

Non verbal communication argumentative



“ We speak with our vocal organs, but we converse with the whole body” as said by Abercrombie (1988), suggesting that as well as language, communication between people also include gestures that we call non verbal communication(NVC), which reinforce or complete what we are saying. In different situations, the NVC of a person varies with different emotions, as is demonstrated by many public figures. Persuasion requires simply more than just language as is written.

NVC supports language in this way, for example paralanguage, which emphasizes verbal messages. This coupled with precision gestures and dominance brings around a very leading and influential personality. The ways that their words are said are in quite different ways, conveying different emotional expressions, and even different meanings. To persuade someone an authority figure may change their tone of voice to sound sympathetic, and make the listener feel sorry for them. It could also be said in a way that empathises with the listener, as when a teacher may try to come down to the level of the pupil. Using similar non dominant paralanguage, this can be an attempt at equality so that the pupil may feel like there is more in common.

An example of this is by saying “ I understand what you’re going through” in an attempt to make the listener feel equal to them. However, some types of empathy in paralanguage can make a person feel patronised and this can dissuade them. Charismatic authority figures in themselves can be enough to persuade a person, for example if an employee’s boss asks them to do something this can be enough to persuade someone. With people who are of equal status, persuasion can be achieved in different ways.

One way is through touch, as this can attract the attention and make the listener feel connected and more safe around the persuader. Open orientation can also give an impression that there is no pressure towards the listener. This, together with gestures, touch and paralanguage can all be used with NVC to persuade someone. NVC can also be used to show or mask emotions. To mask emotions, people often assume there are ways to disguise the true emotions they are having by covering them up with what they believe to be the desired NVC.

For example, a politician such as Gordon Brown may think that he can cover up his nervousness in a situation by facial expressions such as tongue in cheek, the biting of the inside of the mouth, or playing with clothes constantly... but these are sure signs that he is indeed very nervous, or another term is leakage. Ex president Bill Clinton may think that by biting his lip and narrowing his eyes that he looks sincere, but due to leakage we can really tell that this is the facial expression he uses to cover up a nervous moment of emotion. The general folding of arms may be thought to show someone is in a relaxed mood, but it can be a sign of insecurity.

People who lie have a vast range of things that are used to cover this up. The touching of the face for a small time such as a nose scratch, broken eye contact are all signs of leakage. The demonstration of power is very apparent in NVC. When someone has a more authoritative status it soon becomes apparent within a short amount of time just by the NVC that they use. Hand shakes from a figure of power are very telling when they feel they are at the higher status.

The grasping of the elbow shows that the person feels they have higher status and that doing this grasp reminds the other shaker that they are superior. Reminding pats on the back of superiority can sometimes get competitive between rival superiors, for example, the actor Tom Cruise found himself shaking hands with an employer and trying to “out-pat” each other, to confirm who had higher power status. Rivals also find each other trying to out “strut” each other, like George Bush and Bill Clinton, and can appear quite comical as each attempts to power walk in the better way. In the Navy however, these NVC gestures aren’t as necessary. This is due to the fact that rank is officially established and known to all, so no one really feels the need to compete for the power roll, and people tend to just get on with the job in hand. Therefore, it is now apparent that NVC is important in emphasizing speech, through gestures orientation, closer proxemics and paralanguage; but it is not a necessary requirement to interpersonal communication.