**Verbal communication**

* **Nature and purposes of language**
  + Language is a body of symbols and the systems for their use in messages that are common to the people of the same speech community
* Speech community
  + Group of people who speak the same language
* Words
  + Symbols used by a speech community to represent objects, ideas and feelings
* Sapir-Whorf hypothesis
  + Theory that language influences perception
  + Language allows us to perceive certain aspects of the world by naming them and ignore other parts of the world by not naming them
  + There are concepts that people do not fully perceive until a word is coined to describe them
* **Purposes of language**
* Use language to negotiate meaning
* Use language to designate, label, define and limit
* Use language to evaluate
  + Convey negative or positive attitudes
* Use language to discuss things outside our immediate experience
  + Allows to share a common heritage
* Use language to talk about language
  + Helps us understand differences in communication because we don’t view words and phrases in the same way
* **Relationship between language and meaning**
* Meaning of words lies in people and how they interpret words
  + Hot/cold, expensive/cheap
* Denotation
  + Direct, explicit meaning a speech community formally gives a word
  + Dictionary definition
* Connotation
  + Feelings or evaluations we associate with a word
* Syntactic context
  + Position of a word in a sentence and the other words surrounding it
  + That’s awesome--positive or a negative
* **Culture and gender influences**
* Low-context cultures
  + Cultures in which messages are direct, specific and detailed
  + U.S., European communication tends to be direct and very specific
* High-context cultures
  + Cultures in which messages are indirect, general and ambiguous
  + Latin America, Asia tends to be indirect
  + Contextual cues help them understand the speaker’s meaning
* Feminine styles of language
  + Words of empathy and support
  + Emphasizes concrete and personal language
  + Politeness and tentativeness in speaking
* Masculine styles of language
  + words of status and problem solving
  + Emphasizes abstract and general language
  + Assertiveness and control in speaking
* Metaphorical language
  + We use metaphors to explain something we do not understand
* **Improve language skills**
* **Use clear language**
* Specific words
  + Clear up confusion caused by general words by narrowing what is understood from a general category
* Concrete words
  + Words that appeal to the senses and help us see, hear, smell, taste or touch
  + descriptors
* Precise words
  + Words that narrow a larger category to a smaller group within that category
* Dating information
  + Specifying the time or time period that a fact was true or known to be true
* Indexing generalizations
  + Mental and verbal practice of acknowledging the presence of individual differences when voicing generalizations
* **Memorable language use**
* Emphasis
  + Importance given to certain words or ideas
  + Time, repetition, transitions
* Vivid wording
  + Wording that uses bright, descriptive language
* Simile
  + Direct comparison of dissimilar things
* Metaphor
  + Comparison that establishes figurative identity between objects being compared
* Use linguistic sensitivity
* Adapt your vocabulary to the level of your listener
* Use jargon sparingly
* Use slang appropriate to listeners and the situation
* Use inclusive language
* Use non-offensive language