

Body language essay thesis



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Communication is an important aspect of daily life, it helps us to connect with others as individuals or as groups. Without communication life would be non-existent, we communicate to others verbally and non-verbally. It is the very basis that drives our development in relationships, education and work. But as important as communication is less than 10% of how we communicate is done verbally, percentages ranging from 55% to as much as 80% state that most of how we communicate is done through non-verbal behaviour (Burgoon, 1994; Dempsy, 2002; King, 1997) While the percentage conclusions do vary the results are clear, non-verbal communication is incredibly important in human interaction.

The current study will examine deception in communication focusing on nonverbal behaviour (Kinesics, proxemics, occulesics, artifacts, haptics, vocalics, synchrony, appearance, chronemics) in false statements that may lead to detection identified by laypersons to people trained in law enforcement. The focus of which will be on lower body language said to reveal deception more so than any other part of the human body " a prime place to look for non-verbal signals that accurately reflect thinking is feet" Navarro (2007)

Deception through body language is harder to disguise than verbal communication, when individuals are occupied in deception their bodies more than their faces are the main source of leakage where non-verbal behaviour discloses information otherwise hidden (Ekman & Friesen, 1969), to research deception distinctions have to be made between perceived and actual indicators of deception (DePaulo, Stone, & Lassiter, 1985; Zuckerman, DePaulo, & Rosenthal, 1981) Perceived indicators of deception are non-

verbal behaviours that the observer actually associates with deception despite whether the behaviour is as a result of true deception and actual indicators of deception are made up of non-verbal behaviours that are associated with deception.

Non verbal communication plays a central role in how humans behave, it involves more than verbal communication to effectively understand the complete message one has to understand the role of non-verbal behaviour has in communication

Our non-verbal behaviour has symbolic meaning, Ekman and Friesen (1969) identified five characteristics of how our bodies communicate through movement. The first aspect to this movement is Emblems, Movement here usually have direct translation in verbal communication, and an example of this would be the gesture "ok" commonly performed by linking the thumb and forefinger.

The second characteristic is non-verbal behaviour connected with words termed illustrators. Movements used here allow for people to emphasize words or phrases such as suggesting something is small or big using our fingers or hands.

The third characteristics is affect display which shows how ones body movements can reveal their emotions.

The fourth characteristic is non-verbal cues that regulate our interactions such as turn taking in everyday conversation. This technique is used very commonly where during conversation observing a persons tone of voice,

hand gestures or body movements one can predict when the end of there conversation is about to end and allow for the beginning of the next.

The fifth and final characteristic is adaptors, movements which assure our needs and aid us in acclimatizing to our environment through changes in behaviour or the adjustment of objects in the environment.

The current study will not only focus on the statement Navarro, J (2007) made that lower body movement reveals deception but also focus facial movement and there abilities to express feelings and emotions in lie detection

Effective communication involves focusing on various areas already mentioned but one of the key areas in honest communication is focusing on a persons face and maintaining eye contact (Ekman, 1982; Argyle, 1988). Both Ekman, 1982 and Argyle, 1988 have categorised six agreed upon expressions most displayed which are fear, anger, disgust, sadness, happiness and surprise.

During normal communication people tend to focus on faces, eyes are a particular focus as when people first meet, eye contact is crucial, it regulates conversation and allows for the signalling of exchange between the speaker and the person listening. On average 10-30% of all conversation, eye contact is made, too little and the speaker will observe that the listener has lost interest or not focused but too much eye contact and the speaker will feel uncomfortable or unable to focus on his or her statement. Eye contact is used to acknowledge or in some cases of deception avoid revealing true feelings. Eye contact allows for the exchange of a persons emotion and their

true intent, the breakdown of eye contact can be because of many factors such as deception or avoidance and in other cases due to cultural differences (Webbink, 1986)

Expanding on non-verbal behaviour the factors that play a role in communication truth or deception are based around kinesics, proxemics, ooculesics, artifacts, haptics, vocalics, synchrony, appearance and chronemics.

Vocal cues that take place during speech play a vital role, intonation and the quality of voice used can augment the way the speaker is perceived. During everyday conversation intonation can reveal a person's true feeling in an instant, the vocal pitch used in the way a person says "hello" can determine to the listener if the speaker is honest in greeting them or reveal feelings of unhappiness. It is important that vocal cues align themselves with their verbal message (Lewis, 1998). In the case of deception when a speaker is lying clues leak non-verbally, answers or statements become shorter, speech is hesitant and pitch is higher as the speaker has less control over the way their body channels the information they are trying to portray (DePaulo & Friedman, 1998)

In the case of deception high pitch may indicate anxiety, Ekman (1985/1992) states that there are two major categories of cues, thinking and feeling cues. Those who prepare themselves to lie will be unaware at some point and reveal inconsistencies of their deception while those that over prepare their deception may reveal their stories as over prepared and rehearsed. For

those that try to prepare their lies ad-hoc their speech will become slower allowing themselves to adlib.

A higher pitch in this case according to Ekman (1985) may also be coupled with pauses in speech, speech tremors and slower or faster than usual pacing which may reveal their deception. These non-verbal cues may be used by law enforcement officers but to people close to the liar, people who they trust, they show more exaggerated indicators of guilt such as a downward gaze to avoid eye contact and he or she may speak in a slower and softer tone (Ekman, 1985/1995)

Observing body posture and gesture is another important aspect of non-verbal communication especially in detecting deception. In mind, self and society, George Herbert Mead (1934) stated that our biological communication constitutes the primitive system in which human verbal ability has evolved and developed, Mead (1934) between communication through gestures and via significant symbols referring to Charles Darwin that these displays are gestures.

To display our body language as honest it's important that it appears natural and that it flows (Lewis, 1998) Body cues involved in positive communication involve the body's torso, arms and legs and that gestures are the movements of the body parts in non-verbal communication. For example a clenched fist can be interpreted as a moment of triumph or a moment of anger and a raised hand taken in its own context can be interpreted as answering a question or the movement in striking someone. Hand gestures can be used to emphasize size, shape or even feelings. In deception

according to Navarro (2007) Hands can be moved out of sight to the lower half of the speakers body to show deception, a rubbing of ones hands together can display closed characteristics or even to hide perspiring hands due to excess perspiration through deception. Hand gestures can also be used to misdirect in a situation to divert a persons gaze.

Deceptive gestures are categorised into four groups, personal, grooming, supportive and protective and external. These categories attempt to group the common ways in which gestures can be used to deceive. According to Navarro, 2007 the human brain has the ability to detect even the slightest of hand and finger movements, the brain gives an unequal amount of its resources in attending to the wrist and fingers (Givens, 2005; Ratey, 2001) Whether speaking or not hand gestures deserve the attention they receive as a source of non-verbal behaviour that helps others understand what the person is trying to convey. In general in court cases jurors dislike when attorneys stand behind lecterns as it doesn't allow for them to observe or gauge the appearance of the attorney, as it shows dishonesty, Navarro, 2007.

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It is hoped that law enforcement officers have a higher rate of detection of false statements to that of the layperson. Training in becoming law enforcement officers heighten the trained person's awareness of a person's

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behaviour allowing them to determine if people or suspects are making true or false statements about themselves or an event. Zuckerman, Stick in ref at end

(insert this after the hand gestures half way through, but expand) -The study of non-verbal behaviour is divided into several sections, Kinesics which deals with physical movements, Proxemics which involves the use of space in a communication situation, Oculistics deals with eye behaviour and its movements, Environment which shows how the person communicates based on their environment, Artifacts which deals with the use of visible objects, Haptics which involves touching as an aspect of non-verbal behaviour, Vocalics which deals with vocal cues, Chronemics is the use of time, Appearance is how the person presents themselves and Synchrony which deals with the level of coordination in the person's behaviour.

Research has shown that lie detection is very difficult to detect but with added training to observe certain cues in a person's behaviour lies can be detected very easily. Lie detection studies normally consist of observers given video tapes of actual witness testimony of people lying or telling the truth. Research by Aldert Vrij has shown that through large studies given evidence that up to 60% of observers are able to detect if a person is telling the truth or not. But Ekman and O'Sullivan found that professional lie detectors were more accurate than the layperson in detecting lies.

Verbal and non verbal communication play an important if not more important part in lie detection. To the untrained most if not all people take someone's word as truth but trained professionals in dealing with criminals

observe not just what is being said but what's not being said i. e., facial expressions, seated positions, perspiration and other body movements.

As important as face to face communications is, Joe Navarro an ex FBI agent has stated that the focus shouldn't necessarily be on facial features but on the lower half of the body. He states that while people mostly focus on a persons face it is also the area in which people conceal the most about themselves, where else would the term having a good poker face come from.

" lower half, legs and feet are truly remarkable and honest in the information they convey. The lower limbs must be viewed as a significant part of the entire body when collecting non verbal intelligence" (Navarro, 2007)

As part of the research into deceptional cues researchers have outlined three psychological models of deception, the Arousal approach, the. Emotional approach and the Self presentational approach to deception.

It is believed that internal feelings cause certain cues to display themselves while making false statements. the Arousal approach is based around Zuckermans idea that " no single behaviour is always and exclusively evident during lies, deception in threatening situations create an increase in tension in an individual leading to certain nervous behaviours" (Zuckerman, 81)

In emotional approach the deception is based on feelings that a person lying will leak evidence in terms of body language which will be the focus of this study." liars are likely to feel fearful of being caught and these feelings can be associated with certain cues to deception" (Ekman, 1992)

The self presentational approach views deception as something that if the occurrence is on an everyday basis blends in with the persons character and to be able to observe the signs of lying, one must look on the “ context and settings when the liars exhibit the varying cues to deception” (De-Paulo, 2003)