurred in diplomacy between countries.

Society, in evaluating political leaders, applies some other information other than discourses. These informations are generally gathered through nonverbal communication. For the voters in the society and societies

and politicians in other countries, each symbol like dressing style, jewellerys, accessories, posture, using gestures and mimics, looks besides voiced tone, rhetorics, capability in mother tongue in face to face relation are the elements for evaluation and persuasion process.

Nonverbal elements, as we mentioned in the beginning of the article, are more effective than verbal communication elements and words, and are considered as more catchy, persuasive and convincing.

Besides; image made with nonverbal communication is the sum of skills that political leaders should develop and today it is aimed to create through professional help. When nonverbal communication elements together with the message to be sent and personal characteristics are paradoxical, persuasion on target audience cannot be ensured. According to Milburn (1998, p. 49) arguing that analyzing different social factors such as age, race, education, and sex together with political behaviors should be amongst the basic functions of public surveys, "These factors are the indicators of how the experiences of individuals differ and thus they are political directors of political behavior differences between people as a secret power. Each variable should be taken under control and new impacts should be measured" (Ünal Erzen, 2010, p. 79). Thus, 'how political leaders use nonverbal communication elements and their impact on the society' is also an important variable to be analyzed. It must be researched and explained because it is important and directive factor in defining the images of political leaders and their countries, and international relation levels. Article aims to explain how politicians use nonverbal communication elements in national and international levels with examples.

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