THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VERBAL AND NONVERBAL SPEECH

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Doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20615574

Abstract: This scientific article examines the psychological significance of verbal and nonverbal speech in human communication and interpersonal interaction. Verbal communication is analyzed as a system of linguistic signs used for expressing thoughts, emotions, and intentions, while nonverbal communication is investigated as a complex process involving facial expressions, gestures, body language, intonation, eye contact, and spatial behavior.

Keywords: verbal speech, nonverbal communication, psychology, psycholinguistics, communication, emotions, gestures, interpersonal relations, speech activity, personality.

In the twenty-first century, the study of communication processes has become one of the most important areas of psychology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociology, and pedagogy. Human social activity, interpersonal relationships, and psychological development largely depend on the effectiveness of communication. Among the principal means of communication, verbal and nonverbal speech occupy a central position as forms of expressing human thought and emotion.

Verbal speech refers to the process of exchanging information through language. Through verbal communication, individuals express ideas, emotions, attitudes, and social experiences. Nonverbal communication, in contrast, involves the transmission of information without words and includes facial expressions, gestures, body movements, tone of voice, eye contact, and spatial behavior. [1,66]

Psychological research demonstrates that a considerable portion of interpersonal information is conveyed through nonverbal means. Emotional states, in particular, are often communicated more effectively through facial expressions and body language than through spoken words. Consequently, the interaction between verbal and nonverbal communication constitutes an essential component of successful social interaction. The purpose of this article is to analyze the psychological significance of verbal and nonverbal speech and to examine their role in human cognition, emotional expression, socialization, and communicative competence. Verbal speech is a communicative activity carried out through linguistic units. It is based on phonetic, lexical, grammatical, and syntactic structures of language. Verbal communication is closely connected with human thinking and functions as the external expression of thought. [2,98]

In psychology, speech is regarded as one of the principal instruments of cognitive activity. The renowned psychologist Lev Vygotsky extensively studied the relationship between speech and thought, emphasizing that language plays a decisive role in the formation of consciousness and higher mental functions. According to Vygotsky, speech serves as a mediating tool in human psychological development.

Verbal speech performs several essential functions:

1. Communicative function;
2. Cognitive function;
3. Emotional-expressive function;
4. Regulatory function. [3,47]

The communicative function enables individuals to exchange information and maintain social interaction. The cognitive function contributes to the formation of knowledge and intellectual development. The emotional-expressive function allows individuals to communicate their feelings and emotional states. The regulatory function helps people organize and control their own behavior. The psychological importance of verbal speech lies in its influence on personality formation, social adaptation, and intellectual growth. As language proficiency develops, individuals become capable of more complex reasoning and more effective social interaction. Moreover, verbal speech reflects individual psychological characteristics. Speech tempo, vocabulary richness, sentence structure, and intonation may reveal aspects of temperament, emotional condition, and personality traits. [4,88]

Nonverbal communication refers to the transmission of information without the use of words. It includes all expressive means through which individuals communicate emotions, attitudes, intentions, and psychological states.

Facial expressions constitute one of the most significant channels of emotional communication. Happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, and disgust are often communicated through facial muscle movements. Psychologists argue that facial expressions are universal indicators of emotional states.

Gestures involve movements of the hands, arms, or body used to convey meaning. Different cultures interpret gestures differently, and the same gesture may carry positive or negative meanings depending on the sociocultural context.

Body posture and movements provide important information about a person’s emotional and psychological condition. An upright posture may indicate confidence, whereas slumped shoulders may signal anxiety or insecurity.

Tone of voice, pauses, rhythm, stress, and speech tempo are crucial elements of nonverbal communication. The same sentence may acquire entirely different meanings depending on intonation.

Verbal and nonverbal communication are inseparably interconnected and together form a unified communicative system. During interaction, individuals communicate not only through words but also through gestures, facial expressions, voice modulation, and body movements.

Psychological studies indicate that communicative effectiveness largely depends on the consistency between verbal and nonverbal signals. For example, a positive verbal message delivered with an aggressive tone may produce a negative psychological impression. The relationship between verbal and nonverbal communication may be observed in several ways:

- Nonverbal signals reinforce verbal messages;
- Emotional meanings become more explicit through nonverbal cues;
- Communication becomes more persuasive and credible;
- Interpersonal influence and emotional impact increase.

Verbal and nonverbal communication are integral components of human interaction and psychological activity. Verbal speech enables individuals to exchange ideas through language, while nonverbal communication expresses emotional and psychological states through gestures, facial expressions, intonation, and body language. From a psychological perspective, the harmony between

verbal and nonverbal means is essential for effective communication. Nonverbal signals strengthen verbal messages and reveal internal emotional conditions.

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