Unit IX

NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Defining Communication

It is very easy to talk about the communication but at the same time a difficult task is to define the concept ‘communication’ itself. Basically communication is a process, and human being is at the centre of this process because we all knows that since the beginning of human existence on the earth, communication has been taking place in any human civilization. Communication process involves exchange of ideas, thoughts feelings, providing information, experiences and sharing knowledge also. In communication process human beings play the role of sender and receiver interchangeably. This chain of communication process includes various channels which help to make communication successful they are, sender (source) of the message who sends the message through proper channel, on another hand receiver/s receives the message after processing on it receiver/s give/s reply to the sender which is named as feedback. Communication is divided into two broad categories: verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication refers to spoken and written communication while non-verbal communication includes postures, gestures, facial expressions, sign language etc.

Meaning and Nature

One of the multi media of communication is non-verbal communication, which is also known as ‘communication by implication’. Communicating a message without using arbitrary symbols, ie. Words or meaning of words is called as ‘non-verbal communication’. Non-verbal communication is wordless communication.

In simple terms non-verbal communication includes all messages other than those expressed in oral or written words. In non-verbal communication the speaker communicates through postures, movements, and other cues. Non-verbal communication is usually understood as the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless messages. In short, it is a wordless communication. In non-verbal communication information is communicated without using words. 93% of communication is non-verbal. 55% communication takes place through facial expressions, posture, gesture and 38% communication through tone of voice.

Non-verbal can include:

Shaking hands, posture (poor posture may appear unprofessional), facial expressions, appearance, voice tone, eye contact (or lack thereof), expression in your eyes (a downward gaze or avoiding eye contact conveys the negative impact to the employer about you), smile, distance between two individuals, how you listen, confidence (through body language and voice quality),
your breathing, the way you move, the way you stand, the way you touch people, colour choice, silence, Artifacts- hairstyle, perfume, clothes, ornaments, books, buildings, room furniture, interior decorations etc. (Objective Language) Clocks, jewellery, hairstyle interior decorative items communicate something. All these things give a symbolic message about the person who communicates. Dress by different countries varies. Dress of army men differ from civilians, land army, air force and naval personnel according to their rank. Objective language is non-verbal message communicated through appearance of objects.

**IMPORTANCE**

Words alone are in many cases, not adequate to express our feelings and reactions. When someone says that he does not know how to express himself in words, it can be concluded that his feelings are too intense and complex to be expressed in words. The relation between a mother and son/daughter, lawyer and his clients are few examples where mother tries to understand her child’s non-verbal cues. Lawyer also tries to understand his clients non-verbal cues in the cases of heinous crimes. The importance of non-verbal communication cannot be ignored. It is necessary that every listener should get himself acquainted with skills of non-verbal communication to observe and understood the conveyed message effectively. Every speaker while communication to people uses non-verbal signals. According to one study, only seven percent of a message effect is carried by words and listeners receive the other 93 percent through non-verbal. The question often arises whether silence is a mode of a communication or not. The answer is yes one can communicate silently. Sometimes silence proves as an effective mode of communication. It is rightly pointed out the significance of silence as a powerful mode of communication through the proverb, ‘silence speaks louder than words’. Actions often speak louder than words. Silence, gestures, handshake, shrug of the shoulders, a smile all have meaning and hence communicate with others.

**TYPES OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

1. **Paralanguage**- Paralanguage deals with “Not only what we say, but how we say it also matters”. Depending on your way of conveying something’ people perceive you which decide your future in the workplace.

Paralanguage is another significant dimension of non-verbal communication. Non-verbal things like sounds, tone of voice, pitch, rhythm, power of emphasis, volume pause and break in sentence, speed of delivery etc. These languages also leaves great impact on meaning which someone wants to convey to the listener.

i) Voice qualities: includes pitch, resonance, volume, rate and rhythm.

ii) Vocal Characterizers: Embracing laughter, coughing, throat clearing and sighing

iii) Vocal qualifiers: variations in pitch and volume
iv) Vocal Segregates: emphasizes on silent sound such as ‘ahs’ and ‘ers’ and pauses.

2. **Kinesics** (Body movement, Facial expressions, gestures, postures, eye contact tactile (touch))

Kinesics is the non-verbal behavior related to movement, either of any particular part of the body, or the body as a whole.

There are five types of kinesics:

i) **Emblems**: Non-verbal cues that have verbal counterpart. The examples include gestures used to signify ‘OK’ and ‘Peace’, or ‘Victory’.

ii) **Illustrators**: Illustrators are used to illustrate the spoken message. Illustrators are basically the cues which communicate directly to the spoken words. For example when you inquire someone to guide you about some address or direction and the listener responds you by using verbal communication accompanied by the gesture of pointing the appropriate direction and here that gesture will be considered illustrative type of non-verbal communication.

iii) **Affective Displays**: These are the indicators of inner emotions, these are the patterns of behavior includes a clenched fist (hostility) a stoop posture (submissiveness) and a bowed head (depression), display of anger by using violence or peace/silence etc. But lack of affective displays is considered as lack of emotions which harms your impression. Different cultures use different affective displays to express their emotions.

iv) **Regulators**: Certain non-verbal cues control the flow of conversation between individuals, when one person has finished a statement, she or he may nod in the direction of the other participant as if to say. I’m finished it’s your turn to speak. Regulatory movements may also suggest that the individual should speak faster, slow down, repeat, elaborate or in some way modify her or his message transmission.

v) **Adaptors**: Adaptors include postural changes and other movements used at a low level of awareness. A slumped posture indicates low spirits, fatigued or inferior state of mind. During conversation when someone leans forward it indicates that the person is interested to listen what you are saying Crossed legs and arms gives the impression of unwillingness to listen.

3. **Oculesics** (Eye behavior) the language of Eye contact: Our eyes speak a lot. Our eye behaviour is studied in Kinesics. Oculesics word is taken from Latin word oculus, meaning eye. The face and eyes conveys most in this type of communication. We use eyes as communicator to communicate our readiness to speak or we also use it to convey others to speak.

4. **Appearance/Artifacts**- hairstyle, perfume, clothes (details of dress), ornaments, books, buildings, room furniture, interior decorations etc. (Objective Language) Clocks, jewellery, hairstyle interior decorative items communicate something. Their revealing is symbolic,
communicating something special about the person. Dress by different countries varies. Dress of army men differs from civilians, land army, air force and naval personnel according to their rank. Objective language is non-verbal message communicated through appearance of objects.

5. **Proxemics** (The non-verbal study of space and distance) the term Proxemetics was invented by the anthropologist Edward Hall. The proxemics is the study of distance that the people keep themselves between the speaker and the listener. Generally, people are not conscious and aware about proximics but the distance affects interpersonal communication. Personal space is an invisible factor or rule. How we arrange objects and ourselves in relation to space decides the success or failure of our communication. Space between persons indicates relations (formal, informal) at the same time and is a dimension of interpersonal communication. Personal space and interpersonal distance are important components of communication. Edward T. Hall in his scholarly work identified three components of interpersonal distance They are: a) Intimate b) Social c) Public They govern interpersonal relationship.

Intimate – distance ranges from very close (3 o 6 inches- for soft whispers; secrets are intimate communication) to close ( 8 to 12 inches- for giving confidential information) to near (12 to 20 inches- for speaking in a soft voice)

Social- The social distance ranges from 20 inches to 5 feet.

Public- The public distance from 6 feet to above 100 feet.

6. **Haptics** (Study of touch) tactile communication- Haptics communication is one of the important branches of non verbal communication that refers to the ways people and animals communicate through the sense of touch. The different forms of haptics have its own positive and negative side. For example a warm loving touch can lead to positive outcome while a violent touch leads to a negative outcome. A gentle touch of a friendly hand on the shoulders communicates encouragement. Feeling of sense communicates something. One can communicate a great deal by touch. Like gesture, touch is also one of the earliest methods of communication of human beings. Infants learn much about their environment by touching, feeling, cuddling, and tasting. A pat on the back, shaking hands, or holding hands can express more than a lengthy speech. Touching is a powerful communicative tool and carries the potential to express a tremendous range of feelings such as fear, love, hatred, anger, anxiety, warmth and coldness.

7. **Olfactics** (what would you prefer smelling?) use of smell. A smell can trigger the oldest of memories. We can remember what we smell for longer time as compared to what we see and hear. Americans are very smell conscious. Smell can even be used as a warning system in identifying culprits.
8. **Chronomics** (use of time) Use of time is also as chronemics as an important non-verbal method of communication. Time also conveys the message. Time speaks. Edward T.Hall is the first scholar who has investigated time dimension of interpersonal communication. Time is a mode of interpersonal communication. Time is an important factor which is precise and valuable. In these days of busy living, business and social relations, time can be saved, wasted, given and taken. Punctuality or delay speaks pleasant or unpleasant feelings and attitudes. Tardiness is considered an insult in some cultures. Late arrival to attend a meeting in time, convey something. Time is very valuable in group activities of many organizations. In certain circumstances, arriving at an appointed place on or before time, communicate something. A telephone call at too early hours or late night conveys, significant message. For instance, a telephone call a 1.A.M. or 2.A.M. communicates something of urgency, unusual message to be attended to on a priority basis.

9. **Facial Expressions**- Many a times our face is considered as the mirror of our mind. And that is very true in many cases. Facial expressions are closely associated with our feelings and moods. Facial expressions can also communicate message effectively. As a matter of fact, facial expressions as a form of non-verbal communication medium is more effective and helps to complete the circle of communication. Some expressions are intentional or unintentional, conscious or unconscious. Facial expressions definitely transmit feelings, facts, emotions, ideas, opinions, attitudes etc. It is one of the kinesics media that include smile, frown, narrowed eyes, exhibit friendliness, anger, disbelief etc.

Different parts of human face such as upper face, middle face, lower face, and the sides of the face are capable of conveying wide range of expressions and emotions. Facial expressions convey happiness, anger, surprise, boredom, fear, sadness, disgust, liking, disliking, rejection, love, jealously, agreement, disagreement, frustration, depression, ease, pain, pleasure etc. The expression or movement to make the forehead wrinkle and the eyebrow moved down are signs of worry, disapproval of deep thought. His father frowned at the worker for rude behaviour. The way of looking- long look or short look communicates beyond words about one’s feelings, attitudes, emotions, tensed or relaxed mood of the speaker.

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