

Professional Communication (BHCS 203)
[B.SC\(H\)CS Sem II](#)

Lecture:24,25&26
Date:30/4/2020
Unit V
Topic1:

Paralinguistic Features of Voice:

Paralinguistics has to do with the aspects of language that do not relate to the formal systems of language such as phonology, syntax, grammar etc. The features of paralinguistics fall into two categories. The categories are

1. Vocal paralinguistic features
2. Body paralinguistic features

Vocal Paralinguistic Features

Vocal paralinguistic features relate to how we say something. We can speak loudly or soft which are characteristics of volume. Our voices can be breathy, which is an approach some singers may use. The tone of our voice can be changed as well. A high tone can indicate nervousness or a question and even anger in some people. A low tone indicates doubt or authority in some people. All of these features convey intention and are influenced by circumstance

Body Paralinguistic Features

Paralinguistic Features of the body is how we communicate meaning through the use of our bodies. Facial expressions is one example. When we frown, smile, raise our eyebrows, etc. these all share different forms of information. Clenching the teeth and biting one's lips also sends a message. The cultural context also colors what these behaviors mean as well.

Gestures are another form of bodily communications. Crossing out arms sends a message. Shrugging our shoulders in the US context indicates that the person does not know or does not care. Scratching our heads indicates confusion or lack of understanding.

Proximity is how close two people are when communicating. Normally, the closer two people are the more intimate. The further apart two people are indicates a formal setting and hierarchy. Many people keep a certain distance from their boss when communicating.

Posture is another feature. Slouching indicates laziness. When a person holds their head down it is often a sign of inferiority. If a person stands with hunched shoulder it sends a message as well.

An interesting thing about paralinguistic features is that people often echo each other. In other words, if someone speaks with a high pitch the person they are talking to may respond the same way. If someone folds their arms across their chest while speaking the person listening may do so as well. Normally, echoing is a sign that the other person is listening intently or it could be to mock the other person.

Conclusion

Paralinguistics is an aspect of communication that conveys information distinctly from other forms of language. The way the voice is used as well as the way people use their bodies while communicating sends powerful, yet subtle messages to people.

Topic 2:Listening Skills:

In today's high-tech, high-speed, high-stress world, communication is more important than ever, yet we seem to devote less and less time to really listening to one another. Genuine listening has become a rare gift—the gift of time. It helps build relationships, solve problems, ensure understanding, resolve conflicts, and improve accuracy. At work, effective listening means fewer errors and less wasted time. At home, it helps develop resourceful, self-reliant kids who can solve their own problems. Listening builds friendships and careers.

10 tips to develop effective listening skills:

Step 1: Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.

Talking to someone while they scan the room, study a computer screen, or gaze out the window is like trying to hit a moving target. How much of the person's divided attention you are actually getting? Fifty percent? Five percent? If the person were your child you might demand, "Look at me when I'm talking to you," but that's not the sort of thing we say to a lover, friend or colleague.

In most Western cultures, eye contact is considered a basic ingredient of effective communication. When we talk, we look each other in the eye. That doesn't mean that you can't carry on a conversation from across the room, or from another room, but if the conversation continues for any length of time, you (or the other person) will get up and move. The desire for better communication pulls you together. Do your conversational partners the courtesy of turning to face them. Put aside papers, books, the phone and other distractions. Look at them, even if they don't look at you. Shyness, uncertainty, shame, guilt, or other emotions, along with cultural taboos, can inhibit eye contact in some people under some circumstances. Excuse the other guy, but stay focused yourself.

Step 2: Be attentive, but relaxed.

Now that you've made eye contact, relax. You don't have to stare fixedly at the other person. You can look away now and then and carry on like a normal person. The important thing is to be attentive. The dictionary says that to "attend" another person means to:

- be present
- give attention
- apply or direct yourself
- pay attention

remain ready to serve

Mentally screen out distractions, like background activity and noise. In addition, try not to focus on the speaker's accent or speech mannerisms to the point where they become distractions. Finally, don't be distracted by your own thoughts, feelings, or biases.

Step 3: Keep an open mind.

Listen without judging the other person or mentally criticizing the things she tells you. If what she says alarms you, go ahead and feel alarmed, but don't say to yourself, "Well, that was a stupid move." As soon as you indulge in judgmental bemusements, you've compromised your effectiveness as a listener.

Listen without jumping to conclusions. Remember that the speaker is using language to represent the thoughts and feelings inside her brain. You don't know what those thoughts and feelings are and the only way you'll find out is by listening.

Don't be a sentence-grabber. Occasionally my partner can't slow his mental pace enough to listen effectively, so he tries to speed up mine by interrupting and finishing my sentences. This usually lands him way off base, because he is following his own train of thought and doesn't learn where my thoughts are headed. After a couple of rounds of this, I usually ask, "Do you want to have this conversation by yourself, or do you want to hear what I have to say?" I wouldn't do that with everyone, but it works with him.

Step 4: Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.

Allow your mind to create a mental model of the information being communicated. Whether a literal picture, or an arrangement of abstract concepts, your brain will do the necessary work if you stay focused, with senses fully alert. When listening for long stretches, concentrate on, and remember, key words and phrases.

When it's your turn to listen, don't spend the time planning what to say next. You can't rehearse and listen at the same time. Think only about what the other person is saying.

Finally, concentrate on what is being said, even if it bores you. If your thoughts start to wander, immediately force yourself to refocus.

Step 5: Don't interrupt and don't impose your "solutions."

Children used to be taught that it's rude to interrupt. I'm not sure that message is getting across anymore. Certainly the opposite is being modeled on the majority of talk shows and reality programs, where loud, aggressive, in-your-face behavior is condoned, if not encouraged.

Interrupting sends a variety of messages. It says:

"I'm more important than you are."

"What I have to say is more interesting, accurate or relevant."

"I don't really care what you think."

"I don't have time for your opinion."

"This isn't a conversation, it's a contest, and I'm going to win."

We all think and speak at different rates. If you are a quick thinker and an agile talker, the burden is on you to relax your pace for the slower, more thoughtful communicator—or for the guy who has trouble expressing himself.

When listening to someone talk about a problem, refrain from suggesting solutions. Most of us don't want your advice anyway. If we do, we'll ask for it. Most of us prefer to figure out our own solutions. We need you to listen and help us do that. Somewhere way down the line, if you are absolutely bursting with a brilliant solution, at least get the speaker's permission. Ask, "Would you like to hear my ideas?"

Step 6: Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions.

When you don't understand something, of course you should ask the speaker to explain it to you. But rather than interrupt, wait until the speaker pauses. Then say something like, "Back up a second. I didn't understand what you just said about..."

Step 7: Ask questions only to ensure understanding.

At lunch, a colleague is excitedly telling you about her trip to Vermont and all the wonderful things she did and saw. In the course of this chronicle, she mentions that she spent some time with a mutual friend. You jump in with, "Oh, I haven't heard from Alice in ages. How is she?" and, just like that, discussion shifts to Alice and her divorce, and the poor kids, which leads to a comparison of custody laws, and before you know it an hour is gone and Vermont is a distant memory.

This particular conversational affront happens all the time. Our questions lead people in directions that have nothing to do with where they thought they were going. Sometimes we work our way back to the original topic, but very often we don't.

When you notice that your question has led the speaker astray, take responsibility for getting the conversation back on track by saying something like, "It was great to hear about Alice, but tell me more about your adventure in Vermont."

Step 8: Try to feel what the speaker is feeling.

If you feel sad when the person with whom you are talking expresses sadness, joyful when she expresses joy, fearful when she describes her fears—and convey those feelings through your facial expressions and words—then your effectiveness as a listener is assured. Empathy is the heart and soul of good listening.

To experience empathy, you have to put yourself in the other person's place and allow yourself to feel what it is like to be her at that moment. This is not an easy thing to do. It takes energy and concentration. But it is a generous and helpful thing to do, and it facilitates communication like nothing else does.

Step 9: Give the speaker regular feedback.

Show that you understand where the speaker is coming from by reflecting the speaker's feelings. "You must be thrilled!" "What a terrible ordeal for you." "I can see that you are confused." If the speaker's feelings are hidden or unclear, then occasionally paraphrase the content of the message. Or just nod and show your understanding through appropriate facial expressions and an occasional well-timed "hmm" or "uh huh."

The idea is to give the speaker some proof that you are listening, and that you are following her train of thought—not off indulging in your own fantasies while she talks .

In task situations, regardless of whether at work or home, always restate instructions and messages to be sure you understand correctly.

Step 10: Pay attention to what isn't said—to nonverbal cues.

If you exclude email, the majority of direct communication is probably nonverbal. We glean a great deal of information about each other without saying a word. Even over the telephone, you can learn almost as much about a person from the tone and cadence of her voice than from anything she says. When I talk to my best friend, it doesn't matter what we chat about, if I hear a lilt and laughter in her voice, I feel reassured that she's doing well.

Face to face with a person, you can detect enthusiasm, boredom, or irritation very quickly in the expression around the eyes, the set of the mouth, the slope of the shoulders. These are clues you can't ignore. When listening, remember that words convey only a fraction of the message.