



English Nonverbal Expressions in Communication

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Abstract: Humans send messages not only with the help of words, but they can also convey meaning through the usage of facial expressions, eye contact, body language, hand gestures and tone of voice all of which we know as nonverbal communication. It involves all those nonverbal stimuli in a communication setting that are generated by both the source and his or her use of the environment, and that have potential message value for the source and receiver [1, P-271]. To put it simply, nonverbal communication is the widely the use of wordless messages in generating meaning. Nonverbal expressions can be exemplified by head movements, facial expressions, eyes, voice, smell, gestures, postures, body movements, clothing, touching, personal space, environment, time and cultural context.

Literal review. It is worth stating that the nonverbal messages and the responses for them differ from culture to culture. It happens because what might be a clear message in one culture may turn up to be a confusion in another. To illustrate this, in parts of Bulgaria and Greece, nodding means no, while in parts of the former Yugoslavia and southern India, shaking the head signifies yes [2, P-109]. This significant difference leads to a failure of communication. Unawareness of it even causes unintended meaning or the opposite of intention. Nodding by someone is an example where nodding means “yes” in a culture where it means “no”.

In Uzbek conversation, people tend to nod to when they agree with the speaker. If people do not nod to the speaker, the Uzbek may think they disagree. The expression of disagreement in Uzbek conversation is usually a head shake. We know whether people are listening friendly by their nonverbal and paraverbal feedback, such as smiling, nodding and their grunts “mmm...” “hmm...”, “o`x xo`...” and so on. In other words, it is back channeling that is understood as our reply to a speaker in conversation with nodding, smiling and the like.

In addition, eyes are described as portals of soul in some literatures showing crucial messages. In many Asian, African and Latin American cultures, extended eye contact can be taken as an affront or challenge of authority [3]. Actually, looking directly in the eyes of someone may be a symbol of sincerity and failure of eye contact in communication refers to insincerity, lack of confidence or disinterest in most cultures. Some cultures show respect by averting their eyes. However, in other cultures, you find a listener looking directly at the speaker to show their respect and attention.

Research and Methodology. Direct gaze is understood differently. Euro-American, Saudi Arabian, Korean and Thai people tend to regard a direct gaze as desirable characteristic indicating openness and honesty. Conversely, an averted gaze can be construed as suggesting dishonesty or shiftiness. In other cultures, however, such as Japanese, Mexican, West African and Puerto Rican, direct eye contact may be considered rude, while an averted gaze indicates respect [4, P-86]. As it can be seen, eye contact undoubtedly varies across cultures. Westerners apply eye contact in order to regulate communication.

When it comes to the discussion about voice, we need to hereby mention the study of paralinguage. Paralinguistic changes may modify the meaning of words we use. These changes include differences in pitch, inflection, emphasis, volume, nasality and articulation. We emphasize some words and also de-emphasize others when we need to convey the meaning of what we say: “Who, me? Oh, no, never”.

A new branch of linguistics, the study of nonverbal speech is also based on paralinguistics. The term paralinguistic was coined by the american linguist A.Hill in 1940 [5, P-267]. Nonverbal communication can be an example for the field of paralinguistic study. Phonetic units, facial expressions, gestures and others are directly used to facilitate communication. They all have importance in communication since they impact on the listener and communication. For instance, intonation and pause are also crucial.

The study of English nonverbal behaviour is usually traced to Darwin’s work “Expression of the emotions in man and Animal” [6, P-479]. A.Luria noted that in the age of humanity, the process of communication took place without sounds. It is possible to think that the first communication appeared in the process of active work, in which communication was the result of gestures related to the same activity and it was understood only by the participants of that process of activity [7, P-134]. In other words, the specific use of gestures without sounds made it difficult for those who were not involved in communication process. Paralingual aspects of communication are sometimes even more elusive and prone to misunderstanding than gestures. Grunts and silences are subtle cultural conventions that may be used in conjunction with other utterances or gestures that reinforce them, or do not reinforce them [8, P-33].

Analysis and Results. By interruption and silence, we can find out much about what is happening while people are communicating. It should be paid attention to analyze explicitly because of being hard to observe when compared with body language. Even they may seem morphemes to a non-native speaker who may take offense perceiving uncertainty as well as hesitation. Silence means embarrassment for Americans, it is empty space in time [9, P-99].

Hayakawa [10, P-79] noted that silence refers to be left alone. For instance, silence is regarded as rude action by the American people who do not like silent treatment. Even they may feel discomfort if there is silence at mealtimes. On the other hand, a talk at mealtimes is not the case in Uzbek culture. Besides, the Uzbek tend to pause for a few seconds before answering a question in order to show that they reflected upon the question and response. On the contrary, in many Western countries silence is a void that must be filled. If people do not immediately answer a question, speaker may think that they do not know the answer.

S. Muminov believed that if there is a it long silence and pause in Uzbek communication, it may cause some misunderstandings between the Uzbek participants [11, P-87]. Actually, it is seen strangely to keep a long silence as it is typical of the Uzbek to be more sociable in conversation. However, it is a normal case in English communication. So there is the difference between English and Uzbek character. Though the English have have a bit cold character, they prefer keeping waiting and silence to speaking about unnecessary or unimportant things.

That said, it is possible the British are still less emotional than other nationalities. A poll of more than 2500 Britons, conducted in 2007 by the Social Issues Research Centre in Oxford, revealed that fewer than 20% of Brits claimed to have “let it all out” in the past 24 hours, even though 72% of them believed that bottling emotions up is bad for your health. And 19% of those surveyed revealed they could not remember the last time they let their emotions fly [12].

As Poyatos has observed, people who are more expressive kinetically, like Latins, arabs or Mediterraneans in general, tend to use paralinguistic imitations in situations in which, for instance, we see English speakers utilize with great precision a legitimate onomatopoeic verb or noun from the particularly rich repertoire of their native tongue [13, P-186]. In short, if people are physically expressive, in that case, it is typical of them to rely more on paralinguistic behaviour, whereas those who are less physically demonstrative tend to rely more on linguistic expression.

The volume we use when we speak can indicate boldness, timidity, confidentiality or other states of mind [14, P-293]. Apart from that, we can also change volume if our physical distance requires. Also, it is dependent on our private and public conditions. Without doubt, we admit that there are crucial cultural variations in voice volume as well.

We tend to pitch our voices higher when we are dealing with people we know. We may pitch our voice lower as a warning signal, or out of defensiveness, when we speaking to people we do not know; although we sometimes lower the pitch along with the volume when we wish to establish more intimate communication with someone we like [15, P-17]. Besides, interruptions also depend on gender and listening behaviour according to Schefflen [16, P-66], Dunbar [17, P-144] and Burgoon [18, P-302] who believe that men are more likely to interrupt women than vice-versa. Interruption refers to dominance, power and submission as well. As Hall notes, in some societies, perfumes and deodorants are frowned on because they mask the natural odours of the body, which are seen as sending messages and states of mind [19, P-198]. Further, it is an interesting fact that ambient fragrances in shops attract customers and increases the possibility that they return.

Additionally, people tend to feel necessity for touching. Haptics is concerned with the study of the touch and it also gives information about human behaviour. According to Heslin and Apler, touch is classified into the following types:

1. Functional/professional
2. Social/polite
3. Friendship/warmth
4. Love/intimacy [20, P-47].

Type 1 or type 2 is most commonly used by professional touchers whose job is a doctor, nurse, dentist, physiotherapist, masseur, manicurist and hairdresser. Probably a handshake is considered as the most common form of professional touching. A handshake which is the western habit is intertionally accepted. Nonetheless, demonstrative gestures, such as kissing or embracing must be approached considering culture.

Conclusion. It can be summarized that messages are sent by the use of words as well as through the facial expressions, eye contact, body language, hand gestures and tone of voice. Nonverbal communication serves to generate and convey meaning. The purpose of using nonverbal expressions is to modify the spoken word, replace verbal expression when there is an appropriate situation to tell, express emotions, interpersonal attitudes, enhance the overall message and so on. As it is seen viewed the nonverbal messages and their responses are undoubtedly rooted in culture which mean that the English also make use of nonverbal expressions during conversation. The examples show that a vivid message in English culture might be a confusing in another, such as Uzbek causing unintended meaning.

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