

Experiment on the non-verbal communication and personal space

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



An Experiment on the Non-Verbal Communication and Personal Space

Introduction Communication is the process of exchanging information, whether verbal or non-verbal, from one person to another. Non-verbal communication is apparent because it uses bodily movements, gestures, or signals that are interpreted by the decoder. Individuals use the non-verbal communication in every mode of interaction. It conveys a message that is different from the verbal communication; hence, a person must be particular with interpreting body language because the truth lies in it. Through non-verbal communication, receiver can easily detect the message underlying the word's meaning.

Facial Expression One of the non-verbal behaviors is facial expression that conveys the emotions of a person, which are very important in determining the mood. Facial expression constitutes the movement of the eye, eyebrow, lips, which emphasizes the inner feelings. Facial expressions such as contempt, happiness, sadness, surprise, fear, and disgust convey meanings in the social context. Facial expression is the result of the movement in the muscles, which enables a person to create different expressions. In addition, smile is the common facial expression that indicates happiness and contentment. In the general area, facial expression conveys the emotions of two people interacting closely. A person can interpret if the two persons have an argument based on the movement of their face. The facial muscles define whether the communication is relaxing or indifferent. Furthermore, the facial expression tells if the person is welcomed in the spatial territory of a person. A smile invites a person to enter his/her personal space whereas disgust displeases the presence of an individual.

Experiment This experiment is intended to examine the facial expression of

two persons interacting or sitting in a cafeteria. Based on the observation, these people tend to sit in space that is far from other persons. This signals their privacy that no one should suppose to invade. In addition, there are spaces available beside them, which the researcher will invade. Normally, these individuals will just eat and talk to each other comfortably because their territorial space is not threatened. In assessing their facial expression, the invaders will interpret the signals or non-verbal communication from the subjects. The experiment was carried out in a fast-food restaurant. The method of invading individuals' personal space was occupying the seats next to them or the vacant space beside them. In the first case, their facial expression was serious. There was a vacant seat beside them, which the invader occupied. Based on their initial reaction, the subjects' seriousness was broke because of the presence of the invader, which was replaced by surprise. It is evident on the movement of their eyes, eyebrow, and lips. They tried to conceal their surprise, but they were not able to bring back the topic they were discussing because of the stranger's presence. The two individuals continued to eat their meal and suppressed the feeling of discomfort and disgust. They decided to finish their meals and left the premises. In the second case, the two individuals were in a jolly mood as apparent in their smiles and sparkling eyes. When the researcher invaded their personal space, as was similar in the first case, these people lost their smile and tried to ignore the stranger. They acted as if nothing happened, but there was an annoyance in their facial expression. The two individuals' mouths were twisted in a side disposition, which made a wrinkle in their cheek, and the sloping of eyebrow was inward. The proxemics developed by anthropologists

suggests that a person is territorial, which is akin to animals or primates. Even though he/she is in a public space, a person values his/her privacy through his/her actions such as choosing a seat that is not close to strangers. Thus, the reactions of their faces are anticipated. Annoyance, disgust, and surprise were the common expressions in this experiment. The subjects pretended that their social norms and behaviors were not affected through ignoring the presence of other persons, but their facial muscles expressed otherwise. It signifies that even though a person cannot express through verbal communication, non-verbal behavior conveys a clear and consistent message about what they really feel.

Conclusion The existence of personal space is grounded to primitive behavior of human beings wherein they protect their territory from invaders, which will attempt to take it away. Thus, the value of personal space is extremely significant to a person. The reactions of the subjects indicate that they do not desire to sit with a stranger. The closeness of a person is defined in the distance or proximity; hence, a stranger should not sit next to a stranger because he/she will gain a negative impression. There are acceptable norms for distance when sitting at a table, which every person must conform to.