

## PROXEMIC COMMUNICATION IN INTERPERSONAL CONTEXTS

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Proxemics, derived from the Latin term *Proxemus* meaning «nearest» is how people communicate non-verbally through the use of territory and spatial relationships. When Edward T. Hall first introduced his theory in 1963 it was relatively new science in the world of non-verbal communication. But its importance is the obvious impact it has on cultural differences, as our world's boundaries shrink and societies become more globalized.

At the interpersonal level, proxemic behaviour is guided mostly by perceptual features including manner of speech. One of the most important means used to signal status and power is olfaction. Hall (1963) has included under thermal factors mainly heat gain and loss which influence the sensing of heat from another body can result in a movement either towards or away from the source. 'Everyone is surrounded by a small cloud or haze of smell, varying in size according to physical setting, varying in size according to prescribed norms. The investigator must determine at what point the smell is unmistakable and whether this fits into the total proxemic posture. Usually there is little ambiguity. Most transactions occur either inside or outside these boundaries' (Hall, 1969).

Voice loudness is another interpersonal nonverbal communication factor. Voice loudness is controlled by distance, relationship between the parties involved and the situation or subject being discussed.

Use of language style also is resorted to in creating and closing distances. There can be listed five styles, each used for a different situation. They are: intimate, casual, consultative, formal and frozen (Joos 1962).

Vision is a primary means of judging distance in interpersonal communication. 'How the eye is used is a function of one's culture. The culture specifies at what, at whom and how one looks as well as the amount of communication that takes place via the eye' (Nydell, M. 1987).

Touching in interpersonal communication, as a proxemic behaviour, differs from sex to sex. Even among members of the same sex, touching behaviour is governed by social status, attire, age, and familiarity. Touching is generally resorted to for calling the attention, as a form of worship and of begging the pardon, for comforting, to show the closeness of relationship between individuals, to make way for oneself.

Some of the other features of nonverbal communication through proxemic behaviour at the interpersonal level are as follows: 1) females require less personal space than men, with members of their own sex. They deliberately create greater distance between them and members of the opposite sex purely as a social code of behavioural norms between sexes, in contrast to man who create deliberate distance between them and members of their own sex on grounds such as status and power; 2) personal space is expected to be increased by individuals as their age increases; 3) there is a direct relationship between age and distance when we compare children, adolescents, and adults conversing in natural settings; 4) touching while conversing

is generally frowned upon among adults of both the sexes; 5) touching behaviour could differ from one individual to another and thus could be related to personality factors; 6) touches, such as handshakes, are modern social acts, as they are intended to communicate reverence, submission, humility, in essence, the inferior status of the individual who touches the feet or forearm. 8) the touches for sexual arousal are many, varied, intense and somewhat idiosyncratic among partners. 9) touch on cheek to show the affection one has for another (Morain, G. 1986).

Communication of liking is more by variations in immediacy, whereas the communication of respect is both by variations in immediacy and relaxation. Immediacy toward an addressee is greater when one is truthful than deceitful. Arrogance, high status and slight dislike are associated with postures such as extending legs and hands, yawning and unresponsiveness to others. Well defined movements (for example, the degree to which a person bows) may be an important variable in communicating status differences. Body orientation or the degree to which a communicator's shoulders and legs are turned in the direction of, rather away from, his addressee, can also serve as a measure of his status or of his liking of the addressee. Distance and forward lean are easily related conceptual as variations in the degree of physical proximity between communicator and addressee (Leather, D. 1978.).

Knowledge and use of this non-verbal tool will aid an individual in recognizing when a spatial breach has occurred. The importance of this theory, and having the ability to utilize it will enable the communicator to send and receive a message more clearly benefitting all of those involved.

It is an invaluable tool to help bridge the gap between sender and receiver in any culture. Having this means of communication in our post-modern society is increasingly needed now more than ever as we interact in global markets.

### **Literature**

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## **DRUG ADDICTION AS A GLOBAL PROBLEM**

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The 21st century has witnessed the spread of narcotics to the entire world. In the past narcotics in the natural economy were confined to territories where drug-bearing plants were grown.

Narco-dealers making fabulous profits infect more and more people and even entire social groups with drug addiction. Narcotics have long since gone beyond the