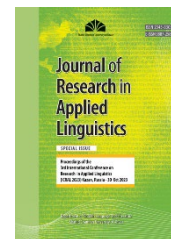




Shahid Chamran University
of Ahvaz



Features of Non-Verbal Communication in the Culture of English Speakers

Leila Ayvazovna Nurgalieva^{1*}, Alsu Yunisovna Giniyatullina², Olga Stanislavovna Zubkova³, Irina Vladimirovna Shcherbakova⁴, Yulia Alexandrovna Kovalenko⁵

¹Department of Foreign Languages in the Field of International Relations, Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia; lei.pandora@gmail.com

²Department of Foreign Languages in the Field of International Relations, Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia; alsu.giniyatullina.2016@mail.ru

³Department of Foreign Languages and Professional Communication, Kursk State University, Kursk, Russia; olgaz4@rambler.ru

⁴Department of the Latin Language and the Basics of the Medicine Terminology, Kursk State Medical University, Kursk, Russia; irina.shcherbakova315@gmail.com

⁵Department of Clothing and Footwear Design, Kazan National Research Technological University, Kazan, Russia; Julia_a_kov@mail.ru

Abstract

The issue of nonverbal communication as it relates to language culture is covered in this paper. English-American culture was cited as an example. The author takes into account nonverbal cues like smiling and waving in greetings and goodbyes. Comparative study on these nonverbal communication methods revealed that, for English-speaking Americans, smiling is more than just a happy or encouraging emotion; it's a way of life, an essential component of their culture, and akin to saying "I'm fine." In contrast to smiling, both cultures value hand gestures. People who are interested in learning more about English and American culture will find this article interesting. The differences between entirely different peoples are easier to comprehend and accept when the studied linguistic culture is compared to the native one.

Keywords: Communication; English language; Culture.

1. Introduction

Earth is home to a vast array of languages, and learning a new language takes more than a year. Modern writers examine the nature, function, and significance of the English language in the history and cultures of many countries. In this instance, we frequently forget that nonverbal communication is a universal form of communication that is available to everyone. "The body language we use every moment of our lives is the one language on earth that is accessible and understood by everyone," according to Kuznetsov (2007) (Oxenden, 2014). The emotional component of nonverbal communication is present in it.

Nonverbal communication, sometimes referred to as manual language, is the exchange of messages without the use of spoken or written words. Nonverbal behavior can highlight specific aspects of a spoken message, much like italicizing text does. Author Weldon Kees and psychiatrist Jurgen Ruesch first used the term "nonverbal communication" in their 1956 book "Nonverbal Communication: Notes on the Visual Perception of Human Relations." (Schefflen, 1972). They are essential to our ability to comprehend our interlocutor's current feelings, and they can frequently carry out simple communication tasks. Consider this straightforward query: Have you prepared dinner? Yes or no, or simply a nod or shake of the head, is our response.

2. Literature Review

The study of nonverbal communication in foreign cultures began in the 1950s, a decade that saw substantial progress in the study of body language. A few important books on the subject were published during this time period, such as Bode Whist's Introduction to Body Language and Hall's The Silent Language. There were developments in the field of body language during the 1980s. The 1980s saw the beginning of research into nonverbal communication in China. Numerous professionals and academics have expressed interest in the study of nonverbal communication, which has garnered a lot of attention in China (Pengshuang, 2018). This has led to the publication of several books that investigate the role of language and nonverbal behavior in cross-cultural contexts. The Dictionary of British and American

Culture, Hu Wenzhong's Culture and Communication, and Liu Runqing's Language and Culture, published in the late 1980s and mid-1990s, are a few prominent works in the field of language and culture. These works established the foundation for researchers studying language and nonverbal communication in cross-cultural communication today (Kuhnke, 2007).

The total impact of a message is approximately 7% verbal (words alone), 38% vocal (including tone of voice, inflection, and other sounds), and 55% nonverbal, according to American psychologist and pioneer of body language research Albert Mehrabian (Mehrabian, 2007). For this reason, nonverbal communication is crucial. As a result, communicating nonverbally requires a lot of cognitive processing. The exchange of information between people using a language other than spoken or written is referred to as nonverbal communication. This includes the communicator's physical gestures, positioning, temporal aspects, vocal inflection and pitch, general environmental features, color scheme, layout, and design, in addition to any additional visual or auditory cues. Body language, gestures, and other nonverbal cues are studied as a branch of nonverbal communication because they are so important in communication. The term "Kinesics" refers to "body movements." It illustrates how the body speaks through various motions of its constituent parts rather than through words. It also has strong cultural roots. Cultural norms and beliefs impact nonverbal communication by dictating the acceptable range of nonverbal behavior. Conversely, nonverbal communication serves as a mirror reflecting a multitude of cultures. In order to avoid misunderstandings and facilitate cross-cultural communication among nations, this research aims to highlight a comparative approach to discussing a variety of nonverbal elements that are frequently used in daily life (Ziying & Mingrui, 2020).

Nancy Austin, a management consultant, asserts that body language is crucial. "People rely on body language to tell the truth when they are not sure what they are seeing or hearing." Playing fast and loose with words is much easier than doing the same with gestures." Paul Ekman clarifies "We communicate with our entire body, including our tone of voice, facial expressions, and vocal cords," the saying goes. Knowing how to read body language has many real-world uses. When you can consciously "read" what others are unintentionally saying, you can deal with problems at work and at home before they become serious. Marilyn Maple, an educational psychologist, says. It seems that power dynamics are the main topic of nonverbal communication in the workplace, and this in turn affects how conscious one is of their status. In a conference, we can determine who is most important by observing who is present. In all species and societies, those in positions of authority desire to project an enormous, fearless, and strong image. People who feel excluded or helpless exhibit a variety of bodily cues (Vishwakarma, 2023).

3. Methodology

The majority of people define non-verbal communication as the mode of communication using non-verbal cues. This, however, does not fully capture the intricacy of this phenomenon. "Some gestures have a linguistic meaning, as in various types of aphasia, along with lost verbal skills; also gestures with corresponding linguistic functions disappear," Knapp & Hall (2002) point out in reference to one of his works. Conversely, not all of the words we say are clear-cut and definitely constitute verbal means of communication; for example, take into consideration sound-like words (buzzing, muttering) or non-sentential speech, which are common in aphasic individuals (Amirkhan, 1984). Therefore, it follows that human speech incorporates both verbal and nonverbal forms of communication. They sometimes replace one another and sometimes they enhance one another. Studying the culture of the people we are learning a foreign language requires. While researching culture, it is also necessary to examine the finer points of language speakers' speech patterns because ignorance of customs and culture can lead to awkward situations.

4. Results

It's no accident that we've spent so much time discussing smiles in order to illustrate how they serve as visitors' business cards for foreigners, particularly Americans. Furthermore, smiling at Americans is akin to a cult. It is thought that a smile is a natural facial expression, and its absence can only indicate that a person is so awful that he is unable to conceal his feelings. However, this phenomenon is incredibly uncommon in America, where people do not think it necessary to express their genuine emotions to someone they do not consider to be their closest and dearest friend. Americans are therefore frequently viewed as being dishonest and cunning (they always have a smile on their faces, even when their conversations don't suggest anything pleasant). Numerous psychologists have noted that smiling is not a tradition that can spread. It is only possible to accept part of their viewpoint. When individuals travel overseas for longer than two months in pursuit of employment or education, they return entirely different people. Compared to verbal

communication, nonverbal communication typically includes more context. Although people can lie vocally, it is more difficult to hide nonverbal cues like hand gestures and eye contact. In our daily lives, we may have come across a variety of nonverbal personality traits that are associated with various cultural groups and give rise to stereotypes. Examples of these traits include the belief that Asians conceal their true emotions, Americans are fake, Japanese people are courteous but uninterested, and so forth. Nonverbal communication is interpreted differently in different cultures (Fakhrutdiniva et al. 2022).

After assimilating into Western customs, returning home requires a difficult period of acclimatization as one gets used to our people's decreased openness and fun (especially after returning from America). The British culture is demonstrated by the example that follows: Alexander bemoaned that he felt "like the village idiot" in England because, in Britain, people assume that you are insane if you smile all the time. Since I always had a smile on my face, this is actually exactly what my husband's friends thought of me when I first visited England. Individuals and cultures differ from one another in terms of nonverbal communication. Their nonverbal communication is defined by their cultural background because many nonverbal cues, such as signs and signals, are learned behaviors. When people from different cultures communicate, miscommunication can happen because non-verbal cues have different meanings. People can unintentionally offend others because nonverbal communication differs across cultures. Since many facial expressions, like smiling and crying, are innate, most cultures share a common set of expressions. Six expressions have been found to be universal: happiness, sadness, disgust, fear, anger, and surprise. However, there may be other variations, such as the degree to which people express these emotions; in certain cultures, people express their emotions honestly, while in others, they do not (Arshavskaya, 1977).

It would appear how significant and complicated a gesture can be. However, a great deal of gestures are incomprehensible without additional research. When we see what we believe to be a familiar gesture when visiting a foreign nation, we often interpret it in accordance with our own national cultural traditions, even though it may mean something entirely different. This symbol denotes admiration in our nation, but in Bangladesh it denotes a desire to have fun with a woman. This is not by happenstance, as one of the challenges that people encounter when learning a foreign language is nonverbal intercultural differences. First of all, in order to be «able» to read body language and aid in understanding others, one must be knowledgeable about and practice nonverbal communication techniques. Every facial movement—eyebrow, lip, and mouth—conveys information, whether favorable or unfavorable. For instance, smiles, according to American psychologist P. Ekman, are far more complicated phenomena than is generally understood. P. Ekman identifies eighteen distinct smile types, the majority of which are imitations. How can one tell which smiles are genuine from fake ones? According to Kuznetsov (2007), one should examine the upper portion of the face. When one smiles sincerely, muscles in the face contract, causing the eyes to squint.

5. Discussion

We will now look more closely at the significance of smiles in British culture. Firstly, we would like to point out that the influence of Western culture is evident in the speech and kinesic (outward expression of human feelings and emotions) behavior of the younger generation. However, it should also be acknowledged that some customs have persisted to this day, albeit only in part. For instance, prior to the 20th century, a girl would cover her face with a handkerchief and apologetically lower her eyes when she met a young man. Here's an example from an English author's novel: Anna had to hide her face from the frequent men on the street so she could not walk around freely. Thankfully, Hayat didn't find this to be a huge concern when she saw the Tartars; on many occasions, she didn't even realize her hand was covering her small face as it reached for the shawl on its own. It's evident from the example above that the girl wasn't supposed to reveal her face to an unknown person. If the girl did smile, it was a very small smile, hidden by half a shawl over her face so that only her eyes showed the smile. These days, girls typically show their faces to strangers without covering them. Moreover, a lot of contemporary English women can smile first thanks to the influence of Western culture. A handshake at the meeting or farewell is another of the most striking non-verbal communication methods in the West, aside from smiling. This type is a more widely used communication tool than a smile. There are three known varieties of it: One way to raise your right hand is to swipe it from side to side at head level or above, putting the palm forward. Another way is to raise it at head level and put the palm forward, then move your fingers in an undulating motion, bending forward as you go.

Take this scenario into consideration: "Emile waves enthusiastically to Joe, who composes his face and gives her his most endearing smile." As demonstrated by the example, a smile goes well with a handshake and is typically

interpreted as a measure of familiarity. Two phases of the Greetings process are highlighted by American psychiatrist A. Shefflen (to Americans):

1. In most cases, the greeting begins at a distance of roughly 12 feet between the communicators (though it may start closer in desolate areas). Furthermore, the following is how Americans generally behave when they are far away: He turns around and greets AI with a wave of his hand. Those extending their hands in greeting; 2. Those involved in the communicative act gather together and, if they are friends or acquaintances, shake hands. They give each other an embrace if they are close friends or relatives who haven't seen each other in a while. Some couples share a kiss.

6. Conclusions

There are many current issues in linguistics at the current stage of development. A few of them are being studied in multiple fields of expertise. One way that any language is culturally represented is through nonverbal communication. It is ubiquitous in both in-person and virtual communication. Nonverbal communication is an effective way to control our social interactions with others because it occurs largely automatically and frequently without conscious thought. Stable patterns of nonverbal communication are shaped by factors related to environment, gender, culture, biology, and personality. Nonetheless, nonverbal communication serves a variety of purposes, demonstrating its adaptability and usefulness in managing impressions, expressing intimacy, controlling interaction, and conveying information, among others. Therefore, nonverbal communication's complementary behavioral and social judgment tracks make up a vital system for interacting with others in our social environments. These days, a growing number of people employ the formerly unusual expressions and gestures. Therefore, we can conclude from researching nonverbal communication methods that they convey cultural and ethnolinguistic information in addition to psychological information. We can only understand more about individuals from diverse cultures by researching this kind of communication.

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