VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL REALIZATIONS OF PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES IN VIDEO RESUMES

FORMAS VERBALES Y NO VERBALES DE ESTRATEGIAS PERSUASIVAS EN LOS VIDEOCURRÍCULUMS

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Abstract

With the rapid shift from print to digital modes of communication, new genres have emerged. One example is the video resume (VR). This novel professional digital genre enables job seekers to enhance their visibility and connect with broader audiences through various semiotic modes. The VR has a clear communicative aim based on a strong persuasive component: to secure a job by convincing the audience of their qualities. The premise of this paper is that VRs are not only informative but also inherently persuasive. Accordingly, the study aim is to explore the use of multimodal semiotic modes as a way of realizing persuasive strategies (i.e. attention-getting, anticipation and control of responses, rapport, emphasis and processing aids). The methodological approach uses video-based analysis and computer-aided Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) to analyze a dataset of 8 VRs from the online platform YouTube, considering the following criteria: limited duration, impact, year uploaded and editing. The results suggest that verbal and non-verbal realizations of persuasive strategies are present in the fragments analyzed, and such strategies are encoded by heterogeneous combinations of semiotic modes. Although the strategies and modes are not always consistent, they contribute to achieving the communicative purpose of the genre. As for pedagogical implications, this genre and its features can be incorporated into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching materials,

enhancing learners' persuasive strategies and developing their multimodal communicative competence.

Keywords: digital genres, video resumes, persuasion, multimodality, MDA (Multimodal Discourse Analysis), ESP (English for Specific Purposes).

Resumen

Con la rápida evolución de los modos de comunicación de impresos a digitales, han surgido nuevos géneros. Un ejemplo es el videocurrículum (en adelante VC). Su aparición como género digital profesional ha permitido a los profesionales aumentar su visibilidad y relacionarse con un público más amplio utilizando una gran variedad de modos semióticos. Conlleva un claro objetivo comunicativo basado en un fuerte componente persuasivo: convencer a un público concreto para obtener un puesto de trabajo. Este artículo parte de la idea de que los VCs no sólo son informativos, sino también intrínsecamente persuasivos. En consecuencia, el objetivo es explorar el uso de modos semióticos multimodales como forma de implementar algunas estrategias persuasivas (captación de la atención, anticipación y control de las respuestas, compenetración, énfasis y ayudas al procesamiento). El proceso metodológico se centra en un análisis basado en vídeo y en un enfoque de Análisis del Discurso Multimodal (ADM) asistido por ordenador con un conjunto de datos de 8 videocurrículums tomados de la plataforma en línea YouTube, teniendo en cuenta los siguientes criterios: duración, impacto, año de publicación y edición. Los resultados sugieren que las realizaciones verbales y no verbales de estrategias persuasivas están presentes en los fragmentos de los vídeos analizados, y que van acompañadas de combinaciones heterogéneas de modos semióticos. Aunque las estrategias persuasivas y los modos no siempre actúan de forma coherente entre sí, sí contribuyen a alcanzar el propósito comunicativo del género. En cuanto a las implicaciones pedagógicas, este género y sus características pueden incorporarse a los materiales de enseñanza del Inglés con Fines Específicos (IFE), mejorando las estrategias persuasivas de los alumnos y desarrollando su competencia comunicativa multimodal.

Palabras clave: géneros digitales, videocurrículums, persuasión, multimodalidad, ADM (Análisis del Discurso Multimodal), IFE (Inglés con Fines Específicos).

1. Introduction

1.1. Professional Genres in the Digital Era

In the digital age, professional genres have undergone significant transformation, shaped by the influence of technology and the internet (Luzón and Peréz-Llantada

2022). One of the key aspects of digitalization in professional genres is the shift from traditional, paper-based formats to electronic ones (Hafner 2018).

In today's highly competitive job market, the traditional curriculum vitae (CV) is no longer the sole means for individuals to showcase their skills and qualifications (Teixeira da Silva et al. 2020). As technological advances take root globally and digital tools become increasingly integrated in the professional sphere, novel digital genres have appeared and are now employed. A new professional digital genre has emerged —the video resume (VR). The present study understands the VR as a clear example of a remediated genre, which means that there is a deep transformation of the medium from printed to electronic formats (Brooks et al. 2004). Hiemstra et al. describe a VR as "a short video-taped message in which applicants present themselves to potential employers on requested knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation, and career objectives" (2012: 11). Nonetheless, research into this genre is rather scarce and has mostly focused on paper-based genres in professional contexts (Hiemstra and Derous 2015). A search conducted of the Web of Science database and conference proceedings (February, 2017) revealed a scant number of studies addressing the topic of VRs since 2010. Half of these studies emerged within the digital era, suggesting a growing interest among researchers. Yet, this growth is still modest, and VR is not as widely present in academia as in professional settings. For instance, data from a survey conducted in June 2011 produced 174,000 hits for the term "video resume" on YouTube (Gissel et al. 2013), and by February 2017 that figure had risen to 5.53 million. Although several studies (Hiemstra et al. 2012; Hiemstra and Derous 2015; Waung et al. 2015; Nguyen and Gatica-Perez 2016) suggested its popularity among job seekers, scholarly exploration of VRs remains limited (Ryan and Derous 2016). However, VRs come with a set of challenges since they require a certain degree of digital literacy and essential communicative skills. Applicants who use the genre to search for employment need to demonstrate creativity and incorporate technical elements, such as lighting, sound quality and video editing, with the aim of creating engaging and persuasive presentations and set themselves apart from other applicants. This is the reason why job seekers must strike a balance between professionalism and creativity, ensuring that their videos reflect their competence while maintaining conciseness and adherence to a standardized format.

As technology continues to evolve, the VR is likely to become even more prevalent, reshaping the way candidates market themselves and how employers evaluate talent. The VR is not only conceived as a digitized version of the paper-based CV or resume, but also as an opportunity to present the candidate in a dynamic, authentic and creative manner, capturing the attention of potential

employers and standing out among competitors. Even though paper- and video-based resumes have the same communicative aim (i.e. to persuade the audience to offer them a job), the two ways in which the two genres pursue this end differs significantly in the use of added semiotic modes intertwined with linguistic elements.

1.2. Multimodality and Persuasion in Digital Genres

The integration of digitality in genre studies is inherently connected to the use of multimodal and persuasive elements. Specifically, present-day professional communication is regarded by the field as multimodal, meaning that speakers call on a wide range of semiotic modes, including image, animations, gestures, or even language (among others) orchestrated by speakers to make meaning (Jewitt and Kress 2010).

A salient feature of VRs is their multimodal nature, given the fact that speakers need to employ a variety of semiotic modes to convey meaning. In this context, *modes* are understood as semiotic systems with rules and regularities —such as images, gestures, speech, music, layout, writing, proxemics, and posture (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001). Norris (2004) categorizes the use of modes as *embodied* and *disembodied*. The former consists of resources produced by the human body (e.g. facial expressions), and the latter refers to external elements that cause an impact on the audience (e.g. clothing). This paper considers an additional mode, called *filmic*, as a subset of the disembodied mode and one that is only possible in the digital medium (e.g. music). It refers to significant elements added in the postproduction process (Valeiras-Jurado and Bernad-Mechó 2022).

Multimodal studies allow analysts to view communication holistically, since every single semiotic mode, verbal and non-verbal, is intentional to the same degree (Jewitt and Kress 2010). In particular, the Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) approach conceptualizes language as the result of a combination of semiotic resources to convey meaning (O'Halloran 2011; Ruiz-Madrid and Fortanet-Gómez 2016). Within this approach, every verbal and non-verbal mode is considered on equal footing, aiming at fully understanding any communicative process. As a result, language becomes part of a multimodal ensemble (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001). Ruiz-Madrid and Valeiras-Jurado define multimodal ensemble as "the orchestration of different modes to produce a specific meaning that is inferred based on the interrelation among them" (2020: 30). Moreover, this orchestration of modes can be used consistently, although the individual modes do not always interact logically. This interrelationship among modes is defined as modal coherence (Valeiras-Jurado 2019).

The aforementioned multimodal ensembles can be especially decisive in achieving persuasive oral communication (Valeiras-Jurado et al. 2018). Persuasion research has typically focused on linguistic aspects; nonetheless, studies on persuasion are becoming broader, deeper, and more complex since nonlinguistic elements may also contribute substantially to any persuasive message (O'Keefe 2004).

Previous studies on persuasion (O'Keefe 2015; Perloff 2020) pointed out that persuasive messages tend to be more effective when i) speakers have credibility, ii) the audience can identify with speakers, iii) the message is made memorable, easy to understand, innovative, and surprising and iv) it is perceived as not imposed, but inferred. Additionally, particular attention is also paid to the fact that persuasion has non-verbal realizations, which supports the multimodal connection. Taking into consideration previous studies on persuasion in digital professional and academic genres, such as TED talks (Valeiras-Jurado 2019), YouTube videos (Luzón 2019), research dissemination talks (Ruiz-Garrido and Palmer-Silveira 2023) and research pitches (Ruiz-Madrid 2021), it can be hypothesized that the combination of modes and persuasive strategies may influence the extent to which these genres achieve their communicative aims. Therefore, the concept of persuasion is a defining trait in oral academic and professional genres and the orchestration of different modes brought together through persuasive strategies can be decisive in oral communication.

Taking into consideration that persuasion is inherently multimodal, the research questions (RQs) guiding the present paper are as follows: RQ1. What verbal and non-verbal realizations of persuasive strategies are identified in VRs? RQ2. How do multimodal ensembles and persuasive strategies cohere with each other?

2. Methodology

2.1. Dataset

The analysis in the present study is based on a detailed examination of short excerpts of audiovisuals to understand how semiotic resources and persuasive strategies are employed coherently to deliver a message. Previous studies (Bernad-Mechó 2022) have already explored videos which easily deploy multimodal content.

The dataset consists of a total of 8 VRs, all of them in English, taken from the online platform YouTube.[1] In the initial stage, I established a set of criteria to collect the data of the study, that is, duration, professional or academic activity, gender, impact, year of publication, editing, type of camera shots (see Appendix 1

for a description of the data). The dataset was then restricted to videos that complied with the following guidelines: limited duration (less than 3 minutes), impact as expressed by number of views (although the number of views is irrelevant for the purpose of the present study), year of publication (all between 2010 and 2020), and, to enrich the multimodal analysis, whether or not the videos used editing strategies as indicated by camera shots.

Once the eight videos were selected, I opted to extract one excerpt from each, the function of which was to urge the addressee to take action. The combined length of these clips was 179 seconds. Table 1 shows the exact time intervals and excerpts in which the speaker emphasizes their strengths and potential aptitudes as evidence that they are the most suitable candidate for the position. Therefore, the selection of the segments was made on the basis of their persuasive communicative aim and their multimodal nature. I hypothesized that these fragments, interpreted as using pressure tactics, would be modally dense (Norris 2004), since they would use a greater variety of semiotic modes and more complex interrelations among them.

8 VRs	Time interval	Length in seconds	Excerpts
VR19	from 1'27'' to 1'56''	29 sec	"Why should you pick me out of seven billion people living on this planet? Well, as a strong communicator and negotiator who can build effective relationships, I specialize in finding creative and innovative solutions to the toughest problems. I also happen to speak English, French and Spanish and have been involved in very exciting stuff for the last few years. I truly believe that I can bring a real and positive impact to the organization from day one. I'd love to join a creative agency, working to put my skills and experience to good use and apply my entrepreneurial principles to foster social transformation".
VR20	from 1'46'' to 2'12''	66 sec	"Why should you pick me? Well, I'm very interested in digital trends, new ways to sell products and services and how to build strong marketing strategies for companies around the world. I'm also able to speak English, French, Arabic and Spanish. I'm a fully creative, strong communicator and extremely motivated to build effective relationships with the ability to fit in with any group, any service, any company. I'm sure I can bring a really positive energy to the organization from day one".
VR21	from 1'18 to 1'32''	14 sec	"As a recent graduate from the Iron Yard, I'm an excellent candidate for a company or team looking to capitalize a lot and blow me into what they specifically need. I'm always up for a challenge, and I'm looking for a place where I can continue to grow and learn".

8 VRs	Time interval	Length in seconds	Excerpts
VR22	from 1'21'' to 1'29''	08 sec	"I believe I am your perfect candidate for your company and will become a great future employee".
VR23	from 2'18'' to 2'35''	17 sec	"I'm looking for a company that believes in getting stuff done, low bureaucracy, and empowering the staff to use their skills and talents for the better at a business. I'd prefer to be used for my brainpower and skills, but I'm willing to crush whatever is put in front of me. I hope that this is interesting to you or someone that you might know".
VR24	from 2'34'' to 2'44''	10 sec	"I am convinced that you are looking for a young, creative, hard-working, reliable and committed employee who will do their best. I'm one of those!"
VR25	from 1'26'' to 1'56''	30 sec	"Why should a company employ me? I have all these skills that I feel are very transferable: soft skills that are necessary in job roles when I apply for jobs. I feel like companies are looking for this. Alongside being very good at communicating, a good problem solver. I find that I've learned from my Project Management how to be very organized, how to plan better, and I'm just good at time management as well, and I think this works in the role I'm looking for".
VR26	from 0'41'' to 0'46''	05 sec	"If you're looking to increase sales production, develop your employees and retain them, I'm the person for the job".

Table 1. Time intervals and excerpts from the dataset

2.2. Annotation and Analysis

The analytic strategy employed in this paper relies on a specialized software package designed to carry out computer-assisted multimodal analysis complemented by manual analysis. This application is known as Multimodal Analysis-Video (MAV) (O'Halloran et al. 2012), and it "provides the necessary tools for investigating the use of semiotic resources and the ways in which semiotic choices interact to fulfill particular objectives in a multimodal video" (O'Halloran et al. 2017: 22). Appendix 2 contains an image of the interface and further explanation of the tool.

Other linguists have also found the support of the software to be useful, arguing that "an MDA approach requires the use of different specialized software packages to look into the data" (Valeiras-Jurado et al. 2018: 99). According to Ruiz-Madrid and Valeiras-Jurado, "an MDA offers a comprehensive approach for the fully [sic] understanding of the multimodal nature of genres" (2020: 28). Therefore, to explore the connection between the semiotic modes and the persuasive strategies,

following an MDA approach, a fine-grained framework for the multimodal annotation has been adapted from prior studies on multimodal analysis (Bernad-Mechó 2022), as Table 2 below shows.

SEMIOTIC MODES		
EMBODIED	DISEMBODIED	FILMIC
1. Gestures	1. Clothing	1. Image
1a. Iconic 1b. Metaphoric 1c. Deictic 1d. Beat	2. Background	2. Music
	3. Objects	3. Writing (words)
		4. Proxemics (disposition)
2. Head movements		4a. Lateral 4b. Frontal
2a. Iconic 2b. Novel 2c. Deictic 2d. Beat		5. Camera shot
3. Facial expressions		5a. Frontal 5b. Lateral 5c. Close-up 5d. Middle 5e. Foot
3a. Eyebrow-raising 3b. Frowning 3c. Laughter 3d. Smile 3e. Swallowing 3f. Lip-licking		6. Sound effect
4. Posture		7. Moving image
4a. Standing upright 4b. Standing by a table 4c. Sitting on table/chair (cross-legged) 4d. Sitting on table/chair (legs stretched) 4e. Swaying		
5. Speech (spoken language)		

Table 2. Framework for the multimodal analysis of VRs (based on Bernad-Mechó 2022)

For the purpose of the current study, I built upon preceding investigations into the use of semiotic modes and persuasion in alternative formats (Valeiras-Jurado 2019), and I focused on five salient persuasive strategies, which are explained in the following paragraphs and briefly presented in Figure 1. Both the persuasive strategies and the semiotic modes contribute to achieving the communicative aim of the VR (Figure 2).

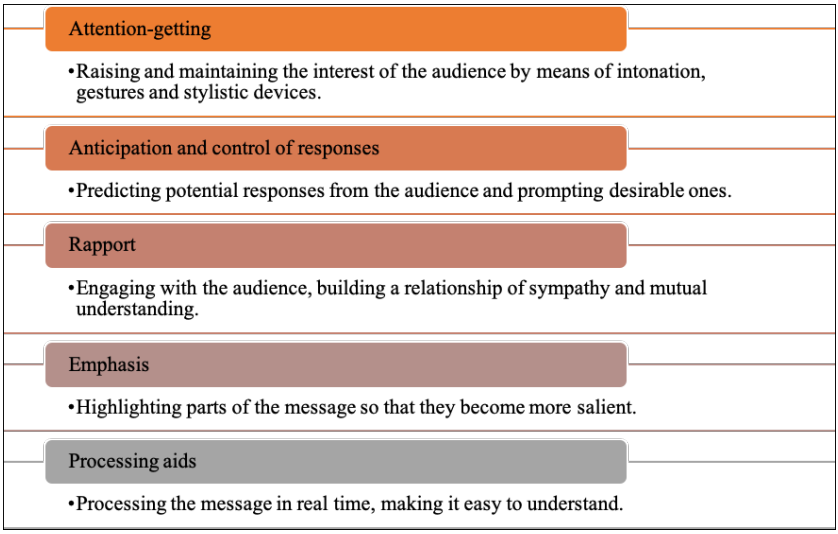

Figure 1. Taxonomy of persuasive strategies (Valeiras-Jurado 2019: 92-93)

The first strategy, 'attention-getting', is employed to establish and maintain contact with the audience. It is mostly based on attracting the interest of the audience so as to make them listen and invite the speaker for a job interview. 'Anticipation and control of responses' consists of the way the speaker adapts their speech and the way they deliver the message, taking into consideration the audience's anticipated reactions, with the aim of obtaining a desirable response (Brazil 1997; Carter 1997; Kendon 2004). Additionally, the speaker intentionally heads off certain responses, redirecting communicative intent according to their own aims. Valeiras-Jurado and Bernad-Mechó (2022) determined in their study that certain embodied modes (i.e. speech, intonation, gestures) and filmic modes can elicit certain reactions in the audience. The third strategy, 'rapport', refers to moments of mutual understanding and empathy with the audience. This strategy can also be expressed verbally (i.e. use of inclusive pronouns) and non-verbally (e.g. bodily postures, smiling, nodding). 'Emphasis', as the name implies, occurs when the speaker highlights parts of the message to make them more salient. For example, rhetorical devices (i.e. three-part lists, parallel structures, among others, in combination with intonation, gestures, head movements or filmic modes) are commonly used to cause a long-lasting effect and make the text more memorable. The last strategy, 'processing aids', refers to resources used to facilitate the

understanding of the message in real time. Specific embodied modes, such as gestures or intonation, are prominent to clarify aspects or structures of a message.

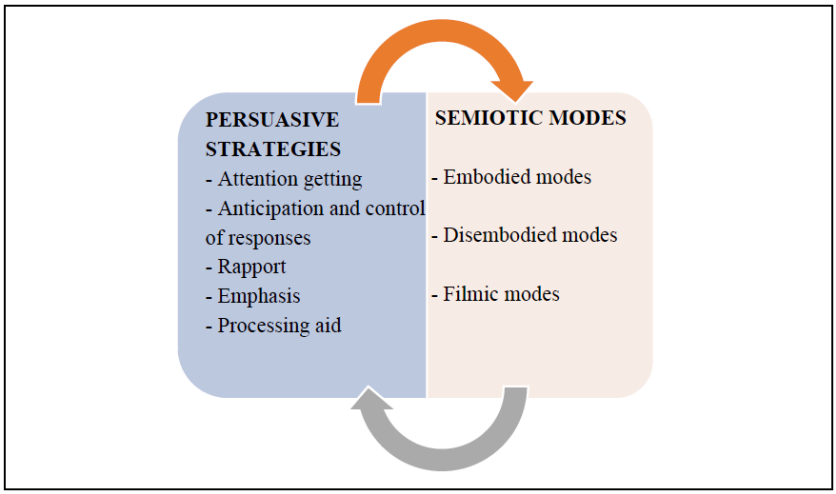

Figure 2. Persuasive strategies and semiotic modes in VRs

The 8 VRs were viewed several times, during which initial observations were made regarding the sort of embodied, disembodied, and filmic modes employed, and observing how the nature of multimodal ensembles configured through the use of persuasive strategies contribute to achieving the communicative aim of the VR. For the present research, the dataset was constructed to be gender-balanced (4 female and 4 male candidates) and two more scholars in a related research field were consulted until a consensus was reached regarding which multimodal semiotic modes were employed to realize persuasive strategies, thus ensuring interrater reliability.

3. Results and Discussion

The main aim of the present study is to identify the verbal and non-verbal realizations of persuasive strategies speakers use in VRs (RQ1). Additionally, this article accounts for the notion of coherence among multimodal ensembles and persuasive strategies to achieve the persuasive effect in VRs (RQ2).

Out of the eight excerpts shown in Table 1, 6 figures are supplied below (Figures 3-8) to show a precise explanation of the most noteworthy verbal and non-verbal realizations of persuasive strategies by the presenters in their videos. Each of these videos makes use, in most instances, of a coherent multimodal ensemble that effectively interacts with the most frequent persuasive strategies.

Figure 3. Multimodal and persuasive resources from VR19

Figure 3 provides an example of a coherent multimodal ensemble, enabling the speaker to capture the audience's attention and present himself as a strong candidate for the job. Through a blend of verbal and non-verbal multimodal cues, he introduces the section interpreted as using pressure tactics with a direct question aimed at steering the audience's interpretation toward his desired outcome. For instance, he poses the direct question, "Why should you pick me out of seven billion people living on this planet?" [VR19], a persuasive tactic intended to anticipate and control the audience's response. This strategy is accompanied by a metaphoric gesture (i.e. an open hand facing upward) conveying candor and truthfulness, and seeking rapport. These persuasive strategies are depicted in the upper images of the ensemble.

Furthermore, the applicant appears to purposefully use different embodied modes in order to captivate the audience's attention, employing them as a persuasive

tactic. For example, he often incorporates head movements, such as bobbing of the head when shifting his gaze to the left side of the frame, along with a range of facial expressions to emphasize his points. Particularly notable is the use of an eyebrow-raising gesture in conjunction with the sentence "I truly believe that I can bring a real and positive impact to the organization from day one" (lower right image). These resources, combined with different filmic modes, enhance the effectiveness of the candidate's message and the way it is delivered. For instance, the excerpted footage opens with the speaker in frontal orientation (i.e. proxemics) and shifts to a lateral orientation to introduce a new topic (lower left image). Additionally, there is a shift in camera angle, starting with a medium shot of the speaker and then transitioning to a close-up shot to highlight his message and establish rapport as a persuasive strategy.

In short, this speaker utilizes semiotic resources such as speech, head movement, facial expressions, proxemics and camera shots to emphasize, capture attention, anticipate a response from the audience, and seek rapport with them as persuasive tactics.

The message delivered by the speaker in Figure 4 is, to some extent, coherent from a multimodal perspective, and his presentation predominantly relies on embodied modes to accomplish the communicative aim of the genre. There is a noticeable variation in the way gestures are performed, for example, when the speaker uses his fingers to enumerate points: his intention seems to be to emphasize information he considers significant (persuasive strategy) and at the same time he is making the message easy to understand (processing aids as a persuasive strategy in the lower right image) by visually showing with a gesture the number one, since the speaker later remarks, "I'm sure I can bring a really positive energy to the organization from day one" [VR20].

Regarding posture, throughout the excerpt, he remains seated in a stretched-out position, employing the persuasive strategies of attention-getting and rapport to create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Moreover, the camera captures frontal shots from a medium distance to build further rapport. However, at some points his posture, for example, in the upper right image with his arms inward and directing his body to the side does not project the message in the same way and rather minimizes his physical presence. Therefore, there is an incoherence between both embodied modes (speech and posture) in this case.

In sum, this example shows the orchestration of gestures, posture and camera shots, mainly contributing to developing the following persuasive strategies: emphasis, processing aids, attention-getting and rapport. However, it should be noted that they do not act in isolation. Instead, they are interconnected to fulfill the communicative purpose of the genre.

Figure 4. Multimodal and persuasive resources from VR20

Observing the performance of the speaker in VR20 (Figure 4) alongside that of the speaker in VR23 (Figure 5), certain similarities can be noted, particularly in the frequent use of embodied modes. Specifically, both speakers employ the iconic gesture of enumerating with their fingers, along with the eyebrow raise (observed in the facial expression in the upper left image), enacting the persuasive strategy of attention-getting (i.e. when the speaker raises his eyebrows, he conveys surprise or extreme attention and expects the audience to align with this feeling and be surprised and attentive as well). However, the speaker in Figure 5 closes his eyes momentarily to pause and consider his next words. This action can be interpreted as a metaphoric representation of silence and a sign that he is now concentrating on remembering the message rather than on the audience (lower right image).

In this sense, the embodied mode does not contribute to the persuasive message he aims to deliver, or, in other words, gaze is not part of the persuasive multimodal orchestration in this specific example. Nevertheless, the speaker uses the persuasive strategy of attention-getting, realized through gestures, facial expression and speech, which act as a whole.

Figure 5. Multimodal and persuasive resources from VR23

Three speakers [VR19, VR20 and VR23] in Figures 3, 4 and 5 are observed wearing light-colored shirts, interpreted as a disembodied mode to deliberately convey reliability and politeness. Indeed, in any online performance, the selection of an appropriate outfit is crucial for making a strong impression and signaling personality (Ruiz-Garrido and Palmer-Silveira 2023). Nonetheless, a particularly notable instance of a disembodied mode is the T-shirt of a technology-education company (i.e. clothing) worn by the speaker in VR21 (Figure 6), seemingly chosen intentionally to demonstrate pride in the training in technology she received at the institution (upper right image). This coincides with the statement "As a recent graduate from the Iron Yard, I'm an excellent candidate for a company". Moreover, she shows expressiveness by using facial expressions, with eyebrow raises aimed at capturing attention (lower left image) and smiles, fostering rapport as a persuasive strategy.

A similar example is found in VR24 (Figure 7), where the speaker opts for a 'bow tie' as a means of setting herself apart from the other candidates (attention-getting strategy). She maintains an eloquent manner, employing facial expressions throughout the video, including eyebrow raises and smiles (lower right image), to establish rapport as a persuasive tactic. Additionally, she strategically emphasizes certain aspects of her message over others, employing embodied modes through gestures (iconic and beat) and speech ("I'm one of those"). She employs her

fingers coherently as well as a persuasive strategy (processing aids in the upper and lower left images), orchestrating the presentation of concepts in a specific sequence while listing her strengths ("I am convinced that you are looking for a young, creative, hard-working, reliable, and committed employee who will do their best").

It should be highlighted that, despite the fact that both speakers use their fingers to point to themselves for attention-getting (persuasive strategy), they do so in different ways and achieve different effects. The first speaker is pointing to herself with her thumb (upper left image in VR21 in Figure 6), which is a more specific way of pointing, which makes the gesture more aggressive. With this gesture, the speaker controls the response of the audience (persuasive strategy) by explicitly directing their gaze to her. On the other hand, the second speaker touches her shoulders with her open hands to point to herself in a subtler and more affectionate way, building rapport (upper left image in VR24 in Figure 7).

To conclude, in both examples, the multimodal ensemble is established by disembodied modes (i.e. clothing) and embodied modes (i.e. facial expression, gestures, speech). The verbal and non-verbal realizations of persuasive strategies that contribute most to both excerpts are attention-getting, rapport, emphasis, processing aids and controlling the response of the audience.

Figure 6. Multimodal and persuasive resources from VR21

Figure 7. Multimodal and persuasive resources from VR24

In VR25 (Figure 8), the speaker makes use of the text overlaid onto video (upper left image) as filmic modes. In this specific example, the speaker employs the direct question "Why should a company employ me?" to support her speech (emphasis). Additionally, she provides the audience with visual support (processing aid) to anticipate and control responses, since the audience is prompted to interpret her speech as the answer to her question when they read it. She presents her speech in a somewhat emotionless way, although certain facial expressions, such as eyebrow raises (upper right image), a subtle smile (lower right image) and closed eyes during pauses (lower left image), can also be discerned. Once again, the pause in her speech while she closes her eyes may suggest that she needs time to think about her message and, in turn, seems not to contribute to the multimodal coherence.

In sum, the ensemble is orchestrated by the combined use of filmic (i.e. written words) as well as embodied modes, such as facial expressions, which lead to the realization of different persuasive strategies (i.e. emphasis, processing aid, control of responses) but in an apparently insufficient way.

To conclude, all the multimodal ensembles orchestrated by the speakers produce a suitable and comprehensible message, fostering persuasion through a variety of embodied, disembodied and filmic modes (e.g. facial expression, gestures, head movements and clothing as the most salient ones). The eight excerpts use a similar choice of persuasive strategies (rapport, emphasis and processing aids) realized

Figure 8. Multimodal and persuasive resources from VR25

through several modes (mainly gestures, facial expressions, head movements and speech). However, when there is a lack of coherence across modes (i.e. modes do not cohere with each other), the persuasive effect can be diminished. Three excerpts (VR20, VR23 and VR25 in Figures 4, 5 and 8) seem incoherent in their use of modes. Their speech as well as their facial expression is flat at certain points, showing no emotion, and it may reveal disengagement from the communicative situation, which is to persuade the audience. As a result, the use of modes becomes less coherent and, consequently, less effective with regard to the communicative aim of the genre. The rest of the excerpts (VR19, VR21 and VR24 in Figures 3, 6 and 7) orchestrated the multimodal ensemble in a more coherent way. The persuasive strategies in the excerpts are deployed through a series of semiotic modes, which consistently contribute to achieving the communicative intention of the genre.

In order to visually show the observed features that foster the persuasive nature in VRs, a summary table (Table 3) is presented as follows:

PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES	VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL REALIZATIONS
Attention-getting	Head movement (i.e. beat) [VR19] Gesture (i.e. iconic) [VR20] + [VR23] Facial expression (i.e. eyebrow-raising) [VR20] + [VR23] Clothing + speech [VR21] Clothing [VR24] Gesture (i.e. iconic) [VR21] + [VR24]
Anticipation and control of response	Speech (i.e. direct question) [VR19] Speech (i.e. direct question) [VR25]
Rapport	Gesture (i.e. metaphoric) [VR19] Proxemics (i.e. lateral and frontal) [VR19] Camera shot (i.e. middle and close-up) [VR19] Proxemics (i.e. lateral and frontal) [VR20] Camera shot (i.e. middle and frontal) [VR20] Facial expression (i.e. eyebrow-raising) [VR21] Facial expression (i.e. eyebrow-raising and smile) [VR24]
Emphasis	Facial expressions (i.e. eyebrow-raising) + speech [VR19] Gesture (i.e. iconic and beat) + speech [VR24] Facial expressions (i.e. eyebrow-raising and smile) [VR25]
Processing aids	Gesture (i.e. iconic) + speech [VR20] Gesture (i.e. iconic) + speech [VR24] Writing (i.e. visual support) [VR25]

Table 3. Features that foster persuasiveness in VRs

4. Conclusion

This study has explored the presence of persuasive strategies via the interplay of multimodal realizations in VRs. In professional settings, multimodality has become essential due to the need to effectively transmit information as well as convince audiences across a range of digital platforms (Jewitt and Kress 2010). Digitality has also developed into a pervasive force in professional genres, influencing how individuals present themselves, connect with others, communicate and conduct business (Hafner 2018). Embracing digital elements and practices is now fundamental for professionals to stay competitive in today's evolving landscape.

To answer the research questions posed, I closely examined the verbal and non-verbal realizations of persuasive strategies in VRs from a multimodal perspective using the software MAV. Considering that the fragments selected for analysis are part of a section that uses pressure tactics to convince the audience to take action, a wide range of verbal and non-verbal realizations of the five persuasive strategies identified are explored in the digital genre of the VR. For instance, raising and

maintaining the interest of the audience, as a persuasive strategy, is mainly realized by gestures, head movement and facial expressions (e.g. embodied modes), and clothing is the only element identified as disembodied mode. In addition, in order to prompt desirable responses from the audience, it is noteworthy how the speaker poses a direct question (e.g. disembodied mode). The findings of this research reveal that the attempt to engage with the audience and build a relationship of empathy and mutual understanding as a persuasive strategy requires a substantial number of embodied modes (i.e. gestures and facial expressions) and filmic modes (i.e. lateral, frontal proxemics and middle and close-up camera shots). To highlight parts of the message so that they become more salient, most of the speakers employ the eyebrow-raising gesture, smile, gestures and speech. Lastly, speakers process the message in real time to make it easy to understand by employing a significant element added in the postproduction process (i.e. text overlaid onto the video for visual support). This filmic mode is supported by the embodied one, mainly through gestures and speech.

Interestingly, the embodied modes play a relevant role concerning the communicative intention of the speaker since they are present in all the fragments selected. Furthermore, the most prevalent embodied modes are gestures, facial expressions and speech. Nonetheless, even though the disembodied modes are not always present in all the excerpts, the most frequent one is clothing. External elements such as background and objects do not seem decisive to achieve the communicative aim of the fragments analyzed. The most prominent filmic modes are proxemics, camera shots and visual support. Likewise, images, music and sound effects are missing in these fragments.

The findings of the current study indicate that VRs have marked persuasive function, which is enhanced by the use of multimodal ensembles considering the excerpts analyzed. Waung et al. (2014) claim that VRs constitute a rich medium because multiple verbal and non-verbal cues are employed. Nonetheless, in certain instances (e.g. VR20 and VR25) multimodal ensembles do not cohere with persuasive strategies and, as a consequence, the communicative intention may be altered. In both fragments, the pause in their speech while they close their eyes can be interpreted as time needed to think about their message; as a result, these VRs may not be fully persuasive. In turn, coherence in the use of semiotic modes and persuasive realizations is paramount to this purpose.

As a conclusion, the interrelation between the various semiotic modes identified in the MDA approach presented in this paper along with the persuasive strategies introduced in the methodology section can pave the ground for further genre studies. Due to their potential impact on both the professional community and the general audience, individuals can take advantage of the

power of audiovisual communication to convey their professional achievements, non-verbal communicative skills and overall suitability for a desired position (Flannery et al. 2014).

As for pedagogical implications, the analysis presented in this paper provides valuable insights applicable to the creation of teaching materials for English for Specific Purposes courses. Here, the VR could serve as a teaching resource for honing multimodal skills and mastering essential persuasive strategies for effective communication in professional settings. The teaching of VRs appears to be pedagogically beneficial, as it can help refine the inclusion of oral and digital genres in higher education curricula (O'Halloran et al. 2017).

Given the limited size of the dataset, further analysis is required to enlarge and refine the methodological framework of multimodal realizations and persuasive strategies, especially by including other types of remediated digital genres. In addition, it should be noted that there has been no real check of the candidates' effectiveness, that is, no information is provided about whether they were ultimately hired. However, it is my hope that this paper provides a flexible and easily adaptable analytical framework for future digital genre studies in video formats.

Notes

1. The present article is part of a wider study approved by the Ethics Committee of Universitat Jaume I, with the file number "CD/41/2022", which allows the use of the videos and images extracted for academic purposes.

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Appendix . Description of the dataset

VRs	Duration	Professional/ academic activity	Gender	Impact (Views)	Year of publication	Video type (Edited video)	Camera shot
VR19	2' 10''	Publicist	M	977,826	2012	person + audio	face, half, full body
VR20	2' 34''	Salesman	M	16,652	2019	image + music + audio + person	half body
VR21	1' 52''	Web developer	F	124,584	2016	image + music + audio + person	half body
VR22	1' 38''	Student	M	22,871	2020	image + music + audio + person	half body
VR23	2' 50''	Travel manager	M	5,655	2020	image + music + audio + person	half body
VR24	2' 57''	Student	F	293,152	2014	image + music + audio + person	half body
VR25	2' 02''	Project manager	F	865	2019	person + audio	half body
VR26	0' 46''	Sales manager	F	202,454	2010	person + audio	half body

Appendix 2. MAV interface for multimodal and persuasive annotations

The left corner contains a video window where the clips can be played; the right corner of the interface leaves space for verbal transcriptions as well as a list of strips. These strips are divided into the sound strip, which displays a waveform of the audio in the clip, and supplemental strips, created manually with the aim of annotating all relevant semiotic modes employed in the excerpts selected (Bernad-Mechó 2022).