Non-verbal Barriers to Cross-cultural Communication

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Abstract: It is undeniable that communication technology has made the world a small village. However, cross-cultural barriers still represent a challenging hurdle not only to individuals from different cultures but also to governments and international companies. This paper aims at exploring different non-verbal barriers that may hamper intercultural communication, including kinesics (facial expressions, movements and gestures), proxemics (space and distance), vocalics (paralanguage), physical appearance (attire), chronemics (time), haptics (touch), and oculesics (eye contact and gaze). It is, then, concluded that if two or more speakers having different cultural backgrounds are not aware of these barriers, communication cannot take place.

Keywords: Communication, cross-cultural communication, Intercultural communication, non-verbal barriers.

I. INTRODUCTION

In general, people feel more comfortable when they are with individuals who are similar to them, who have the same culture, race, religion, and nationality. The reason is that they share the same values, the same beliefs, and the same way of doing things. Nevertheless, due to Globalization, unceasing advances in communication technology, and the internationalization of higher education, people have found themselves engaged in communicating across cultural boundaries.

Intercultural communication occurs when a message is encoded in a culture and decoded in a different culture. This situation is quite challenging as only a few individuals have the ability to get their points across when a cross-cultural barrier shows up. Culture is believed to characterize and shape communicators. When individuals from different cultures communicate, they may encounter confusions, misinterpretations, or even clashes. If an individual cannot function properly in a different culture, they will surely feel embarrassed and disappointed. These problems that pop up at any stage of the communication process and cause misunderstanding are known as communication barriers. The objective of this paper is to identify the most common non-verbal communication (NVC) impediments to successful intercultural interactions, which people may face during their stay in a foreign country.

II. NON-VERBAL BARRIERS TO CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Interaction is an intricate process that embraces both verbal and non-verbal communication. Non-verbal or non-vocal communication is as important as verbal communication in transmitting and interpreting the message. They both are strongly connected to culture. Verbal communication differs from a community to another and non-verbal communication fluctuates from person to person and culture to culture. In fact, it is culture that defines the meanings of non-verbal behaviors.

Because the significances of non-verbal communication are not the same in all cultures, misinterpretation is expected to take place when two or more people from different cultures interact. Consequently, a person can hurt somebody's feelings without intending to do so just because they have different cultural backgrounds. Nods can be a good example to illustrate this. In the Moroccan culture, nodding means yes or OK; however, in Greece, Iran, and Turkey, if you nod your head up one time, it means “no” (Shraddha Bajracharya, 2018).

Non-verbal communication encompasses all the unwritten and unspoken messages, everything except words. It is the communication that does not make use of words. According to Hall (1973), nonverbal communication is “the silent language – the language of behavior” (p. xv). Many researchers (e.g. Hall (1973), Samovar & Porter (2010), and Anderson (1999) have agreed that nonverbal communication includes the following topics: kinesics (facial expressions, movements and gestures), proxemics (space and distance), vocalics (paralanguage), physical appearance (attire), chronemics (time), haptics (touch), and oculesics (eye contact and gaze).

2.1 Kinesics: Part/Whole body movement.

This is a term that was coined by the American anthropologist Ray L. Birdwhistell. It is the wide field of non-verbal communication that is exclusively concerned with the interpretations of non-verbal behaviors. It refers to the scientific study of how the body speaks. Kinesics can be very revealing. In fact, watching people in terms of their body language can make a person closer to their inner feelings. It is mainly connected with what is commonly known as body language. It involves the study of body movement, gestures, posture, and facial expressions, as it comes from the root word kinesis, which means movement.
2.1.1 Body movements:
This refers to the intended or spontaneous movements of parts of the body such as hands, feet, legs, and shoulders, or the whole body. These movements can emphasize the message that is communicated verbally or oppose it. They can convey information about how an individual is feeling and also about the characteristics of their personality. They show if a person is active and confident, or passive and down. In short, any motion of one or more parts of the body is an outward expression of what is going on inside our brain.

2.1.2 Gestures:
Gestures refer to any movement of a part of the body that expresses a thought or a feeling. It is another form of non-verbal communication, which provides visible actions of the body. A gesture may be expressed by the hands, arms, fingers, head, and legs. They may be intended or spontaneous. Hands gestures, for example, indicate the state of comfort of the speaker. Relaxed hands express confidence, while clenched hands are a sign of anger and discomfort. However, the tricky part of gestures is that they have cultural backgrounds. That is to say, gestures vary from one culture to another. A gesture may have a certain meaning in the western culture but has a totally different meaning in the South Asian culture and vice versa. Tomoko Koda and Yuki Mori (2014) distinguish between five key types of gestures: adaptors, emblems, illustrators, affective displays, and regulators.

2.1.2.1 Adaptors:
Adaptors are sorts of nonverbal communication that the speaker may use to cope with uneasiness and discomfort, such as anxiety and stress. They are a class of gestures that help the speaker to control their feelings and administer their feedback. These body movements are useful signals of the speaker’s physical and psychological state. Adaptors are not like the other movements people make to deliberately express a message nonverbally. They are done involuntarily and they have no relationship with what is being said. Adaptors are divided into three groups: self-adaptors, alter-adaptors, and object-adaptors. Self-adaptors refer to the set of body behaviors that usually involve self-touch. They occur both when a conversant is very relaxed or emotionally unstable. Some common examples of self-adaptors are: rubbing the face, stretching the arms or the legs, and stroking the head. The other type of adaptors is alter-adaptors. An alter-adaptor is made in response to another person. It refers to the same movements known as self-adaptors. The only difference is that the need for relief is prompted by the other conversant. An example to illustrate this is when a person gets into our personal space, we cross our arms or put our hands on our arms. These movements make us in defensive and comforting positions. The third type of adaptors is object-adaptors. An object- adaptor is a movement that does not involve the speaker’s body but rather their glasses, clothes, or any other accessories. For example, in these movements the conversant may play with a pen, a ring, put on glasses and/or take them off, or adjust a hat or a tie.

2.1.2.2 Emblems:
Emblems in communication refer to signals that have specific meanings and that are knowingly used by the speaker and consciously understood by the interlocutor. These emblematic gestures are used as alternatives to words. They are easily known because they are frequently used in context and most people use them. Also, the interlocutor receiving the emblem immediately recognizes the gesture and understands what it means. The most known emblematic gestures are: a thump-up gesture meaning “OK” or “I need a ride”, hand waves meaning “hello” or “good-bye”, and the V-shape sign that is frequently known as Victory sign. For Allan Pease and Barbara Pease (2004), the V-gesture dates back to the time when the bow and arrows were the main weapon. Archers used to hold up the index and middle finger in a V-shape to show their enemies they still had these two fingers, as at that time, when an archer was captured, the captors used to cut off his two fingers so that he would never be able to use his bow and arrows.

2.1.2.3 Illustrators:
Illustrators are a different type of gestures. They are a vital part of visual communication as they serve to illustrate and enhance what is being said verbally to help the receiver understand the message. Illustrators provide a visual image and support the verbal message. As an example, when a person shows another the way to go somewhere, illustrators are used to make the task easy. According to the pioneer in the study of non-verbal behavior Ray L. Birdwhistell, illustrators are similar to emblems since they are both used by the speaker consciously and intentionally. However, the speaker who uses an illustrator may be less conscious of what they are doing.

2.1.2.4 Affective displays:
Affective displays are the verbal and nonverbal displays of emotion. These displays can be shown through the body, the gestures, and usually facial expressions, carrying an emotional meaning or showing an affective state. An individual’s gait, for example, gives a clear idea about their emotional state. A bouncy gait suggests joy and happiness, while a slouchy gait expresses depression and unhappiness. Facial movements, also, reveal the speaker’s feelings. For instance, while frowning indicates displeasure and annoyance, breaking into a grin shows happiness and contentment. Demonstrating positive emotions is termed “positive affect”, while showing negative emotions is known as “negative affect”.
2.1.2.5 Regulators:

Regulators refer to the body movements used to manipulate conversations. They refer to all the things you do with your body and your face to let your interlocutor know how the conversation is going. For example, when you nod your head while someone is talking to you, you express agreement by moving your head up and down, instead of saying “I agree with you”. You may also cross your arms while a person is talking to you, to show that you are ready to go into an argument, or just look away to show that you can’t believe what your converser has just said to you. These body movements can let the person you are having the conversation with know how you are feeling about the conversation without saying anything.

Regulators can also sustain and regulate the back-and-forth nature of the interaction, that is, the pace of the exchange. They can be used to control turn taking. The speaker can use a hand gesture, for example, to invite the interlocutor to talk, to keep on talking, to repeat, to hurry up, or to give the other speaker(s) a chance to talk. Contrary to emblems and illustrators, regulators are not intentional. People do not deliberately use them to manage the interaction. Regulators are actually natural movements that everyone uses to enhance the communication process.

2.1.3 Posture:

Posture provides a great amount of information about the person. How a person stands, sits, or walks give a lot of information about the person’s gender, social position, attitudes and emotional state. Postures give impressions of interest, lack of interest, self-confidence, status, etc. For instance, when you see someone sitting with their head in their hands, you immediately understand that they are in the dumps. However, sitting on a chair with the feet on the desk may show superiority and authority.

2.1.4 Facial expressions:

The face is the most predominant indicator in terms of body language. It is the most prevailing channel of NVC. People give much attention to the face even in the least important interactions. Facial expressions are believed to be essential ways to show social information. A smile, for example, can designate happiness or agreement, while a frown can indicate disagreement or discontent. In most cases, facial expressions show one’s own feelings in a particular situation. According to Paul Ekman (1977), there are six basic facial expressions which people accept everywhere: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise.

2.2 Proxemics:

Another concept that was developed by Edward T. Hall is proxemics, which is basically the study of how humans use space in communication. Hall was known for conceptualizing the personal space bubble. He also shaped a whole system of notation to record how people make use of shared space. Hall has visited different places around the world and taught hundreds of foreign service personnel how to communicate in different cultures. For Hall, culture and communication are inseparable, and communication is present in silence as in speech. Proxemics refers to how communicators use space, how it can make communicators less comfortable, and how communicators arrange themselves in relation to space. In simple words, it is concerned with how close an individual is to another when they are talking, how much room or space an individual puts between themselves and loved ones, friends, colleagues, and strangers (Edward T. Hall 1973).

In order to understand more about proxemics, we need to discuss different kinds of spaces. For Edward Hall, there are four types of acceptable distance that people generally use in communication. Before explaining these types of space, it should be noted that the use of space varies between cultures. If you are from a western culture, like the United States, and your interlocutor is from North Africa, you will probably feel a bit uncomfortable when they stand a little closer to you than you would like, you may feel they are crowding you, or getting into your personal space bubble. This difference can be seen also within the same culture. More importantly, proxemics behavior is learned implicitly. People are less likely instructed explicitly as to what appropriate distance they should keep in each situation. They learn this by observing others. Now, let’s see the different distances that can be between communicators.

2.2.1 Public space:

Public space refers to the space which characterizes how close people sit or stand to someone, like a public speaker or public figure. It is used by large groups. It can be between three and seven meters (twelve to twenty-five feet). For instance, if a person is attending a lecture, they are probably four or more meters away.

2.2.2 Social space:

The second type of space is social space, which is used with strangers. This is the type of distance a person is in when they are talking to a customer. The expression “keep someone at an arm’s length” means that the interlocutor is kept in the social space, avoiding any possibility for intended or accidental touching. It is usually between one meter and two meters (four to seven feet).

2.2.3 Personal space:

Personal space is even closer. The communicators are probably less than one meter away from each other (one foot to two point five feet). This is reserved for interactions among family members, friends, close acquaintances, or significant others. Much of the individual’s communication takes place in the personal space.
bubble. This type of space is divided into two subzones (McKay, Davis, & Fanning, 1995), the outer-personal zone and the inner-personal zone.

2.2.3.1 The outer-personal zone:

The outer-personal zone extends from seventy-five centimeters to one meter and twenty centimeters (two point five feet to four feet). It is useful for interactions that are private but not with people who are interpersonally close. It is suitable for intimate communication in professional settings. This space permits communicators to have intimate conversations but it does not always mean there is intimacy between the conversers.

2.2.3.2 The inner-personal zone:

The inner-personal zone is a space kept for interactions with people interpersonally close to each other. Only family members and close friends are allowed to get into this zone. In this space, the speaker can touch their interlocutor. They can hold their hands, and express and show feelings of closeness.

2.2.4 Intimate space:

The fourth type of space is intimate space. It is also known as Skin Contact. Intimate distance is for the closest friends, family, and romantic partners. A breach of this zone can be comforting if the individual is a close partner, or scary or irritating if the individual is a stranger. In this case, the communicator is one or two centimeters away (less than one inch), and he or she might be touching the interlocutor. It is the space an individual is in with a romantic partner, the spouse or lover. People may have different proxemics patterns depending on their cultures. In Morocco, for example, males get closer to each other than American males, with more confrontational types of body orientations (Matsumoto, 2006).

2.2.5 Territoriality:

Another way to look at space is territoriality, which refers to how people use space and objects to communicate tenancy or ownership of space. It is the innate determination to possess and defend spaces. It can be a stationary area or a fixed geographic location that an individual lays claim to and protects from invasion by other people. Not only humans have this drive, but also other creatures, like animals. According to Hargie (2011), there are three types of territories: Primary, Secondary, and Public.

2.2.5.1 Primary Territory:

This refers to any space or territory that is marked or understood as ours and under our control. It can be where the individual lives, like their house, room, or bed. It can also be their vehicle, or their office. In fact, another term for this is Home Territory. People feel really comfortable in their primary territory, and no one is allowed to get into it without their permission. It is a space people feel they own and can do anything they want in it.

2.2.5.2 Secondary territory:

Secondary territories do not make part of our properties. They do not belong to us, and are not under our control. Yet, they are places where we are expected to be, and where we expect to see others on a consistent basis. This territory is also referred to as Interactional territory. A student’s desk at school is a good example to explain this. The student views the classroom and the desk as his, but there are other students who are consistently in the same classroom, the same school, and they are expected to be there. And of course, there are some behaviors, rules, and norms they have to respect. When someone else takes a student’s regular desk, he or she gets irritated, and might even fight to get it back.

2.2.5.3 Public territory:

Public territories are spaces that are open and accessible to everyone. Everyone has access to public parks, movie theatres, and gyms. When a person is in a public space, they take their personal space bubble with them. When someone joins you in an elevator, you move to the corner to maintain your space. It should be noted here that what is primary territory for someone can be Secondary territory for another. A professor at the university, for example, has got their private office, which is primary territory for them. When students visit the professor in their office, it is secondary territory to them. However, when the students’ parents come for a tour at the university, the professor’s office becomes public territory.

There is one more aspect to explain about territoriality: territorial Markers:

2.2.6 Territorial markers:

It has already been explained that where ever people go, they take their personal space bubble with them. They continually protect their body territory by marking it in different ways. They may use a variety of objects that are known as nonverbal signals that mark a place as temporarily reserved. For example, a student in a library can leave their jacket on the chair or a book on the table when they have to go out to make or receive a phone call. A person in a café can leave a cup of coffee on the table. An individual in the swimming pool or on the beach can mark their place by a towel or a bag.

2.2.7 Vocals:

Vocals is a constituent of meta-communication. It is the study of how people express themselves through the use of their voices. The term vocality includes any vocal-auditory behavior excluding the spoken words. It refers to how the words are said rather than the real meaning of these words (Samovar and Porter,
1991). Of course, when we speak words, we use our voice; this is why a lot of people mistakenly categorize the voice as verbal communication. The voice uses not only the words, but also other nonverbal sounds to communicate, such as pitch, tone, and so on. It is crucial to emphasize here that vocalics relates to all aspects of the voice other than words. This is exactly the reason why it is also called “paralanguage,” as it refers to the vocalized but nonverbal parts of a message. Vocalics often gets messages communicated without the use of language. When a converser ignores the words and concentrates only on the voice, they can manage to know the physical, emotional, and attitudinal states of the speaker. Neuliep (2015) states that “through paralanguage, people communicate their emotional state, veracity, and sincerity” (p: 286).

Vocal qualities that accompany verbal messages, such as vocal fillers, and vocal qualifiers represent the nonverbal part of the message.

2.2.7.1 Vocal fillers:

Vocal fillers or vocal insertions, refer to the sounds which fill gaps when we think about what to say while speaking. They are not words with specific meanings. They are sounds which an individual can use when they want to pause for a second to think about what to say next, such as “ah”, “um”, and “uh”.

2.2.7.2 Vocal qualifiers:

Vocal qualifiers refer to the way in which the speaker presents his or her verbal statement. They encompass volume, pitch, rate, and tone of voice that may go together with the articulation of the consonants and vowels, and which echoes the mood, the emotion, and the psychological state of the speaker. Now, let’s go deeper a little bit, and explain what is meant by the vocal qualifiers: volume, pitch, rate, and tone of voice.

2.2.7.2.1 Volume:

Volume shows intensity. When a voice is loud, it shows that it is intense. People adjust their volume based on their setting, the distance between them, and their relationship. However, Samovar and Porter (2015) state that cultural differences can appear clearly in the use of volume. Arabs think that a loud voice is sincere, while a soft one may be deceitful. Brazilians speak loudly to show interest and involvement. Ruch (1984) notes that when Germans use strong voices, they intend to show self-confidence and express authority on their interlocutors. Conversely, other cultures have a different sight toward loud voice. Chaney and Martin (2014) note that people in Philippine speak gently to express good breeding and education. Cooper and Cooper (1994) notice that people in Thailand think that speaking in a loud voice is rude. For Japanese, a soft voice indicates good manners and etiquettes.

2.2.7.2.2 Pitch:

Pitch in communication refers to the relative highness or lowness of a tone, which is the result of the vibrations produced by the vocal cords. All languages use pitch as intonation to deliver various messages and express different meanings. They use it to show surprise, to emphasize a point, or to ask a question. It is necessary to pay attention to the pitch of the voice since it controls conversational flow, and shows the strength of the message. People do not understand this paralinguistic characteristic until they become adults, as children may understand literally what they hear (Anderson, 1999).

2.2.7.2.3 Speaking rate:

Speaking rate indicates how slowly or fast a person speaks. It does not only let others know about the speaker’s emotional state and credibility, but it can also influence how the receiver understands the message. A speaker who speaks fast may be difficult to comprehend, while a slow speaker may cause boredom. According to Buller & Burgoon (1986), a normal person says between 120 and 150 words in one minute. A higher rate of speech may negatively affect articulation and pronunciation as only the speaker will understand what is being said. A reasonable rate of speech plus a nice tone of voice will certainly help the speaker to reach their goals.

2.2.7.2.4 Tone of voice:

Tone of voice is another non-verbal aspect of speaking. It is the musical notes that the speaker’s voice communicates separated from the words. It is the intonation or inflection of the voice. It is the rise and fall of the sounds uttered by the speaker. It refers to the individual’s ability to change the meaning of the words by changing their pitch, intonation, volume, and tempo. For an individual to be a good communicator, they should be sensitive to how their tone of voice affects what they say. The tone of the speaker’s voice may be mightier than the words themselves. It can influence the understanding and retention of the words being said. How the speaker stresses an emotion in a word may strongly affect the quality of what is understood. So, when we say tone, we generally mean all of those vocal cues combined and collapsed into one.

2.2.8 Physical appearance and dress (or artificial communication):

Talking about non-verbal communication basically means dealing with impression. That is, things that exist physically without words that form impression. Another form of non-verbal communication that one can do nothing about is one’s appearance. Appearance refers to the individual’s height, weight, skin color, hair color, hair style. It also refers to what a person wears, clothing. Therefore, just by being who you are and how you look have an impression on the others. As soon as a person walks in the door, they consciously or unconsciously communicate non-verbal messages.
Another form of artifactual communication is clothing. What a person wears plays a crucial role in establishing their social identity. What an individual puts on is not only a shelter that protects their body from the weather, but also a vehicle through which they show their identification. How an individual dresses, and what clothes they have on their bodies convey messages about them. Clothing not only displays a person’s appearance, but also represents their interior world. The external phenotype communicates information that people use to set up a social identity for each other, which they would never construct by verbal means (Susan B. Kaiser, 1997). Clothing has a ubiquitous effect on the image people have on us. Clothing represents “a transmission of information between the carrier and the recipient through symbolic messages in the general or specific scope of the clothing culture” (Todorovic Tijana, Toporisic Tomaz and Alenka Pavko Cudin, 2014). It is generally acknowledged that a person wearing attractive clothes is better liked, can get better job opportunities, has increased self-esteem, and has more social power as compared with a person wearing shabby clothes. Artifactual communication gives an idea about the person’s social class, attitude, style, level of convention, and creativity (Neuliep, 2015).

2.2.9 Chronemics:

Chronemics is now an important area of study mainly for anthropologists. It refers to the study of the role of time in nonverbal communication. It helps us understand how people use time in their dialogues and relationships. Robin Sandhu (2020) defines chronemics as “the study of how time is used in communication”. It deals with notions such as punctuality, waste of time, and people’s attitude toward time during non-verbal communication.

2.2.9.1 Monochronic Time Cultures vs. Polychronic Time Cultures:

In terms of chronemics, cultures can be divided into two classes as people think differently about the value and uses of time. The two classes are Monochronic Time Cultures and Polychronic Time Cultures (Robin Sandhu. 2020). Monochronic cultures, also known as M-Time, believe in doing one task at a time, and usually follow a plan or schedule. In other words, monochronic persons perform tasks one after the other. They do one thing at a precise time. For example, in a company, executives have a specific time when they can take their break, have lunch, hold meetings, etc. “Monochronists” may even divide a task into a number of portions and do one portion at a time. Cultures that are known for being monochronic are USA, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, South Korea, Japan, and Scandinavian countries. Polychronic Time Cultures (P-Time), on the flip side, use time in a different way. “Polychronists” give more importance to personal relations. They can do various tasks without any plan or agenda. A polychronic can drive the car, eat a sandwich, and make or answer a phone call at the same time. In a polychronic time culture, many things happen at once. For example, in a meeting, you may see several conversations taking place at the same time. Interactions are cyclical and most of the time without a purpose. You need to take your time in communicating your message, while in a monochronic culture, you can share your message linearly and with a predictable order. Polychronic cultures are Russia, Brazil, Italy, Egypt, Indian, and Saud Arabia (Tatiana Kolovou, 2018).

2.2.9.2 Attitudes to time:

People do not have the same attitudes towards time, and use it in significantly different ways. For Ben Alvele (2020), the attitude to time of people from Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries is totally different from that of people belonging to time-conscious cultures such as North America and Northern Europe. To illustrate this difference, in the American airlines system, “on time” means at the exact time or less than one minute late, while in Morocco, if a plane lands fifteen minutes late, it is still considered “on time”. The same thing can be said about appointments and meetings. In punctuality-conscious countries, such as USA, Canada, England, Germany, etc., being late for an appointment or a meeting is not accepted, while it is the norm in Arab and Mediterranean countries (Ben Alvele. 2020).

2.2.9.3 Time orientations:

Anthropologists also classify cultures in terms of time orientation, depending on the preference toward the past, present, or future. It is strongly believed that the time orientation of a culture has a great impact on how much value and importance it gives to time. Ben Alvele (2020) notes that there are three basis psychological time orientations: a culture can be future-orientated, present-orientated, or past-orientated.

2.2.9.3.1 Future-oriented cultures:

Future-oriented cultures are goal oriented. Americans are known for being future orientated. They always think about the future. They continuously plan for the future, near or distant future. Future-oriented cultures welcome change and novelty and are less tolerant for traditions and customs.

2.2.9.3.2 Present-oriented cultures:

Cultures with orientations towards the present emphasize living in the present time. People from these cultures often make plans for the short-term. They believe that living for the moment is fundamental. They tend to be relaxed and spontaneous (Ben Avele, 2020).

2.2.9.3.3 Past-oriented cultures:

Cultures with orientations toward the past refuse change. They often remember past events with pride and happiness. They are strongly attached to their historical traditions. They make their plans according to how
well they appreciate their traditions. They also respect the elderly and traditions and give them high value and special importance. The Amish are a good example of a past-oriented culture. They follow and obey time-honored traditions overlooking all types of technological advances (Adele Pillitteri, 2010). However, some interculturalists state that a society can be a combination of all three orientations.

In the following table, Robin Sandhu (2020) summarizes the characteristics of Monochronic and Polychronic people:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monochronic people</th>
<th>Polychronic people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do their tasks and missions one after the other.</td>
<td>Do some tasks and missions simultaneously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are concentrated on their job.</td>
<td>Can easily be distracted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick to a plan/schedule.</td>
<td>Can easily ruin a plan/schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrow or loan money very seldom.</td>
<td>Borrow or loan money very often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have normally superficial relations.</td>
<td>Try normally to establish serious and lasting individual relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are normally devoted to their job.</td>
<td>Are normally devoted to their relations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.10 Haptics:

In terms of soft skills, it is important to be absolutely clear about the concept of haptics. Haptics is a Greek word that means “I touch”. It is the study of touch in communication in different situations. It examines the language of touch. It refers to the nonverbal communication involving physical touch. While communicating, a person usually gets the feeling of interaction and intimacy at different level. Whether a person is talking to their parents, their wife or husband, their colleagues, their seniors, etc., every interaction and communication is different from the other. Some of the communication may involve ‘touch’. For example, a mom talking to her son would certainly touch him to give him a feeling of love, appreciation, and reassurance; while a manager is unlikely to touch his subordinates when he gives orders.

2.2.10.1 Haptics and Contexts:

Context refers to the characteristics of an interaction that offer key indicators for the understanding of a given behavior. According to Philippot, Feldman, and Coats (1999: 13), “nonverbal behavior can be fully understood only when considered within its context.” In fact, in some cultures, communication cannot be described as effective if there is lack of contextual knowledge. In all intercultural interactions, conversers need to understand context to be fully knowledgeable about the meaning of messages, especially nonverbal ones. Lack of understanding of the context will certainly result in misunderstanding messages. People who are less aware of a culture are less aware of contextual cues that complete the understanding of certain behaviors.

The meaning of a certain nonverbal behavior can be understood only if the following indicators are taken into consideration: (1) who the people involved are – their gender, age, relationship; (2) where they are – environmental features; (3) the topic of the communication – what the conversers are talking about; and (4) what happened before and after the behavior.

Several studies have demonstrated that touch can happen in different contexts and in different ways. As an example, Henley (1977) collected people’s points of view on touch patterns and came to the conclusion that people believe that touch is more likely to happen in these eight contexts:

1. Giving advice and information to someone
2. Giving a command or an instruction
3. Asking someone to do a favor
4. Trying to persuade someone
5. Taking part in a profound conversation
6.Interacting at a party
7. Expressing excitement and enjoyment
8. Receiving a message of worry

2.2.10.2 High-Contact vs. Low-Contact Cultures:

Anthropologists have noticed that touch patterns may differ from one culture to another. Some cultures are viewed as High-Contact, that is, very tactile, while others are Low-Contact or “hands off” (DiBiase & Gunnoe, 2004). Communicators in high-contact cultures maintain close interaction distances and may touch each other many times during their interaction (Hall, 1966). South America, Southern Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East are said to be high-contact regions. Contrariwise, North America, Asia, and northern Europe are described as low-contact.

2.2.10.3 The handshake across cultures:

We almost always shake hands when we meet our friends, relatives, and colleagues. We shake hands to greet and welcome other people. Yet, most of us have never tried to know the origin of the handshake. The history of handshakes goes back to 500 BC. People used to grab each other’s right hands and shake them. At that time, most men used to hold a weapon, namely a dagger, in their right hand. Because the dagger was a short
We have seen so far that people can use their body in a variety of ways to communicate. They use posture, gestures, and facial expressions, in addition to their eyes. Another subsection of Kinesics, or body language, is Oculesics. It refers to the study of eye movement and eye behavior. Eye behavior is an important part of non-verbal communication that has a great impact on face-to-face interactions. In fact, people nonverbally convey messages using their eyes.

A great number of authors, researchers, and scholars highlighted the importance of the use of eyes in conversations. In one of the most popular literary works written by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, “Don Quixote de la Mancha,” the author describes the eyes as silent tongues of love. Dr. Anupama Jena (2020) believes that the eyes are the most communicative feature of the human body that helps people to communicate their physical condition as well as their deepest feelings.

The eyes are believed to be magnificently revealing social signals. The famous folk wisdom says that our eyes are the window to our souls. The eyes of an individual can allow other people to have a snoop in his/her inner world. A person can understand his/her interlocutor’s feelings just by looking into his/her eyes. Our eyes serve as a salient channel since we send non-verbal messages through our eyes and we perceive non-verbal messages sent by other people’s eyes (Reginald B. Adams Jr. and Anthony J. Nelson, 2016). To put it simply, the eyes can show different things about an individual his/her words might not. Let’s examine some subcategories of Oculesics.

### 2.2.11.1 Eye contact and Gaze:

Eye contact and gaze are important subcategories of Oculesics. The word “gaze” is used to refer to the fixed and steady look. Eye contact refers to the mutual gaze, when two people look at each other. Eye contact occurs when one person looks directly at another person’s eyes. It is considered an important form of NVC as it has a huge influence on social behavior. Eye contact has solid implications in all cultures across the globe. In general, maintaining eye contact indicates genuineness, while avoiding the mutual gaze is a sign of shiftiness. However, the intensity of gaze varies between cultures and societies. In the dominant white-American culture, for example, sustained eye contact is a significant sign of interest, respect, confidence, and sincerity. In the Middle Eastern cultures, eye contact is less common and sometimes considered less appropriate, especially between a man and a woman. It can indicate some sexual overtones. In Africa, Japan, and India, a person...
may avoid eye contact to show respect. In these cultures, direct eye contact means aggression, rudeness, and belligerence (Kazuo Nishiyama, 2000).

2.2.12 Eye movement:

Eye movement refers to the voluntary and involuntary movement of the eyes. When the eye movement is combined with other gestures, it can give important information about the speaker’s thoughts. If the speaker, for instance, looks to the left and down while speaking, this means he/she is recollecting facts. If he/she looks to the left and straight, it means he/she is engaged in a self-conversation before getting involved in a debate. If the speaker looks to the right and down, this means he/she is uncertain. If the speaker looks to the right and straight or up, it means he/she is lying (“tutorials point,” 2020).

2.2.13 Pupil dilation:

The pupil is the black center of the eye. The function of the pupil is to allow the light to get to the nerve cells in the back of the eye, which is referred to as the retina. The size of the pupil changes to adjust the amount of light the eyeball needs to function properly. When a person is in a dark place, the pupils dilate to get enough light to be able to see. However, if a person is in a bright environment, the pupils shrink to prevent too much light from getting inside the eye.

The pupils of our eyes are not only affected by light, but they are also influenced by attraction. According to Hess (1972), if an individual looks at someone that he/she finds attractive, his/her pupils will certainly bulge out. Guyton (1977) explains this saying that the pupils get wider in this case because they make it possible to collect more visual information about the attractive person to allow the mind to decide if he/she is a potential partner. Human beings cannot control this process. They cannot even feel the dilation or the contraction of the pupils as this happens in an automatic and adaptive way (Marieb, 2003).

2.2.12 Olfactics:

From all what has been said in the previous section, it can be noticed that non-verbal communication comes in various forms. Olfactics is one of these forms. Olfactics, also known as olfaction, refers to the non-verbal communicative effect of one’s scents and odors. Different cultures like different smells, and interpret smell in different ways. It is true that olfactics has not been explored as deeply as the other forms, yet, there are some interesting and surprising findings that are worth sharing.

Humans, like animals and insects, produce pheromones that allow each individual to have their unique smell. Body odor (BO) is like our fingerprint. It is unique to every person. In fact, it is also called smell print. A newborn child feels comfortable in his/her mom’s arms because he/she recognizes her smell. In addition, most people are able to identify not only their own unique olfactory print but also the one of their close relatives and friends. Moreover, floral odors affect people’s moods, motivation, performance, and interpersonal behavior. More importantly, odors that are used in detergents lead people to many righteous behaviors, such as trusting others, and spending more money (J. Haviland-Jones, P. Wilson, and R. Freyberg, 2016). In contrast, fishy odors may be the cause of an opposite set of behaviors. In a series of studies conducted by Lee and Schwarz (2012), they came to the conclusion that exposure to fishy smells augmented suspicion and diminished cooperation.

Smell is not only a biological or psychological phenomenon, but also a social and cultural experience. For some cultures, like the culture of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, everything in this universe is defined by smell (“TranslateMedia, 2014). In this culture, natural bodily smells are highly valued. Andaman people greet each other saying “Konyune onorange-tanka?” which means “How is your nose?” This question should be answered describing the mood of the person. The local etiquette orders that if the response shows that the person is ‘heavy with odor,’ the greeter is expected to inhale deeply to lessen the smell. In contrast, if the person shows he/she needs more odor-energy, the greeter is advised to blow on him/her to provide some additional scent. In some Middle Eastern countries, the speaker is expected to breathe on his/her interlocutors to show goodwill and friendship. Avoiding this can give the impression that the speaker is not willing to get involved in a conversation, and as a result, he/she will be perceived as disrespectful (“Vectairsystem”, 2019).

Not all cultures are drawn to the same fragrance. In the USA, personal odors are always covered by daily bathing and perfumes, which justifies why Americans are obsessed with deodorants, perfumes, soaps, and shampoos. For Kohl and Francoeur (2002), the most popular fragrance in the USA is vanilla. The French culture, in contrast, highly appreciates ’dark, spicy, statement scents’ (Dunlop. 2012: 346). There is a French tradition that involves accompanying girls of twelve or thirteen to the market to buy their first perfumes. Middle Eastern people’s attitude toward fragrance is influenced by religion. Davies (2006) concluded that in Saudi Arabia people consume oriental perfumes such as Oud and Amber because they are religiously permissible. Dunlop (2012) also noted that the Japanese culture, as a collectivist culture, prefer light fragrances and eschew heavy ones. Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2010) note that collectivist cultures tend to prefer soft fragrances, while strong fragrances are highly valued within individualistic cultures.
III. CONCLUSION

Whether we are aware of it or not, once we interact with others, we unremittingly give and get signals through our nonverbal behaviors. Our facial expressions, our gestures, our postures, our use of space, our tone of voice, as well as our eye contact convey interesting messages. These unspoken messages sent by our bodies can tell our interlocutor if we are honest or not, if we care of what they are talking about, and if we are listening to them carefully. Therefore, understanding these nonverbal signals will help us to effectively recognize the messages being communicated.

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11. Hall, Samovar & Porter, Burgoon & Saine, Knapp and Mehrabian, Birdwhistell, and Anderson

Biography

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