



临沂大学学术专著

LINYIDAXUE XUESHU ZHUANZHU



Study of Classroom Nonverbal X-Factor

from Intercultural
Communicative Perspective

跨文化交际课堂中
无声语言的研究

· 刘乃美 著



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前言

随着信息和交通技术的高度发展,人们之间的空间距离大大缩短,文化交流日益频繁。但空间距离的缩小并不意味着文化距离或心理距离的缩短,交际中的失误、矛盾和冲突加大了人们之间的心理距离。矛盾和分歧的背后不只是利益的分歧,更多的是文化差异所滋生的巨大隔阂,正是这些隔阂使得“地球村”的人们虽然近在咫尺,却如隔天涯。如何消除这些隔阂成为世界各国人们关注的焦点。随着“一带一路”、“亚投行”等国家战略政策的实施,我国与其他国家的交流更加广泛,实现《国家中长期教育改革与发展规划纲要》(2010-2020)提出的培养大批具有国际视野、通晓国际规则、能够参与国际事务和竞争的国际化人才目标,进行有效的跨文化交际成为我国语言学界一项重大研究课题。

跨文化交际涉及两个层面:语言交际和非语言交际。非语言交际也称作无声语言交际。研究表明,交际中信息传播的总效果=7%的语言+38%的语调语速+55%的表情和动作,由此可见非语言行为的重要性。非语言交际行为在很大程度上体现的是一个文化群体的意识形态,如宗教思想、哲学伦理、道德观念、处世方法、行为准则、风土民俗、语言规范等;折射出的是一个民族的文化体系和价值取向;是保持跨文化交际畅通的重要前提和渠道,也是跨文化交际研究的重要内容之一。

与国外的研究相比,我国在该领域的研究多集中在社会学、人类学、心理学和精神病理学等方面,针对教育领域中非语言行为的研究相对匮乏。本书对国内外该领域研究成果进行了较为全面地剖析,建构了符合我国跨文化交际国情的交际能力新模型。采取定量和定性研究相结合的方法,从跨文化交际的角度分别对我国高校教师和非语言行为的现状、在课堂教和学中产生的效果等进行了实证研究。为充分发挥非语言交际在教学中的作用,提高教师和非语言交际意识和跨文化交际能力提供了有价值的借鉴。

本书分为四部分,每部分各包括两章。

第一部分为导论。第一章论述了跨文化非语言交际研究的背景、必要性、本研究的目的、意义等。第二章对前人在该领域研究的成果进行了较为详实的剖析;对非语言交际的定义、特征、分类、功能等进行了梳理;阐述了语言和

非语言交际的差异；论述了非语言交际在教学中的重要性。

第二部分为理论研究。第三章分析了非语言行为在文化中的作用；对比了东西方在体态语、身势语、副语言、时间语和环境语等方面的文化差异；探讨了文化因素对非语言交际行为的影响，揭示了跨文化交际中因非语言行为引起交际失误和冲突的根源。第四章对跨文化交际研究的进程进行了分析；论证了非语言交际能力、交际能力、文化能力、跨文化交际能力与第二语言习得的关系；剖析了非语言交际在交际能力模型中的地位。根据前人的研究成果，构建了符合我国国情的跨文化交际能力新模型，阐释了非语言交际在跨文化交际能力中的地位和作用。

第三部分为实践研究。该部分通过大量的实例分析了不同文化背景下教师和学生课堂教学中各种非语言行为的体现、作用、内涵以及其对教和学的影响。为了了解中国高等教育领域中外语教师和学生课堂中非语言行为的实际情况，该研究借助于问卷调查、访谈、课堂观察、学生日志等手段，分别从教师和学生角度开展了针对课堂教学中教师和学生非语言行为的实证研究。第五章从学生的角度对教师在课堂中的非语言行为进行探讨，结果发现：（1）学生认为穿着得体的教师具有较强的交际能力，表现出对工作的热情和对学生的关爱，具有良好的专业发展前景；（2）教师的身势语、面部表情、眼神交流等能够带给学生大量的信息，教师得体的肢体语言能够起到引起学生关注和活跃课堂气氛的作用，而且对学生的学习成绩有积极的影响。同时还发现，与女生相比，男生对教师的非语言行为的敏感程度较弱。第六章从教师的角度对学生在课堂中非语言行为研究，结果发现：（1）教师认为举止得体的学生具有较高的信誉度，他们能力强，有良好的发展前途。学生的亲和行为能够激发教师的职业荣誉感，使教师更加自豪、热爱教师职业；（2）学生在课堂中的沉默行为受到客观和主观因素的影响。客观因素包括传统的教育观念、班级人数过多等；主观因素涉及面子问题、学生个人性格等。

第四部分为总结。第七章针对研究中发现的问题，就如何提高教师和非语言交际能力提出了相应的策略。第八章总结了本书的研究成果，并就未来该领域的研究方向提出了个人的见解。

本书基于作者多年教学经验的反思和总结。该书的出版得到临沂大学学术部的资助；审稿人提出了有价值的修改意见，在此一并感谢！

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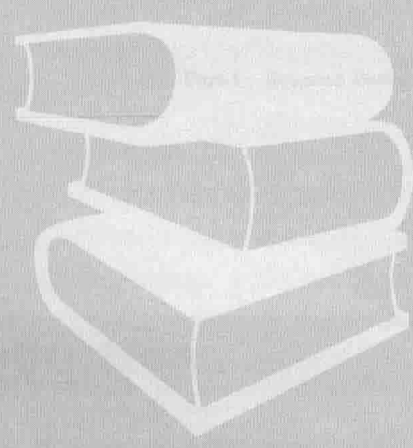
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Part I

Research Background



1.1 Background Information

Information that is the basis of all business decisions and strategic planning. It is a partially assessed information source is described that helps the business and management to select the most relevant of them and to better understand of knowledge in their work. Effective human communication is from multiple levels of communication.

Verbal communication is a process of communication, and is regarded as the most and most important way of transferring information about an object from one knowledge to other people, including writing. Research in the field of research into the use of recorded human language in the study of human communication and theories of verbal interaction. It is believed that we need to study how to develop and grasp verbal interaction. As a result, a great number of scholars have studied human verbal communication, with the study on theoretical communication has been regarded as a very important branch of the study of human communication.

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Chapter One

General Introduction

1.1 Background Information

Communication is the basis of all human contact and integrated part of our lives. We communicate in different ways to express our thoughts, feelings, knowledge, skills, and ideas. It is normally assumed that communication is identified with speech and sounds, but communication is, in fact, the combination of verbal and nonverbal transmission of knowledge, in other words, effective human communication falls into two types: verbal communication and nonverbal communication.

Verbal communication is commonly considered to be the most important, efficient, powerful means of communication, and is regarded as the main and most important way of transmitting information about our daily business, knowledge, tradition, culture, teaching and learning. Scholars in various research fields through the recorded history relating to the study of human communication had focused on verbal messages. They believed language was the only way to deliver and grasp information. As a result, a great number of books published before about verbal communication, while the study on nonverbal communication has been neglected to a large extent and is comparatively lagging behind. For a long time, only the verbal communication occurred to us immediately when we discuss human communication.

However, communication is much more than just expressing ideas and feelings through words. A simple gaze can reveal either a sensation of pleasure or disgust. Nonverbal signs, as part of the process of human communication, show different types of communicative meanings. What a person does while conversing might strongly sign his/her personal feelings much more than when it is verbally expressed. The fact that nonverbal communication is woven inextricably into our daily interactions was confirmed by Abercrombie (1968, cited in Lörcher, 2003) who believes that “we speak with our vocal organs, but we converse with our entire bodies. Conversation

consists of much more than a simple interchange of spoken words.” (55) The process of communicating through sending and receiving wordless messages is known as nonverbal communication (Kendon, 2004; Pike, 1967).

Nonverbal communication is of interest to a number of fields, including anthropology, communication, psychology, sociology, and child development. Anthropologists believe that our ancestors communicated with one another by using their bodies. For example, they gritted their teeth to show anger; they smiled and touched one another to indicate affection. Although we have come a long way since those primitive times, we still use nonverbal cues to express superiority, dependence, dislike, respect, love, and other feelings. It can be expressed through body language, or even through clothing and hairstyle and by voice quality, emotion and speaking style; or prosodic features, such as rhythm, intonation and stress. Likewise, written texts may also include nonverbal elements that surface in the handwriting, layout or the use of images. Thus, nonverbal communication acts as an indispensable component to communication. It can account for a large portion of information in communication. Many researchers provide different statistics to explain the amount of information which nonverbal communication conveys.

Mehrabian, as a pioneer researcher of body language in 1950s, found that as much as 93 percent of the emotional meaning is transmitted nonverbally. His research (1971) indicated that in face-to-face interaction only 7% of the emotional meaning is expressed verbally, 38% is vocal expression and 55% is facial expression (Mehrabian, 1971). Birdwhistell made some similar estimates of the amount of nonverbal communication that takes place between humans: “that the average person actually speaks words for a total of about ten or eleven minutes a day and that the average sentence takes only 2.5 seconds” (cited from A. Pease & B. Pease, 2004, p.9) and “we can make and recognize around 250,000 facial expressions” (ibid, 32). Samovar and Porter (1981, 4), also pointed out that in a normal two-person conversation the verbal components make up less than 35% of the total social meaning of the situation and that over 65% is expressed nonverbally. Miller (1988) found only 7% a message is sent through words with the remaining 93% sent through facial expressions (55%) and vocal intonation (38%), which means that, as the receiver of a message, people can rely largely on the nonverbal cues of the sender since his/her nonverbal behavior is a better indicator of the meaning behind the message than his/her words (5-6). We are not clear that whether or not these figures are accurate and scientific enough, at least they inform us that in person-to-person communications nonverbal messages deliver a large amount of information.

Then how important is nonverbal behavior in human communication?

A very simple example can illustrate this. The way a person portrays himself/herself on the first encounter with others can become a last long impression. Although the first impression which may take only one-tenth of a second to judge, it can become a lasting nonverbal communicator and can be positive and negative interpreted through the way a person presents himself/herself, such as clothing, tattoos, and other visible attributes. Although sometimes misleading, first impression can in many situations be an accurate depiction of a person. In verbal communication, when we listen to a speaker's words, no matter whether we realize it or not, we are also influenced by the way the speaker talks as well as by the speaker's actions. Whether we are aware of the nonverbal messages or not when we speak, we may communicate when we don't speak, so it is impossible not to communicate. Even when we are silent, we are communicating. Before we begin to speak, for example, when we pause, or when we leave the speaker's stand, we are still sending information to the audience. We communicate nonverbally by the way we dress, the way we position our hands, the way we touch things and the way we listen. Therefore, communication doesn't use words. Our smiles, frowns, where to sit at a meeting—all communicate pleasure or anger, friendliness or distance, power and status. But most of the time we are no more conscious of interpreting nonverbal signals than we are conscious of breathing.

Bovee, Thill, and Barbara (2003, 48) further confirmed, "People's actions often do speak louder than their words." Sometimes some people can deceive others much more easily with words than they can with their nonverbal behaviors since words are relatively easy to control and nonverbal behaviors are not. By paying attention to these nonverbal cues, people can detect deception or affirm a speaker's honesty. Because nonverbal communication is so reliable, people generally have more faith in nonverbal cues than they do in verbal messages. If a person says one thing but transmits a conflicting message nonverbally, listeners almost invariably believe the nonverbal signal. Chances are, if we can read other people's nonverbal messages correctly, we can interpret their underlying attitudes and intentions and respond appropriately.

Then why human beings use nonverbal communication? We can get the answer from Miller's (1988, 5) explanations:

- (1) Words have limitations. It is easier to explain the shape of something or give directions using hand gestures or head nods.
- (2) Nonverbal signals are powerful. They primarily express inner feelings and evoke immediate action or response.
- (3) Nonverbal messages are likely to be more genuine. Nonverbal behaviors are

not as easily controlled as spoken words with the exception of some facial expressions and tone of voice.

(4) Nonverbal signals can express feelings too disturbing to state. Social rules limit what can be said, but nonverbal cues can communicate thoughts. They can show the feelings of superiority or dislike that etiquette may prevent from being stated verbally in interpersonal communication. Conveniently, if people have not verbalized their feelings, they can change their minds freely without having committed themselves.

Then why are we not all aware of nonverbal communication although it is so important?

Turk (2003, 145) explained, "The main reason is that we are heavily word-oriented, that we tend to undervalue other ways of communication. Because of our cultures, and our schools that emphasize verbal ability so heavily, we tend to overlook the expressive possibilities of the nonverbal." Turk further pointed out that nonverbal signals appear before language. Even animals manage to negotiate their social lives by nonverbal signals. They make friends, find mates, rear children, work out their political hierarchies, and work together in groups, by means of nonverbal signals. The same is probably true of human beings.

Locker (2004, 300) provided another explanation why people undervalue the way of nonverbal communication, "Nonverbal signal can be misinterpreted just as easily as verbal symbols do. And the misunderstandings can be harder to clear up because people may not be aware of the nonverbal messages that led them to assume that they aren't liked, respected, or approved." For example, an Arab student assumed that his American roommate disliked him intensely because the student sat around the room with his feet up on the furniture, soles towards the Arab roommate. The miscommunication resulted from that Arab culture sees the foot in general and the sole in particular as unclean; showing the sole of the foot is an insult. Since nonverbal actions are not easily controlled consciously, they can precisely betray one's true feeling without distortion and deception. For example, it is difficult to control a blushing face when we are embarrassed or a clenched jaw when we are angry. Researches indicate that we will believe nonverbal messages instead of verbal ones when the two contradict each other. Accordingly, the significance of nonverbal communication has grown to such an extent that it is how we say the words counts instead of what we say.

From above discussion, we can conclude that nonverbal signs play an important role in communication. It can help us project the image we want to present and

make us more aware of the signals we are sending and interpreting. In order to reduce misunderstanding in communication, it is necessary to extend the research of nonverbal communication. Especially with the rapid development of mass media, the wide spread of knowledge and the frequent communication among people in the new century, nonverbal communication is important in the study of intercultural communication because some of nonverbal behavior can speak a universal language. Behaviors such as smiling, frowning, laughing and crying tend to have similar meanings, whether in China, America or any countries in Europe.

However, compared with the study of verbal communication, nonverbal communication is often neglected. One reason is that nonverbal message is less structured, so it's more difficult to study. It also differs in terms of intent and spontaneity. We generally plan our words when we say something, we have a conscious purpose. But when we communicate nonverbally, we sometimes do so unconsciously. For example, we don't mean to raise an eyebrow or blush. Those actions come naturally without our consent. Another reason is that nonverbal communication is somewhat ambiguous, subconscious and spontaneous. Therefore, in order to help people be fully aware of their nonverbal signs in communication, research in this field becomes necessary and indispensable.

1.2 The Significance of the Study

1.2.1 The Limitation of Precious Research in Education

The importance of nonverbal communication has made many researches conducted in the field of anthropology, sociology, psychology and psychiatry in the past decades. While in educational area, it has been neglected for a long time as White and Gardner (2012, 6) point out that "it is surprising that given the potency of nonverbal communication and its value to our daily forms of communication it is given scant attention by the education world."

One reason is that the cumbersome and costly nature of undertaking research on nonverbal communication, such as the videotaping. And this nature of nonverbal communication is unique to each individual and it is often picked up within seconds with no "text" record and usually no video record, we have little tangible record of its use. Its impact may be clear and sometimes individuals will remember "the way

he speaks”, but because it is often spontaneous, subtle and fleeting, it leaves little tangible evidence (White & Gardner, 2012, 6).

Another reason is that in education environment, both teachers and students tend to ignore the important role of nonverbal behaviors in classroom on the one hand they take them for granted, on the other hand, curriculums and textbooks seldom mention or discuss the use of nonverbal communication, and most teachers are normally unaware of the nonverbal signals they send out in class, which are the main causes of the study of nonverbal communication being relatively short in the past decades.

Lastly, the importance of nonverbal behavior has been acknowledged in elementary and secondary settings but largely ignored by college classroom, this is due to the assumption that college students learn what they need to regardless of teaching competence, or from a university norm that teaching is secondary to research and university service, or assuming that college professors automatically have adequate teaching skills. Content competence and instructional competence are presumed to be one and the same capacity. For whatever reason, few college professors are aware of how to use their nonverbal behaviors to enhance instructional effectiveness.

1.2.2 Classroom Nonverbal X-Factor: The Silent Language

Everyone has this experience: at get-togethers, we talk of funny stories, school plays, and we also inevitably talk about our favorite teachers and classmates. The lesson some teacher taught may not be our best subject but we still remember how the teacher sparked our enthusiasm. Remember the teacher who never seemed to have problems getting students’ attention or captivating students’ every interest. We look forward to his/her class, hang on his/her every word, watch his/her every move. So how did he/she do so? Why did some teachers have such an ability to engage and enthuse us? The teachers’ faces, voices, the classrooms, and the teaching methods all interwoven gave us impressions. The more we thought about it, the more we realized there was something else. In this book, the author borrows White and Gardner’s (2012) metaphor “X-Factor” to stand for the quality of a teacher who uses nonverbal signs in the teaching to enthuse the students and of students who try to become effective learners in classroom, that is, the silent language in classroom.

Originally, the term relates to the TV show in UK entitled “*The X-Factor*.” It is a UK musical talent contest which auditions thousands of contestants and ultimately whittles them down through successive performances and public voting to one single individual who has the X-Factor (White & Gardner, 2012, 4). The term is defined by

the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* as “a quality that you can't describe which makes someone very special.” This book tries to unravel the indescribable quality which can make teachers and students “very special.”

It is apparent that the subject knowledge and teaching ability are not the exclusive requirement of the classroom X-Factor. The inspiring teacher has much more than subject knowledge, teaching ability and clear voice. Their magnetic quality comes in many subtle ways of which we are often unaware: the way we “carry ourselves” in the classroom, our body language, whether we smile or grimace, how we dress, how we gesture, etc. Academically, this collection of X-Factor attributes is known as “nonverbal communication.” Calling it X-Factor can remind us that there are “forces” at play in our classroom practice which are mysterious and tangible to us (White & Gardner, 2012, 7).

1.2.3 The Urgency of the Study

Study on classroom nonverbal communication is urgent in China. On the one hand, one key recent policy launched by Chinese government— “The Belt and Road” strategy aims to re-establish ancient land and maritime trade routes across the Eurasian continent. This will deepen the regional economic cooperation in the process of infrastructure development and trade across the region. In order to cooperate with other countries well, many talented graduates are urgent needed who are required not only having professional knowledge but also commanding intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in various walks of life. Thus, how to improve students' ICC has become an urgent task for language teachers. Accordingly, as an important component of ICC, nonverbal communication should be incorporated in language teaching and learning. What is more, in the wake of globalization, many teachers and students come from different cultural backgrounds and nationalities and their communicative patterns are unique, especially their nonverbal symbols and cues. Not only should teachers be equipped with knowledge of nonverbal communication, but also the students should be encouraged to improve their nonverbal communicative competence. Therefore, the study of nonverbal communication has been necessitated by the diversity of student and teacher population in higher education and has accelerated with increasing globalization.

On the other hand, the teaching and learning in college classroom is a social interaction between teachers and students which is conducted through verbal and nonverbal means. Bi Jiwan (1993) has stated that the role of nonverbal