

THE CHALLENGE OF ACCURATE INTERPRETATION OF NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE IN PAKISTAN WHILE DOING COUNTRY-WIDE RESEARCH VIA NATIONAL OR OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Dr. Syed Shujaat Ali¹ (Principal & Corresponding Author), Muhammad Asif Khan², Imran Ali³, Mubasher Hussain⁴, Muhammad Shahid⁵

Original Article

1. Assistant Professor & Chairman, Department of English, Kohat University of Science & Technology, Kohat. Email: s_shojaat_ali@yahoo.com
2. MPhil, Contract Lecturer, Department of English, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Kohat. Email: arshiyah512@yahoo.com
3. MPhil, MPhil, Contract Lecturer, Department of English, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Kohat. Email: imranali@kust.edu.pk
4. MPhil, Contract Lecturer, Department of English, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Kohat. Email: mubasherhu@gmail.com
5. Lecturer, Department of English, University of Malakand. Email: shahiduum1@gmail.com

Abstract

Pakistan, being a heterogeneous country, is home to people hailing from different ethnicities, sub-cultures and local languages. Nonverbal language acquired by a speaker parallel to the acquisition of their local language on subcultural level can continue to be used by the speaker while using their national or official language. As a result, a researcher doing country-wide research faces a great deal of chances of misunderstanding the non-verbal cues accompanying the oral responses made in the national lingua franca, Urdu, in the official language, English or in some rare cases the mother tongue of the respondent. The nature and extent of the matter was investigated by interviewing students coming from different parts of the country i.e. Karak, Hunza, Quetta and Gilgit, to the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, in the official language, English or, upon choice, in the lingua franca, Urdu. Speakers of different mother tongues from different ethnicities were selected via purpose sampling. Since they were university students, most of them agreed to give interviews in simple English or Urdu language. It surfaced that despite giving their interviews in English or in Urdu, the interviewees still used the nonverbal cues associated to their mother tongues and their sub-cultures; thereby, posing difficulty in interpreting their nonverbal behavior correctly. The findings were that the apparent smile of the people of Hunza was not because they enjoyed a bad comment or question; the high tone and roughness of people from Karak should not be interpreted as signs of argumentation or rudeness. Unlike many other cultures of the country the people from Gilgit were not prone to make hand gesture while speaking and they disliked being touché physically during conversation. Much rhythmical variation in the speech of the Pashto speakers from Quetta should not be taken as a dramatic and artificial style. It was recommended that anyone doing research on national level should spend some time with their interviewees to be aware of the peculiar nonverbal behaviour associated to their sub-cultures or should make a list of their specific non-verbal cues and meanings to interpret their communication correctly.

Significant Terms: Non-verbal language, Heterogeneous Cultures, National Language, Research Interview.

Introduction

A Pakistani researcher faces a great deal of problems in correctly interpreting the non-verbal cues related to interviewing a subject from another part of the country. The difference of languages on intercultural level is relatively more easily believable than the difference of gestures. We see a marked difference among people of different areas of Pakistan in their languages, their styles of speaking, ways of dress, customs etc. It is difficult to consider its culture a totally homogenous culture like most countries of Europe because its people have different cultural roots hailing to cultures across border e.g. many of the Punjabis are from Indian origin and most of the Pashtuns are from Afghan origin. The life style, dress, views and opinions of a Pashtun living in the NWFP are more akin to the Pashtuns of Kandahar and Kabul inside Afghanistan than to their countrymen in Makran and Gawader in the extreme south of the same country of the researchers. In order to conduct research on country-wide level, a researcher often conducts interviews of people, but to get reliability for his/her data the researcher has to get information from different areas of Pakistan where the mother tongue of the researchers happen to be different from those of their subjects and where there is a considerable difference in the ways of life, in the attitudes, beliefs, manners and customs of the subject and the researcher. With the change in culture and ethnicity, the languages also to some extent vary in their paralinguistic features and the body language accompanying them. Change in the nonverbal language is to some extent related to the culture of a particular region or ethnicity. When their languages are absolutely unintelligible to each other, then they may also rely on the national or official language, provided the subject and the researcher both happen to be educated, competent or experienced enough to carry out discussion in the national language or official language. In some cases, the researcher may only need to conduct observations. But in all cases, the researchers face the difficulty of getting the desired information from the subject with exactitude and the difficulty of interpreting properly the collected data that the researchers have collected through interviews

or observations, because of the difference in nonverbal behavior of the researchers and the respondents or subjects.

Literature Review: Non-verbal and para-verbal tools can also help us in partial expression of the functions related to the level of social meaning. The above mentioned areas are scenes to a great deal of differences between cultures and languages. Gumperz (1982) intimates us on the manner in which differences in prosody- like the difference in intonation marking a difference between statements and queries- volume, and the rhythm, among speakers of the various varieties of the same language of English can lead to misunderstandings.

Although aspects of culture typical to it, like the features of proximity, gesture and eye-contact, are described immensely (Wolfgang 1979, Poyatos 1988, Hall / Hall 1990) in studies related to intercultural communication, yet the dimension of communication that is non-verbal in nature, has till this time, relatively been more overlooked as compared to the verbal dimension.

That is due most probably to the fact that non-verbal and para-verbal data can be represented only with a great deal of difficulty in methods of conventional printing and, hence, the data available for analysis is lesser in amount than verbal data. However, most of the information is transmitted through para-verbal and non-verbal means in interpersonal communication and they occur simultaneously in face to face interactions with the verbal forms of communication. To judge the politeness of a request we consider more the potency of the voice used and the expressions of face accompanying it. A smile made particularly by a non-native speaker can atone for the otherwise too much directness.

Different languages spoken by the Pakistanis are characterized by some part of nonverbal and paralinguistic features that are particularly their own. Just as verbal language changes from region to region and subculture to subculture, so does body language. Some expressions such as fear, anger, sadness, etc

are somewhat universal. However, subcultures tend to develop their own communication styles. Body language comprises of the major elements like movements of hand, expressions of face, contact of eye, proxemics, posture, and speech are all nonverbal channels of communication. Each channel is capable of transmitting messages containing information, attitudes, or feelings. The researcher, however, should not isolate any one channel for the purpose of drawing total conclusions about the subject. A multi-channel output approach is supported by most behavioral scientists. Ekman and Friesen (1969) wrote about hand movements, and said about their study as follows:

"Throughout our studies we have emphasized a comprehensive approach, considering not just one aspect of motor behavior, such as facial expression, or eye contact, or hand movements, or posture, or leg movements, but all of these, if possible, on the same subject in the same settings. This comprehensive approach is based on our assumption that because activities in different areas of the body can serve equivalent or substitutive functions, studies of just one type of activity may provide an incomplete picture of what is occurring. Further, we believe that studies of the sequence of nonverbal behavior requires study of activities across the face and body; and, to the extent we are interested in one person's impression of another, we must consider the entire range of nonverbal behavior (and voice and words as well). since that is what is available to each participant In most interactions" Communication, therefore, is variously-channeled and the information proceeds forward via a variety of sources from a number of different sources and is a function of the environment. Therefore a researcher conducting research in these different subcultures should not rely exclusively on a single channel but on a variety of channels to get a true picture of reality.

In case of interpreting a nonverbal message the researcher has to take care that interpretations of intentionality vary. Intentionality to the purposefulness of

nonverbal codes has four possible interpretations (Maladro, Barker and Barker, 1989). One possibility is intentional nonverbal communication interpreted as intentional, such as when you hug a friend. The hug is nonverbal, purposeful and perceived as an intended message: I am so glad to see you. In this case, no misunderstanding occurs. Another possibility is an intentional code misperceived as having another intention, such as when a person tries to read a printed message bore by a female's T-shirt and the female upon discovering it turns away and hides her chest. The act of reading the message on T-shirt, being a nonverbal code, is considered as intentional lust. A third is that an intentional code perceived as intentional, such as while driving a car, a person forgets to note that the turn signal is on whereas the other person driving a car thinks the first person is intending to take a turn. A fourth possibility is a code sent and received unintentionally, such as when a man accidentally leaves a price tag on a new tie or a person wears mismatched socks. The code is noticed but it is perceived as unintentional and discounted as meaningless. In the study of nonverbal communication, the focus is on intentional nonverbal codes.

A problem with which a researcher may come across in multi-channel communication is the sending of contradictory messages via incompatible signs. Apparently the a person's words can be signaling appreciation and commitment, but his voice tone, expressions of face, posture, or gesticulations may be indicating depreciation. Which communication channel can be trusted to convey the true message? According to the findings of Mehrabian (1967) dependency of original decoding of communication on verbal behavior is 7%, on voice tone is 38%, and on expressions of face is 55%. Other studies have confirmed this relationship. This study along with other such studies made it clear that nonverbal cues represent original feelings in a better way. Automatically people trust body language communication more. Therefore, the researcher in dealing with the subject should feel free to place the most reliance on the nonverbal messages. When nonverbal communication channels conflict,

the least controlled channel (posture as opposed to facial expression) is probably transmitting the truer feeling. Similarly, the researcher should be cognizant of the fact that the subject will rely on the researcher's nonverbal channels when messages conflict and take care that his/her body language transmits the intended message. Then all of the environmental influences must be considered to obtain an accurate picture of the subject. The resulting context of the situation and the messages emanating from each of the channels compose a total view of the person observed. Total communication and feeling are not a function of any one of these channels. Each channel's message can only be interpreted in the context of the whole system

Geographical influences, due to their association with cultural influences, exercise immense influence over body language. The researcher should recognize that these influences can be found over relatively short distances, such as areas within one city, as well as over larger distances, such as parts of a country. This is true even when the cultural influences remain relatively constant. A respondent from Karachi will have different gestures, semantic content, and posture than that of a Waziristan. The researcher must be aware of these possible environmental influences. When visiting a new city, people must be observed in the way they communicate and react to one another. Environmental acclimatization can only occur through observation and interaction with the people in that environment. Occupational influences can also significantly affect body language communication. Most nonverbal features are acquired at a very early stage in life and are displayed unconsciously by the speakers. They get produced due to inborn characteristics and due to norms learnt socially. When speakers having different mother tongues communicate in the national language their speech is colored by the local nonverbal features associated with their mother tongue. Because of ignorance from the unfamiliar nonverbal features, the risk of misinterpretation acquires magnitude when speakers having different mother tongues use the common national language or one speaker

adopts the mother tongue of the other speaker to communicate with him. Speaker A having separate mother tongue from that of speaker B may fail to understand behaviour or the message of speaker B for the message being distorted by the nonverbal element of that of speaker B's mother tongue. The problem assumes greater intensity when a researcher interviews a respondent of a different mother tongue where message can easily be lost, misinterpreted or distorted. According to Porter and Samovar, where it is easy for a message to get distorted, lost, or misinterpreted. "when a message reaches the culture where it is to be decoded, it undergoes a transformation in which the influence of the decoding culture becomes a part of the message meaning. The meaning content of the original message becomes modified during the decoding phase on intercultural communication because the culturally different repertory of communicative behaviour and meanings possessed by the decoder does not contain the same cultural meanings possessed by the encoder (Porter & Samovar 1988:21). The researcher decodes the nonverbal cues of the respondent according to the presumptions of his own society and due to their mutual difference reaches conclusions opposed to reality.

Unawareness on the part of the senders about the types of messages being sent by them and about how they are being interpreted by the receivers can lead to many complexities and difficulties. If the message conveyed by the sender fails to conform to the perception of the receiver regarding social standards for the concerned specific circumstance, then there are again high chances of miscommunication. In order to avoid misinterpretation and reach correct conclusion the researcher needs to take cognizance of the body language or the nonverbal element of communication along with other factors impeding correct interpretation.

A researcher cannot afford to overlook a highly powerful communication construct like body language. It is not anything of supreme importance or relevance to know which means of communication among written word, spoken word, hands, eyes, posture or face conveys

more meaning. A researcher needs to be super sensitive and has to keep his/her eye upon each and every channel of communication to carry out a detailed and complete analysis of his/her respondent's situation. We unconsciously send nonverbal cues and each component of our nonverbal are not only received but are also interpreted positively and negatively, affecting in a very complex manner our relationships with others and the interpersonal milieu around us. Affect states of a communicator can be understood with the help of non-verbal cues, and the perception about a researcher's sincerity and reliability can be influenced by them.

A researcher must be equipped with the necessary analytical skills to be able to describe and analyze different types of communication in multilingual environments. Researchers hail from different backgrounds that have a unique permanent stamp over their approach towards how they see nonverbal communication. Due to this, a lot many problems arise due to attribution of wrong meaning to a nonverbal cue. According to Motley (1993) evidence regarding accuracy of interpretation with regard to affective facial features of sender exists; however, additional research in this regard has shown lesser degree of accurate identification when the facial behavior is made spontaneously. According to his findings, affective facial display helps in supporting verbal communication mainly. Facial display, like a type of verbal interjection, is employed to attribute appropriate and accurate meaning to a verbal message.

Risk of misinterpretation of the nonverbal language in interaction between people speaking different languages for research purposes is there. Speaking community of a particular language as mother tongue often has nonverbal cues specific to it. During qualitative research a researcher often has to collect data through interviews and observations in field setting. In day to day dealings, normally the reality is not what we see, on account of the distorted perception of people in majority cases. Creating accurate perceptions of human behaviors is a question. How do we perceive and how we are

perceived by others can be affected by nonverbal cues. To add reliability to his/her research, he/she has to conduct research in diverse localities and communities speaking different languages and holding somewhat different local and ethnic ways of behaviour. Sometimes meaning of a statement made by a respondent or an action performed by a subject may be accompanied by nonverbal gestures that may give meaning different or even opposite to the one understood by the researcher. Emotions are ambiguous in nature and therefore both the researcher and the subject can attribute different meanings to them. Some internal and external properties impede our ability to do nonverbal communication accurately. Pure emotion is hard to see in human beings and different strength and quantities of emotion get mixed up to form our affective states. The ability of conveying overlapping and contradictory emotions together at a given point of time is natural to human body. For instance, we see that sometimes the emotion of anxiety also accompanies the emotion of anger. Resultantly, the receiver or decoder of the message gets confused upon getting these overlapping emotions. According to Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1989), a complete understanding with respect to affect states regarding ourselves is unavailable. Different researches have explored up to the extent of cross-culturally distinguishing some emotions like anger, happiness fear and sadness. According to Hall, Chia, and Wang (1996) very obvious difficulties are faced in differentiating emotions of disgust, acceptance, anticipation, contempt and affection universally. As per the definition of the cultural background of the communicator, we can place along a continuum the different other behavioural manifestations of emotion.

In order to get exact interpretation and full understanding the researcher has to be cautious even in the nonverbal traits that are common and universal e.g. the nonverbal behaviour that is universal should be differentiated from the nonverbal cues of a particular sub-culture and ethnicity. Age and gender have been compared by various studies as variables to reflect obvious differences in nonverbal communication.

According to the research of Lancelot and Nowicki (1997), that with an increase in the age, an increase takes place in the proficiency for decoding gestures and postures, except facial expressions. The researcher needs to be well conversant with those traits which are universal e.g. non-verbal behaviour that accompanies while one is telling a lie. When compared with verbal communication, our bodies are prone to show reality and they do not tell lies. Analysis of head movements was carried out through computer by Donaghy and Dooley (1994), and the sending of deceptive messages was correlated. The findings revealed use of more head movement in case a person is telling a lie as compared to when the person is telling the truth. No relationship was found between gender and the degree of using head movement while telling lies. This was an important finding because since long it used to be stated that the females were easier to be detected while they told lies as compared to males.

These researches put us on the alert that the act of telling a lie or deception can be detected through our bodies also. People's emphasis is normally more over controlling the face than other body parts while hiding deception or lies but the reality is that other body parts like hands and feet also betray lies, although not much in a research environment as the information sought might not be so much harmful for the subject. A person's hands normally keep making gestures during speech, but it depends on the ability and skill of the researcher to find out the suppressed truth. Nonetheless, if gestures can indicate our integrity or otherwise, according to Ekman & Friesen (1969), they can easily be controlled by sitting over our hands or by putting them in our pockets while speaking. Deception can be detected by means of a speaker's voice also; however, to detect minor shades of it a researcher has to be well experienced and skillful. Pitch is the hardest to recognize because a researcher cannot do it without using some instruments; however, it Hall (1986) has found it that when one tells lies one's voice pitch increases considerably. He adds that the speaker's amplitude of voice increases when the speaker is telling a lie. Syllabic duration, standing for the time length

between words and syllables, however, is a factor of voice that is easier to detect without the help of any instrument. According to Hall (1986) the syllabic duration in a person's speech gets lengthened when he/she is telling lies as compared to when he/she is telling the truth. The length in duration is due to the reason that it takes more time to concoct a lie than telling the truth. Besides, the other reasons are the unconsciously felt fear of being detected in the act of lying and the hesitancy accompanied by the fear of being caught. According to Kraut (1978) a half-hearted smile shows the probability of a person's lying. In this case, there is still the possibility that one can get oneself used to putting on a fake smile. However, Kraut (1978) helps us out by informing that the one indelible sign beyond the control of the speaker is manifested by the muscles surrounding the eyes which are not used while making a fake smile.

Researcher should also learn to sift through practice the non-verbal behaviour that is peculiar to people of an area or an ethnicity from the traits that are displayed by different genders differently. The researcher must also know the differences shown on the basis of gender i.e. the nonverbal cues that are common to males and those that are common to females. It is stated that females use body language differently from males. To arrive at correct interpretation of a subjects' behavior and correct understanding of a respondent's utterance, a researcher needs to be well equipped with full understanding of nonverbal communication. The researcher observes others during their performance and speech acts and on the basis of their observations and interviews he/she reaches some conclusions. A researcher howsoever competent in deriving exact meaning from verbal language will still not be qualified to arrive at the exact meaning of an action if he /she does not have an understanding of nonverbal communication on different levels. He/she interprets their behavior by keeping in view the meaning of nonverbal cues of the location class and ethnicity that he/she hails from. He/she may misinterpret the behavior and constructs of his/her subject and therefore come up with a conclusion poles apart from the reality. A

rudimentary knowledge about nonverbal communication and an appreciation of the possibility of its difference among different persons, ethnicities, and communities can safely guide him/her into arriving at correct understanding of behavior and speech of a respondent and a subject. A researcher needs to differentiate between cues specific to an individual, to a community, to an ethnicity from those that stand true universally and are same for everyone.

Methodology

This study involves studying the differences in nonverbal communication among the researchers and the respondents belonging to different parts, ethnicities and subcultures of Pakistan. But because of the nature of the study, the researchers liked to delimit this study to NUML which could be trusted to have students coming from all corners of Pakistan, speaking different mother tongues and belonging to different ethnicities and sub-cultures. These students could be trusted to represent the people from different parts and provinces of Pakistan to convincingly verify the hypothesis of the researchers.

The area of research is very complex and requires close examination. The study involves nonverbal behaviour which cannot be observed and understood properly unless it is observed in the proper context. Because of the momentary and spontaneous nature of the nonverbal behavior, the researchers might not remember the cue, they might not understand and pick the cue up instantly, and they may not get enough time to note down the cue. So, the tool of simple observation could not be relied upon exclusively nor could the method of simply asking people about the information be considered satisfactory. The researchers could not rely on photos or on snapshots alone, because they could not catch the nonverbal cue in totality and because nonverbal behaviour is not only limited to gestures, postures, facial expressions but also involves paralinguistic features of voice like tone, stress accent, rate, and volume etc which can only be heard and listened to only. Because of these limitations, the researchers planned to make videos of those moments when a person is engaged in performing nonverbal behaviour, which can be observed

as well as listened to. These videos could then be intensively studied and examined in the laboratory with the help of experts and the interpreters and translators of the mother tongue of the respondents if the respondent happened to be unable to respond in the national language. The researchers planned to conduct interviews and conversation sessions among the interviewees and participants in the national language of Pakistan i.e. Urdu and when the respondent was found lacking in expressing himself with ease in the national language then he/she would be allowed to use his/her own mother tongue in case of which the services of an interpreter of the mother tongue of the respondent were availed. For the purpose of bringing uniformity in the use of tools and strategies the researcher preferred to find those respondents who were able to speak well in Urdu. But here again we find the problem of not getting pure uncorrupted nonverbal behavior which can be found more conspicuously when the mother tongue is used. In case fluent speakers of Urdu were difficult to find then the researcher would be availing the services of a translator of the mother tongue of the respondent and improvising other ways to let his/her subjects engage in activities like debates etc among themselves so that their nonverbal behavior could be videoed.

The researchers planned to conduct interviews sessions with students from the above mentioned diverse environments. The interviews were conducted not in order to get the views of the respondents but to observe the respondents while displaying nonverbal behaviour as the problem with interview is that we cannot consider the information asked about nonverbal behaviour from respondents valid. The reason for the lack of validity of the information asked through interview was that the respondents themselves might not be aware of the nonverbal behaviour they were making. The challenge the researchers faced was that how could they manage to ask questions to let the respondents display the whole range of nonverbal behaviour. For this purpose, the researchers planned to go about the project by first making a list of some of the utterances which normally are accompanied by nonverbal gestures and cues. Although

almost all the statements and utterances can be accompanied by different nonverbal behavior, but the researchers chose only such type of utterances which were more pronounced and which were normally indispensably accompanied by nonverbal language. Then to put those utterances in the mouths of the respondents and observe the nonverbal language accompanying them, the researchers devised a kind of questionnaire having questions the answers of which were more or less the utterances arrived at by the researchers. My interview questions were of such type that the answers to them were most probably accompanied by nonverbal language e.g. a respondent might be asked a question the answer of which might elicit embarrassment, anger, sympathy, refusal, agreement, wonder, etc. Not only were their gestures and body language studied but also their paralanguage was examined. So the researchers had data both by visual and aural means. The audible data included voice quality, volume, rate, accent, stress pattern etc.

Another challenge that the researchers faced was the spontaneous nature of nonverbal behaviour. The question was that whether the nonverbal behaviour displayed by the respondents and especially the females in the presence of a stranger interviewer, and that too in isolation, could be trusted as natural and not artificial. What strategy could the researchers adopt to make their respondents display their nonverbal behaviour in a natural and spontaneous manner in their presence? To tackle this hurdle, the researchers needed to develop close familiarity and some sort of informality with the subjects. Secondly if the respondents felt hesitant and there happened to be a risk of their behaving artificially, then the interviews might not be conducted in isolation but in the presence of other respondents. Conducting interviews in groups would enable the respondents to feel at ease and behave normally.

The researchers were to take interviews of students coming different subcultures and geographical parts of Pakistan and speaking different mother-tongues. To have knowledge of the different types of nonverbal language

throughout the country of Pakistan, the researchers first located and then interviewed students from different parts of Pakistan speaking different mother tongues, and whenever possible, belonging to different ethnicities and to different sub-cultures. The interview was conducted in the national language i.e. Urdu. The possibility was that some respondents might not feel themselves competent enough to speak out their mind in a spontaneous and natural way via national language. For the lack of proper words their speech might hamper and therefore the nonverbal behaviour accompanying them and which the researchers wanted to see would also not take place. Their imperfect command over the national language might bring distortion in their nonverbal behavior and language and make them behave artificially. If the subjects felt much difficulty, then they were to be asked to answer in their own mother-tongue and the services of an interpreter were availed, who converted the question asked by the researcher in the national language into the local language and conveyed that question to the respondent when needed. Then the answering of the questions by the respondents via their mother tongue was videoed. These videos clips were interpreted with the help of the interpreter. To gain more permanence for the data and exactitude for the analysis of the utterances, the translation of the local language into the national language and/or the English language was made to run along the video as hypertext. Then that videos were scrutinized in the laboratory with great care and minute attention and the clips bearing more noticeable nonverbal cues were separated and a list of the common and uncommon features of nonverbal language of that group of people were noted down. Here the researchers must be competent enough to and must be well-read to understand that some of the nonverbal behaviour e.g. behaviour showing emotions those of pain and joy are universal and are displayed in almost similar manner by people throughout the world. This knowledge of the researchers helped the researchers in sifting the universal nonverbal language behaviour from the local one. Clips of respondents belonging to one specific area, ethnicity, subculture, speaking one common mother tongue were compared. In order to gain validity for the data received

from one set of people, similarities between the nonverbal cues of this one set of respondents were studied and the common nonverbal behavior peculiar to that set of respondents were reached at. A list of these nonverbal cues was prepared for a particular set of people. Then the researchers proceeded to students belonging to another area or ethnicity and repeated the same process among such students individually, and if difficult individually, then in groups.

Flexibility in strategies and tools was maintained as the culture or the environment of every area and every group of individuals was not going to be the same. It was planned that if some subjects felt shy in front of the camera, as especially the female subjects from the rural areas of Pakistan do hesitate and feel shy to speak out their mind in front of male interviewer, then conversation would be held with them on some familiar topics which had the potential for eliciting nonverbal response more conspicuously from them. After this discussion the researchers asked them to hold conversation among themselves in their mother tongue freely on those topics. This conversation among them was videoed. While people converse among themselves, their responses and behaviour are more natural and spontaneous and the nonverbal element of their conversation is clearly observable. This strategy reduced the influence of factors like hesitancy, artificiality, and shyness. But the researchers definitely saw to it that although the participants enjoyed the conversation, they also exchanged their views in a serious way and that the conversation in group discussion did not lead to hilarious fun. The researchers, then, made video of that group discussion and studied it in the laboratory with the help of translators of the participants' mother tongue.

Students, especially the females belonging to some areas and ethnicities living in the rural Pakistan may not think good if their interviews are videoed. The number of such students was not more in NUML. However the researchers looked for sensible and educated people who saw eye to eye with them and extended full cooperation in line with the decided plan. In case such a provision was

hard to achieve then other alternatives were to be adopted to get access to first-hand knowledge. For the sake of interpretation a local educated person of that area was engaged and his/her services were availed in this respect. The same process of making a script of national language translated from the local language used in the conversation or interview session run in front of the video-clips was adopted so that the video clips along with their translation could be viewed and studied at leisure by the researchers, experts and other testifiers. The researcher visited another set of students belonging to another area or to another ethnicity of pronounced difference and repeated the same process.

The researchers intended to start their research from students belonging to those parts of the country which are farthest away from one other and also from those subcultures who are descendents from cultures outside the country (as previously mentioned in our literature review people belonging to NWFP province show more proximity in their lifestyles and culture to the Pashtun tribe inhabiting the southern part of Afghanistan than to the Muhajirs of Karachi and the Punjab most of whom have migrated from India and showing more affinity to Indian culture). The remotest areas having different geography on whose students the researchers wanted to conduct his/her research include Gilgit and Hunza belonging to the Kohistan division, Pashto speaking student of Quetta from the province of Baluchistan since the number of student in of this province is always less in institutions far away along with students from the southern coastal parts of Baluchistan like Makran and Gawadar, and at last Sukkar and then the Muhajirs of Karachi in the Sind province but unfortunately no such student could be found in NUML Islamabad.. However, in order to find clear and sharp nonverbal behaviour contrast, the priority of the researchers was those students who apart from belonging to different areas also belonged to different ethnicities. The ethnicities of Punjab who have migrated from India e.g.the Karnals and the Rajputs were to be studied in relation to the students from Pashtun ethnicity residing in the FATA and tribal areas of NWFP and in the Province of

Baluchistan, who have great affinity with cross border culture of Southern provinces of Afghanistan to a large extent. The problem of non-availability of students due to the exam of the NUML was faced by the researchers. Due to this the research had to be further delimited to fewer numbers of areas than those earlier intended and mentioned above by the researcher. It was delimited to District Karak from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, District Quetta from Baluchistan Province, Hunza from the northern areas of Pakistan and Gilgit from the northern area of Gilgit Balthistan province.

The researchers revisited their hostels and their meeting places like lawns, cafeteria, library and sometimes classes again and again in order to get familiarity with the expected subjects, to have deep knowledge of their situation, to study the nonverbal behavior of the males and females in isolation as well as in combination and to establish rapport with them. These visits were first aimed at making the subjects open up so that they could be made ready to undertake the interview voluntarily. Depending on the norms and values of most of the Pakistani population, the researchers did well to engage an attendant from opposite sex along with them so that they could easily access the groups or members of opposite sex and hold interviews in a relaxed manner with subjects of opposite sex.

Before appearing in the interview each respondent was taken into confidence and was informed about the nature of the study and was assured that his/her views would not be publicized but would simply be studied for the nonverbal content accompanying them and that the interview session of each respondent would have to be videoed. They were asked that set of questions which were more likely to elicit nonverbal behaviour along with the verbal language. Those video interview sessions were studied in the laboratory by the researchers along with some helpers. Then the video clips which showed verbal language accompanied by nonverbal cues were separated and put under close scrutiny.

Fortunately NUML inducts students hailing from different corners of the country who professed different mother-tongues. The students of NUML came handy in serving another purpose of our research which was that of finding only those interviewees for our research who could communicate in the national language apart from their mother-tongues. Almost all of those who come to NUML have at least an education up to Matric and find no difficulty in expressing themselves in Urdu. In fact some of them can satisfactorily express themselves in English too. After conducting the same study in different segments of students belonging to different areas, ethnicities and sub-cultures and speaking different mother-tongues the researcher came up with the peculiar nonverbal qualities of different types of subcultures, ethnicities and languages.

To check out the difference, and to add reliability to their findings, two students from those who were doing PhD degree in Linguistics at NUML and who belonged to the localities and ethnicities of the respondents were asked to watch the clips picked up from the videos of interviews and the group discussions collected from the students of the chosen areas of Pakistan studying inside NUML. The researchers while displaying each clip put the following questions to his assistants and the students of PhD and made them express their opinions on the verbal behaviour of each other and then their answers to the questions were noted down. The following questions were put to them:

1. Can you detect the nonverbal language displayed in the clip?
2. What type of nonverbal behaviour would you call it?
3. Do you see anything strange about the nonverbal cue the person in the clip is making?
4. What message do you think the nonverbal body language of the person is conveying?
5. Do you find any type of nonverbal language and behaviour which you would consider universal and not local in nature?

6. What does this gesture or this paralinguistic feature suggest to in your mother tongue and sub-culture?
7. If you had wanted to convey the same verbal message then what type of nonverbal behaviour would you have used to accompany it?
8. What type of emotion is being conveyed through the body language of the performer or the paralinguistic features (stress, volume, frequency, rate, stress, intonation etc) of the speaker?
9. Do you think the non-verbal language (facial expression, gesture, posture, appearance, space, and the volume, accent, frequency, stress, rate, intonation) accompanying the verbal language is appropriate for it?
10. Do you think you underwent some misunderstanding before coming to know what the nonverbal language was really meant to convey?

After the researchers got feedback from the students the limitation faced by the researchers was to ascertain certitude whether the difference was high or low and to what extent it could cause misunderstanding between a researchers and a respondent if each belonged to a different subculture or ethnicity and spoke a different mother tongue, inside Pakistan.

Data Collection

The first group observed by the researcher was from Hunza valley. The names of students that participated are as follows: JavedHussain (MA, IR), Shakir Ali (MA, IR), Ibne Abbas (MA, IR) Hussain (MBA, 1st term), NasrullahJan (MBA, 3rd term). The language spoken by them is called *Burushaski*. It is highly isolated language inside Pakistan evading classification; it has no links with the languages spoken in its neighborhood like Dardic branch or Iranian branch.

The second group observed was a group from district Karak, which is from among the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. The names of students that

participated are as follows: Naveed Khan Khattak (MA English final), Muhammad Abdullah (MBA, 2st semester), Wasif Jamal Khattak (MBA, 3rd Semester), Shehzad Qayum Khattak (MA English final), Afzal Khan Khattak (English language certificate), Faiq Shah Khattak (English language certificate), and Abid Saeed (Diploma in English). These students spoke a southern dialect of Pashto which among the two main dialects of Pashto is more akin to the Qandahari dialect of Pashto than to the Peshawari dialect of Pashto.

The third group of students, which the researcher managed to convene, comprised students belonging to Gilgit. Their names and disciplines are mentioned as follows: Arif Hussain (MBA 3rd term), Ibadullah (MBA, 3rd term), Ziauddin (MBA, 3rd term), Sartaj Ahmad (MBA, 3rd term), Sabith (MBA, 2nd term), SajidHussain (MBA, 3rd term), Saqlain (BBA 5th term) Mushtaq (MA IR final), Shahid (MA English final). The language spoken by them is called is *Shina* which is a large living language, Dardic in nature, and existing in multiple variations and dialects. It is claimed to be the main language spoken all over Gilgit Baltistan.

The fourth group observed by the researcher was from Quetta, Baluchistan Province. The names of students that participated are as follows: Jahanzeb Khan (English language certificate), Anwar Shah (English language certificate), Nazeer Shah Kakar (English language certificate), RehmatKakar (English language certificate), Khalique (English language certificate). The language spoken by them was Pashto, with no specific name for the dialect spoken.

The following questions were asked respondents.

1. Could you tell us about the event when you felt sure you were about to die.
2. What is the dream of your life? If you are given a bank-cheque of five lac American dollars, then what would you do with it?
3. Tell us something about the most joyous moment of your life.

4. What was the cause of your failing in three papers in your last exam?
5. We were told by one of your class fellows that you had a scuffle with your class fellow. Is it true?
6. Have you been wronged by anyone or has some injustice been done to you by any person or by any institution? If yes then what would you tell us in complaint?
7. Could you tell us how grateful you are to your father or/and to your mother and why?
8. What were your feelings at the time when someone very near and dear to you passed away?
9. What do feel about the present rise in prices and the present political instability of our country?
10. What feelings do you have for our Holy prophet Mohammad (S.A.W)

Where the respondents felt hesitant or felt shy in appearing for the interviews the researchers tried to engage them in group discussions. The group leader was briefed about the purpose of the interview and was taken into confidence and was then asked to bring into discussion the following topics imperceptibly; Present price hike in Pakistan, political instability inside Pakistan, the day when Pakistan cricket team won the world cup, a moment when one was sure one would die, the type of enemies one have on individual and family basis and what one feels about them, whom does one love most inside ones family and why, the complaints one have against teachers, institutions and the whole system of education, the teacher one likes and dislikes and why, topics in which the group leader would deliberately tell such a lie which would elicit the feelings of surprise, disgust and anger from the respondents.. These chosen topics were, like the questions of the interview, believed to touch the emotions of the students and were believed to have the potential of bringing out nonverbal cues along with the verbal language.

Where the tools of both interview and group discussion were possible and the students agreed happily, then both of them were used to gain more validity for the data. The collection of data was not smooth sailing as imagined by the researchers. Most of the

students could not spare time for being interviewed because they said their exams were in progress. Entry into their rooms was unwelcome for them as they were busy in their exam preparation. The interview sessions and the group discussions of those who agreed after a lot of requests by the researchers were characterized by nonchalance, haste and lack of interest. Their usually frequented hangovers were also found deserted because of their exams. Girls in particular could not be accessed because they were busy in exam preparations at home. Depending on the problem of accessibility, the researcher had to further delimit the fold of study to only a few groups of NWFP province, Baluchistan province and some of the northern areas of Pakistan. The set of students studied were from Gilgit, Hunza, Quetta, and Karak. The medium adopted for the interview was Urdu, although in certain cases when the respondents knew speaking Pashto, the researcher also interviewed them in Pashto. The Questions specified for the students were translated for them into Pashto as and when required.

Data Interpretation

The data was collected and analyzed by the researcher. The videos were watched again and again. With the help of his assistants among whom were also speakers of the mother tongue of the interviewees, the researcher first separated the non-verbal cues of one group of students into three categories: universal nonverbal behaviour and cues, purely personal and idiosyncratic nonverbal behavior and cues, and the nonverbal behaviors and cues that were shared among members of the same ethnicity, mother tongue and culture. The same process of categorization was applied to the data collected from all the groups. When the three types of list were prepared successfully for each group then only the list of nonverbal behaviour that was shared by the same ethnicity and mother tongue was taken up for each group by the researcher and were examined closely. After this the above mentioned particular list of each group was compared with similar list of another groups on the basis of behaviour and cues displayed for the same emotions of surprise, frustration, anger, gratitude, happiness, sadness, love

and hatred etc. The researcher was conducting this type of research for the first time therefore he lacked experience and faced a great deal of difficulty in detecting minor and subtle differences among students of different communities. However some of the differences that were more conspicuous were noted down by the researcher.

Results

The type of nonverbal behaviour found unique with students of Hunza was that they were extremely polite and that even when they got offended they absorbed it with a smiling face so that their reaction to having got offended remained hidden. In response to a request or order by somebody they, as a sign of gratitude or to show their obedience, also were found to be in the habit of placing their hand on their chests with a lowering of their heads. A researcher undertaking research in the Hunza community is warned that due to their cultural politeness, it should not be assumed that they do not get offended or that they are liberal to the extent of not taking exception to any sort of question.

The second group of students studied belonged to district Karak, from southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The respondents kept a distance with the strangers as compared to other respondents from other chosen areas. However, during the conversation, upon getting familiar and friendly, with the researchers, they would prefer touching the researchers with their hands out of informality. Their tone remained higher while conversing and answering, so much so, that anyone from other culture suspected they were arguing instead of conversing. The reason found behind this trait was that talking silently was looked upon by them as a trait of feminine conversation and unmanliness. Besides their roughness in speech was found to be interpreted as rudeness but it was found they did not mean anything rude in reality.

The group of students belonging to Gilgit showed another very distinctive nonverbal feature. It was their non-use of hand movements while conversing with one another. They also avoid touching one another during conversation. The researcher found it

very unusual and upon asking the reason for it was informed by the assistant from Gilgit that actually in their ethnicity it is considered extremely rude and disrespectful on the part of the person sitting in a group to make gestures and movements with hands. They also take serious exception to their being touched by one another. Apart from Sociolinguistics, the field of study involved in respect of nonverbal communication is Kinesics. A sociolinguist researcher should be well-versed in Kinesics to be sensitive to such differences and interpret a situation with exactitude. What can be derived as useful information for the researcher is that due to the non-use of nonverbal information in the shape of hand movements and light touching of the subjects the researcher will have to put double efforts in order to arrive at the exact meaning of the words of the respondent in this community. In such circumstances the researcher is required to focus more on the verbal content of the subjects. Apart from it the researcher himself/herself will be well-advised to avoid the use of hand movements and touching while conducting research inside people belonging to this ethnicity.

The fourth group of students observed by the researcher was from Quetta. The distinctive features revealed by the examination of their non-verbal behavior include too much rhythmic variation in speech which seems to an outsider as dramatic and artificial. Even when they are interviewed in their mother tongue, Pashto, a researcher from another province, like in the case of the researcher, speaking another dialect of Pashto, might take their responses negatively. The reason is that because of being not used to such type of highly rhythmical variation in speech they might interpret their response as a deliberate act of joking, insinuation or ironising. The monotony observed in many other languages and in many other dialects of Pashto, is hardly to be seen in their language or in their dialect of Pashto.

Conclusion

However, the acknowledgment of the difference of gestures on intercultural level should not lead one to assume that people from every subculture of a state would behave uniformly same in their nonverbal behavior. Just as languages vary across different

subcultures of a country, therefore, within a single country different gestures might convey different meanings in different parts of that country. Nonverbal language learnt by a speaker on subcultural level by using a local language can continue to be used by the speaker while using as an official common language. As a result, a researcher doing country-wide research via national language faces a great deal of chances of misunderstanding the non-verbal cues accompanying the responses of participants coming from different subcultural backgrounds.

Even if an interviewer and interviewee interact in their common national language, we may expect a faulty understanding of the researcher's questions by the respondent and a faulty interpretation on the part of the researcher, if the mother tongues of the researcher and respondent happen to be different. Therefore, the researcher, before conducting interview inside different parts of the country, needs to observe for some time the sub-culture and the non-verbal cues of its respondents, and make a list of all the strikingly different nonverbal cues of the target sub-culture. Besides, a researcher working in such heterogeneous societies needs to have a thorough knowledge about the mechanism of body language, to know its varieties, forms, and manifestations, to distinguish its more universal features from the local ones, and to take account of other environmental factors that may tend to distort the exact information sought.

References

- Burgoon, J. K., Buller, D. B., & Woodall, W. G. (1996). *Nonverbal communication The unspoken dialogue* (2nded.). New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Donaghy, W. C., & Dooley, B. F. (1994). Head movement, gender, and deceptive communication. *Communication Reports*, 7 (2), 67-74
- Eibl-Eibesfeldt, I. (1989). *Human ethology*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter
- Ekman. Paul, and Friesen, Wallace V. "Nonverbal Leakage and Clues to Deception," *Psychiatry*, Vol. 32, 1969.pp. 88-105
- Gumperz, J.J. (1982): *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge UK: CUP
- Hall, J. A. (1984). *Nonverbal sex differences: Communication accuracy and expressive style*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hall, M.E. (1986). *Detecting deception in the human voice: An analysis of the fundamental frequency, syllabic duration, and amplitude of the human voice*. Ann Arbor, MI. U.M.I.
- Hall, E.T., & Hall, M. (1990): *Understanding Cultural Differences. Germans, French and Americans*. Yarmouth, ME.: Intercultural Press.
- Hall, C. W., Chia, R. & Wang, D. F. (1996). *Nonverbal communication among American and Chinese students*. *Psychological Reports*, 79, 419-428)
- Hanna, M. S., & Wilson, G. L. (1998). *Communicating in business and professional settings* (4thed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Ivy, D. K., & Backlund, P. (1994). *Exploring genderspeak*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc..
- Kraut, R.E. (1978). Verbal and nonverbal cues in the perception of lying. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36, 380-391 Ulibarri 197
- Lancelot, C., & Nowicki, S. Jr. (1997). The association between receptive nonverbal processing abilities and internalizing/externalizing problems in girls and boys. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 158 (3), 297-302.
- Malandro, L. A., Barker, L. L., & Barker, D. A. (1989). *Nonverbal Communication*. New York: Newbery Award Records.
- Mehrabian, A., & Wiener, M. (1967). *Decoding of inconsistent communication in two*

- channels. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 31(1), 248-252.
- Motley, M. T. (1993). Facial affect and verbal context in conversation: Facial expression as interjection. *Human Communication Research*, 20 (1), 3-40
- Porter, Richard E. & Samovar, Larry A, eds. (1988). *Intercultural Communication: A reader*. Fifth edition. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company
- Porter, Richard E & Samovar, Larry A. (1988). "Approaching Intercultural Communication". In Porter, Richard E. & Samovar, Larry A, eds.
- Poyatos, F. (ed.) (1988): *Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Non-Verbal Communication*. Toronto: C.J. Hogrefe Retrieved January 8 2002 from <http://commfaculty.fullerton.edu/rgass/deceptio.htm>. Journal: *Language and Identity* .
- Wolfgang, A.C. (ed.) (1979): *Non-Verbal Behavior*. New York: Academic Press