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The Body Speaks Society, School and Culture

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Abstract

How can we help all children, since birth, become effective communicators and interpreters? Why should nonverbal behaviour be of interest? The aim of this research is to reflect on the importance of every element of the analogical language, related to a target audience of preschool and school children aged between 0 and 8 years that is always little studied. The ability to communicate is an essential skill that has roots in early childhood; preschool children especially prefer the body as means of communication, from birth. Children learn to know the analogical language by observing the one of the parents and by imitating him. It is worth to underline the essential role of school that, beyond the family context, is the privileged environment for the development and learning of communication, both verbal and non-verbal. However, non-verbal languages are determined by cultures, that is, they are not equal for all regardless of cultures, but they change depending on cultures themselves; understand cultural foundations of the communication, in today's multicultural and pluralistic world, is an essential help to handle an appropriate conversation.

Keywords: non-verbal communication, early development, children, parents, teachers, cross-cultural effects

1. Introduction

Communication is a basic need for all living beings since their birth. It is the foundation of society itself, as it implies an interaction between interlocutors and therefore an exchange, that can be social, interpersonal, verbal, nonverbal, analogical, digital and so on. During the evolution process, the majority of the animal species developed the ability of conveying and receiving messages that could be understood by every member of the same species. These messages may be about: reporting of food or warning of danger, sexual desire, prohibition linked to the social hierarchy, the will to play (which may be found in cubs) and so on. Even newborns are able to communicate in a comprehensible way and the adults who take care of them are able to understand and reply to their messages.

All these forms of communication belong to the nonverbal type and are extremely varied and complex. In each species, the nervous system has evolved so that it could decode and produce nonverbal and at times very complex messages. The human brain is “naturally” suitable to communicate in a nonverbal way within our species. Moreover, the human form of nonverbal communication, which until 4–5 million years ago was identical to the one of chimpanzees, has evolved even

more, becoming extremely sophisticated and allowing humans to interact and cooperate in a more and more well-structured way [1].

How preschool and school children communicate today? Do they prefer verbal or nonverbal channel? Do they use their body? What is the task of Kindergarten and Primary school teachers to encourage the nonverbal channel?

Communicating means sending, passing down, handing over, notifying, making see, making feel, describing, meeting, spending, infecting, sharing, connecting, share with others what belongs to us. Communicate means so many things and can mean nothing: it all depends on the meaning we want to give to the word itself and on the way we act to achieve the aim [2].

Communication is linked to the exchange of information between two or more entities capable of produce and receive signals, but, to do it at best, it is necessary to pay attention to have consistency between the explicit message, given by the verbal language, and the implicit message, transmitted by using the nonverbal language. Although it may seem obvious, the two types of message do not go hand in hand, so that communication can leave the interlocutor in a situation of ambiguity and uncertainty towards the other one. In that case, he tends to rely on the message got nonverbally, compared to the verbal one, which is more spontaneous and more difficult to hide [3].

A communicative event, besides the fundamental abilities of “know the language”, “know how to do the language” and “know how to do with the language”, requires complementary abilities. The complementary ability par excellence is the emotional intelligence, discovered in 1990 by Salovey and Mayer, who defined as “the ability to control ourselves and others feelings and emotions, distinguish between them and use this information to guide his own thoughts and actions”.

Therefore, communication is the process of transmission of an idea or emotion from one person to another through facial expressions, gestures, speech or via means of communication like writing, telephone, radio, television, etc. Communication skill can be defined as “one’s ability to express his/her emotions, ideas, beliefs and attitudes comprehensibly way and relevantly” [4].

About it, Mehrabian (1967), having regard to the results of his research, has pointed out the importance of nonverbal communication for years. His studies determined that of any given message, only thirty–five percent is verbal; the remaining sixty–five percent is communicated through various nonverbal channels. The nonverbal component of a message includes movements and body position which we unconsciously sense but often overlook. The major part of any message is conveyed through non-verbal channels, but then why do the education system, from the first childhood, takes the most of his time and efforts in ensuring that children master the thirty–five percent of communication, which means words?

The ability to communicate is an essential skill that has roots in early childhood. Children begin communicating from birth, but they need attention of adults, be they parents or caregivers, so they can develop communicative skills to express themselves clearly and confidently. Parents are the young child’s first teachers of communication who help him to master non-verbal and verbal communication through listening, watching and responding to the sounds, communicative gestures and language the child uses [5]. The child learns to know the body language by observing the one of the adult and by imitating him, that’s why the first step to improve communicative abilities is to recognise non-verbal signs that we are sending in relation to the verbal ones sent.

Therefore, this research try to investigate and consider all aspects of nonverbal communication in today society, focusing on a target audience of preschool and school children.

2. Nonverbal communication

In 1967, Mehrabian claims that, daily, the human being communicates through three different channels (**Figure 1**):

- verbal, composed of words and content, that accounts on the communication for 7%;
- paraverbal, composed of tone of voice and rhythm of word, that accounts for 38%;
- nonverbal, composed of gesture, mimicry, posture, proxemics, that accounts for 55%.

Therefore, verbal channel, even though it is considered the main communication channel, accounts for 10% in living beings communication; more than 90% of what is communicated is not given by words, so it is not verbal, it does not come out of the mouth and it is not received by ears.

This distribution is not related to a particular age group or to a temporary vital moment; in fact, at the moment when, growing, the use of word is acquired, the nonverbal transmission aspects of messages are not lost, they become a particular feature of every person. Many of these attitudes are linked to a characteristic of the person itself, while others are more properly identifiable in each of us, at the moment we are in a specific situation, with a specific mood [3].

Nonverbal communication is a highly efficient and pervasive means of interpersonal exchange [6]; therefore, in a communication, the aspects that have to be considered are not only the verbal ones (digital language), that is, related to the meaning of words and on <what>, but also the nonverbal ones (analogical language), that is, related on <how> [7].

Know the nonverbal language is therefore very important to communicate well, to transmit or interpret others messages, to hear and understand at the same time.

The essential aim of a communication is that it results effective; the communication effectiveness, encouraged by nonverbal communication and his main elements,

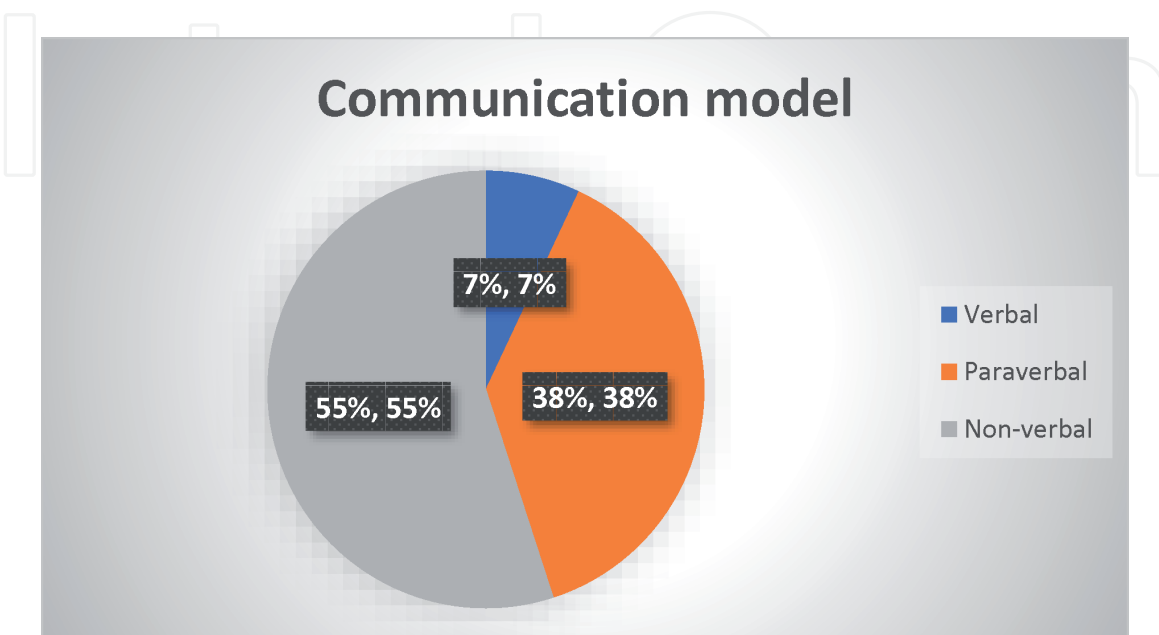


Figure 1.
Source: own elaboration.

comes from the mood of the interlocutor and from the aim that the interlocutor wants to give to the communication. If these components are missing, the risk is to obtain the opposite effect or at least different from intentions.

What makes a message incisive and productive, combined with a clear and effective verbal channel, is the body. This is the first means with which the individual experience the environment, it is the first communication channel between him and the others, between his inner and the outside world. The body expression, intended as the spontaneous nonverbal demonstration of every of our acts, precedes and comes with communicative and artistic techniques [8].

Body language is a universal language code, with a no precise syntax, but with strong cultural influences, in fact, to be understood, it has to be inserted in his reference cultural context. The socio-cultural context is the main learning form of body language, but it is passed on even by daily and family relationships and it remains by lived experiences [1].

Voluntarily or involuntarily the body is the means by which we appear to others. It communicates, through subjective ways, our most deep and true feelings, it reveals our moods and our emotions: that's the reason why it becomes essential the importance of being conscious of what our body can tell about us, so that to send or understand better messages and have a better relationship with ourselves and with others.

Human beings, since birth, are capable of emotion and recognise feelings. The major need of the human being is to have the possibility to reveal his own emotional language, by communicating his own feelings. But too often, words are not enough to express completely the sense and the meaning of feelings; in this way, they come out through the body language, through the face, through attitudes, etc. Expressions and external modifications represent, therefore, internal expressions and mutations, with which they are always in connection.

So, an excited body allows people establish relations with each other through the deepest level of communication [9].

2.1 Components of non-verbal communication

Nonverbal communication is composed of different components, each of which, in turn, includes various elements describing small parts [3]. The main components of non-verbal communication are 4:

- paralanguage;
- kinesics;
- proxemics;
- haptics.

Being able to recognise all these parameters gradually, from the first development, within the communication, means realise the inner state of a person to handle a dialogue and maintain a climate of confidence, by adjusting our intervention.

2.1.1 Paralanguage

Paralinguistic is the study of intonations and inflexions of the voice. Paralinguistic system concerns the prosody, that is, the trend and the dynamic of phonatory flux [10]. This is considered the main element of a communication,

both to characterise the real meaning and his significant. The voice and his characteristics such as duration, intensity, tone, intonation, modulated by the reference culture, can reveal subjective and relational feelings and emotions such as anxiety, fear, anger, pain and joy, especially through the rhythm modulation, the intonation and the speech intensity. In addition, in communication, the trend of the rhythm is modified by pauses, that are distinguished in empty and full pauses. Full pauses are the typical interjections (mmm, ehm...) without a verbal meaning, that are inserted between two sentences; empty pauses, on the other hand, represent silence.

2.1.2 *Kinesics*

Kinesics involves all communicative acts that are expressed by body movements, by the expression of the face and by gestures, both voluntary and involuntary, mostly linked to emotions. These signals sent by the body most of the time can be interpreted.

Posture

Posture, which means the position of the body or parts of it, is a very significant factor or communication because it reveals different information about the subject: basic attitude, mood and self-image, but interlocutors must be “good readers” to avoid being deceived by appearances. It is dynamic and it changes continuously during the interaction, by signalling and showing internal emotions or particular attitudes to the parties involved. Posture is determined by different factors: the psychic component, since it depends on emotional dynamics inherent in the relationship between the individual and all others; anatomical components, as is the morphological and muscular conformation or pathologies that determine the posture; proprioceptive capacity, on which depends the static and dynamic self-perception that affects the position of the body. [1, 3, 11].

Clearly, there is no model posture, but on the contrary, it varies according to all social and context elements, to the situation, to people and to the dialogue type [12]. Some studies have shown even the presence of the “Chameleon effect”: the tendency to adopt the partner positions during the social interaction [11].

Expressions

The face expression is the communicative means par excellence and it can be defined as such thanks to mimicry and look, which allow the inscription of state of mind and emotions on the face, as well as interpersonal attitudes. In fact, the face is the most observed part of the body by interlocutors; particularly, look is the channel by which the nonverbal message is sent and helps to perceive nonverbal messages sent by others [13]. This last is characterised by intensity, duration and direction; these elements vary according to the level of intimacy between the parties, to behind emotions and social value in a specific cultural context.

Eye contact, during a conversation, serves to send and collect information, has the function of acquire the partner feedback; in addition, it promotes the climate of cooperation and is a power signal to obtain consent. Eye contact is the first important step to start every interpersonal relationship, whether it is positive or negative. In fact, reciprocity and frequency of looks represent an indication of directness, transparency and trustworthiness of the interlocutor and are linked to positive emotion, like joy and tenderness, while negative emotions like disgust or embarrassment require a swerve of the eye from the interlocutor. Eye contact plays a central role also in conversation scheme to modulate empathy [14] and to suggest the speaking time between speakers. Therefore, eye contact is essential to collect and receive information, whether parties intend to communicate with the eyes or not.

On the other hand, smile, one of the fundamental signs of human species, plays important functions in social interactions: can act as regulator of social relations, as

promoter of relational affinity by representing an attitude of relational availability or interpersonal closeness, as information tool [15]. It is strongly related to social interaction, not the emotional state. Smiles are divided in “Duchenne¹” (natural, genuine) and “Non-Duchenne” (false, forced): the first smiles involve both muscles lifting the corners of the mouth and muscles surrounding the eyes and reflecting the positive affect; the second smiles, concern only muscles lifting the corners of the mouth and are considered like masked smiles, often produced in absence of positive affects [16].

In 2010, Bonaiuto enhance that <<through eyebrow and forehead movements, eyes displacement, use of the smile, in fact, the face express emotions and interpersonal attitudes>>.

Gestures

Finally, gestures are movements of hands or the body, coordinated motor actions, that allow a more rapid and efficient communication system which goes beyond words and verbal language [17]. Gestures are immediate, since with one only gesture a lot of information is sent which would need lot of words, and incisive, because requiring a minimum sending time with respect to a verbal message.

Additionally, gestures can be conscious and unconscious. Conscious gestures are movements made voluntarily to make clearer the message to the interlocutor, unconscious gestures are activated regardless our intention and express the current mood (for example cold sweat, red cheeks, etc.).

Gestures can be directly related to the speech “*cospeech gesture*”: accompany words, by making them more effective and by precisising the sentences meaning; or can transmit a verbal meaning independently from the speech [18]. All these movements of hands and body are divided in gesticulation, pantomime, expressive gestures, emblems, motor gestures and sign language.

2.1.3 Proxemics

Proxemics is the semiologic discipline that studies individuals behaviour, space and distances inside a communication [11]. The proxemic components of communication is therefore in strong relation with space and its occupation; that’s why it is called proxemic space: this space has to be considered as the minimum subjective space that a person draws around her. Even though this distance could apparently seem causal, actually there are very precise rules and it vary according to the type of the existing relationship [11].

In this regard, E. T. Hall² defined four interpersonal zones:

- the intimate area (0–45 cm) reserved to some close relatives and the partner,
- the personal area (45–120 cm) used for relatives and friends,
- the social area (1,2–3,5 cm) used for interactions between acquaintances or formal meetings,
- the public area (over 3,5 cm) synonym for public relations of official occasions.

¹ G. B. Duchenne, important French neurologist of XIX century, discovered, through electricity, that smiles resulting from real happiness do not use only mouth muscles, but also those of the eyes. These “genuine” smiles are known as Duchenne smiles in his honour.

² Edward T. Hall, American anthropologist, worked on proxemics and in 1966 published his essay “The hidden dimension”, in which he collected his researches results. His deductions derive from the observation of animals and people behaviour.

The physical distance helps to understand the existing relationship between interlocutors, even is the radius of these zones varies necessarily according to the crowding, to the age, to sex, and to the importance of interlocutors. Moreover, the physical distance signs to every individual the relationship built with beloved persons, friendly people and the world in general, by making him conscious of the relationships he is living.

2.1.4 Haptics

Haptics focuses on body contact in managing relational and communicative dynamics. Communicative messages expressed through physical contact can be codified or spontaneous; codified communicative forms are those universal and conventional, such as handshake, kisses on cheeks, while spontaneous communicative forms are not conventional and they are subjective. Contact, additionally, can be mutual, like a handshake, or individual, wanted by only one person and that, for one reason or another, is not returned. In fact, the body contact, which influences the nature and the quality of the relationship and which express various interpersonal attitudes, has multiple effects: can, on one hand, facilitate empathy and socialisation, on the other hand, create discomfort, harass, annoy and raise negative reaction. Moreover, some zones of human body allow the contact only between people in close relationship and, equally to distances and proxemics, the contacts show a major or minor intimacy between individuals.

Finally, haptic system does not consider only gestures with which we touch others and we enter into relationship with them, but even self-contact gestures, as is, those referred to ourselves. These behaviours allow to the individual to adapt to external stimulus, because they allow the manipulation of a part of the body (for example the gesture of rub the arms to calm down) [11]. Psychoanalyst Anna Maria Sepe has identified the most frequent self-touch gestures and she group them as follow: touching hair (gesture used as tranquilliser), rubbing the root of the nose (gesture that express rejection), touching the throat (gesture that communicate anxiety and agitation).

2.1.5 Chronemics and vestemics

Last studies concerning communication involve also chronemics and vestemics between the main components of nonverbal communication.

Chronemics is the science that studies the perception, the organisation and the manifestation of the time in human contexts. Every individual has a personal rhythm and does not know that of the other, or he takes for granted that every rhythm is the same as his. This can lead to discomfort and dystonia at the moment in with rhythms don' match; communication, instead, could result synchronic at the moment in which there is a regular and flowing communicative flux [10].

Vestemics is the system referred to the physical structure, to clothing and personal ornaments, therefore we can speak about physical appearance; this last, subjected to constant changes of fashion, involves, as well as clothes, even makeup, hairstyle, accessories, belonging objects, status symbol signals. Consequently, tends to influence what others think about us, as it leads to self-presentation, it helps to provide our image in interpersonal relationships, both private or public.

Ultimately, is useful, while observing a person, do not focus only on one of the elements of nonverbal communication (only hand gestures) or on one dimension (only kinesics behaviour), but consider all dimensions and also the person in his/her uniqueness and context in which the person is [3].

2.2 Non-verbal communication functions

As already said, nonverbal communication is used to send messages of the body, to express emotional states, attitudes, emotions, one's personality, to strengthen verbal expressions, to send feedback and signals in order to achieve better empathy with the interlocutor [1].

It has function:

- Individual-expressive, to satisfy interior affective needs;
- Cognitive, to relate the subject with the external world;
- Psychological-developmental, to build the individual autonomy and awareness relating to the external world;
- Cultural-social, to transmit history and culture of a society.

Nonverbal communication is therefore used for:

- Establish interpersonal relationships: it can be considered as “relationship language”; through nonverbal language there is the possibility to influence others behaviour: according to the way we act in front of the interlocutor, he will act accordingly. If, for example, we act in a way that expresses a sense of superiority, it is at least possible that the who is in front of us will act in a defiant attitude. It has been observed, In the wake of Mehrabian studies, how nonverbal language has major power than verbal communication, in influence others behaviour [3]. Consequently, the most used signals are gestures, voice tone, posture, mimicry and look, that allow to express our feelings with regard to other persons and create relationships between interlocutors. These signals are the first that have been used to communicate and represent the first means of expression in the relationship infant-mother.
- Show the personality: it allows to express the image of ourselves and introduce to others. Face expression, look, gestures and movements make it clear the personality of who is in front of us. Sometimes we try to send controlled or modified nonverbal signals to give a better presentation of us.
- Support verbal language: nonverbal signals, linked to what it is said, influence this last and give more information to the interlocutor. Nonverbal signals complete the verbal communication and have a meta-communicative function, as they supply elements to interpret verbal expression.
- Express emotions: interlocutors are capable of understand and recognise body status and moods through the analysis of face, eyes, gestures, postures and voice tone.

2.3 Cultural influence

Culture has strong and pervasive influences in communication [18]. Verbal and non-verbal languages are determined by cultures, that is, they are not natural and equal for all regardless of cultures but they change depending on cultures themselves [19, 20]. Understand cultural foundations of the communication, in today's multicultural and pluralistic world, is an essential help for human beings

to handle a conversation. The lack of knowledge of cultural aspects, that extend beyond of the purely linguistic knowledge, can lead to the rise of misunderstandings and communicative problems for interlocutors [20], who stop the social coordination and increase the conflict potential [18]. It's easier for people coming from expressive cultures (Mediterranean cultures, Latin American ...) to judge as untrustworthy, inscrutable, smart, misleading or elusive those belonging to reserved culture. At the same time, it's easier for people coming from reserved cultures (Asian, northern European...) to judge as arrogant, noisy, immature or vulgar.

Hall, in 1968, remarks that people of different cultures, as well as speaking different languages, live different sensory worlds, set according to cultural influences. Therefore, it is usual that in multicultural communication a different perceptive way could lead to contrasting meanings and obstacle to communication. In such context, recognise a nonverbal signal, do not always lead to an adequate interpretation of its meaning. Consequently, it's easier to misunderstand, especially when we suppose, perhaps unconsciously, that a particular behaviour has the same meaning in every culture.

Nonverbal communication components vary considerably according to the reference culture: native and stranger speaker communicative competences depend on different cultural background, is therefore clear what are the inconveniences that could arise after have used or interpreted gestures that can be innocent in a language but rude and insulting in another. In fact, gestures, can be more or less conventional, but it is important to know that they show relevant cultural variations, especially for what concerning emblems (gestures with the verbal meaning that id different from word, like the OK signal) and the sign language, used by deaf-mute. The knowledge of gestures and their specific use can be very useful, particularly to know when use them as to not appear ridiculous or rude.

Face expressions and smiles are universal and biologically instinctual, in fact, they have the same meaning in all nations, but culture plays an important role in moderating their use [18]. For what concerning eye contact, it has strong cultural influences: for example, Eastern people tend to look a stranger person for a long time, thing that can be particular according to Western people.

The use of silence, on the other hand, has an ambiguous and ambivalent nature, in fact his meaning varies according to the situational context, the type of relationship of the participant of the communication act, the reference culture [10]; as a matter of fact, Westerners, who are constantly surrounded by a life characterised by din, perceive silence as resignation, powerlessness, and paradoxically connect it to death or disgrace; the Eastern culture instead, is still perceiving and living silence as a force that reaches the bottom of someone's inner reality, digs down into it, and that is able to protect the individual. Just as much as the voice tone that, used in a conversation both high or low, varies according to the discussing topic and the cultural influence, but in general, as shown by Matsumoto and Hwang in 2013, expressive cultures encourage the use of higher vocal tones, while in restricted cultures, the voice tone is weaker and lower [18]. So, different vocal tones can cause embarrassment, discomfort and misunderstandings, especially if interlocutors are from different cultures [20].

Proxemics first of all depends on culture; for example, during a communication situation, distant for an Asian person, is shorter than the one of a European person. Moreover, inside the same culture, proxemics is influenced by the type of the existing relationship: there's a restricted space, same for everyone in the world, inside of which are included only affectively close people. This space is enlarged in case of working relationships and increases more and more as quickly as people in front of us are less known and are perceived as more far away [1].

Body contact and the effects, favourable or not to relations, depend on the subject and his personal inclination, but also cultural differences play a crucial role. There are countries in which contact is frequent and intense (like those Arabian and Latin American) and others in which the contact is even forbidden.

In public relation, vestemic system influences the communication and leads to relations of dominance and persuasion between individuals. Especially in modern society, more and more people give importance to external appearance, not only given by the way of clothing and dressing up, but also given by the purely physical condition, by considering it a benchmark in the relationship choice. Different persons have major or minor confidence even through the way of dressing and the choice of personal objects that often act as status symbol [21].

Finally, it is important that the interaction between interlocutors is adequate from the point of view of chronemics (as is, that respects others' rhythms), so that the communication results effective: each individual has a personal rhythm and does not know the ones of other people, or presumes that they are identical to his; this can lead to awkwardness and dystonia, and it happens when rhythms do not correspond with each other, while when a regular and fluid communication flow is established, communication is synchronous [10]. In modern world, this aspect of communication is very neglected, mostly in Western culture. The time, in fact, in the fast culture of western world is not considered as a resource or an asset to spend in communication, but it is actually lived in a completely frenetic way, in a temporary perspective always future-oriented and economically respecting the "time is money" rule. On the other hand, in Eastern culture, the time has not yet been charged of these negative meaning and it is not lived with such anguish, people live in view in which "time is relation".

In conclusion, being expert in nonverbal communication and knowing the main analogical and intercultural differences, allows to establish effective and beneficial communicative relationships, even ignoring completely or partially interlocutors language.

3. Children and communication

Communication, especially from the nonverbal point of view, assumes a basic position in personal and social development of every individual. With children communication assumes a relevant aspect even in relationship because it is necessary to adjust and moderate every message according to their age. Knowing and understanding how the child's brain matures, when it reaches specific competences, when it is capable of doing specific types of mental operations, can be a very big help for adults, both parents and teachers, which daily interact with children. Working on the way to communicate of the adult with the child at school and at home (but even during free time) can truly make the difference for significance relationships of life. Talk in a respectful, empathic and friendly way to children is an attitude that helps a lot in little daily difficulties and during learning times, that brings real harmony affective moments with children, which ask constantly to the reference adult to help and understand them.

For a healthy development, the child, since birth, needs to live daily communicative situations that are challenging, rewarding and most of all clear. With the beginning of kindergarten, the student, who is living a great development moment both physical, cognitive and especially lexical, gets in touch constantly with peers and adults, with which he spends time and establishes solid and significant relationships, by communicating regularly, giving and receiving information [22]. It is therefore important that kindergarten gives to students effective communicative

exchanges, that are adequate to subjects age, by increasing in them cognitive and relational curiosity. The key role is the one of the teacher: as communication is an important component of early years education, pre-school teachers also need to have adept communication skills [4]. He has to transit to students not only didactic information, but also rules applicable in the society, for example he has to be able to teach them to communicate effectively to solve in the right way their problems or inconveniences, without the use of verbal or physical violence. However, a good communication is based on empathy and listening, both of the teacher and the student.

Focusing on languages development steps, it must be kept in mind that pre-school children, between 3 and 5 years, still need to learn using properly the verbal and nonverbal coherence principle³; to do so they have to concentrate and rely on nonverbal signals, despite their salience during the incoherent communication.

2003 research by Eskritt and Lee suggests that children below 5 years old do not have this capacity yet, that can be acquired during primary school; therefore, during the pre-school age, for a lot of children is difficult to understand an interlocutor's mixed message (in which the verbal shows to be different from the non-verbal or even contradictory), finding themselves in a position where they have to choose a source on which they can concentrate. Most of the time, the verbal part of the message is chosen, while sometimes people rely on the non-verbal part, but only when these messages are salient, exaggerated. The research has shown also that preschool children have just start recognise the importance of intention of the speaker in communication; with the rising of the mind theory beyond the preschool years, children can develop the capacity of deduce the communicative intention of a speaker when he/she communicates in an incoherent way [23].

In addition, during this period, children, according to Boyatzis and Satyaprasad research [24], have developed major capacities for what concerning decoding, so the interlocutor emotions and gestures understanding, rather than coding, as is the production thereof [24].

So, many researchers argue that preschool years are a critical period for the development of the language; is therefore important to understand all factors that can potentially influence or interact with language development during this period. Assessment and monitoring of language and communication development should be integrated into each country's healthcare settings, alongside easy and timely access to quality early interventions and services, in case the child experiences difficulties in communication and language development [5, 25].

3.1 Non-verbal communication in 0-8 years-old children

Preschool children, which was mentioned earlier, prefer the body as means of communication; this allows them to handle themselves, to be conscious of themselves and support the development of the person in all dimensions. The way to communicate nonverbally can have long term effects on how children listen, act, process information and talk to others; therefore, it is necessary to analyse non-verbal characteristics in order to determine emotions shown by aforementioned [16].

Gestures

Word and gesture, as already demonstrated, are intimately interwoven. This strong relationship between gesture and word, emerges soon in life and gets stronger when children learn the language. The gesture, influenced by cultural

³ This principle assumes that verbal and nonverbal behaviours transmit normally the same message, but when there is a discrepancy, adults tend to assume as trustworthy the nonverbal message, rather than the verbal one (Rotenberg et al., 1989).

differences and personal social status, has a particularly important role during starting language development. Children, when using gestures when they are not yet able to produce word and combining words and gestures when their repertoires are still limited, increase their communicative potential and communicate over the ability of their talking way [17].

Up to 3 years infants do not combine gestures with words, then they arrive to a turning point in which they start to combine them and synchronise the production of gestures and words. The start of this combination, in correspondence of kindergarten, announces a new linguistic developing phase of children and expands notably the range of their communicative systems. These characteristics of semantic integration and temporal sync, characterise the relationship between gesture and language even in adults. In fact, children from 3 years use gestures like adults [26].

As for adults, even for children, the use of gestures during a speech supports the collection of information from the memory and it lightens, by acting as an instrument, the charge of cognitive work of vocal process, by facilitating the lexical research [25].

In addition, Goldin-Meadow, Cook and Mitchell's 2009 research, showed a strong relation between gesture learning: in fact, the use of gestures helps children learning, therefore, the teacher has to stimulate it. For example, Clark et al., in 1974, showed that indicative gestures of adult speakers have helped understanding adults speech. Tfouni and Klatzky, in 1983, discovered that indicative gestures help children understanding the meaning of deictic words as, for example, "this". In 2008, McGregor reported a series of studies that show that hand gestures used in communication adult-child have been functional for the acquisition of an early vocabulary. Gesturing, by students, increases their implicit knowledge and prepares them to learning [17, 25].

As already said, gestures can be more or less conventional, but every child is different, so it is important to pass time with him to learn his gestures and meanings. It is fundamental, during Primary school, to promote the transition from the dimension of spontaneous expression to that of intentional gestural communication [1].

Expressions

Smile is one of the first mechanisms of social intelligence that is developed by children, to the point that 90% of infants has already smiled during the first two months of life. When one relates to such young subjects, a smile can reduce many barriers during the communication; a smile is also able to create a comfortable situation, that "connects" the subjects, provides and opens the communication channels. This aspect has strong cultural roots; therefore, the essence and intensity of children smiles varies according to the sociality and the culture to which they belong [16]: as a matter of fact, in the same occasions we smile neither in the same way nor with the same frequency. At first, children find it easy to smile and laugh, but their culture can inhibit their spontaneity, especially in girls, insisting on the fact that a woman should be introverted and reserved with advancing age. To the boys, on the other hand, could be taught to hide their feelings, as a sign of masculinity, with the result that, besides the tears, they will inhibit also a smile or a laugh. Ultimately, it seems that a child inherits a raw action, and then refines it with social experience. A person who belongs to an expansive culture could judge insincere a smile of another person who belongs to a more reserved culture, when in reality it's just an attenuated form of expression, conveyed by the cultural contest of belonging. In this case, knowing how to be on the specific wavelength of the culture with which one gets in touch becomes essential.

Look is linked to the internal emotive component of children: the expression of his own emotions, in fact, supply information on the internal status of the child that, at the same time through look direction (that is eye movement),

check the stimulation that he sends or perceives. Therefore, the child look can have a different functional meaning according to social-scientific relevance of stimulus. So, focusing on the combined role of the smile, the look and the emotive expression, researchers examining the early affective development in developing subjects, claim that children smile more when they look people and interact with them [14].

In general, children do not have the same capacity as adults to filter, cover and hide their own emotions, so they tend to show always their feelings. Facial expressions generally arise what a child is thinking or feeling and it is very easy to understand when he likes something or not.

Proxemics

The space is a very important aspect, in fact, since birth are necessary relationships that are built inside an intimate and personal space. But age is an aspect that affects the space use; in fact, a research has shown that from 3 years old to almost 21, personal space increase gradually and constantly. This has been demonstrated both in naturalistic and experimental contexts. However, Proxemics is not influenced only by age, but also by cultural, familiar and gender differences [11]. The teacher, in fact, has to try to establish physical contact with his/her students, but respecting times and modality of each one of them; if not he/she risks to invade the student personal space by creating inconveniences and negative reactions, that affect the relation and the development of the child.

Throughout history, experts have succeeded in formulate various strategies to try to improve non-verbal communication in children, included those with disabilities. For example, children, especially those with ASD, often need to be taught about eye contact or to hold body contact. Eye contact can be stimulated and taught by holding objects, that they draw their attention, in front of own eyes; as time goes by, ASD individual will look up independently, when he/she chase something.

These strategies are important because, first of all, allowing all of them to learn how to communicate with each other without the barrier of verbal language, creates a sense of empathy, patience, understanding and equality.

3.2 The teacher of kindergarten and primary school

The presence of motivated, prepared teachers that are also careful to children groups specificity, is an essential quality factor for the construction of a friendly, inclusive, sure and well organised environment, also capable to stimulate trust in parents and community [27]. So, the teacher has to create conditions in order that students can learn in the best conditions, by identifying his/her role of speaker, harmoniser and stimulus in relationships between students and knowledge. Context is a fundamental element for the child, because, when he realises of being in a suitable space, he starts to communicate in a relaxed manner, not only verbally, but also with his own body; in addition, the child can establish good relations with his friends in a conscious way [15].

Teachers communication is of great importance in children educative process; in fact, according to Pianta studies, have effective communicative capacities is very important for their development and education. It was determined that pre-school children who perceive their relation with their teachers as positive, warm and close had better school adaptation. However, school adaptation of students who perceive their relation with their teachers as negative were poorer compared to others. In similar studies, Brich and Ladd in 1997, and Justice, Cottone, Mashburn, RimmKaufman in 2008, it was revealed that when child-teacher relationship is negative, children exhibit negative attitudes towards school, have poor academic

success, spend less time at school environment, and avoid from being at school and cooperation in the class [4].

It is fundamental that the teacher, starting from kindergarten, is capable of transmit messages effectively, as is, that is an expert in oral expression and in verbal explanation of certain concepts. But it is not enough: it's not only about what it said, but how is said [28]. The positive or negative attitudes and behaviours that the teacher assumes towards the child, and the verbal and non-verbal messages, which he sends, are closely correlated with the confidence, autonomy and emotions of assertiveness, which the child begins to develop in this period [4]. Nonverbal messages, in fact, are a fundamental component of communication in the learning process.

For example, find, in the morning, a smiling teacher, who says hi to students and parents by welcome them with open arms, rather than with crossed arms and pour, modifies the sent message making the difference for positive relationships. Greeting is done in both examples but emotions that arise are totally different [23]. So, it must understand, that it is not only important to refer a message, but even find the right way to transmit it. This can happen only by accompanying and controlling gestures and expressions.

3.2.1 Nonverbal communication components in kindergarten and primary school teachers

The teacher could be conscious of which are nonverbal messages circulating inside the class; this consciousness makes the teacher more watchful to messages sent by the child, it allows him/her to be more effective in the communication of didactic information and he/she is capable to implement the psychologic degree of closeness between student and teacher [28].

A good teacher could try to improve every aspect of his/her nonverbal communication. First of all, to make the communication style effective, it is fundamental that he/she know how to vary voice elements, as tone, rhythm, timbre, volume, cadence. Otherwise, the risk is to be monotonous, demoted, to annoy the children and not be able to attract their attention.

For what concerning postures, it is necessary to be in an upright position but not rigid, with the bust slightly extended forward; in this way children understand that the teacher is "approachable", receptive and friendly [22]. In addition, staying stationary in class and to not transmit the presence, motivation and care to children, on the other hand, walking in the class or suddenly get up, allow to achieve every student and reactivate a declining attention. Finally, it is important to speak to children in the face, avoiding to direct to them with the back turned or looking the floor. This make the student more involved in the communication and contributes to make him feel a real interlocutor.

As already demonstrated, the face of individuals transmits, besides their intention, emotions, thoughts and feelings. In the education sector, face mimicry constitutes one on communication means between the teacher and the group he has in front of him/her, and it becomes one of the most important factor to determine the environment. About it, the teacher, through his facial expression, communicates his/her mood and links to the topic a specific emotion. So, be able to relax face muscles, by smiling and keeping an eye contact, will have the effect of transmit a joy, warmth and emotive closure to children, who, by feeling relaxed and considered, will enforce the learning process. Particularly, smile can result contagious and contribute to the creation on a peaceful environment in the class; eye contact, instead, allow the teacher to have a total control in managing relationships and concentrate the attention and interest of students on him/her, facilitating

communication. Is necessary that the teacher distributes his/her look in a circular manner, to avoid to ignore any part of the classroom, and that stops himself on every student to prove him not only to look him but to watch him. Look the student is therefore important because it increase the probability that children return the look and follow the speech carefully; in addition, through eye contact, that's the possibility to collect precious feedback, as attention level, interest, tiredness degree, understanding [15].

So as gestures, lessons containing gestures improve interest a more specific learning: new reasoning forms, generalisation of new types of problems, conservation of knowledge, etc. In addition, as is known that gestures can promote learning, teachers can consider to improve their students to gesture, that have the potential to activate implicit knowledge and make students particularly receptive to education [17].

Finally, the teacher figure, as well as have and use correctly nonverbal communication elements in class, has to be a good listener. If the teacher is a good listener, he makes sense of not only what children say but also their facial expressions and gestures, and body language. She/he also attracts attention to the messages she/he communicates with his body language [4]. However, the first step to arrive to a good communicative intervention is to use an "active listening" with regard to children, which consists in thinking on the student message by only absorbing it, without emit personal messages. So, active listening allows the teacher to feel important and receive information, advices and interests. In 1991, Gordon claims that active listening improves discussions in class; it allows to support the class in case of problems, both in-school and after-school, as this strategy helps the child to express lived feelings, which are considered and respected. The teacher, thanks to this type of listening, is capable of observe very carefully interests, training needs, strengths of his/her students, that can be used to support the group-class in learning.

4. Conclusions

Since ancient times, human beings have felt the need to group in societies so establish relationships and socialise with others. This process is possible due to dialectical exchanger and in general to communication. Every communication form is possible due to signs, that link to a concrete and intelligible referent (as word), and to symbols. These two systems form the set of expressive forms (symbolic), given by language, science, myth, religion, philosophy, art, etc. It should however be noted that communication is not a simple linguistic act, but it is an action inserted in a dynamic process that a person does through another as the consequence of the information or the message sent and/or received, of transformations and changes, more or less significant, in behaviours, in attitudes, in moods, in the ways to interact with our and someone else's social world [1, 8].

Inside the communication, as already said, it is possible to distinguish two forms, which have different characteristic and appear in totally different way. Verbal communication is deliberate and arbitrary, it serves to argue, describe and narrate, by giving information about expressed topics. On the other hand, nonverbal communication is mostly unconscious, not intentional and can be ambiguous; it gives information about the subject expressing it, but not about the expressed concepts. In addition, it is important to notice that, while verbal communication tends to be characterised by partners that, in turn, speak and listen, sending and receiving nonverbal signs normally occurs simultaneously. Communication comes before and results more effective and relevant through nonverbal channel, with respect to the verbal one [6, 20].

In conclusion, it is possible to underline how communication is the fundamental base of interpersonal relationships and how the most spontaneous way to transmit something about us to another person is through verbal and nonverbal language. This last, most of the time, is not controlled by the transmitter, but allows to send important information about us, our mental status, about the humoral one, about characteristics of our own personality and even about our own story. By sending this type of information it is possible, in some way, to influence the other, by suggesting contents that the recipient can accept or not. One more time this underlines the importance of communication in all the different forms and the need to explore the knowledge of all various aspects of it [3].

Ongoing has already been highlighted the cultural influence in various communication elements; in summary, in intercultural communication it must surely learn to be aware of differences in nonverbal forms and other cultural aspects. Knowledge of nonverbal language of its meaning and verbal expressions, to which it corresponds, in fact, it can help to achieve a better communicative competence and develop a major comprehension and tolerance through interlocutors. More information and multicultural communicative competences we manage to acquire, and it will be easier to adopt strategic behaviours for a successful communication.

Nonverbal communication characterises most of the communicative process that can occur between two or more persons: it is always present and it can reveal lots of particulars related to a person with which there is communication. These components are not often very considered as, in adults, the importance is mostly given to the verbal aspect of the communication; thing that do not occur with children. These last, since childhood, tend to trust mostly the nonverbal attitude, the face expression, smiles, looks, gestures and the interlocutor position in front of them [29], mostly when the interlocutor is incoherent.

Kindergarten welcomes children between 3 and 5 years, to which teaches verbal and nonverbal communication prerequisites. Children of these ages, do not even develop totally the language, so, in order that their communication is incisive, they need the use of the body and its parts to get in touch with peers and adults. It is clear that the knowledge of these arguments taught at kindergarten are not the only element for teacher to keep in mind and maybe neither the most important to the transmission of competences. In fact, for teachers, not only of kindergarten but of all levels, it is fundamental base the work on an effective communication, in which occur, all communication elements, both verbal and nonverbal. Sure, is that everything concerning nonverbal communication development it is easily implemented when competences that have to be transmitted are mastered.

Accordingly, positive teacher-child communication makes it easier for children to adapt to school environment and it positively affects their emotional, social and even cognitive development during this adaptation. Several studies reported that positive teacher-child communication influences children's academic, social success and even their school life in the future [4]. Therefore, for a teacher is strongly important the interpersonal relationship and the communication with his/her students. Interpersonal relationship and communication centrality, in its complexity, are one of the major interesting aspects of the teacher job, since his/her behaviour in various situations often serves to children and people around him/her as a model; so, the more coherent are all body movements, the more believable will be the teacher body language and so his/her own person. The contact with the class, in fact, is established firstly through an effective body language.

This chapter has focused mostly on cultural differences and on children analogic language. At the end of this path inside the communication, it is possible to claim that an optimal development of nonverbal communication elements, since kindergarten, is fundamental in order that children learn and grow. Investing in language

development, and in particular that of the body from early childhood (ECD), is one of the best investments a country can make [5]. A password to get first and better inside their world, that it is even ours.

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