

# Communication verbal and non-verbal aspects essay sample

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



Communication necessitates the use of messaging to generate meanings within and across various contexts, cultures and channels. Communication is a two way process involving the exchange of information. A communicator encodes by putting thoughts into words and gestures, and transmits messages to a receiver who decodes the messages by applying meaning to them. In today's technological age we have to send, receive and process many messages every day. Verbal and non-verbal aspects both assist in the communication process. In personal communications messages are sent on both levels simultaneously. If non-verbal cues and spoken message are incongruous, the flow of communication may be inhibited. Effective communication also involves understanding cultural differences and the emotion behind the information exchanged. It helps us better understand a person or situation and enables us to resolve differences, build trust and respect, and create open environments to support creativity and problem solving. Ineffective communication can lead to misinterpretation, conflict and frustration.

Verbal communication encompasses the use of words, voice and pitch. The use of words that are understandable in well constructed sentences aids the communication process, however what one says is not nearly as important as to how it is said. The voice needs to be clear so words are easily understood, and having the ability to use an appropriate voice volume is a fundamental skill in verbal communication. Volume that is too loud can annoy listeners while a very soft volume can express shyness, resulting in loss of interest and loss of authority. The variation of a voice can also influence interpretation. A dull message delivered by an engaging speaker,

for example, will be better received than an excellent message delivered by an unenthusiastic speaker who appears uninterested in the topic.

Misunderstandings can occur with intercultural verbal communication, with words used in the wrong context or incorrect intonation.

In addition, one needs to be mindful of cultural etiquettes in communicating verbally. For example, in Japan one does not ask direct questions unless sure that the answer will be yes, because saying no causes loss of face. Silence can also influence in the communication process, creating tension and uneasiness, or a peaceful situation. Non-verbal communication refers to aspects of communication other than speaking, such as facial expressions, eye contact, body posture, motions, clothing and make-up. It's the process of encoding and decoding wordless cues. An awareness of the signs and signals of body language enables one to more effectively communicate with others. The face is the most expressive region of the body, it's "where the person meets the world head on".

Facial expressions such as a smile, frown, raised eyebrow or yawn all convey information. In interpreting non-verbal aspects of communication we need to be conscious of cultural differences to minimise misunderstandings. For example, a smile in Australia is an expression of joy and friendliness, while in Asian cultures it can be used to express anger or mask sadness which are both unacceptable to show overtly. Facial expressions continually change during interaction and are monitored constantly by the recipient as part of the decoding process.

Eyes are considered the most intense social signalers, reflecting sincerity, honesty and comfort when communicating with others. Eye contact can convey emotion or aversion, and signal when to talk or finish. The frequency of contact may suggest either interest or boredom. Eye contact comprises the actions of looking while talking and listening, frequency of glances, patterns of fixation and blink rate. Some people find making eye contact more difficult than others, such as those who suffer social anxiety. In different cultural contexts eye contact can express different things. For example, Japanese children are taught in school to direct their gaze around the area of their teacher's Adam's apple or tie knot and, as a gesture of respect, Japanese adults lower their eyes when speaking to a superior.

Body positioning and motions are also important aspects of the communication process, with inside thoughts and feelings generally reflected on the outside. Body positioning's such as slouching, towering, legs spread and crossed arms communicate an array of messages, both positive and negative. The meaning of body positioning and motions can be very different across cultures. For example, in some cultures such as the Middle East, the acceptable physical distance is much shorter than what most Australian's feel comfortable with. Australians may feel that their personal space has been invaded and view attempts to get closer as pushy, disrespectful or aggressive.

An attempt to then create more space may be interpreted as coldness, condescension or lack of interest. Other motions like hand gestures are also regularly used when talking. For deaf people, Auslan is the verbal

mechanism for communicating, consisting of a language only using hand gestures. Examples of commonly used hand gestures in Australia include the “ thumbs up” and “ OK” gestures which are signs of approval indicating all is good. However, in other countries such as Iran, these gestures have vulgar meanings and are offensive. It is therefore important to develop an awareness and understanding of non-verbal cues in order to enhance the process of communication.

Verbal and non-verbal aspects combine to assist in the process of encoding and decoding messages. We tend to look for non-verbal cues when verbal messages are unclear or ambiguous. Accordingly, what is being communicated verbally should be supported and reinforced by the image conveyed by the physical self. Visual images inconsistent with spoken messages often result in ineffective communication. The receiver provides feedback on how they have interpreted the message through both verbal and non-verbal reactions. In order to determine whether the message has been understood as intended, one should consider the response of the receiver, allowing any confusion to be rectified.

While misunderstandings can occur at any stage of the communication process, this may be even more likely in cross-cultural communication. People from different cultures communicate in different ways based on their upbringing and experiences, and how they perceive the world around them. Intercultural communication is about the exchange of information across different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. Low context cultures like Australia and the United States give relatively less emphasis to

non-verbal communication, placing more importance on the literal meanings of words themselves. For high context cultures such as Japan and Africa, non-verbal aspects of communication are relatively more important. Knowledge of cultural differences is important in understanding how messages have meaning applied to them.

Communication encompasses verbal and non-verbal messaging to generate meaning within and across contexts and cultures. Cultural awareness and emotional understanding enhance the communication process. Effective communication involves minimising potential misunderstanding and overcoming barriers associated with the exchange of information. “ To effectively communicate, we must realise that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others”.