

Communicating without Words

The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said.

—PETER DRUCKER

Communication, the breath and soul of human existence, is dynamic but a complex process. When we communicate, we express our feelings and emotions, share information, seek advice and also give numerous pieces of advice to people who seek the same from us. All these are done with the help of words, as they are the representative of our ideas. But think for a while, do we always communicate with words alone? No. On numerous occasions we communicate without words. Just think of the other day when you went to meet your professor after being absent from his class for a week. The professor looked at you but didn't say a thing. Didn't you realize that his eyes were stern and he was very angry? He hardly said a thing, yet he communicated his anger. Sometimes you see a person who instead of speaking uses his hands, fingers, and tries to describe things by making certain gestures. He is speech impaired and it is difficult initially to understand what he is trying to communicate. Yet with time and long association you can understand what he is trying to say. The speech-impaired person you come across is also living his life though with certain hitches.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

You might have read in the history books that human beings, before the introduction of words, used to express their feelings with the help of gestures and postures. They used their bodies to communicate. They gritted their teeth to show anger, grinned to display their happiness and touched one another to exhibit affection. You have also read previously that communication can be both written and spoken. The history of language reveals that the written form of communication developed much later than the spoken form. Language became more refined with the passage of time when the notion of correctness, i.e. grammar came into being. The importance of words gained more prominence when the signs and symbols showed the speaker's moods and intentions.

Communication with the use of words (either written or spoken) is called **verbal communication**. Communication without the use of words or speech is called **non-verbal communication**. This chapter will deal with non-verbal communication. You have read in Chapters 1 and 2 that we can communicate without the use of words also. But one often wonders how communicating without words can be considered successful. Sigmund Freud had said,

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

Non-verbal communication occupies important place in human life. Since we keep communicating throughout the day, we don't use words always. Sometimes, we use body movements to strengthen or lessen the impact of our message. But on many occasions, we don't do so consciously. Since our body plays an important role in the framing of a message, the underlying emotions are easily stamped while conveying the information.

Non-verbal communication involves various features, and it appears through the signals given by the ambience. These signals are non-verbal cues, which on most of the occasions speak louder than words. Non-verbal communication differs from verbal communication as it:

- is less structured.
- has no vocabulary.
- has no books.
- is more spontaneous.
- is more reliable.

Non-verbal communication doesn't follow any fixed structure. The response to a piece of good news can be expressed by giving a small smile, whereas sometimes by evoking a whole-hearted laughter. No doubt, your reactions also depend on the audience with whom you are sharing such news. Non-verbal communication doesn't go by theories. The meaning of non-verbal cues can have different connotations in different communities, states or nations. The nod that means acquiescence in one culture, may mean denial in other. Also these cues are infinite in number. It may either overlap or contradict one another. While talking to a foreigner, avoid using any non-verbal cues whose specific meaning you are unaware of. Keeping cultural clashes apart, non-verbal cues are more spontaneous and reliable. The feelings of anger or irritation, expressions of delight or despair, despite our effort to control them appear clearly on our face.

Most of us, either at our workplaces or in our offices, pay more attention to non-verbal cues than we do to words. While asking for a make up test for the missed test, you look more at the face of the professor than on the piece of paper. The police officer while interrogating a criminal looks into the latter's eyes and the mother too concentrates at the child's mien when inquiring about his misbehaviour. We have

more faith in the message conveyed by non-verbal cues sometimes, than we have in words.

Researchers also reveal that more messages are conveyed by non-verbal cues than by words. Ray Birdwhistell, an eminent scholar of body dynamics, is of the view that 35% of our messages are carried verbally and 65% non-verbally. Albert Mehrabian makes it more clear by considering 7% as verbal, 38% as vocal and 55% non-verbal. All these suggest that more messages are generally conveyed and interpreted non-verbally.

In written communication, punctuation marks convey the message left out by words. But in oral communication, body movements, gestures, postures, voice, environment, time, space and vocal characteristics convey more than words do. Various non-verbal cues can be studied under different categories. Studies suggest that there are 700,000 forms of non-verbal communication. It is difficult to interpret all of them. They can be grouped in the following categories:

1. Kinesics
2. Proxemics
3. Chronemics
4. Paralanguage
5. Haptics
6. Metacommunication

KINESICS

We have read that formulation of any message takes place in our mind. Any idea which becomes a message has to be approved by our willingness and attitude. While conveying or receiving a message, parts of our body also get activated. Sometimes readily and at other times unknowingly. Thus, the role of our bodily action in communication becomes essential. Remember the first time when you were asked to

make a speech, the way your limbs trembled and voice shook. It was your principal who noticed and said, "Don't be nervous".

Our body keeps giving indications of emotions which we can feel and others can see. The movements of our body can be studied under *kinesics*. Ray Birdwhistell coined the term 'kinesic'. According to him, kinesics is the science that analyses the movements of our bodily organs. Birdwhistell observed: all movements of the body have meaning. None are accidental.

As body language reveals the innermost feelings of human beings, it is emitted from every part of our body. You can at times hide some of your emotions but this can't be possible in every situation. A careful observer rarely fails to detect the deception, cleverness or betrayal, however hard the other person tries to overcome or control it. Body language or kinesics consists of appearance, eyes, posture and gesture.

Appearance

There is a famous saying that "appearances are deceptive". Let us analyse this adage. Those who make use of their facial expressions often deceive their listeners for their own advantages. Since your face speaks even before your words, it can convey emotions of all sorts. Much of your sincerity or gratitude, love or dislike appear visible on your face. Imagine your first impression of the speaker who comes to deliver a speech. You often tend to judge the speaker on the basis of his dress, shoes, hair and even the colour of the suit. All these comprise his bearing and background. A look of weariness or anger on his face makes the listeners lose interest in what the speaker wants to convey.

Both as a speaker and a listener, your facial expression can affect communication. A speaker with a positive expression, such as smile on face, formal dress and other required accessories for the occasion can win the crowd and make a propitious impact on them. Likewise, a negative expression from the crowd may make the speaker realize that he has failed to create interest in them. Hence, careful speakers

work hard to ensure that their facial expressions engage the attention of the crowd and pay rich dividends. In most formal situations, such as addressing a gathering, attending a meeting, job interviews and also in your daily life, appearance plays a vital role.

Eyes

Eyes are an essential ingredient of your appearance. Your eyes mirror your heart and conceal your mind. A favourable glance at someone may be enticing whereas an angry look may unnerve others. While making a conversation, delivering a speech or a presentation, an eye contact with the receivers makes you accountable or responsible to them. Nobody likes a speaker who buries himself in his notes or is lost behind the screen. Your eyes help in establishing a rapport with your listeners and ensuring credibility of their words. Another advantage of eye contact is to get the feedback of your lecture or speech. You should all remember that in many countries and cultures, you have to follow certain norms about eye contact. Studies reveal that in the USA, even a positive message tends to become negative if delivered with averted eyes. As eyes are meant to arouse attention, interest, influence and interaction, you should always make them a useful weapon to convey meaning. Avoid gazing unnecessarily and restrict aggressive facial expressions. Whether speaking formally or informally, you should look at your listeners to help them understand your message and change your stance in the case of any incomprehension.

Gesture

Gesture is another aspect of body language. Not only our face and eyes but the movement of other parts of our body, such as hands, arms, head and shoulders have a vital role to play in communication. Imagine a dancer who moves her arms and makes various corresponding movements to convey the intended meaning by nodding her head and patterning her shoulders. In verbal communication too, the

movement of these body parts become obligatory. You can, at times, express voluntary and involuntary messages through the use of gestures. Although gestures are natural, careful professionals use it to get desired results. People practising martial arts and even theatre artists get special training to use specific gestures to symbolize specific effects. We use our hands to indicate or point to something, raise them to say hello, wave to say good bye, etc. You often stretch your hands outwards to express comfort but squeeze them to show discomfort and restlessness. An orator uses clenched fists to locate something and also to use numbers. There are many other gestures which at times can give negative meaning. You should make a conscious effort to use gestures to convey the appropriate meaning. At the same time, one should avoid displaying negative gestures. Table 11.1 will help you understand the implications of gestures, both positive and negative. See Figure 11.1.

Table 11.1 Gestures, their Meaning and Effects

Gestures	Meaning	Effects
Looking at the watch frequently	Restlessness	Negative
Looking at the roof	Unable to face the crowd	Negative
Playing with buttons of the shirt	Unease	Negative
Biting nails	Nervousness	Negative
Leaning towards the speaker/listener	Enthusiasm	Positive
Nodding head at times	Agreeing	Positive
Playing with keyrings	Too nervous	Negative
Wringing hands at times/cracking knuckles	Reluctance	Negative
Smiling at times	Friendliness	Positive

Walking briskly while speaking	Restlessness	Negative
Wiping forehead	Unease	Negative

Though gestures have nearly the same meaning in many countries, yet there are some which are culture and context specific. The meaning of one gesture in a particular country may be completely different in another country. Tapping one's head in Brazil indicates thinking process while it stands for 'crazy' in other places. Likewise, tapping the nose means 'keep it secret' in Britain whereas it is a warning signal in Italy. Britishers hiss to show extreme disapproval but hissing is symbolical of social deference among Japanese. You should take some time to learn the implications of particular gestures and then use them if you are in a foreign country.

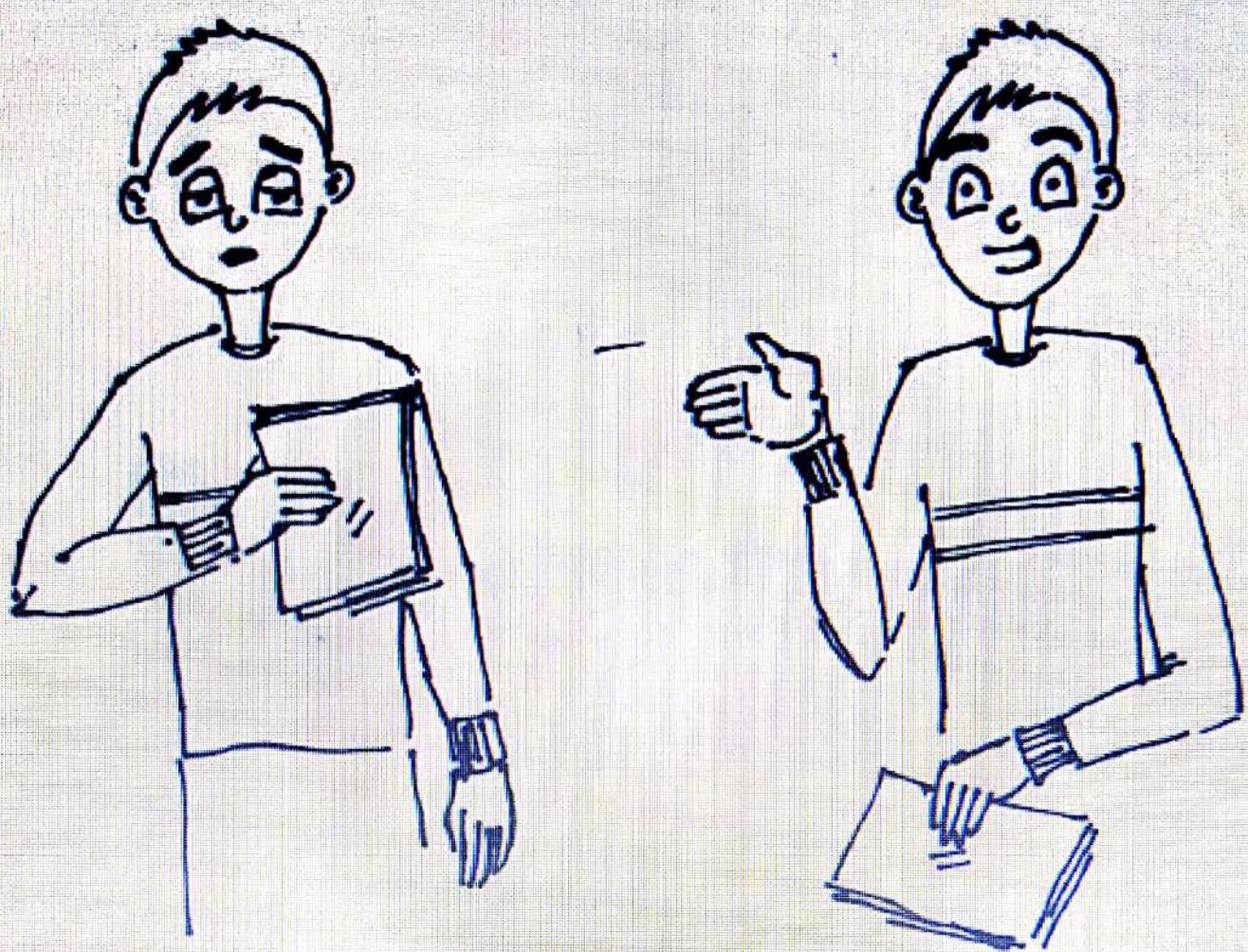


Figure 11.1 Different gestures.

Posture

Like gesture, posture, too, has its importance in communication. Posture, basically, is the positioning of your legs while standing or sitting. For every occasion a

particular posture is appropriate. While praying, one needs to stand carefully as in attention or sit with the back straight. When attending a meeting you ought to sit properly. Your nervousness or confidence can get displayed in an interview by the way you sit. Likewise, while participating in a group discussion you show your active or inert participation by your sitting or bending posture. A speaker often tends to lean forward with one foot positioned in front of the other while delivering a speech. But his reclining on the lectern or pulling away his back often reflects his lack of interest in the subject and his listeners. Being too close to the microphone and sagging your shoulder may symbolize your morbidity and distract the attention of the crowd. The ideal way is to walk sprightly to the dais when called, and ensuring a relaxed feeling by changing your posture only when the need becomes so imperative. The frequent change of postures may lead people to dig more meanings than conveyed and, hence, ought to be regulated.

You are often faced with the challenge of either standing straight or walking. In many cases we either walk too much or too less. Remember, this is obviously an indication of mental disposition. The ideal posture is to ensure a proper balance of your body weight in consonance with the impression you want to convey. When you stand straight and balance your weight on both the feet, you reflect control and poise. Such a position allows you to have a proper control over your audience, and also helps in establishing a rapport with them.

Walking during an oral presentation has its undeniable role. Both the speaker and the audience can benefit from walking. As a speaker, walking allows him to be natural. While the audience gets some relief as they concentrate on the speaker. They can move their eyes saving themselves from looking in a particular direction all the time. Walking may, to a great extent, help a speaker in hiding his anger, frustration or boredom. But care ought to be taken as to how much one should be walking while giving a presentation. Walking too much or a military march is also negative. Proper practice and handling audience of all kinds will help you regulate your postures with perfection. See Figure 11.2.

PROXEMICS

Proxemics is the study of nearness or distance in a communication scenario. The word 'proxemics' has been derived from proximity which means the state of being near or distant. An important aspect of non-verbal communication, proxemics deals with the amount of space we usually occupy or demonstrate while communicating. Imagine yourself to be in a crowded place and you desire to feel free. Think of being in a crowded bus when a stranger slightly touching you seems to anger you. Do you know why it happens? All of us want some amount of space around ourselves. This space is our own. We consider it to be our treasure. But while communicating, the use of this space conveys some meaning. Careful communicators use 'space' with desired effect. But all of us are not aware of this space. As a result, we often violate the different space zones.

In communication, the use of space signifies relationships. When communicating with friends, parents or close relatives there is not much space between them and you. But you always leave more space while communicating with your teachers, elders and seniors. Also you usually maintain more space when communicating with strangers and outsiders. Imagine when you open your door to a stranger and simply ask "whom do you want?" You feel threatened and maintain a distance between the individual and you. But in the case of a familiar face, you not only open the door of your house but also allow him to enter. It is the kind of relationship that makes you decide the amount of space you should leave while communicating.

We usually violate spaces in crowded situations, such as in a bus, train, ticket counters and cinema houses. But in different contexts and cultures, space is interpreted in a variety of ways. As human beings, we ought to respect each other's space. The veteran American anthropologist, Edward T. Hall, who coined the word 'proxemics' classified the spatial needs into four zones:

1. Intimate zone
2. Personal zone
3. Social zone
4. Public zone

Intimate zone, as the name suggests, is an area where people having close relationships are allowed. The distance in this zone is less and may at times allow people to touch each other. In this zone, people of the inner family circle, close relatives, lovers and parents are allowed, and they are exposed to each other's body odour, breath or touch, etc. Intimate zone ranges from 6 to 18 inches. When you invade a person's intimate zone, you tend to offend him and at times it may lead to unnecessary hassles.

Personal space zone is the zone which a person feels to be his own. This zone ranges from 18 inches to 4 feet, and allows people to interact with each other not in a whisper but in a low tone of voice. People in this zone are friendly but not intimate, comfortable but not too close. Friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc. come under this zone. You can often find people during social functions, parties maintaining their personal space and keeping each other at arm's length.

Social zone is the area we usually maintain with people whom we don't know personally but know socially. This zone ranges from 4 to 10 feet. While interacting with postman, shopkeeper, milkman or your new colleague and with many people known to you formally, this zone is maintained. While interacting with people, you have to maintain some amount of formality without causing any inconvenience or discomfort to them. An executive while interacting with his clients or customers maintains this distance to ensure his superiority and preserve his privacy.

Public zone is the farthest and the widest gap maintained between the speaker and the listener. The speaker in this zone addresses a huge gathering from a raised platform and usually uses a microphone. Since the number of audience is unlimited,

the speaker gets a better view of the public and feels more protected. The distance ranges from 10 to 15 feet between the speaker and the audience. This zone restricts the audience to raise doubts or queries, and protects the speaker from clarification. Communication in this zone is often one way and the speaker has less control over the crowd. The chances of violation in this zone are less. But at times violation of public zone has led to disastrous consequences.

CHRONEMICS

In communication, it is not only words and actions that communicate. Imagine how your professor behaved with you once when you had reached late to his class. Also consider telling somebody about his unkempt hair in the midst of a meeting. It is only later that you realize it was not the right time or place to tell your friend about his hair and dress style. Time is an important feature of communication. People judge you on the basis of how much importance you attach to time. Many people have succeeded because they have used time dexterously. Chronemics is the study that tells how human beings utilize time while communicating. Time reflects our sincerity and our punctuality. It can hint at a person's devotion and dedication to his job or assignment. In many organizations, executives appreciate completion of a job within the stipulated period. While completing a task before the deadline may sometimes be considered lack of sincerity and also not serious towards one's work. But this is not true always. It may vary from individual to individual. A person determined to submit assignments only after several reminders may also give the hint of his being overburdened or feigned seriousness.

The importance of time has much to do in a professional world. The growth of an organization too depends largely on the importance given to time. Even if you verbally convey a positive message, if not properly planned, the result will be negative. It is only time that has made many of our old practices redundant and new ones significant. All you require in a professional world is timeliness. A right drive at

a right time may bring laurels, whereas an untimely initiative may evoke harsh criticism. Think of talking about your raise in salary when your boss is having an important meeting. Such a gesture may be labelled ill-mannered. Instead raising the same matter after office hours when the boss is relaxed may give favourable results. In many cases, busy executives use time to assert authority. You can come across various situations where people are made to wait for long time outside an official's room. This gives the visitor some clue about the official's position and importance. Edward T. Hall has rightly said, "Time talks and space speaks."

Time language also differs from one country to another. In many countries, such as Scandinavia or Germany, punctuality brings admiration and delay shows less concern. Latin American countries allow meetings to begin after appointed hours. Whatever the interpretation, in a country as ours, punctuality is not only admired but most often rewarded. As individuals, you ought to respect time and that will pay you rich dividends.

PARALANGUAGE

All forms of communication is language, whether spoken or written. When we speak sentences, we not only use words but also attach intended meaning to certain words. There goes a famous saying, *Words don't have meaning; we attach meaning to them.* No doubt, while sending intended meaning to a particular unit/part of a sentence, the shared assumption and common background can't be ignored. But the majority of people extract meaning on the basis of something other than words. It is more often than not that the delivery part of a spoken communication gets more prominence. When you speak a sentence, you attach specific meaning by the way you deliver it. The same sentence spoken differently may evoke different responses. The amount of pitch, the rate of delivery and the loudness help in imparting meaning to the sentence.

Paralanguage is a kind of action language. It involves tone of voice, hesitations or

speed of speech, and variations of language other than the actual words. A qualitative voice involves a proper blend of force, pitch, rate and quality. Force or volume signifies the energy or amplitude of the sound.

There is no such fixed rule about volume though. But whatever you speak should be audible to your audience. You can always raise or lower your volume depending on the number of people attending the presentation and the acoustics of the room. Likewise, you should keep in mind the background of the listeners while determining the rate. Nobody would appreciate a speaker who either speaks too fast or too slow. The ideal way is to speak in a conversational tone, which allows you to pronounce words clearly and effectively.

Another important paralinguistic feature is the application of pitch while speaking. It can be understood by making an analogy with musical notes. Too high a scale usually becomes thin and tight. You can also experience people speaking in high pitch often during moments of anger and stress, and in low pitch being despaired. The role of electro-chemical reaction in the tightening of our muscles and affecting our vocal chords can't be ignored. We tend to mispronounce certain words when speaking rapidly. Fast delivery reflects our nervousness. Moreover, we also lose control over our audience. Instead, a proper synergy of rate, pitch and volume can work wonders.

The quality of voice is also important. But not all people have pleasant voices. Though a god-gifted attribute, the quality of voice can be improved by proper training. There are many instances where people who despite having shortcomings in relation to voice became successful speakers and orators by proper training. In addition to force, pitch, rate and quality of voice, careful speakers utilize proper timing of pauses in their speech. A timely pause is a meaningful investment. It helps the speaker in indicating what is to come next in the speech. The tone and tenor of our voice often become a victim of circumstances and we often become losers because of our excessive emotional outbursts. A careful speaker reaps the advantages of these paralinguistic features, which a casual speaker ignores. You should always

remember that your language habits not only exhibit your background, it also affects the background of your audience.

To say that a speech is faulty or defective, we should keep in mind what a highly respected speech therapist, Charles Van Riper said:

Speech is defective when it deviates so far from the speech of the other people that it calls attention to itself, interfere with communication or causes its possessor to be maladjusted.

Charles Van Riper, *Speech Correction*, 5th edition, Englewood cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1972, p. 29.

But more often than not the fault in the speech is not only because of a defect in voice, but also due to a shortcoming in our personality. Quality of voice can be improved and our voice is affected because of our resistance to change or our morbid nature at times. Another expert in voice and diction training, Virgil A. Anderson makes quite a significant remark:

Bluntly stated, one may have a dull, uninteresting, or unpleasant voice because his voice is defective or improperly used, but he may also have such a voice because he is dull, uninteresting or unpleasant person.

Virgil A. Anderson, *Training the Speaking Voice* (New York: OUP, 1942, p. xvii.)

HAPTICS

Haptics is the study of touch behaviour in communication. It is an important vehicle for expressing intimacy, warmth, comfort and discomfort. Imagine the impact of a mother's touch on her child. It obviously gives the child a reassurance and the mother a sense of possession. But while communicating you can't touch all and sundry. It may be like invading somebody's personal freedom and intruding on one's

privacy. Even the most casual touch may generate positive feelings.

Touching may be misinterpreted in different contexts. You might have felt encouraged during your school days when patted on shoulder by your teacher. But as you grow in years you may not like people touching you. Though indicating warmth, it may invite wrath also at times. There are strict regulations about who can touch whom in organizational structures but you can always keep yourself away from the imbroglio by avoiding to touch your colleagues and subordinates. The norm of touching also varies from one culture to another. Cultural studies reveal different signals being sent while touching different parts of the body. You can notice how a common phenomenon in the West may become a debatable issue in a more orthodox country. Men and women in India don't walk publicly holding each other's hand as is done frequently in the West. Two males walking hand in hand in India may be attributed as normal while it may be viewed as a dubious relationship in West. You can still find a lady hesitant while shaking hands with a male in a traditional setup, whereas it is quite common in Western countries.

METACOMMUNICATION

We all know when communicating, at times, we are not able to say all that we had intended to. Sometimes a few things are left because of the structural pattern or due to unusual circumstances. You may often come across situations where you neither want to hurt somebody's sentiments nor want to applaud the other in high flying words. There are times when you want to say more or less than the words you use. All these can be studied under metacommunication which as the word itself implies 'beyond communication'. It entails implied meaning, which may be intentional or unintentional. Many literary devices come under this category. You can come across examples of metacommunication even in your day-to-day conversations. For example, if somebody says "you look well dressed today" may also mean that the person dresses shabbily on other days. Likewise, if someone says "his teacher was good", it may also imply that the teacher was not impressive but quite an average

one.

People use metacommunication sometimes either to be on a safer side or hide what exactly they think. But while using words, you have to be quite careful. Scrupulous speakers often use neutral words to serve their purpose without belling the cat. To get the meaning in the metacommunication, both the speaker and the listeners have to pay due attention to the position of words in the sentences or expressions.

SILENCE AS COMMUNICATION

Many people treat silence also as a form of communication. As already stated, communication involves shared assumptions and unspoken agreements between individuals and teams. Not all words in a communication have equal effect. Some words are more important than others. And it depends wholly on the sender to choose the words according to the needs of the occasion. We have a number of methods at our disposal by which we can emphasize a word or a phrase. For example, italics in the printed page, bullets, indentations and so forth. Though the heavy usage of technical devices has eroded the value of punctuation marks in written communication where dashes, dots and hyphens chartered the surreptitious sentiments of the sender. The reflection of these then becomes vital through vocal nuances.

Vocal characteristics are inevitably important in an oral communication. Oral presentations comprise verbal and non-verbal messages. They differ widely from written communication. A successful oral presentation requires more of performance than of competence of the speaker. Albeit the content of the presentation is an asset, the way it is delivered gets an upper hand most often.

Sending verbal messages doesn't imply one should keep talking all the time. Strong messages and impressions are conveyed even without making any sound. Pauses and silence during presentations, conversations, interviews and speeches can be of great value. Most of us, whether we agree or not, show signs of nervousness

while being interviewed for a new position or when giving a business presentation. If we take time to rehearse before we actually act, then we will appear confident and our interview or presentation will go well. More often than not nervousness propels us to talk faster than normal. Sometimes, inexperienced speakers tend to speak too softly.

A successful communication is one that tends to put forth the idea successfully to the majority of the audience. As Anne Morrow Lindbergh puts it, "Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after". The comprehension of the audience depends on the vocal emphasis of the speaker. It is here that the beauty and blend of silence and pauses equate in an oral presentation. Silence and pauses give a respite to both the sender and the receiver.

When we speak too fast, we either tend to mispronounce or speak wrong. In such predicaments we tend to find ourselves using filler sounds such 'um', 'er', 'fine', 'you know', 'right'. We are also found making frequent use of question tags seeking confirmation either from ourselves or from our listeners. The more nervous we are, the faster we talk and the more fillers we use. There is always a way to come out of such critical moments. One should remember that it is not only the words, which convey the message rather it is also how we deliver the words to facilitate the understanding of our listeners.

Non-words

As we are careful when selecting words to speak, so we should be aware of our 'non-words'. They usually appear when we are not too sure of what we want to say. If we use too many of the non-words, our listeners start doubting our credibility.

In language, there is a provision for space. It always exists between words and phrases, between clauses and sentences sound clusters and threads of thoughts. It is not necessary to fill up these spaces with meaningless synapses. Further, if one is constantly making sounds, one deprives himself of the tranquil time to reflect about what one is trying to convey. This time can be utilized in putting brakes if the

speaker gets off-track.

Silent time is thinking time. Silence provides a way to pace and punctuate our presentation. We all have the license to be quiet. The listeners don't find themselves in conformity with speakers who make too much noise. It becomes difficult for the audience to follow the train of thoughts. The use of a great many non-words creates a distraction or worse an annoyance. Going a little bit off the track but still showcasing the importance of silence, this quotation of Adrienne Rich is of great help; "Lying is done with words and also with silence".

The aim of a presentation or an interview is to convince the listeners and not to distract them. If at any time during the presentation, one is not sure of what he wants to say next, he should just be silent. A split second is usually all we need and our listeners will wait. The listeners are least aware of the fact that the speaker is buying thinking time. But, on the other hand, if the speaker fills up the space with non-words, he will be broadcasting the fact that he is not sure of what to say. This insinuates the belief that the speaker is either lost or confused. In turn, it can be misleading even when the speaker tries hard to be convincing.

Non-words are often interpreted as a lack of preparation and confidence. They are nothing but confused noises and are counter productive. No one has ever presented a convincing argument with non-words. Noise is a distraction but silence and selected pauses contribute greatly to our presentation.

Pauses during Presentation

We know that one should maintain eye contact while talking to a large group and delivering a presentation to an audience. This ensures a better involvement and a cordial rapport with the listeners. An effective way to do this is to give pauses that can help break our thoughts into units, thus making it more comprehensible for the audience. We can present an idea to a person, pause and then present the next idea to another person. This technique helps us in engaging everyone in the audience and also in promoting goodwill. The audience gleefully welcomes such pauses giving

equal importance to all and sundry. Caution should be taken that a single person doesn't attract our attention for a longer period. The resulting silence indicates the comfort and preparedness of the speaker. The audience, too, is convinced that the speaker is talking to each and everyone of them.

Begin with silence. It takes 'guts' to stand in front of an audience after being introduced and not start talking immediately. But this can prove to be one of the strongest ways to get the audience attention and build rapport with them. Lee Glickstein, a well-known speaking coach and speaker from Mill Valley, California, suggests that we start our presentations by standing quietly, making eye contact with audience members, letting them also make eye contact with us, and then once everyone is comfortable and waiting with anticipation, start with a dynamic story. You will be amazed at the level of attention this method produces.

Pause to develop relationship between you and your listeners. During a pause, the speaker is more like a listener. This is a time when both are listening and the speaker can take note of the audience's quality of listening. We might realize that as the presenter we need to change course and tell a story or possibly ask for questions. If, however, we don't take a moment to evaluate reactions and interest, we might just forge ahead without maintaining the audience's attention.

Pause with Purpose

Many a time, throughout a presentation pauses can add emphasis and/or give the listeners a chance to ponder, or even laugh. When we have just made an important point, a startling or unusual statement, or a call for action, participants need a moment to take notes, think about what we just said, or catch up. Even though we hear words faster than we can speak, we do need time to think about what was said and then form our ideas. If, as presenters, we give participants enough time, they will be much more likely to buy into what we are presenting than if we just keep on moving with the information that is so familiar only to us. There are speakers who make a humorous statement and then don't let the audience members have time to

'get it' and laugh. People need time to laugh. And laughter is important because it bonds the audience and the speaker.

As a speaker with content, you have many different points to make. But if you jump too quickly from one point to another, you will leave your listeners behind or confused. When this happens, they will often times 'tune out' and you have lost them for the rest of your presentation. A well-placed pause will help you and the audience prepare for the next aspect of your presentation. We suggest picking transitional sentences as carefully as your openings and closings statements, and then taking a moment of silence for the ideas in these sentences to take hold before you launch into the new point.

Pause for a show of confidence. The confident pause is an earmark of the accomplished speaker. The courage to stop the flow of words is an act of trust in the power of your presence, your non-verbal communication, and your relationship to your listeners.

Pauses have their significance in communication in a variety of ways. An appropriate pause also helps in distributing proper accent at proper places. Most of us know that the effectiveness of the US President John F. Kennedy's famous line, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country", was not only because of its language but also because of its appropriate pause dividing the two thoughts.

Even when telling a story, a joke, a dramatic story, an anecdote or reciting poetry, the pauses enhance our effectiveness as a speaker. Famous actors, politicians, newsreaders, and orators convey meaning in their pauses by regulating them. Pauses also help in bringing variety in our presentation and saving the audience from monotony.

EXERCISES

1. Can you communicate without words? Give an instance when you

communicated without language very effectively.

2. What is paralanguage? Does silence also fall under the umbrella of paralanguage?
3. Are kinesics and proxemics same? Distinguish clearly.
4. What is the difference between silence and pause? Explain the significance of pause in the presentations.
5. Explain all the four distances in proxemics. In which situation you maintain public distance from the audience?
6. Explain clearly what you understand by metacommunication.
7. What is haptics? Why do you pat someone when he/she has done a good job?
8. What is non-verbal communication? Underline the importance of body language in an oral presentation.
9. Silence and pause help the speaker buy time. Explain.
10. Underline the importance of eyes in various forms of oral communication. Give suitable examples.
11. Explain the role of various factors responsible for effective presentation.
12. *Time talks and Space speaks.* Justify the statement with regard to a successful presentation.