

Nonverbal Communication; A Study of Another Communication System

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More recently social scientists, such as anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists, have shed light on communicative activity and there has been remarkable progress in the experimental analysis of social performance on the nonverbal level. Communication has been traditionally studied as a process of purposefully conveying a message from the sender to the receiver by the means of the shared code, that is, a language. Conversation is just a good example. This traditional approach has considered communication mainly as verbal, it is necessary, however, to pay much attention to the nonverbal aspects in order to understand and describe the whole process of communication.

A. Montague and F. Matson define the word "Communication" as below:

the name we give to the countless ways that humans have of keeping in touch---not just to words and music, pictures and print, but also to cries and whispers, nods and becks, postures and plumages: to every move that catches someone's eye and every sound that resonates upon another ear. Human communication, as the saying goes, is a clash of symbols; and it covers a multitude of signs. But it is more than media and messages, information and persuasion; it also meets a deeper need and serves a higher purpose. Whether clear or garbled, tumultuous or silent, deliberate or fatally inadvertent, communication is the ground of meeting and the foundation of community.¹⁾

Further A. Montague criticizes the traditional approach as follows:

Until very recently the systematic study of communication was heavily dominated by the verbal and logical bias of Marshall McLuhan which took its cue from the linear pattern of words in print and elaborated a no-nonsense theory of communication as the simple transmission of information from A to B. If B got the message, that was "good communication"; anything else that might transpire between the two human points, such as the twitching of bodies or the emission of sight, was regarded as interference of "noise"---that is, "bad communication." In

effect there was only one sensory channel (the audio acoustic) and only one medium (speech) through which human beings could make any meaningful contact with one another.²⁾

Recent studies of communication tend to be increasingly naturalistic, and commonsensical. To this tendency, contributions are expected from different fields such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, linguistics, psychoanalysis, and ethology.

On the share of quantity of total information, nonverbal communication is taking most part of it. According to R. L. Birdwhistell's report, the communication of feeling is 65% non-verbal.³⁾ A. Mehrabian developed an equation for the communication of total feeling which is: Total feeling = 55% *facial expression* + 38% *vocal expression* + 7% *verbal expression*. Moreover he suggests that 93% of the communication of feeling comes from nonverbal messages.⁴⁾ And E. T. Hall summarized the system that men use to convey information (primary message system) as ten types of different human communicative activities.⁵⁾ He says that nine types of them are more or less nonverbal. But it is true that human nonverbal communication is in complementary relation with verbal one. Nobuyuki Honna classified nonverbal communication in the following categories:⁶⁾

- (1) BODY MOVEMENT
- (2) PARALANGUAGE
- (3) APPEARANCE
- (4) TOUCH
- (5) DISTANCE
- (6) SMELL

In this paper I will examine and discuss these six types of nonverbal communication based on Honna's hypothesis.

(1) BODY MOVEMENT

R. L. Birdwhistell called the study of body movement "Kinesics" and said that "Kinesics is the science of body behavioural communication."⁷⁾ He suggested that the communication by body movement was a ruled systematic action, and showed that body motion could be abstracted and analyzed in a manner analogous to speech behavior. And he decomposed body movement into the smallest distinctions called "kinemes," which are combined to form a meaningful "kinemorpheme."⁸⁾

Body movement mainly can be classified four types: (A) Facial Expression, (B) Eye Movement, (C) Gesture, and (D) Posture. I will discuss and examine these four type.

(A) Facial Expression

Paul Ekman developed the "Facial Affect Scoring Technique (FAST)" method to analyze human facial expressions, and recognized the following coding system of eight feelings:⁹⁾

- 1) Happiness
- 2) Sadness
- 3) Surprise
- 4) Anger
- 5) Disgust
- 6) Fear
- 7) Contempt
- 8) Interest

D. G. Leather added 9) Bewilderment and 10) Determination to the above feeling.¹⁰⁾

And Ekman showed that each part of the face has its own expressive function:¹¹⁾

- (1) The lower part of the face and eyes express happiness most clearly.
- (2) The eyes are a major place to express sadness.
- (3) The parts of the face to express happiness also express surprise.
- (4) Anger is shown on the lower part of the face, the eyebrows, and the forehead.
- (5) Disgust expression comes from the area below the nose.
- (6) Fear appears in the eyes.

This study is based on the hypothesis that each facial expression has its own meaning. One facial expression shows not a single feeling but several feelings. Ekman and Friesen called this expressive function "affective blends," and studied complicated facial expressions as blends of coding system.¹²⁾

Do facial expressions differ across cultures or are they universal? Here are two answers presented; one is that the basic expressions are innate (e. g., Darwin 1872; Eible-Eibesfeldt 1972; Izard 1971; Tomkins 1962,) and the other is that they result from social learning (Birdwhistell 1970; Klineberg 1975; Laabarre 1947; Leach 1972; Mead 1975.¹³⁾) It is generally believed that some of them are innate and some are acquired.

(B) Eye Movement

The major topics of eye movement are as followed:

- (1) The function of mutual gaze in interaction.
- (2) The dilation and contraction of the pupil in different social situations or toward different objects.
- (3) The institutionalized types of gaze behavior and their social significance.

The first topic is a study of communicative function of eye movement (eye contact, mutual glance, or visual interaction) in social interaction. Kendon set up four hypothesis regarding functions of mutual glance.¹⁴⁾

- (1) recognition function
- (2) monitor function
- (3) adjustive function
- (4) expressive function

And it is clear that mutual glance has something to do with the power structure within a group hierarchy.

It is well known that the pupil will contract in the light, and dilate in the dark. But at the beginning of 1960, Eckhard Hess discovered that contraction and dilation of the pupil was a sign of emotions and feelings.¹⁵⁾ He reported that a man's pupil enlarged more than a woman's at the sight of a pin-up picture and that a woman's pupil enlarged more than a man's at the sight of a picture of a muscular man. He concluded that the enlargement of the pupil is closely related to the degree of interest.¹⁶⁾ It has been made clear by several studies that the enlargement of the pupil results from strong emotions, interest, and attention. But it has not been known what role the pupil movement plays in the interpersonal relation. As to the social function of eye contact, E. Goffman's study will lead to more interesting topics.¹⁷⁾

(C) Gesture

Ekman and Friesen classified gestures into three types: 1) Emblem, 2) Illustrater, 3) Adaptor (body manipulator).¹⁸⁾ These contents as follow.

1) Emblem

An emblem is more linguistic than other types. It is symbolic and differs in meanings among different cultures. When you make a circle with the thumb and index finger, it means "good excellent." The index and middle finger outstretched in a "V" form symbolizes "victory" and "peace." These gestures are very common in the United States. Symbolic gestures are learned and acquired and differ across cultures.

2) Illustrater

Illustrater is gesture which accompany the content and flow of utterance, and are divided into many different types.¹⁹⁾

Batons : movements which accent a particular word

Underliners : movements which emphasize a phrase, a clause, a sentence or a

group of sentences

- Ideographs : movement which depict the process of thinking
- Pictographs : movements which draw the shape of the reference in the air
- Rhythmics : movements which depict the rhythm or pacing an event
- Spatials : movements which depict a spacial relationship
- Deictics : movements which point to the referent

We use illustrators more or less unconsciously than emblems that are symbolic gestures. Illustrators are used as an auxiliary to verbal communication, but not intentionally as symbolic ones. Illustrators are acquired in social imitative learning situation. They vary in type and frequency across cultures and social classes.

3) Adaptor (Body Manipulator)

Adaptor is unconscious action which we use so as to adapt ourselves to circumstances. We use one part of our body to do something to another part, for example, pitching the nose or holding the hands together. Using things for different purposes, for example, playing with pencil or, scratching the ear with a match, all belong to adaptor.

We usually use adaptor unconsciously to send messages. However, those who frequently resort to adaptor are considered as awkward, nervous, or unreliable. In short the adaptor is regarded as a sign of displeasure and anxiety. In fact the more anxious one becomes, the more often one uses these gestures. Generally speaking, adaptor is a negative sign. It is taken as a bodily movement against a social norm.

(D) Posture

Hews says that we assume more than 1000 different kinds of posture.²⁰⁾ Different types of posture send different messages. Honna says that four types of posture can be distinguished according to relationship participants in interaction:²¹⁾

(1) Familiarity

To show the familiarity by posture is related to the seat choice in interaction, and this may be connected to human spacial behavior.

(2) Responsiveness

Responsiveness means we move our body toward things that we find interesting.

(3) Agreement

Agreeing to other's opinions, we tend to have similar posture. A phenomenon is also called 'posture echo.'

(4) Power Relationship:

Social positions are largely determined by postures.

The study of body movement has popular these days. And there are many books published that are designed to introduce to this field. But due to special interest in sexual symbols, the real role of nonverbal communication has not been recognized as much as necessary and desirable. That is human body movement should be considered in every possible social and psychological context of human interaction.

(2) PARALANGUAGE

Language consists of meaning and other elements. Other elements are called "paralanguage." People get information on other people's feelings, character's, and attitudes from paralanguage. What then paralanguage consists of ? Trager classified it as below:
22)

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. voice qualities | pitch range (spread ⇔ narrowed), vocal lip, vocal lip control (sharp transition ⇔ smooth), articulation (forceful ⇔ relaxed), rhythm control (smooth ⇔ jerky) |
| 2. vocal characterizers | laughing, crying, whispering, snoring, yelling moaning, groaning, yawning. |
| 3. vocal qualifiers | intensity (overloud ⇔ oversoft), pitchhigh (overhigh ⇔ overlow), extent (drawl ⇔ clipping) |
| 4. vocal segregates | "um," "uh," "uh-huh," and variants, silent pauses, intruding sound. |

Mahl and Schlze reported that a dialect, a provincial accent, speaking speed, speaking time, and interaction rates give personal relations stimuli as extra-linguistic phenomena.²³⁾ David pointed out that speaker could express ten kinds of feeling (anger, nervousness, sorrow, happiness, sympathy, satisfaction, fear, love, envy, and pride) by paralanguage modulation.²⁴⁾

(3) APPEARANCE

People usually try to decorate themselves. They organize their appearance in accordance with a certain set of social behavioral rules. They may also deviate from

social norms and create their appearance based on their own self concepts. Parts of body used for decoration and other kind of manipulation are the whole body (clothes), hair (hair style), face (make-up), skin (tattoo and birthmark) and so on.²⁵⁾ In this section, I intend to consider the transmission of information contributed to clothes and makeups.

Clothes

The social function of clothes originally was to hide the private parts of the body.²⁶⁾ It has changed gradually, and a different function has been added to it, this is the function for communication. P. G. Bogatyrev investigated the traditional clothes in Moravian Slovakia, and classified the kinds of clothes and their functions, as follows:²⁷⁾

max

casual clothes

1. a practical function
2. a function that shows a social position or a class
3. an aesthetic function
4. a function that shows geographical area

min

max

clothes for festivals and ceremonies

1. a function of festival or ceremonies
2. an aesthetic function
3. a courtesy function
4. a function that shows a nation or areas
5. a function that shows a social position or class
6. a practical function

min

max

clothes for courtesy

1. a courtesy function
2. a function for ceremony
3. an aesthetic function
4. a function that shows a nation or areas
5. a function that shows a social position or class
6. a practical function

min

Furthermore, Bogatyrev says that it is possible for people to imagine has/her social position, job, age, and religion by taking a look at a person's wear.²⁸⁾

People know that they have a tendency to judge many kinds of other people's attributes by considering their appearance. For instance, we never walk around with sleeping clothes except in an emergency, and never attend an important meeting in too casual clothes. If we do such things, we are regarded as persons who do not conform to social norm. So clothes are regarded as extensions of our personality and indication of social position and role. In addition, a school uniform is a good example. The uniform is a membership card to the group. People have selected a cloth to suit time and place. And they transmit the information by the cloth.

Make-up and Plastic surgery

The face transmits information more than any other parts of body, or people pay attention to other's face. To make-up for females is good example of this. As to make up, Mckeachi researched male feeling against female put on lip stick.²⁹⁾ He concluded many male have feelings that female who put on lip stick are insincere, quiet and conscientious. However, much of make-up image is created by cosmetic advertisements. The word "youth" and "beauty" stimulate to their deeper desires.

In next stage, I would like to describe a plastic surgery operation. Recently this operation is getting popular. Also in Japan, this operation is introduced in many kinds of magazines. Especially it is getting popular among fashionable students who have a job interview. Certainly, when we judge first person, we tend to judge from their face. In other word, appearance is also one of the important factor of social behavior.

(4) TOUCH

People transmit some feeling by touching. Touch is the most basic style of nonverbal communication. In other words, touch is the most primitive nonverbal communication. That is, touch is the most fundamental sense of people. At first it is said an infant begin to communicate by touching mother's womb, and after birth, the infant materializes his/her communication by sucking milk, and the mother by giving a suck of milk, too. The infant starts to learn communication at a very early age.

Moreover, touch is more important than we expected. J. Lionel Taylor explained its importance:

The greatest sense in our body is touch sense. It is probably the chief sense in the processes of sleeping and waking; it gives us our knowledge of depth or thickness and form; we love and hate, and touch and are touched, through the touch corpuscles of our skin.³⁰⁾

And then touch behavior shows different types among culture. E.T. Hall stated that the frequency of touch is different among nation. He distinguished "touch culture" and "non-touch culture."³¹⁾ The former is Middle-Eastern, Mediterranean, and Latin American, the latter is Northern and Western European.

And Males said touch sense is different from by sexes. Males regard touch as pleasure and sexual, while females feel more sexual than pleasant. Sexual harassment may take place by this difference.³²⁾

As shown above, touch behavior is an important part in our communication, too. If how to use is wrong, well communication can't expect forever.

(5) DISTANCE

Distance transmits various kinds of information. For instance, people take nearer distance with those who want to connect, while farther distance with those who don't want to. E. T. Hall was interested in this phenomenon, and found that the way of using space is different among cultures, and that space plays an important role in human relationship. He named this study "proxemics."³³⁾ The aim of this study is to elucidate human space behavior. There are two proxemics themes. One is how to perceive personal space, and the other is how to adapt to environment. Further, as to the first theme, he pointed out four kinds of space as follows:³⁴⁾

Intimate

At intimate distance, the presence of the other person is unmistakable and may at times be overwhelming because of the greatly stepped-up sensory inputs. Sight (often distorted), olfaction, heat from the other person's body, sound, smell, and feel of the breath all combine to signal unmistakable involvement with another body.

Personal

Personal distance is the term originally used by Hediger to designate the distance

consistently separating the members of non-content species. It might be thought of as a small protective sphere or bubble that an organism maintains between itself and others.

Social

The boundary line between the far phase of personal distance and the close phase of social distance marks, in the words of one subject, the "limit of domination." Intimate visual detail in the face is not perceived, and nobody touches or expects to touch another person unless there is some special effort. Voice level is normal for Americans. There is little change between the far and close phase, and conversation can be overheard at a distance of too twenty feet.

Public

Several important sensory shifts occur in the transition from the personal and social distance to public distance, which is well outside circle of involvement.

Moreover, as we have the distance zone as an extension of personality, we know how to use the four types of space properly. The sites of the four are different among cultures. In touch, Hall's "touching culture" and "non-touching culture" relate to space. He says "touching culture" is equal to contact culture, and "non-touching culture" is non-contact culture.³⁵⁾ In other words, in contact culture, people want to close distance each other, while in non-contact culture, and vice versa.

(6) SMELL

It is said that there are more 40,000 different kinds of smell around world.³⁶⁾ It may be able to say that we are living in the world of smell. People often transmit information to one another by smell.³⁷⁾ Hall said that Arabians could understand other's feelings and emotions from their bodies and mouth odors. So in Arabian life, smell is an important factor of communication. However, Americans are different from the Arabian. They try to destroy their own smell. This difference may lead communication gap.

In Americanized cultures people tend to destroy the smell, however, they also send other artificial smell information as a communication device. In fact, it is hard for people to classify the smell in detail. It is as much as they can do is to like or dislike

smell. After all, it is not too much to say that they are controlled by advertisements. There is an interesting research which shows how women use perfume in New York, Paris, Tokyo, and Milan.³⁸⁾ This research has two questions, purpose to use perfume and favorite smell. The result shows below:

purpose to use perfume

(for etiquette)

Tokyo---18% N. Y.---0% Paris---0% Milan---0%

(to enjoy smell)

Tokyo---30% N. Y.---44% Paris---20% Milan---55%

(to change feeling)

Tokyo---18% N. Y.---19% Paris---14% Milan---10%

(for personality expression)

Tokyo---9% N. Y.---14% Paris---21% Milan---11%

(to destroy body odor)

Tokyo---8% N. Y.---2% Paris---6% Milan---2%

Favorite smell

Tokyo ----- polite, sweet, vivid

N. Y. ----- sexy, friendly, tender

Paris ----- simple, polite, vivid

Milan ----- light, quiet, simple

Judge from these results, 'favorite smell' and 'purpose to use perfume' show cultural differences. However, these differences are only formed on culture that try to destroy smell.

Although we more or less lost the sense of smell, it still takes a special role in a certain field. For example, in Japan, when sake is brewed, Touji (sake brewer) judges from the smell samples.³⁹⁾ Also we get a certain type of information by smell biologically. In a women's dormitory or monastery, it is said that their monthly period get synchronized.⁴⁰⁾ The reason is said to be that they smell the sweat of a person who is to have periods. In this case, the sweat carries a chemical smell message. That is, also smell can send and receive information, and can be said one of the type nonverbal communication.

Conclusion

Although nonverbal communication plays a central role in human behavior, it remains far from well understood. We have just begun to learn about the ways in which our nonverbal behavior affects other people, about differences among people in their abilities to understand and convey nonverbal messages, and about the way in which such differences matter to people's lives.

There are several reasons why our knowledge about nonverbal behavior is so incomplete. One explanation has to do with the strong verbal orientation of our society. There are other, more subtle reasons for our lack of nonverbal messages without being aware of them. When we form an opinion of what someone is like, for example, the opinion is probably based in part upon a complex analysis of nonverbal information. When we conclude that someone we have just met is angry or jealous or anxious to love, we may have reached this conclusion as much by listening to the person's tone of voice and by observing how agitated the person's movements were, or by forming an impression of the warmth of his or her facial expression, as by interpreting what was actually said.

Even though we use nonverbal cues every time we meet or talk with someone, we are generally unable to describe the cues we employ. Instead, if asked why we reached an opinion about someone, we are likely to say that it was just a "feeling," or that there was "something" about the way the person acted. And yet, we are intuitively aware that we perceive an enormous number of nonverbal messages. Unlike attitudes or other types of verbal behavior, nonverbal communication has in the past been very difficult to record, code, analyze, and reproduce. However, the development and diffusion of film and videotape technology will produce a recent and marked increase of investigation in this field. As a result, this study of the field will be recognized widely.

Notes

- 1) Ashley Montague and Floyd Matson, *The Human Connection*, (New York; McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1979), p. ix.
- 2) *Ibid.*, p. xi.
- 3) Mark L. Knapp, *Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction* trans. Seiichi Makino and Yasuko Makino, (Tokyo: Tokai Daigaigaku Shuppankai, 1979), p. 14.
- 4) *Loc. cit.*
- 5) *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- 6) Wolburge von Raffler-Engel ed., *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication*, trans. Nobuyuki Honna, Sachiko Ide, and Mariko Tanibayashi, (Tokyo: Taishuukan Shoten 1981), pp. 238-294.
- 7) R. Birdwhistell, "Kinesic," *Social Aspect of Human Body* ed. Ted Polhemus, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex:

- Penguin Books Ltd.), pp. 285-294.
- 8) Knapp, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129.
 - 9) von Raffler-Engel, *op. cit.* p. 239.
 - 10) *Loc. cit.*
 - 11) Knapp, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
 - 12) *Loc. cit.*
 - 13) *Ibid.* p. 137.
 - 14) *Ibid.* pp. 134-136.
 - 15) *Ibid.*, p.137.
 - 16) *Loc. cit.*
 - 17) Erving Goffman, *Behavior in Public Place*, trans, Keisuke Marui and Nobuyuki Honna, (Tokyo: Seishin Shobou, 1980), P. 94.
 - 18) Knapp, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
 - 19) Paul Ekman, "Four Types of Facial Expression and Body Movement," *Hidden Dimenshions of Communication*, ed. Fred C. C. Peng (Tokyo: Bunnka Hyouron Shuppan, 1979), pp. 184-186.
 - 20) Knapp, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
 - 21) von Raffler-Engel, *op. cit.*, p. 242.
 - 22) Knapp, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
 - 23) *Loc. cit.*
 - 24) von Raffler-Engel, *op. cit.*, p. 245.
 - 25) *Ibid.*, p. 165.
 - 26) Michitaro Tada ed. *Kimu* (Tokyo: Heibonsya, 1980), p. 15.
 - 27) P. G. Bogatryrev, *The Functions of Folk Costume on Morabian Slovakia*, trans. Itaru Nonaka and Seiichi Nakazawa (Tokyo: Serika Shobo, 1981), pp. 26-30. 28. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
 - 29) Knapp, *Ibid.*, p. 89.
 - 30) A. Montague and F. Matson, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
 - 31) E. T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 160.
 - 32) A. Montague and F. Matson, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
 - 33) E. T. Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
 - 34) *Ibid.*, pp. 113-124.
 - 35) *Ibid.*, pp. 91-94.
 - 36) Tatsuo Moroe, *Shokuhin to Koryo*, (Tokyo: Tokai Daigaku Shupponkai, 1981), p. 11.
 - 37) E. T. Hall, *op. cit.*, p.160.
 - 38) Shiseidou, "Nioi ni Kansuru Chosa ", *Perfume* (Tokyo: Perfume) vol. 15. pp. 23-24.
 - 39) *Nadashu Yogoshuu*, (Kobe: Nadabou Kyokai, 1979)
 - 40) M. G. Switz and K. Thompson, "Sweat Snchonized Menstral Cycles" *New Scientist*. London: IPC Magazine Lit., January 1981.

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