

Interpersonal communication skills essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Communication can be described as a “ social activity in which people create and exchange meanings in response to the reality they experience.” Gill and Adams (1981). Therefore, communication is a valuable and interesting activity that every single person on this planet takes part in.

Non Verbal Communication (NVC) is a set of skills and functions that aid in forming language. As their name suggests, these are non-verbal skills and we are totally un-aware that we do them. The amount of NVC that a given person puts into a conversation varies dependant on the situation. There are many elements to NVC such as gesture, eye contact, posture, paralinguistics, facial expressions, proxemics and dress. To properly answer the question, it is important to be aware of all of these features and what they mean.

Simple features such as gesture, eye contact, facial expressions and posture all play a part in emphasis to speech. The way in which someone moves their hands to express their emotions, hold eye contact with someone dependant on their mood and the way in which a person holds their body during a conversation is critical. Moods, feelings and emotions are conveyed because of these simple actions. For example if someone is shy, they are less likely to hold prolonged eye contact with someone but would rather look away from the person they are speaking to.

Proxemics and paralanguage are also key to communication. Proxemics is the way in which a person presents his or her body to someone. If someone is pleased to see another person, they could open their arms to the person to greet them – a sort of “ what you see is what you get” feature. Paralanguage

is the features behind speech such as pitch, tone, speed and whether there is an accent present in the speech. This feature contributes to the forming of the self and identity within a person.

Without NVC, speech would not be animated, everyone would speak in the same monotone voice and there would be no identity to a person. Through NVC, we gain a greater, more animated picture on what a person is trying to communicate to us. The meanings of a verbal conversation are therefore clearer and easier to understand and work out. It is simpler to comprehend what a person means when there is, unbeknownst to the receiver, clear NVC taking place. We in turn, learn more about the true meaning that someone is trying to communicate and thus take in more of the communication.

However, there are elements of the verbal word that add to the whole process of conversation. These elements are unaffected by the conventional forms of NVC, but still enhance speech.

When someone speaks, they are unaware they are speaking in restricted and elaborated codes. A restricted code is the limiting of the vocals used and only use basic syntax of speech. For example, when asked a question, they just reply, ' Yes'. Restricted codes also contain high levels of predictability and redundancy of speech. A person speaking in restricted code is also concerned with groups as they might only wish one or more people to hear what is being said.

An elaborated code is different in the fact that it has a much more complicated syntax to it. The speech is much harder to predict and a speaker

is less concerned with group relationships. An elaborated code is also about the uniqueness and individuality a person gives to their speech, perhaps maybe their own special words for something, a form of slang.

Both restricted and elaborated codes of speech affect the verbal message as they dictate just how complex a message is being conveyed. Is the message easy to depict and work out or is it full on unique, long or interesting words? These codes also define identity. Linking these codes to the main features of NVC, we can start to understand more about the meaning of non-verbal messages as we have features that further emphasize speech. From here, it is easier to identify what sort of message is trying to be communicated.

The Laswell Formula (Laswell 1948) is usually referred to as a transmission model for communication. By studying communication, Laswell believed that the following points must be considered if we are to fully understand communication.

The five major components of the diagram all join together to form communication. As with all communication, there must be someone communicating the message, as in the first box of the diagram. They convey a message to another person(s). It is also important to note exactly what channels or mediums this person used. Was it face-to-face, or perhaps over email? The nature of the message will also be affected depending on who this person is speaking to, the receiver. After all these points have been taken into account, we can then successfully depict what effect this message had on another person.

Using the formula further demonstrates that how a message is conveyed determines the reaction received at the end. The non-verbal messages received obviously alter based on the situation, but the principle is always the same. There will be some non-verbal reaction to a message.

Eric Berne's theory of Transactional Analysis (Berne 1968) is used to illustrate a person's ego state. Berne believed that a person chooses one of three ego states when in communication; child, parent and adult. Each of the ego states has their own distinct pattern of behaviour and contains its own forms of NVC. It is possible to change ego states within a conversation, and both communicator and receiver elect an ego state to hold. Berne also believed that when we get some sort of response from communication, like a grin, we receive a 'stroke'. This is a positive form of communication which boosts our self-esteem and to Berne, is the only reason why we communicate with others.

The ego state of the child is very emotional and is very carelessly controlled in terms of the emotions demonstrated. However, the child is very imaginative and favourably affectionate to others. The parent ego state is a series of 'pre-recorded' forms of communication codes. This ego state is parental to the conversation at hand. The adult ego state uses reason and logic to actively resolve a dispute. An adult ego state uses past experiences to do this.

The three ego states allow us to further identify the non-verbal message behind speech as we can closer identify why the forms of NVC are being

displayed as they are. The ego state drives the NVC and thus can affect and alter the reactions and messages conveyed in communication.

The non-verbal messages show in communication can be affected in many ways. These messages can change throughout conversation and are also unique to the individual. Different forms of messages conveyed will evoke different reactions and emotions thus displaying alternate forms on non-verbal messages. How a person speaks through their chosen ego state and coding allows us to gain a greater appreciation for the variety of non-verbal forms of communication there are. It can be complicated to observe all of them, and some are less visible than others. It is important to remember that these are all sub-conscious and that everyone does them. This is why verbal messages more often than not always carry a form of non-verbal messages.