

Topic 4 Non-verbal communication

Pre-reading

Thinking about the topic

1. Think of some examples of non-verbal communication. How can people communicate without using words?
2. Can you explain the difference between conscious and unconscious body language?
3. In what professions is non-verbal communication inevitable either to use or understand?

Reading

Body language

Humans use language to communicate, but we also communicate nonverbally with our bodies. The way in which we stand or sit, how we use our eyes, what we do with our hands, as well as what we wear - all of these convey powerful messages to other people. In fact, anthropologists claim that only a small percentage of what we communicate is verbal (about 7%); most of it is nonverbal (about 58%).

Some of our body language is conscious, such as the "thumbs up" gesture used in many cultures to signal "OK". But much of what we communicate with our bodies is unconscious. Even in one's own culture, unconscious body language can be difficult to read. Imagine, then, how much more incomprehensible the body language of someone from a different culture would be!

After reading

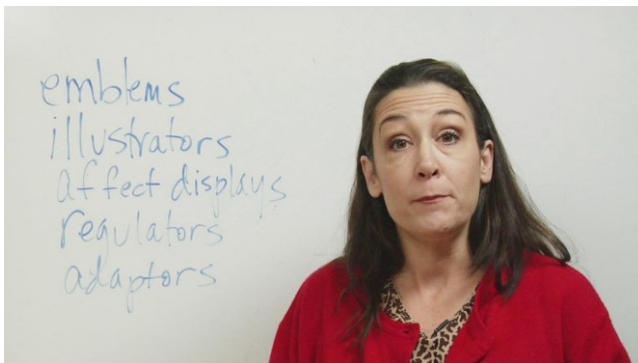
Answer the following questions:

- 1 With what parts of our bodies do we convey nonverbal messages?
- 2 What is conscious body language? Give an example.
- 3 What is unconscious body language? Think of an example.

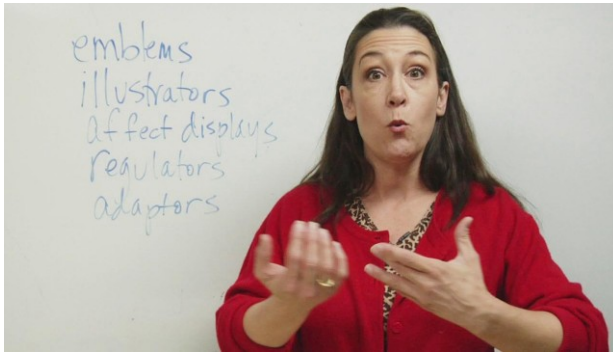
Adapted from:

Espeseth, Miriam. Academic Encounters. Listening, Note Taking, and Discussion. Cambridge: CUP, 1999, pp. 86 – 87

When Demosthenes was asked what was the first part of oratory he answered, "action"; and which was the second, he replied, "action"; and which was third he still answered, "action." **People tend to believe actions more than words!**



Today, many researchers are concerned with the information sent by communication that is independent of and different from verbal information; namely, the **non-verbal communication**. Verbal communication is organized by language; **non-verbal communication** is not.



Communication is the transfer of information from one person to another. Most of us spend about 75 percent of our waking hours communicating our knowledge, thoughts, and ideas to others. However, most of us fail to realize that a great deal of our communication is of a non-verbal form as opposed to the oral and written forms. **Non-verbal communication** includes facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, body posture and motions, and positioning within groups. It may also include the way we wear our clothes or the silence we keep.

Go through the web site

<http://www.bizmove.com/skills/m8g.htm>

Then answer the questions below.

- 1 What categories does G. W. Porter divide non-verbal communication into?
- 2 What are static features of non-verbal communication?
- 3 Could you name dynamic features?
- 4 What can you learn about kinesics and facial expressions?

And from another resource:

Nonverbal behavior always communicates

Even small movements are extremely important in interpersonal relationships. We can often tell, for example, when two people genuinely like each other and when they are merely being polite. If we had to state how we know this, we would probably have considerable difficulty. These inferences, many of which are correct, are based primarily on these small nonverbal behaviours of the participants – the muscles around the eyes, the degree of eye contact, the way in which the individuals face each other, and so on. All nonverbal behaviour, however small or transitory, is significant; all of it communicates.

Facial Communication Research

The way in which we use our hands, face, and eyes creates meaningful nonverbal messages. First of all our faces communicate, especially our emotions. In FAST (facial effect scoring technique), the face is broken up into three main parts: eyebrows and forehead, eyes and eyelids, and the lower face from the bridge of the nose down (Ekman, Friesen, and Tomkins, 1971). Judges then try to identify various emotions by observing the different parts of the face and writing descriptions of facial movements. In this way we can study more effectively just how the face communicates various emotions.

It appears from cross-cultural research that facial expressions have a somewhat universal nature. For example, people in Borneo and New Guinea who have had little contact with Western cultures were able to match accurately emotions with pictures of facial expressions of Westerners. Further, their own facial expressions, posed to communicate different emotions, were accurately decoded by Americans. Similarly, in studies conducted with children who were born blind and who therefore could not see how others facially expressed the various emotions, the children seem to use the same facial expressions as their sighted peers. Studies such as these point to a universality among facial gestures. The wide variations in facial communication that we do observe in different cultures seem to reflect what is permissible and not permissible to communicate, rather than a difference in the way in which emotions are expressed facially (Matsumoto, 1991). For example, in some cultures it is permissible openly and publicly to show contempt or disgust, but in others people are taught to hide such emotions in public and to display them only in private.

Adapted from:

Seal, Bernard. *Academic Encounters. Reading, Studying Skills, and Writing.* Cambridge: CUP, 1997, pp. 136, 147 - 148


Discuss with your partners the following material.

Taken from:

Viney, Peter. Viney, Karen. Handshake – a course in communication. Oxford: OUP, 1996, pp.29,32. ISBN 0-19-457220-X

UNIT TWO

Non-verbal communication



non-verbal communication imperatives

Gesture

1 Matching

What do their gestures mean? Match the sentences to the pictures.

A It wasn't me! I didn't do anything!
 B Don't do that again!
 C The bill, please.
 D I don't know.
 E Be quiet!

2 An international language?

Do other students agree with your choices?
 Do you think these gestures mean the same in every country?

In Bulgaria, nodding the head means 'no'.
 Almost everywhere else, shaking the head means 'no'.

3 What gestures?

Can you use gestures to express these things?

– Come here.	– Go away.
– I'd like a drink.	– You're crazy!
– That's perfect.	– It's over there.
– Keep calm.	– This is boring.
– OK?	– Who? Me?


Are there any other gestures which you often use? Demonstrate them.

4 Role-play

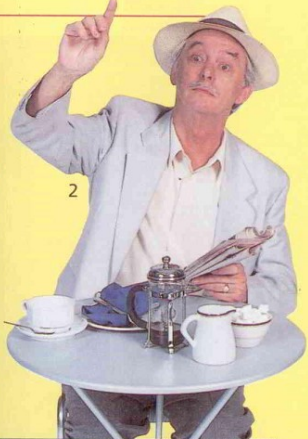
Work in pairs. Student A is a tourist. Student B is a waiter. Neither of them can speak any of the other's language. Use gesture and mime to communicate.

Student A arrives, gets a table, orders spaghetti and a drink, and finally pays without saying anything. The waiter can speak, but the customer doesn't understand.


1




2



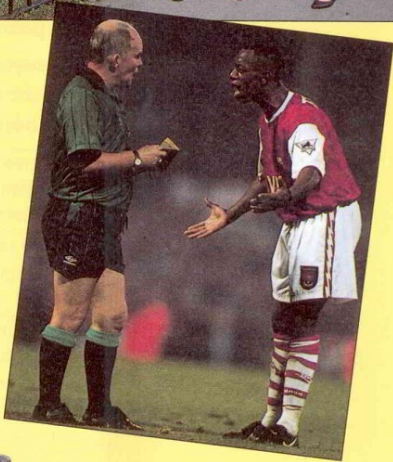
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4



5



Body Language

1 Can you read body language?

Look at these pictures and answer the questions.



1 Tick the words which describe this person:

<input type="checkbox"/> sincere	<input type="checkbox"/> shy	<input type="checkbox"/> relaxed
<input type="checkbox"/> confident	<input type="checkbox"/> nervous	<input type="checkbox"/> honest



2 Does she look:

a. angry?	c. bored?
b. embarrassed?	d. interested?

Can he read her body language?



3 Do they like each other?



4 Does he look friendly and co-operative, or does he look unfriendly and unco-operative?