**NATURE OF LANGUAGE**

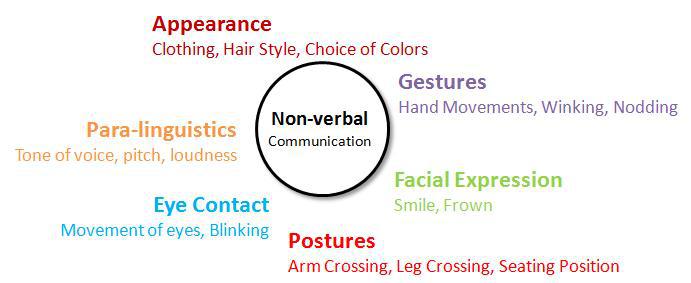
**NEED AND DEMAND FOR ENGLISH. WHY ENGLISH?**

It is certainly not the easiest language to learn nor the most logical. However, English is the major language of technological transfer, air and space travel, international business and education. Often called “link language” English is most widely spread language in the community. Approximately *one in six speakers* in the world uses English. The need for teaching and learning English is rising as the world community is getting smaller. Communication remains a key goal as people strive to co-exist peacefully in communities, family settings, educational establishments and so on. A common language can serve as an important tool in the development of effective communication among diverse groups of people within the globe.

Communication is the exchange of information and thoughts through verbal and nonverbal channels and is accomplished in various ways. Just how much of our time we spend communicating. The average person spends 45 percent of the communicating time listening, 30 percent speaking, 16 – reading, and 9 – writing. So does a school child. Of course, the percentage much depends on a person, but unless we are eating, sleeping, we are probably communicating.

**Culture in verbal and non verbal communication**

**Let’s examine the relationship between verbal and non verbal communication.  What part does culture play in this?**



Communication is a dynamic process composed by multiple elements and steps: a sender, encoding, messages, channels, noises, a receiver, decoding, the receiver’s response and feedback, and context. It may be intentional or unintentional and it is always influenced by factors such as time, topic and circumstances as well as one’s cultural background (Jandt, 1998: 27). Verbal communication is composed by sounds, words and language which has a direct relationship with culture. Verbal communication is best suited to convey specific information, and is better suited to communication through technology over long distances.

What is the first thing you notice about a person? Dress? Face? Style? Whatever, it is probably not their language. The language may not be the most prominent characteristic of a person, it is certainly one of the most revealing. Until verbal communication is established, knowledge of a person is limited and one-sided. Language opens up people - their thoughts, their interests, their view of life .

Language is spoken. Language is heard. The verbal, audible form of language is its most obvious characteristic. It consists of audible symbols voiced by the speaker. Our responses to these symbols differ according to our understanding and familiarity with the specific language. Communication also occurs in a nonverbal, inaudible context. Certain body movements augment and amplify audible speech messages. In some cases, the associated body movement may replace speech altogether. A raised eyebrow may indicate “yes” or a hand movement signal “goodbye.”

Language may also be in written form. Various alphabets, including, pictorial, or phonetic, graphics have been used throughout history. To be sure, not every society has a written form of its spoken language. However, every language has the potential of being written, and every speaker of that language is a potential writer of it.

Language communicates what members of a society need to know. It is a major tool of any social group, affecting loyalties based on past, present, or future events and relationships. Language can also ruin the society since it can destroy relationships and loyalties.

This leads us to define language as verbal, systematic, and symbolic communication. At its core, a language is verbal. Spoken language is the basis for all other forms of language: written language, sign language, and gestures. The symbols we call written language stand for sounds.

Language is not just something spoken; it is also systematic. All language is structured. There are relationships between actors and their actions and their modifiers. The structure formed by these relationships is called grammar. Every language has a grammar and its speakers follow its rules whether or not they are aware of them. Five-year-olds may not know the difference between a noun and a verb, but they can speak a grammatically correct sentence. Grammar gives meaning to language. It tells us who the actor is and who is being acted upon.

Besides being verbal and systematic, language is also symbolic. We use symbols to stand for classes of things. These symbols are arbitrary and not directly related to the class of objects they represent. For example, there is nothing about the four-legged, furry animal that is man’s friend that suggests “dog” . These are simply sounds that the English have agreed to call that particular pet. Symbols are abstract. That is, we can talk about a dog that is not present or even one that has never existed. We can manipulate the symbol. Language is possible because human beings are capable of symbolic activity.

While language is verbal, systematic, and symbolic, its function is communication. Indeed, we can even define language as communication. Language is a vehicle used to try to “transport” what is in one person’s mind into another person’s mind. Language is a vehicle for abstract concepts.

**NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION**

People who don’t speak or understand the same language are still able to communicate. An important tool in improving verbal communication is paying attention to nonverbal communication. Nonverbal cues actually make up more than 90 percent of total communication.

Since nonverbal messages differ across cultures, one needs to pay close attention to what message students are actually sending through their body language and other signs. For instance, eyes can convey fliendliness or anger. A touch can show sensitivity – it often conveys comfort and support. An open hand or clasping athother’s hand can show friendship or sometimes enimity and anger. A smile or a scowl can reveal inner feelings.

We communicate nonverbally with our body movements – with our eyes or hands, through a look, or a pat on the back. Gestures may have different connotations. One can be totally unaware of such nonverbal communications as a raised eyebrow or a cocked head.

*Facial expressions*

* Although smiling is an expression of happiness in most cultures, it can also signify other emotions. Some Chinese, for example may smile when they are discussing something sad or uncomfortable.
* Winking has very different connotations in different cultures. In some Latin American cultures, winking is a romantic or sexual invitation. In Nigeria, Yorubas may wink at their children if they want them to leave the room. Many Chinese consider winking to be rude.
* In Hong Kong, it is important not to blink one’s eyes conspicuously, as this may be seen as a sign of disrespect and boredom.
* Some Filipinos will point to an object by shifting their eyes toward it or pursing their lips and point with their mouth, rather than using their hands.
* Some Venezuelans may use their lips to point at something, because pointing with a finger is impolite.
* Expressions of pain or discomfort such as crying are also specific to various cultures; some cultures may value a stoic affect while others may encourage a more emotive state. Expressions of pain or discomfort are also learned from one’s family illness experiences, expressions, and idioms of distress.

People are often sending communicative signals to each other. For a teacher it is very important to be aware of such signals by learning more and more about the kids, their culture and habbits.

Non verbal communication is defined as “those actions and attributes that have socially shared meaning, are intentionally sent or intepreted as intentional, are consciously sent or consciously received, and have the potential for feedback from the receiver.” (Burgoon, Boller & Woodall, 1988, as cited in Jackson, 2014: 124).

Language changes through time. As a result there are historical and comparative linguistic studies. Language also varies from location to location, giving rise to the study of dialectology. The result of language change and variation can be (a) a dialect - when a smaller group has language varieties not common to the majority of speakers of the language - or (b) an idiolect - where individuals have developed their own peculiar usage of a language. Dialects of languages can vary in pronunciation and also in vocabulary.

**COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE**

Communication includes both language and culture. Effective communication with people of different cultures is especially challenging. The challenge for multinational communication has never been greater. Worldwide business organizations have discovered that intercultural communication is a subject of importance—not just because of increased globalization, but also because their domestic workforce is growing more and more diverse, ethnically and culturally. Cultures provide people with ways of thinking--ways of seeing, hearing, and interpreting the world. Thus the same words can mean different things to people from different cultures, even when they talk the “same” language. When the languages are different, and translation has to be used to communicate, the potential for misunderstandings increases.Words have meaning only in the context of the culture which they are used. For example, the word *lift* refers to elevator in Ukraine or England but in thr USA it means to pick up. These words are of different cultural contexts that’s why they have different meanings.

Learning about a new culture doesn’t mean giving up our native one. But as a student learns a new language in a community where other people speak that language, they should learn about the community's culture as well.

Culture is a system of behaviours and beliefs. These belief systems make some things permissible under certain circumstances but nearly prohibited in others. These cultural patterns may differ from country to country and even from area to area. What may be normal or acceptable in one part of the world may be frowned upon in the other. Culture reaches all aspects of the language and communication.

Culture shock is a feeling of disorientation or confusion which may occur while communicating. Cultural shock affects different people in different ways. People are product of their culture and many their ideas result from cultural bias. Cultural bias often causes stereotypes. Stereotypes are too general or too simple. Very few people fall into a “typical” picture. Members of other cultures are as individual as are representatives of our own culture.

Students who want to study a second language need to know more about the customs, attitudes, cultural patterns of this country. As teachers, we have a responsibility to help them learn and understand such information.

It is important never to take lightly another culture’s way of doing things. As much as possible we should teach students to keep an open mind and avoid value judgements when dealing with cultural differences. Instead we should show ourselves and teach schoolers to show honest interest learning all we can about other students’ backgrounds. It can be fun to fancy tasting national cuisine of other countries and to learn about their customs and holidays.

*Common characteristics among young English learners:*

* Need friendship and acceptance
* Fear embarrassment
* Stress experience in new surrounding
* Not always highly motivated
* Have different backgrounds
* Have difficulty pronouncing certain sounds
* Have problems understanding English-speaking teacher

Whoever our students are, whatever their backgrounds, whatever abilities or weaknesses they show, we must be sensitive to each individual’s real needs and interests.

*Common characteristics of effective English teachers:*

Are well trained

Are learner-centred

Plan and keep records

Let’s discuss the following personal qualities of a teacher: understanding and respect, patience, flexibility, adaptability, enthusiasm and encouragement, sense of humour, cultural sensitivity, creativity and originality, accountability and responsibility, realistic expectations, optimism and commitment.

Of course, teachers are not expected to solve every personal problem a student has, but perhaps they can steer students to someone else who can help. A motivated learner and a creative trained teacher who is willing to adapt and offer practical instruction make a winning combination.

Effective acquisition of a foreign language is not only a mental process but an emotional and social one as well, since language is a part of culture and learning involves the whole person in community with others. Some of language diverse processes are tightly interrelated as speech patterns, learning styles, collaborative or one-to-one learning, components of grammar and its specific aspects.

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