



NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION: AN ABSOLUTE REFINEMENT TO THE VERBAL COMMUNICATION

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“It is the moral strength that enables us to cultivate higher virtues like purity of thought, purity of action in our personality and bestow us peace, harmony and prosperity” (Swami Vivekananda)

“He that has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his fingertips; betrayal oozes out of him at every single pore”

----(Sigmund Freud)

Objective:

The main aim of this paper is to yield the information about the Nonverbal Communication and its essence to the professional students in the view of their corporate life where they need to be employable merely with their skill both in verbal and nonverbal. The strategies of verbal communication like; presentations, discussions, extempore, seminars, conversations, interviews etc are required to work being a corporate employee. But all these strategies of word language can win the laurels when it is used combining with non-word language which means nonverbal language.

Introduction

Critics laud the brilliance of Shakespeare's imagination when he made his Romeo sing of Juliet: “She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that? Her eyes discourses, I will answer it” (Romeo and Juliet, p.40). They also cherish the Homeric elegance and Goethean beauty that sing in its voluminous pages the significance of the emotions that accompany the voices of their characters. However, it is not the beauty or the theatrically involved in nonverbal communication, but the very essentiality of the comprehension of the meaning that makes the nonverbal cues indispensable in the strategies of verbal communication. When the non verbal signal is understood, its message, paired with the lexicon context, makes the interpretation of the sender's meaning absolute. In fact, it is the nonverbal communication most of the people use nearly 75% of their waking hours to communicate



their knowledge, thoughts and ideas. *The social anthropologist Edward T. Hall claims, “60 percent of communication is nonverbal”*. If verbal communication deals with words, sentences and spoken expressions, nonverbal communication constitutes body movements, gestures, expressions etc. and it can be defined as ‘*communication that takes place without the use of words*’. Research suggests that nonverbal communication is more powerful than what people say. It is the term commonly used to refer to all the communication that occurs by means other than spoken and written words. The term nonverbal communication was coined in the 20th century and it includes many features such as; communication through touch and smell, clothing, marks as well as vocal features like; intonation, stress, speech rate, accent, and volume. It also refers to communication through body movements- facial expressions, gaze, pupil size, posture and interpersonal distance. It is defined in several ways:

- ❖ ‘It is the transmission of the messages by some medium other than speech or written’
- ❖ ‘It is the communication through any means other than words’
- ❖ It refers to all external stimuli other than the spoken or written records and that includes body motion, characteristics of voice, appearance and space distancing.
- ❖ It is the communication that uses nonlinguistic means to convey the message.
- ❖ It refers to the transfer of meaning by body language, space, time, and paralinguage.

Essence of Nonverbal Communication -as a *confidence building* and *creativity* in the aspect of Verbal Communication: Presentations, *Interviews, Conversations and Group Discussions*, Nonverbal Communication, which is classified as- Kinesics or Body Language, Proxemics or Space Language, Time Language, Paralinguage and Sign Language, gives vent something about the human relationship as the verbal language that conveys philosophy. Just as language uses sets of symbols to convey meaning, nonverbal communicator consciously or unconsciously carries messages, attitudes, moods, warmth, indifference, feelings and so on. All these feelings are inferred from body language- the face, eyes, gestures, postures and physical appearance. Each of its own function, they are guided by thought process, emotions and feelings. *According to Paul Ekman, “One can talk with one’s vocal cords, with one’s facial expressions, one’s tone of voice and whole bod”*.. Thus, understanding nonverbal communication has immense practical use.



Pertaining to the Oral Communication like; Presentations, *Interviews, Conversations and Group Discussions*, and Team presentations, nonverbal communication builds some confidence and creativity. It is quite instinctive in nature that indicates the attitude and feelings of the speaker. It is less deliberate and conscious as most of the expressions and gestures which are mostly unconscious. Spoken and written words are quite obvious and easy to see, listen, and understand, whereas nonverbal communication is subtle and it needs skill to be understood and expressed. It complements Verbal Communication and makes it more effective.

- i) **Kinesics**- as a refinement of Presentation skills and Public Speaking skills: Presentation is a formal face to face communication in which there is one individual facing a group. It is an audio or visual way of communication with an aim to deliver a message to the audience. Every presentation has to be made to mark an occasion. To such presentation, nonverbal communication is a refinement and accounts for over 90% of a conversation. Body language gives an impression to the audience and it shows presenter's emotions. Everyone has a different posture which may show how he or she will approach the situation in the presentation. A posture can convey a whole range of attitudes. The face is probably the single most important source of nonverbal communication. The presenter uses facial expressions to get his points across the right context. It is advisable to make a short frequent glance in presentation. Maintaining eye contact when presenting gives an impression that the presenter is confident and honest. A relaxed eye contact can make the audience to feel comfortable. As in the words of Helen Keller, "the eye is a window of the soul" (Three Days to See).
- ii) **Paralanguage or Vocal Elements** in a Presentation: Presenter's voice can serve as an important tool to support his or her verbal message. The presenter's vocal elements, namely; the tone, pitch and volume reflect his attitude about himself, his message and his audience. Some tips to help the presenter to use his vocal elements and to enhance the impact of his presentation are given below:



- Speaking with enthusiasm and sincerity and adjusting the volume of voice
- Avoiding disfluencies or vocalized pauses
- Using optimal pitch and avoiding fast delivery
- Using silence and effective pausing by articulating each word clearly

iii) **Important Nonverbal aspects of ‘Interview’:** Eye contact, Facial expressions, Posture, Gestures and Space are some important non verbal aspects that build confidence and creativity in the mind of an interviewee. Fail to maintain eye contact is lack of confidence and dishonest. As Shakespeare says, “One can smile and smile and be a villain”. A true and genuine smile indicates the interviewee’s delightfulness and enthusiasm towards the company. Postures send the signals of confidence and power potential. The best posture is to always be leaning forward slightly. Gestures should be very limited, sincere, natural, and meaningful during an interview. He should recognize the boundaries of his personal space and that of others. For most Americans, the space ranges between 30-36 inches. For most of Indians, merely the awareness of our personal space is enough to consciously prompt us to stand firm.

iv) **Nonverbal Cues in “Conversation”:** Non-verbal signals are often more important than the words expressed. Even more than words, non-verbal cues indicate the relationship among conversers. Social Psychologist Albert Mehrabian illuminated this matter by describing three dimensions of nonverbal signals that he or she gives off during conversation. Based on his research, he termed these dimensions as *Immediacy*, *Power* and *Responsiveness*. Using ‘silence’ during a conversation has the following advantages: It gives hearers time to think before responding, It shows respect for the speakers, It generates focus and concentration and It conveys deep feelings that words cannot express. However, The master conversationalist is one who is able to use silence as a powerful tool.



- v) **Non-verbal Factors in 'Group Discussion':** The Group Discussion is a personality test used to screen candidates after the written test. It is the part of oral communication. Its process includes the manner of expression, communication skills like oral and aural, body language. It primarily evaluates one's ability of interaction and one's behavior that is responsible for working co-ordination of group of individuals. The GD, through its process, evaluates the participant's dynamism rather than the contents of discussion.
- vi) **'Kinesics' and 'Paralanguage' skills for Group Discussions:** A posture of pushing body to the back of the chair keeps the participant alert. A posture of keeping hands on one's lap right indicates that the participant is logical. Keeping legs stationed firmly on the ground shows the participant's firm position. There are certain paralanguage skills yielded below:
- Articulation and Listening skills.
 - Innovativeness or ability to have an entirely different perspective
 - Logical ability and behavioral skills like; aggressiveness, assertiveness and nobility
- vii) **Space, Time and Sign Language techniques of Group Discussions:** In a group discussion, a group usually consists of 8 to 10 candidates. First candidate is nominated as a leader or coordinator to conduct the discussion. Normally 20 to 30 minutes time is given to complete the discussion. Each candidate is addressed by name or number. The seating is arranged in a circle or semicircle and the candidates are seated according to the numbers allotted to them. It is arranged in a semi-fixed feature space to make it easier to communicate.
- viii) **Oral Communication:** Paralinguistic Para' means 'alongside of' or 'having subsidiary relation to'. Paralanguage is used to refer to the study of non-verbal communication. Phoneticians consider non-vocal features which not included in a systematic study of



language to be paralinguistic. They include the study of breathy or creaky voice or giggling or nasalization, which accompanies speech to communicate meaning non-verbally. Still others consider stress, tone of voice; loudness and intonation to be the subject matter of paralinguistic features of English language which are helpful to make oral communication effective. It is purely a non-verbal communication. There are many paralinguistic features such as duration, nasalization, loudness, and stress. According to Vandana Khetarpal, "No oral message is complete without paralinguistic". The major function of paralinguistic is to express various emotions solely. It gives some useful clues regarding the speaker's mental status through his voice. Speaker's voice quality, intonation and speaking speed make his speech easy for the receiver of the message how best to deal with him.

'Word stress, Intonation and Fluency' in Oral Communication

"A greater effort on a syllable or syllables in a word or a longer utterance than on the other syllables", as O'Connor said. Word stress is an essential part of the word shape. Stress may change the meaning of the speech. Placing of stress on the right syllable is very essential in English. Every word has a certain characteristic accentual pattern. No one can learn the pronunciation of an English word without learning its stress. Therefore, it should be very carefully marked either on a word or a sentence. Putting stress on right place is essential for *intelligibility, understanding, comprehension and checking of wrong parts of speech.*

Intonation is the name given to some patterns of speech which results from variation of pitch. "It is the patterns of pitch on word groups which give information about the speaker's feelings", According to J.D.O'Connor. It conveys attitudes of the speaker. The speaker and the listener are rightly turned to each other by an effective use of information patterns. There are four intonation patterns in English given in the below tabular form:

Intonation	Pitch fluctuations	Feelings to convey
↘ 'Falling'	'high level to a low level'	<i>casualness, aloofness, lack of interest, anger, dissatisfaction, finality, threat, command, casual</i>



		<i>questioning, exclamations and contrastive</i>
↗ 'Rising'	' low level to high level'	<i>interest, involvement, politeness, courtesy, surprise, encouragement and other positive feelings</i>
'Falling-Rising'	↘↗	<i>doubt or reservation and polite enquiries</i>
Rising-Falling	↗↘	Enthusiastic <i>encouragement, wonder, appreciation</i> and other strong positive emotions.

Effective oral communication is often the result of *fluency* which means two things: speaking readily; and speaking smoothly. Ready speech is the gift of mastery of language that includes command of vocabulary, grammar and usage. Smooth speech is the result of a mastery of the paralinguistic features of *stress, intonation and pause*.

Conclusion

Communication is of both verbal and non-verbal. Oral communication which is a part of verbal communication is imperfect incase of its coordination with nonverbal language. This paper stresses the importance of non-verbal communication and its strategic features such as *Kinesics or Body Language, Proxemics or Space Language, Time Language, Paralanguage* and *Sign Language* to deal with the oral communication effectively. It also shows how the factors of non-verbal communication build confidence to the speaker in the view of presentations, interviews, conversations, discussions which are the patterns of placement examinations in the private as well as the public sector. Different nonverbal aspects and their essence for oral communication are highlighted. No oral message is complete without paralanguage features like; word stress, intonation and fluency.



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