

Non verbal communicaton

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Nonverbal Communication Nonverbal communication plays a crucial role in interpersonal communication. This is even more visible when individuals do not share a common language. *Outsourced* (2006), explores the journey of an American manager named Todd Anderson. His company, Seattle-based Company Western Novelty, outsources its call center to Gharapuri, India and Todd must travel to India in order to train the new staff and manager. Nonverbal communication is present throughout the movie as Todd, works through the language barrier and is introduced to a new culture, values and rituals.

In this paper, nonverbal communication demonstrated in the movie is analyzed and discussed as it relates the research of Argyle (1988), Archer (1997), et al. Adler (2011) defines nonverbal communication as messages expressed through non-linguistic means. Research has shown that in communication, the verbal content only is only responsible for 7% of the message, while vocal cues such as pitch and intonation account for 38%, and facial expression an overwhelming 55% (Mehrabian, 1968). Nonverbal communication can be performed through facial expressions, proximity, and body movements.

Argyle (1988) describes the five primary functions of Nonverbal Behavior - 1) Expression of Emotion, 2) Communication of Interpersonal Attitudes, 3) Accompany and Support Speech, 4) Self-Presentation, 5) Rituals. In the movie *Outsourced* (2006), examples of each of these functions of nonverbal behavior are observed. The face plays a particularly important role in showing emotion. Ekman (1982) classified facial expressions of emotion into

six categories: happiness, surprise, fear, sadness, anger, and disgust/contempt.

Throughout the movie Outsourced (2006) emotions were expressed by the characters through their facial expressions, body movements, and voice. Early in the movie, Todd visits the Indian call center for the first time. As he walks around the office Todd stops in his tracks with a surprised look on his face as he sees a cow standing right next to the call center's clock. A few days later in a team meeting, emotions are expressed through nonverbal behavior by the call center staff as Todd answers questions about the product catalog from his team.

An employee asks about the purpose of a product. Todd replies that the product is used to brand cows. The employees are outraged, and display facial expressions of disgust/contempt as they learn that cows, sacred animals in their culture, are having logos burned into their flesh in the United States. In another scene, Todd experiences a terrible stomach ache from Indian food. He rushes home with a worried look on his face as he fears he will not make it home in time. His facial expression of fear amplifies as he arrives home only to find that his toilet is being replaced.

The repair men point him in the direction of downstairs bathroom where he discovers there is neither a toilet nor toilet paper and he must relieve himself in a hole in the ground and use his left hand for cleaning. Later in the movie, Todd's boss from Seattle unexpectedly shows up in India and announces that the call center will be relocated to China where the cost of operation is even cheaper. Todd's facial expressions body movements and the tone of his

voice show the anger he feels toward his boss for moving the call center and sadness when he must tell the staff that they will be losing their jobs.

Throughout the movie, Todd and Asha show nonverbal indications happiness, smiling and laughing together as they become romantically involved and enjoy each other's company at work and outside of the office. Nonverbal signals such as tone of voice, gaze, and touch play an important part in establishing and maintaining relationships (Argyle, 1988). Argyle (1988) writes that " the most basic meaning of touch is that an interpersonal bond is being offered or established" (p. 226).

Furthermore, eye contact can give important cues of attitudes and emotions. In the movie *Outsourced* (2006), Asha and Todd make a trip to an Indian island to retrieve merchandise that was shipped to the wrong address. After traveling for five hours and taking a ferry, they successfully retrieve the merchandise, but are forced to spend the night on the island after the ferry breaks down. When they arrive at the hotel they find that the hotel is almost completely booked and they will have to share a room.

After a brief argument about the situation and sleeping arrangements, Asha and Todd gaze deep into each other's eyes nonverbally communicating their attraction and feelings for each other. From there they kiss and proceed to physically express their admiration for each other through sex. Nonverbal communication plays an important role in supporting speech during communication (Argyle, 1988). In the movie *Outsourced* (2006), nonverbal communication plays an important role in situations where Todd must communicate with local people who speak little or no English.

On Todd's first day in India he approaches a street vendor to purchase a drink. The vendor does not speak English and Todd uses his index finger to single the number "one". Through this gesture he is able to communicate his desire for one drink which is understood by the vendor. Shortly after this scene, Todd is escorted by Puro to a local bed and breakfast owned by the friend of a Puro. The hostess, Todd, and Puro sit down for midday snack and begin making conversation. Todd picks up some snacks with his left hand and begins eating.

Both the hostess and his friend Puro look at him in shock. They proceed to try and tell him that eating with your left hand is considered crude and offensive in India because the left hand is traditionally used to clean oneself after using the toilet. When Todd is unable to understand an older man napping in a chair stands up, walks over to the table and makes the motion of wiping his behind with his left hand to help Todd understand. Self-Presentation, a person's appearance, grooming, and dress is also a form of nonverbal communication (Non-Verbal Communication, n. . . , para. 2). (Richmond & McCroskey, 2004) note that people generally form their first impressions about others based on their looks, attire, and attractiveness. In the movie Outsourced (2006), Puro dresses in a suit and tie when meeting Todd. By wearing the traditional Western culture attire for a manager, Puro projects the professional image of an American businessman. Rituals, the use of greetings, handshakes or other practices are also an important part of nonverbal communication (Argyle, 1988).

When Todd meets Puro in Gharapuri, they shake hands as Puro welcomes Todd to India. In another scene at the office, Puro brings Todd a tray of food

that he says will help Todd with his stomach problems. Todd kindly thanks him, and Puro bows to say you are welcome to Todd. (Archer, 1997) states that “ gestures are definitely not a universal language, as people who have worked, lived, or studied abroad may have noticed. ” In many cases, gestures from different societies may look similar but have dramatically different meanings.

In the movie Outsourced (2006), Todd and Asha discuss differences in the meaning of words between British English, the form of English traditionally studied in India, and American English. For example, in British English, French fries are called chips. While not presented in the film it is important to recognize that nonverbal communication and gestures may mean different things in different cultures just like in verbal communication. In the movie Outsourced (2006), Todd is invited outside of his hotel to have dinner with a family in the nearby slums.

The family gestures for him to sit with them and then they proceed to serve him a plate of food. An older woman smiles at Todd while he is enjoying the food and makes a hand gesture of the familiar American “ OK”. The gesture seemed to have a common understanding in this scenario, but in many cases gestures do not mean the same thing in cross culture interactions. For example, the gesture used by many Americans for “ OK” is seen in the movie. This gesture is similar in many ways to gestures in other cultures but has a very different meaning.

In Japan the gesture means “ money”, whereas in France it means “ zero”, and in Ethiopia it means “ homosexuality”. As shown in this scenario, the use of gestures in cross- cultural interaction carries the potential for confusion,

embarrassment, or insult. Nonverbal communication through the use of facial expressions, body movements, gestures, or positions play a significant role in interpersonal communication. The use of nonverbal communication to express emotion, communicate interpersonal attitudes, support speech, and aid people in self-presentation and cultural rituals is observed throughout the movie *Outsourced* (2006).

Gestures, like words and phrases spoken language, may carry different meaning in different cultures. Therefore, it is important for people working in different countries or people from different backgrounds to be aware of this so they are less likely to encounter confusion, controversy, or offend someone during cross cultural interactions.

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