

Non Verbal Communication

Introduction

Nonverbal communication is the process of receiving and sending information through wordless messages for the purpose of communicating. Nonverbal communication can be done through gestures, facial expressions, body posture, eye contact, touch. Object communication is also part of nonverbal communication. Object communication takes the form of clothing, symbols, info graphics and architecture. The entire above are used to convey messages from one person to the other. Nonverbal communication can be used to convey messages clearly but could be misunderstood. The ability to understand nonverbal communication may depend on the context of use and the people involved in the communication process.

Discussion

The concept of facial expression includes a characteristic of a person that is represented, the visual configuration representing the characteristic, the physical basis of the appearance and the perceiver interpreting the signs.

There was a lady named Jane who was telling her friend, Rachel, a story about how her weekend was great. Jane told Rachel of how she spent her weekend with her boyfriend. They went to the movies on Saturday during the day. During the lunch hour, they took lunch at a five star hotel that was at the city. After lunch they went swimming till late in the evening. They went home, had supper then went to the disco. They danced and sang till morning. On Sunday morning, Jane cleaned her house and her clothes. She spent the afternoon sleeping. All this while when Jane was telling the story, Rachel kept widening her eyes and opening her mouth wide without saying anything. She was amazed at how Jane's weekend was great. When Jane was done telling her story, Rachel said nothing. Jane stopped smiling and asked Rachel why she kept widening her eyes and opening her mouth while she told her the story. Rachel told her she was amused and astonished with the way Jane enjoyed her weekend. Jane told Rachel she was lying and that all that while she thought Jane was loose. Jane and Rachel who were good friends ended up quarrelling, fighting and becoming enemies. This was as a result of Jane misunderstanding the facial expressions of Rachel towards her while she told the story.

Nonverbal communication is transferable. However there are two factors that are problematic when nonverbal communication is used. First, nonverbal communication has form and function and secondly it is not at all times translatable. These two factors make nonverbal communication difficult to teach causing break downs which lead to misunderstanding. Most paralinguistic features have more than one function and meaning. Thus nonverbal communication manages, identifies and defines relationships. It conveys attitudes and feelings but not ideas. This is why Jane failed to capture the real meaning of the facial expression that Rachel portrayed resulting to enmity between the two of them.

Misunderstandings occur because the paralinguistic forms functions vary from culture to culture. Although there are nonverbal forms that are universal, such as smiles, laughter and sour expressions, the difference in others do result in misunderstanding.

There are differences that are associated with gender and age. Nonverbal communication is relatively ambiguous and is subject to personal interpretation of the receiver. The meaning conveyed is particularly unclear when the message conveyed is doubted to be deliberate or not deliberate. The communication might have improved if Jane had included Rachel in the conversation so as to know what she thought of her weekend. At the end of the conversation Jane could ask Rachel to tell her whether it was great or not before jumping in to her own conclusion and messing their friendship up.

A communication climate is the concept of how communications are conducted within an environment. It is the environment where communication can either thrive or fail. The communication climate that I can identify is the school environment. The negative behaviors that school mates use are making assumptions. School mates jump in to conclusions very quickly without getting to know the real meaning that the message carries. School mates and teachers use jargons and don't explain technical terms to students. They assume that students must know what they mean when they use jargon. The use of jargon makes many students get an impression that they have understood but in real sense they have not.

Teachers don't share complete and unbiased information. The information with which to make informed choices is not given. The teachers don't offer suggestions that are clear. Students confuse and think that the suggestions are the only options thus making mistakes when making decisions. Students are usually afraid to say they don't know. They are not as honest enough to admit their lack of knowledge on something ending up making wrong choices and decisions.

Students don't respect cultural differences or recognize differences in the way people interpret and understand information. This leads to misunderstandings among students sometimes resulting to violence. They don't pay attention to nonverbal cues and thus being misled. The impact of my own behavior is the same with the behavior of the other students. Being misled, making inappropriate decisions and resulting misunderstandings is what comes out of that.

Analysis of language

Linguists have broken the study of spoken language into two. These two categories are phonology and grammar. Phonology is the study of spoken language. Grammar on the other hand is the study of how sounds are uttered to make sense.

In phonology the smallest sound that can be placed to change the meaning of a word is referred to as phoneme. In English for instance, the initial sounds of the words gin and pin are phonemes. Different languages use different sets of phonemes. Polynesian for instance, uses about fifteen phonemes. It uses vowel sounds more than consonant sounds. English language makes use of forty to forty five phonemes. The English language uses consonant clusters. Some cultures don't have some sounds in their languages making it difficult for their speakers to use a language that contains sounds that are not present in the language of those cultures.

Learning and using the sounds of a language can be made difficult by the writing system. English for example, has more than a thousand combinations of letters that are used in producing the forty sounds of the spoken language commonly used. This is even made harder when words use same phonemes that are spelt differently for example see and sea.

Grammar is divided in to two categories when analyzing language. The two categories are morphology and syntax. Morphology is the unit dealing with how sounds are combined to form

larger units called morphemes. A morpheme is the smallest combination of sounds that has meaning and cannot form smaller units of meaning. Words can consist of one or more morphemes. Some morphemes make sense but cannot stand alone. Such morphemes are referred to as bound morphemes. An example of such is 'mis' in the word mismatch. Morphemes are combined to form words and words are combined to form sentences. Syntax is the study of how words are combined to form sentences. The sentences should be able to make sense when uttered. Native speakers of a language learn the basic rules that entail how words are joined together to form sentences. They do this as they grow up from childhood to adulthood. These rules are acquired at home before going to school. They acquire the rules from family members and acquaintances. When children go to school they learn to enhance them to merge with patterns which fit more to the society in question.

Different languages are intelligible because of the fact that vocabulary is unfamiliar and also because syntax rules are different. In English language for instance, the order of words is vital to effect change in meaning. In Latin languages word order is not vital. Meanings are determined by word endings. In the mandarin language meaning is determined by tonal variation put in words.

Language is involved in about all learning experiences. It is the tool that is used to bring out what one is thinking and experiencing.

The main purpose of language is to transmit culture from one generation to the other. Language assists new members of a group to learn the culture and values of that group. Language is used differently in different societies. What is taken as appropriate use of language varies from society to society. Different societies might have same words but the meaning portrayed by these words to the different societies might be different.

Behaviors might differ from culture to culture on how we converse or use language. In English and mandarin verbal communication for example, various ways of discussing about time in English like it was horizontal and mandarin like it were perpendicular match up to differences on how the speakers of the two languages think of time. World view in language entails language and thought. These two concepts are closely related. One can talk without thinking in the same way one can think without talking. To communicate an idea, it must be put in the parameters of a language. Words help bring out certain images or information to a hearer. Each culture has a different set of parameters for language and thought. Learning the language of a culture that one associates with, helps create one's thought patterns required in the culture. World view and language entails factors such as word sets, spelling and understanding and developing new word and thought categories.

Conclusion

Language carries peoples' culture and history. Therefore language is integral to world view. When we learn another language, we learn a new set of cultural set up and way of thinking. As we progress in learning the new culture, we learn to think in the way of the new culture and create meaning in relation to that cultural world view. Language serves as an organizer of knowledge therefore aspects of language influence categorization.

References

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