

## NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION AND ITS ROLE IN COMMUNICATION

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**Annotation.** This article presents a comprehensive analysis of non-verbal communication as an integral component of human communication. The first part of the paper considers the theoretical basis of nonverbal communication, the main channels of nonverbal information transmission and their functions. The second part analyses the role of non-verbal signals in different communication contexts, such as intercultural interactions, business negotiations and everyday communication. The final part draws conclusions about the importance of non-verbal communication for successful human interaction and formulates recommendations for the effective use of non-verbal means.

**Keywords:** non-verbal communication, facial expressions, gestures, posture, proxemics, intercultural communication, interpersonal relations

### INTRODUCTION

Non-verbal communication is a complex and multifaceted system of information transmission based on non-linguistic means of expression. It includes facial expressions, gestures, postures, intonation, spatial orientation and other signals that we send and perceive unconsciously. Unlike verbal communication based on words, non-verbal signals are often more sincere and can tell us more about our feelings, intentions and attitudes than any words can.

The relevance of the study of non-verbal communication is due to its significant role in interpersonal relations. In everyday communication we often rely on non-verbal signals to better understand the interlocutor, assess his mood and intentions. Nonverbal communication plays an important role in such spheres as business, politics, education, psychology and many others. The purpose of this paper is to review the main aspects of non-verbal communication, its functions and importance in the process of communication.

### MAIN PART

Non-verbal communication is an amazing phenomenon of human communication that takes place without the use of words.

It is a set of all non-linguistic means that we use to convey information, express emotions, create impressions about ourselves and establish contact with other people.

Channels of Nonverbal Communication. There are many channels through which we communicate non-verbal messages. Here are some of the most important ones:

**Kinesics.** The study of body movements, gestures, postures, facial expressions. Each gesture, facial expression carries certain information, which can complement or contradict the words spoken.

**Proxemics.** The study of the use of space in the process of communication. The distance between people, choice of place, orientation of the body relative to the interlocutor - all this carries certain semantic loads.

**Paralinguistics.** The study of voice characteristics such as tone, volume, rate of speech, pauses, intonation. The voice can express different emotions as well as indicate our attitude towards the person we are talking to.

**Appearance.** Clothes, accessories, hairstyle, make-up - all this forms the first impression of us and influences the perception of our personality.

**Tactile contacts.** Touching, shaking hands, hugging is a powerful tool of non-verbal communication that allows you to express different emotions and establish a deeper connection with another person.

**Functions of non-verbal communication.** Supplementing a verbal message: Gestures, facial expressions and intonation can emphasise, clarify or illustrate what is being said. Replacing a verbal message: Sometimes nonverbal cues can completely replace words, such as when we nod our heads in agreement or wave goodbye. Contradicting the verbal message: Nonverbal cues can contradict what we say with words, which often happens unconsciously and gives away our true feelings. Interaction regulation: Nonverbal cues help us manage the flow of a conversation, maintain or break contact, express interest or boredom. Expressing emotions: Mimicry and posture allow us to express a wide range of emotions, from joy to anger.

It is important to realise that non-verbal communication is often more sincere than verbal communication. Words can be deceptive, but the body is not. That is why the ability to read non-verbal signals is an important skill for effective communication and building interpersonal relationships.

Culture plays a huge role in shaping our non-verbal habits. What is considered normal and welcomed in one culture may be considered rude or even offensive in another. Let's look at

a few examples:

**Gestures:** The meaning of gestures can vary greatly from culture to culture. For example, the "OK" sign formed by the thumb and forefinger signifies approval in most Western countries, but in some Middle Eastern countries it is considered a rude insult.

**Spatial distance:** The optimal distance between interlocutors can vary depending on cultural norms. In some cultures it is customary to stand close to each other, while in others a more distant communication is preferred.

**Gaze:** Gaze also carries certain information. In some cultures a direct gaze is considered a sign of sincerity and respect, while in other cultures prolonged eye contact may be perceived as aggression.

**Mimicry:** Facial expressions of emotion can be interpreted differently in different cultures. For example, a smile may be a sign of greeting in one culture and a sign of nervousness or uncertainty in another.

Ignorance of cultural differences often leads to misunderstandings and conflicts. Here are some common mistakes:

**Stereotyping:** Attributing certain qualities or character traits to a person on the basis of their belonging to a particular culture.

**Projecting one's own cultural norms:** Interpreting another person's behaviour through the lens of one's own cultural values. **Ignoring the context:** Failure to consider the situation in which communication is taking place can lead to misinterpretation of non-verbal cues.

**Lack of attention:** Lack of attention to the details of non-verbal behaviour can lead to missing important information.

To avoid misunderstandings in intercultural communication, it is necessary to:

**Learn cultural characteristics:** To be interested in the culture of the interlocutor, to study its non-verbal codes.

**Being open and tolerant:** Willingness to recognise that your understanding may be incomplete or wrong.

**Pay attention to the context:** Take into account the situation in which the communication is taking place and do not jump to conclusions.

**Ask clarifying questions:** If you are not sure of the meaning of a non-verbal signal, it is better to clarify it with the interlocutor.

**Practise observation:** Develop your skills in observing people's non-verbal behaviour.



Understanding cultural differences in non-verbal communication is an important key to successful intercultural interaction. Be attentive to non-verbal cues, show respect for other cultures and avoid stereotypes.

Non-verbal communication plays a key role in our communication, complementing, emphasising and sometimes even contradicting what we say. It fulfils many functions, which can be grouped into several main groups:

1. Expression of emotions. Direct expression: Mimicry, gestures, posture allow us to openly show our emotions: joy, sadness, anger, surprise, etc. Disguising emotions: Sometimes we may consciously or unconsciously hide our true feelings, but our body often gives us away.

2. Interaction Regulation. Maintaining contact: A look, a smile, a nod of the head help us keep the conversation going and show the other person that we are interested in what they have to say. Controlling the conversation: Gestures, changes in posture, pauses can signal a desire to take the floor, interrupt or end the conversation.

3. Supplementing and clarifying a verbal message. Reinforcing meaning: Gestures can emphasise or reinforce the meaning of what is being said. For example, when we say "very big," we can spread our arms out to the sides. Clarifying meaning: Non-verbal cues can clarify the meaning of ambiguous statements. For example, intonation can show whether we are being serious or joking.

4. Contradiction to the verbal message. "Body Lies: Often our non-verbal cues contradict what we say with words. For example, a person may say they are happy to see you, but their body will be tense and they will avoid eye contact.

5. Creating an impression. Image building: Our appearance, demeanour, and gestures create a certain impression of us to others. Demonstrating status: Posture, clothing, accessories can signal our social status and role in society.

How non-verbal communication interacts with verbal communication:

**Synergy:** When verbal and non-verbal messages are consistent with each other, they reinforce each other and increase the effectiveness of communication.

**Contradiction:** When verbal and non-verbal messages contradict each other, it can cause distrust in the interlocutor and make it difficult to understand. **Addendum:** Nonverbal cues can complement verbal messages, making them more expressive and memorable. Understanding the relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication allows us to communicate more effectively, better understand others and create deeper connections.

Improving your non-verbal communication skills is a process that requires constant

practice and attention to detail. Here are some helpful tips:

**Observing others.** Pay attention to details: Try to notice the smallest nuances in other people's behaviour: their gestures, facial expressions, postures, the distance they prefer. **Compare:** Compare the behaviour of different people in similar situations. This will help you better understand how different non-verbal cues are interpreted. **Study the culture:** If you communicate with people from other cultures, try to learn their non-verbal codes.

**Self-analysis.** Record yourself on video: Look at how you look and behave during a conversation. Pay attention to your gestures, facial expressions, posture.

**Ask for feedback:** Ask loved ones or colleagues to give you feedback on your non-verbal behaviour. **Keep a diary:** Record your observations of your own behaviour and the behaviour of others.

**Practice.** Role-playing: Play out different situations, paying special attention to your non-verbal behaviour. **Courses and Trainings:** There are many courses and trainings on non-verbal communication. **Feedback:** Ask other people to give you feedback after your speeches or presentations.

**Specific exercises.** **Reflection:** Try to copy the other person's postures and gestures to show that you are listening and understanding. **Controlling facial expressions:** Practise expressing different emotions through facial expressions in front of a mirror. **Work on posture:** Good posture gives confidence and creates a positive impression. **Gesture control:** Try to use open gestures that do not make the other person feel uncomfortable. **Eye contact:** Make eye contact with the other person to show your interest.

**Important points.** **Consistency:** Non-verbal cues should be consistent with your words. **Context:** Consider the context of the situation in which you are communicating. **Authenticity:** Be natural and do not overplay. **Cultural sensitivity:** Be aware of cultural differences when communicating with people from other countries. Remember that improving your non-verbal communication skills is a long process. Be patient and don't be afraid to experiment.

## CONCLUSION

Non-verbal communication is not just an extension of our words, but a powerful tool that plays a key role in the interaction process. It allows us to express emotions, create impressions, regulate communication and understand others on a deeper level. The ability to understand and use non-verbal cues is a valuable skill in today's world. It allows us to build deeper and more trusting relationships, successfully overcome cultural barriers and achieve our goals. Nonverbal communication is the body language we all speak. By learning to understand

and use it, we can interact more effectively with people around us and achieve harmony in communication.

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