

Nonverbal communication, interaction through space and facial expressions

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<http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/lea/results/Activities/liisa.pdf>

SPACE

General Information

The visible boundary of every living thing is surrounded by a series of invisible boundaries, from the individual's personal space to his "territory". Personal space can be characterised as an invisible bubble around each person. "Territory" means that these places or things are mine, don't come near!

People react unconsciously to differences in distances between people. Again, distances are very culture-bound. Distance is perceived by all the senses.

Edward T. Hall distinguishes four distance zones:

- Intimate distance
- Personal distance
- Social distance
- Public distance

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

General Information

Nonverbal communication can tell people things about you that you maybe would not like them to know.

Paralanguage means variations in the way you speak, such as stress or speed. The use of paralanguage tells about your attitude towards the person you are with. Without saying anything specific you can show that you like or do not like a person.

Body language is very revealing. Your gestures and postures can indicate the way you are feeling and what you are thinking about the person with whom you are talking. Equally revealing is the way you dress.

With *eye language* you can send signs showing threats or propositions.

With your *space language* you can indicate formal, informal, or intimate distances. Space language is seen in the way you furnish your rooms (a giant desk in an office; a big teacher's desk between the teacher and the students).

The most expressive part of nonverbal communication is the *touch language*. In different cultures the answer to the following question is different: Who can touch whom where and in what circumstances? And with what result?

FACE

General Information

A *positive face* means that you are considered to be a good and worthy person. To *lose face* means that during a conversation, for example, you say or do something that causes embarrassment and the others change their positive opinion of you into a negative one. A *negative face*, as a result of losing face, is a situation to be avoided in intercultural communication. If the conversation is to be continued, all the co-conversationalists try to contribute to the success of the talk and to do their best to keep each other's faces. If a loss of the face happens, it makes the continuation of the conversation very difficult – the saving of the face of everyone is the task of the people who want the conversation to go on and results to be reached.