Title: The Quest for Deeper Understanding in Interpretative Research:

Hidden Meaning in Plain Sight

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Abstract

This paper contributes to the literature on qualitative methodology in a novel way by being one of only a handful of studies offering context and culture-bound insights interpreting meaning based on non-verbal communication from 49 semi-structured, face-to-face interviews.

This paper is based on an interpretative phenomenological PhD study, between 2017-2020, which is intended to deepen understanding of London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of social inclusion through entrepreneurship. The cultural insider positionality of the interviewer in this study granted direct access to the Romanian migrant community and also valuable cultural understanding of participants' non-verbal communication. This partial positionality enabled meaning capturing and co-creating embedded within the untapped potential of non-verbal, which is widely overlooked by qualitative researchers.

By creating its own inventory of nonverbal communication topologies, this paper uses interview extracts rich in nonverbal communication as illustrative examples to showcase their interpretative significance in qualitative research.

Keywords: qualitative methodology, interpretative analysis, non-verbal communication, PhD, entrepreneurship

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Introduction

Qualitative research is often portrayed as trying to live up to the standard of academic rigour claimed by quantitative research or to make up apologetically for its differences (Bispo, 2017). Paradoxically, by aiming to overwrite the silenced voice reduced to numbers and linear variables upon which quantitative "supremacy" is built, most qualitative researchers still rely in practice on the interpretation of only seven percent of what makes up verbal communication (Mehrabian, 1981, cited in Onwuegbuzie and Byers, 2014). Purposely setting out to find the missing heartbeat, this qualitative study exposes another methodological gap, the widespread omission of interpreting up to 93% of data hidden in plain sight, which is embodied in non-verbal language of participants' narratives (Mehrabian, 1981, cited in Onwuegbuzie and Byers, 2014).

This paper argues alongside a small number of scholars that interpretative analysis should align its aim of deeper understanding of how and why participants' lived realities are experienced by capturing and analysing meaning within "the embodied data" (Gherardi and Perrotta, 2014). Therefore, this study proposes that deeper meaning is created at the melting point between contextualised interconnected subjective realities, cultural non-verbal and verbal rooted discourse shaped by interviewer and interviewed, rather than being just limited to data analysis of what is lying in wait.

With no intent of building any claims of increased potential for generalisation of the interpretative findings, this paper reflects on the practice of interpreting non-verbal data, using illustrative context-bound cases from a phenomenological, interpretative PhD study.

This paper's contribution to knowledge is two-fold: firstly, it contributes in a novel way to the literature on qualitative methodology by being one of very few papers to offer context- and culture-bound insights on how interpretative meaning was captured and interpreted by analysing non-verbal communication.

Secondly, it promotes a collaborative research agenda of knowledge creation and dissemination between researchers (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015; Rockliffe et al., 2018) by reflectively reporting research practice. Consequently, it responds to the call for alignment between empirical evidence and benchmarks, which links research practice with theory and quality standards reinforced by Standards for Reporting Qualitative Research (SRQR) (O'Brien et al., 2014) and formulated by Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) (Tong et al., 2007).

This paper is structured in five sections: section one presents an overview of the methodological literature on interpreting non-verbal communication, which helps frame the knowledge gap addressed by this paper; section two details the non-verbal communication typology was created for the study; section three discusses the analysis of different non-verbal forms of communication by using context-and culture-bound examples from the PhD study,; section four presents conclusions of this reflective research practice, limitations and future research recommendations on this topic; and section five presents the ethics statement of the study.

Qualitative research: craving for more, but avoiding the obvious

At the heart of interpretative research is the participant's story, where meanings and meaningful subjective experiences come to life through communication, observations, images and documents (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007). However, by interpreting only the spoken words of participants' stories, most qualitative researchers engage in a common practice of omission. Therefore, they are failing to fulfil the aim of deepening understanding of the phenomenon under investigation by only scratching the surface of these stories (Greckhamer and Cilesiz, 2014).

There is no doubt that the qualitative researcher takes on the great responsibility of interpreting these entrusted stories and thus of unveiling the embedded meanings whilst staying true to the voices behind these stories (Gherardi, 2019; Lincoln et al., 2011). And yet, the widespread practice of interpreting the obvious remains troubling, with "65.5% of grounded theory studies, 73.8% of phenomenological research studies, 83.5% of case studies, and 82.4% of ethnographic studies lack[ing] any discussion of non-verbal communication", as recently revealed by a review of over 22 years of published research in The Qualitative Report (1990-June, 2012) (Denham and Onwuegbuzie, 2013:12).

The clear methodological challenge of how to properly analyse non-verbal communication "happening" between interviewer and interviewee (Wacquant, 2015) pushes the qualitative researcher to report the meaning in a reasoning way through performative judgements (Bispo, 2017), by discretely separating the body and mind (Gherardi and Perrotta, 2014).

The intentional/unintentional occurrence and the ambiguity of capturing and interpreting is due to its less systematised, cultural and context-bound nature. This adds to the complexity of interpreting non-verbal language outside any set of prescribed rules and typologies whilst meeting research rigour standards (Aghayeva, 2011). This situation is perpetuated also by the most cited methodological texts, including Creswell (2007), which., despite being a reference book cited over 25,000 times, omits the interpretation of non-verbal communication (Onwuegbuzie and Byers, 2014).

It is this widespread research practice that has ultimately built up a gap of physical "know-how" in qualitative research, by "locking" in plain sight the overwhelming majority of the message shared through valuable extra-linguistic behaviours (Mahl, 2014). Consequently, non-verbal communication still retains to a great extent, a great but untapped potential for "deeper understanding" in qualitative research (Fonteyn et al., 2008; Nyumba et al., 2018).

Against this landscape, communication captures the means of transmitting language and cultural values, which are embedded within co-occurring verbal and non-verbal meaning (Damanhouri, 2018). Therefore, for the research community, communication becomes a performative and cultural act of exchanging verbal and non-verbal information. It is performative as a medium of communicating and enacting action. It is cultural as a vehicle of culturally situated meanings embedded in subjects' cultural values and beliefs, which are collaboratively communicated during social interactions.

Communication happens verbally and non-verbally. Therefore, verbal communication is the spoken message using voiced language, whilst non-verbal communication is broadly defined as any form of communication outside wording (Knapp et al., 2014).

By comparison, non-verbal communication includes: *kinetics*, as subjects' body postures; *proxemics* as expressions of use of social space during conversational interactions; *chronemics* as speech markers for silence, gaps and hesitation and paralinguistic, as variation of voice volume and tone; *haptics*, as reaction to touch during social interactions; *oculesics*, as subject's engagement in eye contact and gazing; *olfaction*, as reaction to different smells; and *gestation*, as reaction to particular foods or drinks (Moore et al., 2014; Onwuegbuzie, 2016).

To reinforce the mutual influence that binds verbal and non-verbal communications, rooted in patterns of co-occurrence, Jones and Baron (2002: 512, cited in Del Giacco et al., 2019) build a strong argument by saying that:

 "Mutual influence is especially complex and subtle in face-to-face situations because visible forms of communication occur simultaneously with one another and with vocal messages, and exchanges among persons can occur both sequentially and instantaneously".

Recently, a handful of scholars have started questioning the widespread norm of interpretative research whereby deeper meaning is unveiled by scratching the surface (Gherardi et al, 2018; Thanem and Knights, 2019).

This paper uses illustrative examples from face-to-face, semi-structured interviews as key scenes of rapport between researcher and researched, the "social stage" for co-occurring interactive verbal and non-verbal communication, and as a means to convey meaning (Bispo and Gherardi, 2019). In these social settings, verbal and non-verbal speech took place in a synergy of dependent and interlinked patterns, conveying in isolation and together different messages and meanings as they evolved throughout the social interaction event (Dagnino et al., 2012).

Within this context, this paper argues that the infancy of interdisciplinary research and associated cross-disciplinary knowledge (Pitts-Taylor, 2015) could theoretically and broadly explain why most researchers shy away from analysing non-verbal communication. Additionally, the interviewer experienced how cultural customs play an influential, research-shaping role in some cases. Therefore, the opportunity of collecting non-verbal data is challenging, rarely considered acceptable by the interviewees during the interviews, despite the cultural insider positionality of the interviewer.

One reason for limited analysis of non-verbal communication is seen within this study. The opportunity for note taking of non-verbal language, particularly kinetics and proxemics was very limited because note taking during interviewing is considered disrespectful within the Romanian culture (Miller and Rollnick, 2013; Sommers-Flanagan and Sommers-Flanagan, 2015), triggering total disengagement, as experienced by the interviewer.

The researchers acknowledged the concern for increased risk of "not good enough" research practice, which seems to have pushed qualitive researchers into managing this risk by choosing mixed methods or by triangulating sources of qualitative data, rather than exploring the promising depths of fully engaging with verbal and non-verbal interview data. However, this research practice prioritizes the interpretation of the obvious and convenient text, whilst it "silences" the 93% of the participants' story which is borne by the non-verbal language. (Oltmann, 2016). This approach is praised as a valuable practice norm and a way of managing the risk of misinterpretation of what could be for many researchers, ambiguous andunarticulated data (Lechuga, 2012; Oltmann, 2016).

Without making any claims of pulling together all perspectives of embodied research, the interviewer responds to the acknowledged need for more "theoretical fence sitters" (Avner et al, 2014:55) and takes the risk of engaging in openly "promiscuous analysis" (Childers, 2014), in order to promote a more inclusive research agenda, daring to engage in in-depth analysis without separating the story from the story teller.

In the context of this PhD study, language is treated as a performative communication tool and thus it recognises the actions embedded within, reinforcing that doing co-occurs with the saying and vice versa rather than in isolation or in a vacuum (Reyes et al., 2008, cited in Del Giacco et al., 2019). By addressing blending of body and voice in the interview context, as enabler of interactive communication, the researcher-interviewer affects and is affected by verbal and non-verbal dimensions of this interaction (Sbisà, 2009, cited in Del Giacco et al., 2019).

Modus operandi

This section presents the study's main research aim and research epistemology, the process of analysing non-verbal communication through illustrative cases, and the context and cultural bound topology of non-verbal communication created to support the interpretative analysis for this study.

The underlying background for this paper is a phenomenological interpretative PhD study with the overarching aim of investigating how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs are experiencing social inclusion through entrepreneurship. The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) undertaken by this study motivated the researcher to look for sources of meaning beyond the obvious, that is to say beyond the participants' spoken words. Through IPA, the research analysis interconnects phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al., 2013). In the context of this study, phenomenology encourages thick descriptions and interpretations of the what and how of participants' experiences (Creswell, 2013) of social inclusion, whilst its underlying hermeneutics encourages the exploration of context- and culture--bound meaning through behaviours and intentions. Additionally, ideography encourages the exploration of unique and case bound details that reinforce the heterogeneity of lived experiences, steering away from the nomothetic normative practices (Smith et al., 2013).

Consequently, the IPA employed creates the right opportunity to explore meaning through verbal and non-verbal communication (Callary et al, 2015). This ontological stance was motivated by the rich accounts of non-verbal communication manifested by participants during interviews valuable opportunities for deeper understanding of the meaning embedded in their stories. Therefore, the researcher's positionality, as a partial cultural and language insider within the researched community, proved crucial in accessing, capturing and interpreting the non-verbal communication. However, the researcher engaged reflectively in the research process by ethically managing her insider positionality (Savvides et al. 2014).

The process of engaging in critical reflectivity enabled the researcher not only to remain true to the interviewees' voices, but to preserve her positionality as a researcher, bracketing preconceived assumptions (Savvides et al. 2014) and reporting from "the space in between" (Corbin-Dwyer and Buckle 2009) in her effort to co-create insightful knowledge (Berger, 2015; Thurairajah, 2019).

Consequently, the researcher selected participants, who overtly showcased rich accounts of non-verbal communication during the interviews and asked accuracy confirmation or moderation of researcher's interpretations of their non-verbal communication showcased during interviews (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). This collaborative practice in data analysis has been previously used in feminist research as a measure to manage interpretative bias and thus build an ethical, rigorous research and transactional validity (Cho and Trent, 2006, cited in Denham and Onwuegbuzie, 2013) and as a means to overcome the lack of reliable catalogues of non-verbal meaning to guide researchers in their interpretative process (Hogg and Copper, 2007; LeGreco et al., 2012). However, this collaborative practice, although a useful exercise of knowledge co-creation and act of balancing power relation asymmetries between researcher and researched, remains a problematic game of managing cultural and personal sensitivities and expectations in practice, often failing to meet unanimous support (Wagner et al., 2016).

This approach of blending materiality and e-materiality of analysis entertained the researcher's critical thinking and her "becoming with data" (Gherardi, 2018), deepening understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Similar to verbal communication, the co-occurring non-verbal communication goes through a similar process of collection and analysis, accompanied by its set of challenges. As argued in the introduction, cultural customs played an influential, research-shaping role in this study. Therefore, the collection of the nonverbal data has proved challenging due to due to the culturally disrespectful" view of note taking of non-verbal language that has previously been noted (Miller and Rollnick, 2013; Sommers-Flanagan and Sommers-Flanagan, 2015: 372). During many interviews the researcher's intention to take notes triggered participants' total disengagement or otherwise refusal to continue. So, note taking was possible only during some interviews, without significant impact on the interviewee's focus and engagement. Some of these interviews have been used as illustrative cases to support the scope of this paper.

The non-verbal communication was then transcribed using the interview recordings and the relevant field notes. The codes for non-verbal communication were operationalised as a file linked to the relevant research participants through shared coding (i.e. "EWR1Notes"). Using as guidance the functions of non-verbal identified by Denham and Onwuegbuzie (2013) across 409 qualitative studies published in The Qualitative Report (Annex 1), these non-verbal communication documents have been organised as confirmation, discovery, clarification and emphasis codes using NVivo 12 software.

By exploring deeper meaning embedded in participants' experiences, the researcher tried to find the right balance between the traditional, technical procedure that legitimizes the research and the embodied research, where the soul and the body are inseparable (Gherardi, 2017; Gherardi et al., 2018; Wacquart, 2015). Through an exercise of continuous self-reflection and critical thinking, the researcher filtered the interpretative analysis through judgement and participants' confirmation, thus ensuring a practice of scientific rigour (Czarniawska, 2016).

In the pursuit of fulfilling its aim, this paper focuses on interpreting non-verbal communication by using context and cultural-bound examples. The researcher is aware of the complexity and the responsibility of undertaking such a task in the context of limited and limiting guidelines and the interdisciplinary knowledge required. The researcher has reported with transparency how this analysis was conducted, whilst relying on previous empirical evidence (Onwuegbuzie and Byers, 2014). Consequently, by narrowing down the focus to understanding the meaning

embedded within non-verbal communication, the researcher has analysed these interviews relying on participants' corroboration as cultural "gestionaires". These collaborations have helped her create the typology of non-verbal communication reflecting the cultural, non-verbal communication particularities of interviewees, which uses as basis the few previously published typologies, including those tested by De Finna, (2007), Edwards, (1997), cited in Sperti, (2019) and Onwuegbuzie, (2016).

This typology of non-verbal communication identified during researcher-researched interviews is captured in the table below:

Table 1: Typology of non-verbal communication used in this study

Chronemics		Kinetics	
(.)	Micropause	ŁŁ	Crossed legs (reserved)
(….)	Long pause	O	Eye contact to engage
@	Laughter	Ø	Looking away/gazing away
¥	Surprised	©	Eyes wide open (surprised)
V	Holding breath	X	Crossed arms (Sensitive subject/reserved)
Λ	Breath down	I I	Open arms (Feeling safe/empowered)
¢	Silence	§	Holding his head (Struggle/emotional event)
		Ñ	Nodding the head (disbelief)
		Ā	Nodding the head (agreement)
		÷	Smile
		O	Staring
		‖	Facing the other person
Paralinguistics		Proxemics	
CAPS	Louder tone	\	Pulling back
!	Animated tone, with/without exclamation	/	Leaning forward
?	Looking for confirmation (high pitch)	∫	Small social space (withing 30 cm)
Aha	Confirmation or self-affirmation	≡	Big social space (over 30 cm)
Mm	Hesitation	∏	Obstructed social space (across table)
::	Vowel elongation	○	Open social space (no obstacles)
Hm	Continuers	¶	Sideway orientation
word	Prominence associated to pitch accent		
±	Change in tone (louder to normal and back)		
> <	Speeded-up talk		
< >	Slowed-down talk		
=	Turn-taking		
{}	Spelling to emphasize		

Source: Author's own based on fieldwork and De Finna, (2007), Edwards, (1997, cited in Sperti, 2019) and Onwuegbuzie (2016)

Mining for meaning: the 7%-38%-55% rule

This section includes context- and culture-bound illustrative examples from the semi-structured interviews undertaken during this PhD study. These examples are extracted, on the basis of their relevance for the scope of this paper, from face- to-face interviews which took place between September 2018 and January 2019.

Following Mehrabian's "7%-38%-55% "rule (1971, cited in Onwuegbuzie and Byers, 2014), the researcher pursued a holistic interpretative analysis of interviews, by interpreting co-occurring meaning embedded in the participants' verbal and non-verbal communication. According to Mehrabian (1971, cited in Onwuegbuzie and Byers, 2014), communication is messages conveying behaviours and feelings and it is the sum of seven percent being spoken words; 38% being paralinguistics and chronemics, as ways of saying the words and 55% of communication being kinetics and proxemics, meaning facial expressions and use of social space.

Consequently, these illustrative examples of co-occurring kinetics, proxemics, paralinguistics, chronemics and verbal communication are transcribed and interpreted below, treating the verbatim accounts as background, in order to prioritize the analysis of non-verbal communication which is the scope of this paper.

Opening up to voice "my story": embodied meanings within kinetics and proxemics

This section presents examples of transcribing and interpreting co-occurring kinetics and proxemics captured during face-to-face interviews. These examples focus mainly on interpreting the context- and culture-bound meaning of gazing towards and away, direct eye contact, nodding in agreement, and use of social space. Their functions of confirming, emphasising, discovery and elaboration alongside verbal communication shape their monitoring and regulating nature enabled through social interaction.

Broadly speaking, proxemics consists of non-verbal expressions of avoidance or approachability between subjects, on grounds of positive or negative subjective analysis (Burgoon and Jones, 1976; Mehrabian, 1968, 1969, cited in McCall and Singer, 2015), as well as the social space between communicators (Gullberg, 2013). Coined by the anthropologist Edward C. Hall, "proxemics" started its epistemological journey by defining cultural and communication use of social space (Hall, 1963) through interpersonal distance, body orientation and eye contact during social interactions, all of which convey attitudes and actions.

Kinetics defines non-verbal communication as facial expressions (e.g. smiling, frowning) and eye contact (e.g. staring and looking away), together with movement of hands (e.g. covering the mouth) and head (e.g. nodding).

Consequently, kinetics and proxemics are conscious and unconscious (Gulsunler and Fidan, 2011) cultural and context-bound acts of communication that co-occur with verbal communication (Gullberg, 2013; Kirkegaard, 2010). They confirm, contradict, emphasise, or add to the verbal communication formulated as part of social interaction that takes place during the interviews between researcher and researched (Denham and Onwuegbuzie, 2013).

By interlinking the textural description, captured by the emergent theme of "motivation to emigrate" ("what" analysis), with structural analysis ("how" analysis) (Moustakas, 1994, cited in Padgett, 2017) and with the analysis of associated emotions ("why" analysis), the researcher thickens the description and the interpretation of participants' lived experiences by capturing nuance, complexity and interconnectivity embedded in nonverbal manifestations (Singer et al., 1998, cited in Padgett, 2017) as captured by the illustrative example below.

Theme: Reasons to emigrate to the UK

Interview	Transcribing, describing and interpreting non-verbal communication
Q: Can you, please, explain what motivated you to migrate to the UK? " ⊙ ∫ (staring, small social space)	Her non-verbal communication corroborates the intensity of the participant's decision to emigrate, regardless of the host country. She chose an open space and, as the interview was enfolding, she came very close to the interviewer, as if she grew more and more motivated to share her story the way she would to a friend. This gesture confirms trust and authenticity.
Over time (...) ◯, I gre**w VERY frustrated** by the Romanian society, (.) in general, and (.) it seemed to me that I could **no** longer live in a perpetual denial (...). I could not feel fulfilled (...) Ñ by a simple good insurance deal or other work-related benefits that seemed to be so much appreciated by many of my colleagues.	She paused for a good few seconds (...), as if she went back in time at a slow pace, and she started staring, straight into interviewer's eyes ◯ to be sure that she was there with her from the beginning of her story, when she was recalling that emotional moment which marked her decision to emigrate. She raised her voice to say "VERY" and elongated the word frustrated, trying to confirm and emphasize once more the urgency of taking then ("I could no longer live in a perpetual denial (...)") the decision to emigrate. She nodded her head Ñ in disagreement with what she was about to say as if she was fighting her vulnerability of exposing her inner thoughts that she buried deep within herself for so long and then, she continued her thoughts.

/ © So, (.) now, when I look back (...) is this an opportunity? (....) mm or a necessity? I considered my decision to leave Romania a personal necessity. And, although my boss offered me the same salary as in London, I was convinced that moving to London was best, because I:: wanted to leave that country, where I could not see a future for myself.

Although, I had not left the country until then, I did not know what was to come for me **there**, having a contract for only nine months. We made the decision to move to London and hoped for the best (÷). Initially, it was a simple way to get out of that country (\) and nothing more." (EWR17)

She leaned forward, ever closer /, pulling her chair along, with the eyes wide open ©, as if she seemed to have surprised herself with how trustful she became to share her story, and, after waiting a few seconds before answering, she asked herself the same questions the researcher asked her. She stopped again briefly (.) and with hesitation (mm), reflecting some more, she answered.

When triangulating the verbal and non-verbal language, there is this confirmation of an intense state of emotions that surfaces unconstructively, defining the decision of emigrating as an ultimate necessity to lift the cultural and institutional ceiling (where I could not see a future for myself), which embedded the opportunity for personal and professional growth through the process of migration.

The difficulty of that moment was reinforced by a combination of negation, pause and nodding ("I could not feel fulfilled (…) Ñ) to convey subject's belief that she could not continue like that and that she seemed to want the unachievable in the context of her home country or that the limiting and limited institutional context failed her.

Opportunity to grow was presented as a "personal necessity to leave" beyond what money could buy ("(…) my boss offered me the same salary as in London, I was convinced that moving to London was best, because I :: wanted to leave that country, where I could not see a future for myself"), portrayed as her freeing herself from a cultural ceiling which could go as far as she went and no further.

She seemed unsure of what the unknown **(there),** anywhere for that matter outside home country would bring. However, she smiled (÷) hoping for the best and by the time she had finished her argument she pulled back (\) to indicate she is ready for pass on the turn.

Source: Researcher's own based on fieldwork

This interviewee portrays her experience of emigrating to the UK as an escape "to get out of that country" due to limited prospects in her home country (Akhurst et al., 2014). She emphasised that the process evolved over decades of unfulfilled expectations when she "grew VERY frustrated" and she "could no longer live in this denial". By elongating specific words such as "grew (….) frustrated, no" and by raising her tone and spell "VERY" it reinforces the necessity precondition of her decision to emigrate. Through these nonverbal cues, she shows "proactive" engagement with her EU citizenship rights (Cook, Dwyer and Waite, 2012) and individual agency (Morawska, 2001).

Additionally, through the lens of non-verbal universalism, establishing the right social space for an effective and productive interview is critical and it is an important form of social interaction that enacts power relations, cultural distance and trust, which directly influence the information communicated (Varner, 2005). For example, in individualistic countries, such as the UK, the social space is between 1ft to 3ft, in collectivistic countries like Romania and Middle East, the social space is commonly under 1ft, without making the subjects feel uncomfortable (Damanhouri, 2018).

Similarly, eye contact could be associated culturally with disrespect and invasion of privacy in Eastern societies, like Japan (Coshkun, 2010), whilst in Western societies and Romania it conveys honesty (Varner, 2005, cited in Damanhouri, 2018).

Within this context, by choosing a barrier free setting, small interpersonal space, leaning towards the interviewer (proxemics), making constant eye contact to the point of staring (kinetics) confirmed and emphasised the spoken message, through which the interviewee communicated a highly emotional state associated with her decision to emigrate as well as a high degree of trust in researcher's understanding and shared national culture.

Looking to understand the nonverbal communication, the interview quoted below is an example of one where gazing was a frequent way of engaging for the interviewee and it seemed to have taken on different meanings. Its frequency motivated the researcher to focus on understanding its meaning as it seemed to define the direction of the interview, signalling the interviewee's hesitation when questions on new topics were formulated.

Theme: Perceptions of social inclusion

Interview	Transcribing, describing and interpreting non-verbal communication
Q: What does social inclusion means for you as a Romanian migrant entrepreneur in the UK?	
A: "**mmm, (…), Ø,** I think everyone tries their be::st to **FEEL** integrated into any society they live in. **O,** Ye::s, > <, you automatically try to integrate as soon as possible and as well as you can and to do that **(…), mmm, Ø,** although you feel vulnerable **Ø, O,** just like a newly **(.)** born baby. Like a baby trying to imitate his parents, I, **Ā, (…),** myself try to imitate what others around me do, how they talk, how they behave, the slangs they use **O** […]." (EMR17)	He hesitated, paused to gather his thoughts and then gazed away not knowing what to answer, as if this is the first time, he faced such a question. He elongated the vowel [be::st] to emphasize the sacrifice everybody makes. By making eye contact, followed by word emphases though vowel elongation (Ye::s) at the beginning of a new sentence, he seeks engagement and confirmation of understanding. By continuing with a speed up voice the rest of the message, the interviewer elaborates on the topic of feeing social included. The combination of pause, hesitation and gazing away [**(…), mmm, Ø]** signals the spontaneity of the answer and that this question caught him off guard, as an inquiry into something that he did not reflect upon before. Even the comparison with the baby, seems simplistic, which reinforces the newness of this inquiry for interviewee. He looked quite frequently for confirmation of the relevance of his arguments, by making eye contact, **O,** by nodding in agreement, **Ā,** and by pausing **(…).**

Source: Researcher's own based on fieldwork

Sometimes, the interviewee gazed away and thus it indicated hesitation in answering, which meant, based on participant's' feedback, that answering that question required a combination of reflective and retrospective approach (Voss et al., 2010) or otherwise that the question was complex or too personal (Ho et al., 2015) (i.e. usually when it included a fuzzy topic, such as social inclusion, or a highly sensitive, personal topic).

By giving the required attention to the co-occurring non-verbal communication, the researcher could intervene by clarifying, reformulating or postponing the question until later on during the interview or otherwise settle for a generic, rather "made up" answer.

However, confident in correctly understanding the cultural implications associated with gazing towards and direct eye contact in general, the interviewer's cultural insider positionality helped entertain this type of social interaction, which signals interest, attention and engagement, which might contradict other cultural social customs (Meyer and Girke, 2011). Consequently, eye contact has an embedded cultural meaning and thus it influences the direction and the quality of the information shared depending on how its significance as defining social interaction during the research is understood and managed as part of the interview.

In this case, for example, the interviewee gazed away to mark turn-taking, as a form of regulating the social interaction occurring during the interview, which aligns with the meaning attributed by previous studies (Sandgren et al., 2012; Cummins, 2012). Additionally, the location of the interview, a room with a big window overlooking London city centre, encouraged this behaviour, creating the perfect scenario for emotional detachment for the interviewee and thus gazing became in this sense a context bound kinetics artefact (Mcdonald and Tatler, 2013).

By trying to deepen our understanding, both the above interviewees shared their stories as one driven by individual agency (I:), filled with uncertainty and intense emotions of starting their lives all over again. It seems that many of them acknowledged that in their pursuit of a more fulfilling life "what one was yesterday will no longer bar the possibility of becoming someone totally different today" (Bauman, 2007: 104). Therefore, the uncertainty of "beginning, afresh can thus be perceived as liberating rather than problematic. This allows the immigrant entrepreneur to "become history-less, able to recreate" (Butcher, 2009: 29), very much "like a baby" (ERM 17).

Despite the interviewee's words which emphasize the process of integration that he had undertaken, his non-verbal communication remains unconvincing of him achieving social inclusion. His frequent gazing away when portraying social inclusion as a process of "trying hisbest "and his eye contact routine when speaking about "being vulnerable" creates a tension between his nonverbal and verbal message, as if he is acting out parts at odds with his own feelings. Consequently, his social inclusion is experienced as a unidirectional process of assimilation.

These examples suggest that gazing towards and away fulfils monitoring and regulating functions of the social interaction that takes place and thus mutual understanding (Hamilton, 2016; Ho et al., 2015).

These interview extracts are examples of reflective research practice, which enables verbal, kinetics and proxemics to synergistically convey participant's message of urgency and ultimatum embedded in her decision to emigrate. Although this message might have been easily interpretable from the verbal message, through content analysis of key words (e.g. I

could no longer live […]), the non-verbal language not only confirmed this experience as a participant's lived experience, rather than just being a box-ticking exercise, but it enabled the identification of opportunity brought by migration, which otherwise have been not formulated verbally in this paragraph.

This approach of exploring the intentionality built into events and memories, rooted in Husserl's philosophy ([1936/54],1970) and embedded in recent studies (Krueger, 2017), offered a glimpse into this participant's intentionality, hidden in her decision to emigrate, which goes beyond the communicated message of overcoming experienced institutional and cultural limitations in her home country, to unveil the opportunity that lie ahead through this change.

Constructivist silence: a meaningful interplay of chronemics and paralinguistic

This section presents illustrative examples of transcribing and interpreting co-occurring chronemics and paralinguistics during face-to-face interviews between the researcher and London based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs. These examples focus mainly on interpreting the context and cultural bound meanings of pauses, tone, volume and hesitation, were used most frequently by interviewees.

Paralinguistics is the science of non-verbal cues, including voice volume, pauses, tone and speed, which convey meaning outside and beyond what is directly and explicitly communicated through spoken words (Haddad et al., 2019). Through paralinguistic communication, the subjects could convey emotions of being happy or sad, meaning, such as sarcasm that might just turn around the meaning of what has been verbally communicated, and grammatical concepts of questions, exclamations or factual statements (Suchy and Holdnac, 2013).

Chronemics refers to the inventory of speech markers, including silence, laughter, hesitation, pauses, breath holding as forms of non-verbal communication, which convey meaning and emotions (Tomicic et al., 2011; 2015).

Theme: Positionality as entrepreneur

Interview	Transcribing, describing and interpreting non-verbal communication:
Context: The interview took place at corporation's headquarters overlooking Canary Wharf. We were sitting on two chairs facing each other, or so they were positioned. However, at the start of the interview, he made it very clear in an almost autocratic voice: "± **LET ME:: (KNOW WHEN YOU START RECORDING?O** (looking for confirmation by making eye contact) and that "**YOU HAVE TO FINISH NO LATER THAN 45 MINUTES, OR 43 MINUTES TO BE EXACT ?O** (louder tone and looking for confirmation by making eye contact). **ŁŁ, X, ¶ O** (With his legs and arms crossed and his body turned sideways, trying to keep eye contact), he confirmed that he is ready for the first question.	During the pre-interview stages, the interviewee used an autocratic approach to regulate this meeting. The changes in tone (±) and thus the use of a louder tone highlighted the significance of respecting a preestablished meeting protocol and specific power relations. His body language with his legs and arms crossed and his body turned sideways, whilst trying to keep eye contact, **[ŁŁ, X, ¶, O]** signals a limited engagement outside the usual Public Relations speech.

Source: Researcher's own based on fieldwork

Context interpretation: This example reinforces the significance of understanding and joining in non-verbal communication, as this proved to be critical throughout this interview. The blend of multiple and co-occurring forms of non-verbal communication reflects the complexity of this type of social interaction and thus how much meaning could have been lost if only the verbal communication had been interpreted. The use of louder tone, compared to the tone used during the brief introduction, could reinforce his dominance and social status as CEO of a big corporation, but also the fact that he was establishing himself as the decision maker. The idea of superior status is reinforced also through vowel elongation and tone prominence when saying "ME". In both cases, the statements ended with expectations of non-verbal confirmation from the researcher, understanding and commitment that has been checked by the interviewee through direct eye contact and loud voice pitch.

Almost fifteen minutes into the interview, the researcher started wondering if and when the PR moment of already publicly known statements would end and thus the opportunity of personal discussion on the research topics would materialise.

The break came with the following question, because it allowed the interviewee to relate to the interviewer on grounds of their shared Romanian language and culture.

Interview	Transcribing, describing and interpreting non-verbal communication
Q: What does it mean for you to be an entrepreneur in the UK?	This question seemed to be the ice breaker of the interview. It conveyed a feeling of a more trustful encounter, where there is something personal which was worth reflecting on, his very important positionality and status as entrepreneur.
A: "ŁŁ, X, ¶, hm, V, ‖, @, ÷ (With his legs and arms crossed and his body turned sideways, he hesiatted, then he opens his arms and turned around to face the reseracher. He breaths down and laughted briefly) (.) (micropause) As a Romanian **ENTREPRENEUR**, O, II, ‖ (louder tone, eye contact, open arms) I:: (vowel elongation) cannot say that I was treated in any different way, and I think I was fortunate to be in charge of a company that everyone needed here ! (animated tone), in the sense that we had the money and we knowledge to deliver where many British companies failled before. **THIS** Ø (louder tone, gazing away) development and we bought the contract to build this. I was in a situation where, as a Romanian **ENTREPRENEUR** (louder tone), I did not have to ask for any favor. I was not the one who needed them, but they needed **US** (louder tone). And from this point of view, it was easy for me [...]. O, ÷ (eye contact and a smile) The title (...) (long pause) awarded to me by the Queen, **FOR ME** (...) (louder tone, followed by a long pause), personally is a well deserved recognition. I received the title for the services I brought to the financial sector [....] which houses the largest financial institutions in London [....].This is the main reason why I was given the title [...]. (EMR32)	The transition from cross arms and sideways orientation (ŁŁ, X, ¶) to open arms and facing the interviewer (V, ‖), doubled by a smile and brief laughter (@, ÷) was perceived by researcher as turning point in interview, as an ending to a PR moment and the beginning of the research interview. Although the emphasis of high social status and the unmissable pride associated with interviewee's positionality as entrepreneur and the significant impact his vision had on the city of London, never lost moment during the interview. Strategically used pauses, doubled by louder voice to emphasise higher status and associated power (i.e. I, ENTREPRENEUR, US, FOR ME) describe personal empowerment and fulfilment. It also emphasis the significance of a few key words, over the majority of statements made during this interview.

In many cultures, a low tone conveys authoritative position of the subject (Haddad et al., 2019), however, in the Romanian as well as in other Latin cultures, a louder tone sounds authoritative, as it embeds an order expected to be acknowledged and followed (Lewis, 2010) . It became clear that what has been communicated non-verbally changed the meaning of what has been said, by changing the importance.

For example, if this message „**LET** <u>**ME::**</u> (change in tone from normal to louder , followed by vowel elongation) **KNOW WHEN YOU START RECORDING?O** would have been communicated by using a normal tone rather than a louder one and no eye contact, without seeking confirmation (i.e. Let me know when you start recording.), the message would have been perceived as a less important statement, than that of greater importance emphasised by the interviewee.

@ ÷ (laughter and smile) marked the turning point in this interview. Although it is considered by scholars to be a universal non-verbal form of communication, it remains the most misunderstood. Its inventory of meanings includes response to humour, social affiliation, adopting behaviour, conveying mainly an emotional state of wellbeing and affiliation (Curran et al., 2018).

In the context of this interview, the speaker was the only one who laughed, which is a common practice (Glenn, 2003, cited in Curran et al., 2018), using laughter as regulator to signal a change in attitude as turning point in this social interaction (Bonin et al., 2012).

This interviewee's identity as an entrepreneur was greatly prioritized over his national identity, which he has carefully reinforced through the use of differentiated voice tones, despite the fact that "Romanian ENTREPRENEUR" were used as part of the same semantic construction. By reading the interviewee's non-verbal communication, one could gain a deeper understanding of interviewees' feelings of empowerment as an entrepreneur but not as Romanian.

These examples portray how people co-construct and negotiate how social interaction happens and how it is said, rendering a complex meaning through verbal and non-verbal communication, through mutual influence and contextual and cultural informal rules that arise during interviews and social interactions (Del Giacco et al., 2019).

Conclusions, limitations and research recommendations

This paper contributes to the literature on qualitative methodology by addressing the acknowledged methodological gap of interpreting non-verbal communication (Bispo and Gherardi, 2019; Wacquart, 2015). Consequently, it is one of few papers to offer context and cultural-bound insights on how interpretative meaning was captured and interpreted by analysing non-verbal communication. It also contributes to the call for alignment between empirical evidence and benchmarks by linking research practice with theory through collaborative knowledge creation and dissemination (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015; Rockliffe et al., 2018).

These cultural and context-bound insights of interpreting co-occurring non-verbal communication in pursuing deeper understanding of participants' lived experiences of social inclusion through entrepreneurship proved equally enriching and challenging.

Enriching thanks to the discovery that the seed to further this knowledge is real and that its untapped potential could support thicker descriptions and interpretations in the way those stories are experienced and told (Denham and Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Challenging because this analysis is complex, pushing the researcher beyond the well-known research practice of literally capturing "the voice of the participants" (Bleakley, 2005) with limited tools and research "gear" (Denham and Onwuegbuzie, 2013).

However, there are also limitations that need to be acknowledged, including the risk of misinterpretation or overinterpretation; the challenge of creating universal typologies of non-verbal communication without depleting the experience of its authenticity; and the time taken.; The researcher acknowledged these limitations and maintained a reflective approach in order to manage these risks.

Therefore, adding to the inventory of how to interpret culturally embedded meaning of non-verbal communication, this paper makes no claims of formulating a one-size-fits all approach, but rather emphasises the significance of cultural and context-bound research practice, which could be particularly relevant and useful for early career or "distant" cultural researchers (Damanhouri, 2018). However, through the practice of a more holistic approach, body and mind convey synergistically the meaning intended (Gherardi, 2018) as a joint medium of co-occurring verbal and non-verbal communication, which define any social interaction, including that between researcher and researched.

Despite the statistics attached to non-verbal communication embedding 93% of communication, through tradition, the verbal communication continues as the primary and starting point of interpretative analysis (Oltmann, 2016). However, there is scope for further methodological development in this direction, particularly through interdisciplinary research, which encourages flexible research and cross-disciplinary knowledge.

Additionally, during the interpretative analysis of these interviews the researcher became aware that there was also a gendered way of achieving rapport and thus, although, this is out of scope for the current paper, this is a research stream that deserves further exploration.

There is scope for further studies where transparency and taking the chance to address methodological gaps including interpreting co-occurring non-verbal communication, could encourage other qualitative researchers to cross the traditional line, whilst tackling similar scientific rigour-challenging methodological issues in an open forum. By adopting a multimodal (i.e. verbal and non-verbal) and culturally progressive approach, where "knowledge sources stem from people [i.e. participants] and are generated by people [i.e. researchers] who represent all cultures, races, ethnic backgrounds, languages, classes, religions, and other diversity attributes" (Onwuegbuzie and Frels, 2016:xiii-xiv), is seen as an opportunity to create knowledge and transparent research guidelines to encourage sustainable research practices.

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Appendix

Annex 1: Functions of Non-verbals Used in TQR Articles 1992–2012

Functions of Nonverbals Used in TQR Articles 1992–2012

Function	Example
Clarification	The **tone of her answers** and the fact that she chose **the time of this interview to glue the photos on the album** - I had booked all appointments with her three weeks in advance - was significant. I read this action as a portrayal of subversion and hostility against the interview and what I represented for her.
Juxtaposition	When you were in school, what was your sense of your own ethnicity? *Aldo*: To tell you the truth, I have never had any ideas (...) And there was something on TV and I was like "Senad, isn't that a Serbian name?" **(Laughs)** I mean ... **(rolls his eyes)** *Maja*: (Smiles) My mom, it probably crossed her mind, well, my son, it is not. When I think about it now, I can only imagine what had crossed her mind, they are searching for my son in the war, and he can't even differentiate the names.
Discovery	When I revisited the tape of this part of our conversation, I heard definite **lack of enthusiasm** in Tammi's voice. Unfortunately, (or perhaps fortunately) I was oblivious to this at the time, and we proceeded with the activity.
Confirmation	The **pacing of some subjects' responses** also suggested examination of what they were saying in the moment. Kei Huik in particular spoke in exceptionally **well considered** phrases with **long pauses** in between his sentences.
Emphasis	*Paula*: "No, I don't want to" [Paula **starts shaking her head side to side** as a nonverbal sign for the word no. She continues shaking side to side and refuses to stop and look at Mrs. Cole.]
Illustration	He got married soon; his wife wore that (circles around his head to describe the headscarf).
Elaboration	You don't even want to be in the room when Plastic Surgery and ENT go over who gets to do facelifts **(Laughs)** I mean blood flows in the halls.
Complementarity	Interpreting the covert here-and-now behaviour, it became clear that diversity in the organization was filled with extreme levels of anxiety which were manifested in all kinds of defensive behaviours. When these data are added to the verbatim focus group information, the research results become extremely rich and add comprehensible colour to the empirical data.
Effect	Joan, the receptionist, "I just love Sophia. She's a good girl, isn't she? Aren't you Sophia?" in a **sing-song, child-like voice.**
Corroboration /Verification	*John*: I used to play basketball when I was still a student. I was in the school basketball team. But it is all different now. John then **dropped his head,** focusing on his affected limb. This body language indicated that he still had not accepted his disabilities.

Source: Denham and Onwuegbuzie (2013)