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Dept. of English, Narajole Raj College

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Non-Verbal Communication

What is Non-Verbal Communication?

When we communicate our thoughts without using words, we communicate non-verbally. Non-verbal communication is the way in which we express our feelings, emotions, attitudes, opinions, and views through our body movements. In verbal communication we use words; in non-verbal communication we use our eyes, hands, face, and other body movements to express our thoughts. The body and its movements substitute words.

Discuss advantages and limitations of Non-Verbal Communication.

- (1) Non-verbal communication has to be observed carefully otherwise the idea or the presentation of the thought is wasted away.
- (2) It is particularly good for people who are uneducated or who have less education.
- (3) It can communicate small ideas but when the detailed message is to be given it may not be of much use.
- (4) It can be understood instantly and instant response can also be obtained but it cannot be preserved and recorded for further use.
- (5) Sometimes, due to cultural differences the same sign and signal may mean different thing to the person who is responding.
- (6) Nonverbal communication clarifies the verbal message.



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Types of Non-Verbal Communication

God has gifted us with five sense organs. With the help of sense organs, we can communicate. Communication without using words is non-verbal communication. Basically there are two components of non-verbal (wordless messages) communication:

(I) Kinesics Communication (II) Meta Communication

(1) **Kinesics Communication:** Kinesics communication is a message conveyed through non-verbal acts in the form of body movements such as gestures, winking, smiling, style of dressing and grooming. This type of communication transmits the unstated feelings, attitude and hidden intentions of the speaker.

(II) **Meta Communication:** Meta communication includes a message communicated not through words, but along with words. It conveys an implied meaning by the selection and tone of words.

Kinesics Components of Non-Verbal Communication

disapproval ,
displeasure
↑

(1) **Facial Expressions:** Facial Expressions include eye contact. Smiling, frowning, raising eye-brows, etc. are universal in their nature and application. The facial expressions are used to show the following emotions: happiness, surprise, fear, anger, sadness, determination etc. Facial expressions have to be understood in proper manner by the receiver of the message.

(2) **Gestures:** A gesture is the movement of the hand, head or body to indicate an idea or a feeling. There are some common gestures which are used by us in day to day life like, waving the hand to greet goodbye, upraised hand to request to remain silent, wagging the index finger, for scolding, pointing the index finger, to show the direction, moving the hand sideway to show refusal etc.

(3) **Silence:** Silence has its own unique language. A person can convey his ideas even with the help of silence. Sometimes, we are overcome by emotions that we cannot speak - our silence tells the other person of our strong feelings. Every good speaker knows the importance of the pause which is a short period of silence between words or sentences.



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(4) **Body Language:** Posture is an important element in body language. From the posture, we can know whether a person is confident, diffident; old, young weak or strong. Body movements and postures appropriate for one person may not be considered suitable for another. The style of walking and moving that we admire in a dancer may be unsuitable for a school teacher. The occupation and work of a person can affect his posture and body movements.

(5) **Graphs, Maps, Charts and Colours:** The chief advantage of Graphs, Maps and Charts is that plenty of information can be gathered at a glance. Colours are used to convey direct messages. Traffic lights turn red and green and in an operation theatre a red bulb is used to show that the theatre is in use.

(6) **Para Language:** It is often observed that sometimes our body language says something else and we speak something else. For example, when an unexpected guest arrives at our house, we have to smile and say, "I am very happy to see you", but our body language does not mention so. This is the use of Para language.

(7) **Time Communication:** Time is considered to be the most important aspect of our life. We have to plan our time and work accordingly. Suppose we have short time to speak. It non-verbally indicates that we should be brief in our speech.

(8) **Space Communication:** An element of space plays an important part in our presentation of our personality. At the time of talking to others we do keep some distance from the person who is standing in front of us. While talking to seniors we keep some distance. This care gives a special effect to our communication. Distance between lovers and old aged couples indicates whether they are married or not. Given below is an indication of how we generally use space in the communication process:

- **Public space:** It ranges from 10 to 20 feet between the audience and the speaker, such as at a press conference or an election meeting.
- **Social space:** It ranges from 4 to 10 feet, for example, communication among business associates, meeting strangers in public places.
- **Personal space:** It ranges from 2 to 4 feet, for example, among friends and family

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members, waiting in a queue at an ATM.

- **Intimate space:** There is no minimum range for contact with parents, spouses, children and close friends.

(9) **Sign Language:** Sign language is normally used for deaf and dumb when they do not understand our language. Their teachers make effective use of such language. Sign language is also found when sign boards are fixed on the roads, near schools, near hospitals etc.

