At a Republican Party meeting in Stark County, Ohio in 2010, former politician Phil Davison gave a speech in hopes of obtaining the Republican nomination for Stark County Treasurer. Although he has a master’s degree in Communication, his nearly 6-minute speech went viral shortly after due to the absurdity of the way in which it was delivered. Although the verbal aspect of his speech was far from perfect, the words that he chose to use generally fit the message he was attempting to deliver. Conversely, his non-verbal message was erratic, unnecessary, and at times irrelevant to what he was trying to say; so much so that it is arguably what ended his nearly twenty-year political career. This is true especially in terms of his paralanguage and gestures used during his speech.

An example of his seemingly incompetent non-verbal communication skills is demonstrated during his introduction. Ironically, as Phil is informing that the party of his education, he states that he has master’s degree in public administration in communication. Verbally, this is entirely appropriate thing to say. However, after his mention of his degrees in public administration, he pauses for nearly 5 seconds, eventually following up with “…and a master’s degree in communication.” It is hard to determine what his intentions were with this awkwardly long break between words, but one thing is certain – it didn’t fit the verbal message about him being a highly educated communicator. This pause, instead of emphasizing his education, ends up doing to opposite in a demonstration of poor use of paralanguage. In addition to his long pause, Phil essentially yells at his audience throughout his entire speech. While raising his voice would be a good way to emphasize certain parts of his speech, it is rendered ineffective due to him yelling his entire speech, rather than just a few words.

In addition to his inept attempts at utilizing paralanguage to demonstrate his point, there are a couple of times during his speech that Phil attempts to use illustrators. When he says that he will use his knowledge “not only as a tool, but as a weapon”, he hilariously acts out the motions of unsheathing a sword. He does this in a way that is generally unnecessary – because he is speaking figuratively – and also over-the-top when paired with his absurd demeanor. He does this again while saying the word *snap,* as he uses his hands to demonstrate him snapping a twig. His emphasis of this one word doesn’t really help him get his point across, and more so just distracts anyone that is listening.

Although Phil’s non-verbal skills leave much to be desired and do more that takes away form his message than contribute to it. I do have to say that throughout his speech, he does do a pretty good job when it comes to his facial communication. He is very serious about what he is saying, and his facial expressions seem to align with that for the most part. While his words and gestures may be erratic, his facial expressions are relatively static, which fits his intended message.