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Multimodal Stancetaking: Expressive Movement and Affective Stance.
Political Debates in the German *Bundestag* and the Polish *Sejm.*

Politicians, often only remotely available to common citizens by means of traditional and electronic media, make decisions that dramatically influence their life. Although presumably, in the hiding of their offices, they diligently work on the solutions to the problems of the world, much of what they publically do is convincing others to support their actions and to accept more or less uncomfortable solutions they propose. In each public speech, they try to influence the behaviour of the addressees and to build and maintain their image of leaders to be followed. But, first of all, they take stances, and often become highly emotional about them.

Words of politicians may break down or intensify international collaboration, may lead nations to wars or peaceful coexistence, may increase the value of stock or ruin thousands of people. But are they only words? We can immediately find that they are often accompanied by expressive gestures, remarkable facial expressions, body postures. Furthermore, they are uttered in a peculiar way, with an attention-drawing melody, rhythm, or in a very unique timbre. All these components are orchestrated in a sophisticated way, often bearing strong affective load and simultaneously conveying new subtle meanings.

In the present project, we intend to analyse how German and Polish politicians take stances in their public speeches. Our analyses will cover the whole bunch of means they tend engage: spoken utterance, with its lexical content and syntactic structure, and the way they are uttered in terms of melody and timbre, as well as with co-occurring gestures and their coordination with the flow of speech. However, the crucial part will be to find how these components work together, forming complex multimodal gestalts that may express highly emotional meanings. For this aim, we will employ recent theoretical advancements and state-of-the-art research techniques. We will base on our own experience and on extensive everyday team-working as well as on advice from internationally renowned experts.

Our results will allow to understand how the meaning and emotional load of multimodal utterances are built of a number of components, what are the contributions of these components, and how they mutually interact. Although the project is focused on basic research, its results will be useful and applicable to a number of areas that involve public speaking: politics, media, art, show business, teaching. More distantly, they will be also relevant to human-computer communication studies, in the design of dialogue systems or multimodal speech synthesis systems.

In the project, we will join the efforts of the German (Europa Universität Viadrina) and the Polish (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań) team, and draw from both our complementary and overlapping areas of expertise, with the EUV team providing the theoretical framework based on the concept of expressive movement as well as the methods and techniques for gesture analysis, while the AMU team dealing with the analysis of prosodic component for both the languages and offering infrastructure for remote collaborative analysis of audio and video material.