



The Communication of Leadership: The Design of Leadership Style (Routledge Studies in Linguistics)

Jonathan Charteris-Black

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With the crisis of leadership in the western democracies, there has been a growth of interest in how leaders outside of the west emerge and consolidate their positions. This book analyses the communication strategies of six charismatic non-western leaders: Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Ayatollah Khomeini, Mohammed Mahathir and Lee Kuan Yew. The book addresses the following questions in order to arrive at a better understanding of communication and leadership:

- How do leaders communicate?
- Do leaders communicate more by words, or actions?
- Do leaders have unique communication strategies?
- Are leaders moral beings, or impostors?

The book describes how each of these leaders designed a unique style that integrated verbal and non-verbal modes of communication. It argues that leadership style is performed through the cumulative interaction of non-verbal modes – dress, body language, physical possessions, symbols and symbolic actions – with verbal strategies for communicating visions, values and legitimacy.

In order to understand how each of these leaders undertakes a dramatic ‘performance’ of leadership, Jonathan Charteris-Black uses Erving Goffman’s notion of ‘Front’. Noting the inherent similarities between the mutual dependency of actors with audiences and leaders with followers, the book suggests that leaders – like actors – use metaphors and symbols to satisfy followers’ psychological and symbolic needs and that leadership is communicated through impression management, metaphor and media choices.

A fascinating and well executed study, this book will interest students and academics working on leadership, applied linguistics, communication studies and politics.

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