

Course N°07 Nonverbal Communication

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1-Introduction

- “you cannot, not communicate.” do you!
- Nonverbal communication is defined as communication that is produced by some means other than words

- In fact, some researchers suggest that the percentage of nonverbal communication is **four times that of** verbal communication, with **80% of what we communicate involving our actions and gestures** versus only 20% being conveyed with the use of words.

2-Definition

Nonverbal communication is the production and perception of any type of signal, excluding speech, that is made in order to convey information to another person.

Most descriptions of nonverbal communication include **speech modification tactics**, such:

- as adjusting the tone or
- rate of speaking,
- but do not include explicit coding and syntax that are present in spoken language.

Both **production and perception of nonverbal behaviours** are considered to be key parts of the communication process.

Nonverbal communication, is the transfer of information from one person to another without the use of words or spoken language.

Nonverbal communication can occur in a variety of ways, including through facial expressions, gestures, and body posture or position.

3-Importance of Nonverbal Communication in Interaction

it's very important to understand how nonverbal messages impact our daily interpersonal interactions. In this section, we're going to discuss the role that nonverbal communication plays in our daily lives

The Role of Nonverbal communication in Everyday Life

We communicate nonverbally constantly. It's the primary way that we communicate with other people. In this section, we're going to explore the role that nonverbal communication plays in our day-to-day lives.

3-1-Nonverbal communication has Communicative Value

The meaning associated with nonverbal communication in any given interaction cannot be underestimated.

Example 01

to understand how to communicate with your friend you need to pay attention to Your friend's facial expression, way of standing, rate of speech, tone of voice, and general appearance, just to name a few, will indicate to you how you should respond.

If she is sobbing, gasping for air, hunched over, and appears emotionally pained, you might attempt to comfort her.

If she says, “I just have a serious argue with my mom” and sighs while placing her hand over her heart, she might appear relieved. Your response might be, “it seems like you may be a little relieved. Were things not going well?”

Thus, nonverbal communication plays a tremendous role in successfully engaging in interactions.

The successful use of nonverbal communication requires an awareness of the value of nonverbal communication and the belief that it is valuable.

When individuals are unaware of the importance of nonverbal communication, they may be overlooking crucial interactional information.

Example 02

For example, one of the authors of a book was once meeting with a colleague who was **repeatedly sighing** during a meeting. Later, when she and her colleague were discussing the meeting, he said, “**Didn’t you notice that I was sighing?**” She told him she **did notice that he was sighing, but she was unsure why.**

In this example, the author’s colleague was aware of the importance of nonverbal communication and attempted to use it deliberately.

In addition to awareness, individuals must believe that nonverbal communication is valuable. If your parent ever said to you, **“it wasn’t what you said, it was how you said it,”** then your parent was demonstrating a belief that nonverbal communication is essential.

3-2 Nonverbal communication Used for Relational Purposes

Nonverbal communication is an essential element in relating to others. It is often the very first way in which we invite a relationship with another, or, at the very least, invite communication. To communicate with another, we must make eye contact with a few exceptions.

We often use nonverbal communication to relay to others an interest in continuing a conversation or leaving a conversation.

Example 01

For example, you may run into a colleague and strike up a spontaneous conversation in the hall. The conversation is enjoyable, and you each relate to the other that you are enjoying conversing about work.

Your colleague may recognize that he needs to get to a meeting and relates this information to you by looking at his watch, beginning to back away, or looking at the door he needs to enter.

Another way in which we relate to others via nonverbal communication is through the **communication of emotion.**

Through a myriad of nonverbal behaviors, we can communicate emotions such as **joy, happiness, and sadness.**

The nonverbal expression of emotion allows others to know how to communicate with us.

3-3 Nonverbal communication is Ambiguous

A particularly challenging aspect of nonverbal communication is the fact that it is ambiguous.

Some were under the impression that we could use nonverbal communication to “read others like a book.”

Example 01

One of the friends remembers her cousin's wife telling her that she shouldn't cross her arms because it signaled to others that she was closed off.

It would be wonderful if crossing one's arms signaled one meaning, but think about the many meanings of crossing one's arms. An individual may have crossed arms because the individual is cold, upset, sad, or angry. It is impossible to know unless a conversation is paired with nonverbal behavior.

3-4 Nonverbal communication is Culturally Based

Just as we have discussed that it is beneficial to recognize the value of nonverbal communication, we must also acknowledge that nonverbal communication is culturally based.

Successful interactions with individuals from other cultures are partially based on the ability to adapt to or understand the nonverbal behaviors associated with different cultures.

There are two aspects to understanding that nonverbal communication is culturally based.

- The first aspect is recognizing that even if we do not know the appropriate nonverbal communication with someone from another culture, then we must at least acknowledge that there is a need to be flexible, not react, and ask questions.

- The second aspect is recognizing that there are specific aspects of nonverbal communication that differ depending on the culture. When entering a new culture, we must learn the rules of the culture.

Example 01

Patrick, was working in Afghanistan as a contractor on a military base. He was working with a man from Africa. During their first conversation, he held Patrick's hand. Patrick later told his sister, and said he wasn't sure how to respond, so he "just rolled with it."

Patrick's response allowed for the most flexibility in the situation and the best chance of moving forward productively. Imagine if he had withdrawn his hand quickly with a surprised look on his face. The outcome of the interaction would have been very different.

- Researching and understanding the nonverbal communication of different countries before entering the country can often mean a smoother entry phase, whether conducting business or simply visiting.

3-5-Attribution Error

is defined as the tendency to explain another individual's behavior in relation to the individual's internal tendencies rather than an external factor.

Example 01

For example, if a friend is late, we might attribute this failure to be on time as the friend being irresponsible rather than running through a list of external factors that may have influenced the friend's ability to be on time such as an emergency, traffic, read the time wrong, etc.

It is easy to make an error when trying to attribute meaning to the behaviors of others, and nonverbal communication is particularly vulnerable to attribution error.

3-6-Omnipresent

According to Dictionary.com, omnipresent is indicative of being everywhere at the same time. Nonverbal communication is always present. Silence is an excellent example of nonverbal communication being omnipresent.

Example 01

Have you ever given someone the “silent treatment?” If so, you understand that by remaining silent, you are trying to convey some meaning, such as “You hurt me” or “I’m really upset with you.” Thus, silence makes nonverbal communication omnipresent.

Another way of considering the omnipresence of nonverbal communication is to consider the way we walk, posture, engage in facial expression, eye contact, lack of eye contact, gestures, etc.

Example 01

Suppose you are walking across campus at a brisk pace. What might your pace be communicating?

Example 02

When sitting alone in the library working, your posture may be communicating something to others. If you need to focus and don't want to invite communication, you may keep your head down and avoid eye contact.

3-7- Can Form Universal Language

When discussing whether nonverbal communication is a universal language, caution must be used.

We must remember that understanding the context in which nonverbal communication is used is almost always necessary to understand the meaning of nonverbal communication.

3-8- Can Lead to Misunderstandings

Even if nonverbal misunderstandings can be humorous, these misunderstandings can affect **interpersonal as well as professional** relationships.

Sometimes, the meaning of nonverbal communication can be fairly obvious.

Most of the time a head nod in conversation means something positive such as agreement, “yes,” keep talking, etc. At other times, the meaning of nonverbal communication isn’t clear.

3-9- Usually Trusted

Despite the pitfalls of nonverbal communication, individuals typically rely on nonverbal communication to understand the meaning in interactions.

Communication scholars agree that the majority of meaning in any interaction is attributable to nonverbal communication.

It isn't necessarily true, but we are taught from a very early age that lack of eye contact is indicative of lying. We have learned through research that this "myth" is not necessarily true; this myth does tell a story about how our culture views nonverbal communication.

According to research, as much as 93% of meaning in any interaction is attributable to nonverbal communication. Albert Mehrabian asserts that this 93% of meaning can be broken into three parts

