

The Effectiveness of Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication in Extension

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SUMMARY

Effective communication plays a crucial role in the success of agricultural extension services, influencing the adoption of new technologies and practices among farmers. Verbal communication, including direct interaction, presentations, and discussions, facilitates the transfer of technical knowledge, while non-verbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, and visual aids enhance comprehension and foster trust between extension agents and farmers. The paper highlights the complementary nature of both communication forms and explores their roles in promoting effective learning environments. Recommendations for extension programs are provided, emphasizing the need for training extension agents in both verbal and non-verbal communication skills to maximize their impact.

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is a cornerstone of successful extension work, which bridges the gap between knowledge and practice across diverse sectors such as agriculture, health, and community development. The interplay between verbal and nonverbal communication is particularly crucial in this context, as extension professionals often engage with a variety of audiences, each with unique backgrounds and needs. Verbal communication, encompassing spoken and written forms, facilitates the clear articulation of information, enabling the conveyance of complex concepts and detailed instructions. In contrast, nonverbal communication—including body language, facial expressions, and gestures—provides additional context and emotional nuance, reinforcing or sometimes contradicting the verbal message (Burgoon *et al.*, 2016). Studies indicate that when verbal and nonverbal elements are aligned, the effectiveness of communication significantly increases, leading to better comprehension, retention, and application of information (Rogers and Steinfatt, 1999). This paper explores the effectiveness of verbal and nonverbal communication in extension work, examining best practices and strategies for maximizing impact and ensuring that messages resonate with diverse audiences.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication include sounds, words, language, and speech. Speaking is an effective way of communicating and helps in expressing our emotions in words. This form of communication is further classified into four types, which are:

1. Intrapersonal Communication

This form of communication is extremely private and restricted to ourselves. It includes the silent conversations we have with ourselves. Interpersonal communication can be found almost every moment in our daily life. Some people verbalize this out loud when they are lonely. For example, she thought to himself: "what are the works carried out by me usefully today?" Are they enough? - Here the speaker and the listener are the same person. This type of intrapersonal communication, can also be found in the written form of verbal communication. It can be found in psychological and philosophical novels, as well as in other works of fiction.

2. Interpersonal Communication

This type of verbal communication is also called "dyadic communication". This form of communication takes place between two individuals and one of them is called the speaker, and the other is called the listener. The speaker and the listener can change roles to communicate.

3. Small Group Communication

This type of communication can take place only when there are more than two people involved. Here the number of people will be small enough to allow each participant to interact and converse with the rest. For

example, monthly meetings. A specific issue must be discussed here, otherwise the discussions can be chaotic and incomprehensible. This lag in understanding of information completely can result in miscommunication.

4. Public Communication

This type of communication takes place when one individual addresses a large gathering of people. Election campaigns and public speeches are example of this type of communication.

The Oral Mode is Utilized Where

- A conversation between an officer and her personal secretary happen
- A chairperson of an organization addressing the staff
- While speaking with a visiting delegation
- During group or team interaction
- During brainstorming session
- The officers issuing orders during natural disasters such as floods or an earthquake

The Written Mode is Utilized Where

- Information has to be stored and retrieved. e.g., official records
- The reliability and validity of an idea are important. e.g., decisions taken by a group, to be acted upon
- A research article or informative article needs
- Crucial decisions and actions are to be considered. e.g., plans and proposals

Both Oral and Written Modes are Utilized Where

- When optimal understanding is needed.
- When both clarity and impact are needed. e.g. a new product is launched in the market
- When audience participation is desired.

Factors of Effective Verbal communication:

1. Think before you speak
2. Speak with confidence
3. Be clear and concise
4. Be aware of your non-verbal communication cues
5. Be a good listener
6. Think about the perspective of your audience
7. Vary your vocal tone

Verbal Communication Styles

A verbal communication style is ultimately composed of a person's personality, characteristics, language, and gestures. Let's attempt to comprehend how communication methods are influenced by personality types.

Expressive Style of Communication

People with expressive styles are frequently perceived by others as friendly and outgoing. Their capacity for creativity and imagination enables them to come up with fresh approaches to presenting their thoughts to the public. An expressive personality communicates both positive and negative ideas in lively, conversational, impulsive, and joyful speaking.

Aggressive Style of Communication

An aggressive individual frequently interrupts people, listens poorly, dominates conversations, and adopts a domineering demeanor. Because they believe they are superior to others, aggressive communicators attempt to force their views by using violence.

Passive Style of Communication

A person finds it challenging to honestly communicate feelings and emotions when communicating passively. Any confrontation or explanation is rejected by a passive personality since they prefer not to respond to events. A timid body language, self-doubt, and apologetic phrases are indicators of a docile personality.

Passive-Aggressive Style of Communication

When someone who is passive fails to speak honestly, his expectations are not fulfilled, which leads to passive-aggression. In the event of a confrontation, the speaker might also say things behind the other person's back and decline to answer. This type of communication frequently leads to misunderstandings.

Non-verbal communication

Nonverbal communication takes place without the use of written or spoken words. It uses a variety of non-verbal clues, such as chores, colors, signs, symbols, signaling charts, and bodily gestures, in place of written or spoken words to convey information, attitudes, and sentiments. Despite the lack of words, nonverbal communication is more accurate than verbal communication in conveying many human emotions.

Kinesics

According to Negi, Kinesics is defined as a "system that involves body postures, facial reactions, and movement of both the limbs and the head, often referred to as body language".

Facial expressions

A person's dynamic facial expressions can convey a variety of emotions and intentions, including excitement, surprising anger, joy, grief, and attitude. The eyebrows are thought to be the most effective facial characteristics for nonverbal communication. Facial expressions that are always evolving and seen as identifiable by the recipient include smiles, sighs of relief, furrowed brows, lip twists, and more (Bhatti and Teevno, 2021).

Paralanguage

Generally speaking, paralinguistics examines how nonverbal cues are used to create particular speech idioms, such as speech tempo, voice intonation, pause, intonation, melody, etc.

Eye contact

Making eye contact, a crucial interpersonal communication channel, aids in controlling the conversation's flow. Eye movement and eye contact convey the focus, direction, and duration of the look in relation to other persons. Additionally, it shows interest in other people. Additionally, making eye contact with the audience boosts the speaker's trustworthiness. Both knowledge and attitudes can be amplified by making eye contact. It appears that we can use our eyes to discern truth, deceit, shock, satisfaction, fear, irritation, and other emotions (Yang, 2017).

Proxemics

The way we employ space or distance for communication is called proxemics, and it refers to the actual distance we put between ourselves and other people. It has distinguished between four categories of space use: private, social, public, and personal (Helmer and Eddy, 2003).

Verbal and nonverbal communication effectiveness in Teaching and Learning situation

According to the review of several studies, all nonverbal behavior like facial expression, eye contact, physical distance and pitch of voice has a very effective impact on students learning. Verbal and non-verbal communication encourages self-learning and constructive learning of students, develop cognitive skill in students, relate different skills with study and encourage creativity in students.

Oculesics - Maintaining eye contact with students in the classroom is critical for active engagement.

Kinesics - Teachers' body movements temper students' interest and attention, especially while telling concepts and laws; consequently, teachers should actively use their body movements in their lectures.

Paralanguage - The modulation in teachers' voices, with a rise and fall, assists students in comprehending the concept, atmosphere, and finesse of the learning process. It is highly recommended for teachers to incorporate pitch variations or employ a rise and fall in the tone of their voices during instruction.

Proximity - The appropriate distance maintained between teachers and learners in the classroom is a crucial consideration. Adequate spacing between teachers and students promotes a sense of calm during the learning process and instills confidence in their ability to acquire knowledge.

Effectiveness of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication in Presentation Skills

Builds Connections and Bridges

A more responsive and trustworthy atmosphere is produced by a speaker who keeps eye contact, shows excitement through their voice, and exhibits open and inviting body language. This sets the stage for a speech that has greater impact.

Improves Understanding and Clarity

Presenters can help the audience understand complex information by using deliberate gestures to demonstrate their points or changing the tone of their voice to emphasize a point. This guarantees that the message is understood both emotionally and intellectually.

Builds Confidence and Authority

Making eye contact and standing tall with your shoulders back are examples of confident body language that conveys self-assurance to the audience. Therefore, to demonstrate your expertise, it's critical to stand up and look people in the eye when presenting a presentation.

Makes a lasting impression

People are more likely to remember you and what you said if you are animated and express yourself with your hands and face. This helps individuals remember your message long after the presentation is ended.

Selecting the Best Communication Method

In communicating with client, use the most appropriate communications method. One way to do this is to ask yourself the following questions.

- What is the purpose of your message?
- What facts must be presented to achieve your desired effect?
- What action, do you expect them to take?
- What general ideas, opinions and conclusions must be addressed?
- Are you thoroughly familiar with all the important information on the innovation?
- What resources and constraints affect adoption of the innovation? How much time is available? How much money is available?
- Which method, or combination of methods, will work most effectively for this situation?

Personal contact--requires scheduling, time and interpersonal skills.

Telephone contact--requires good verbal skills and an awareness of voice tones as nonverbal communication.

Letter—requires writing skills. E-mail, needs to be short and to the point, may require frequent follow-up.

News release--requires writing skills and cooperation of the media and time

CONCLUSION

Verbal and non-verbal communication encourages self-learning and constructive learning, develop cognitive skill in students, relate different skills with study and encourage creativity. A person's use of non-verbal means of communication during verbal communication is as natural as the interaction of biological and neurophysiological processes during the speech process. Studying the interaction of verbal and non-verbal means in the process of communication helps raise deeper questions about the nature, structure and functioning of language in live speech. Research has shown that effective communication relies not only on the words chosen but also on how they are delivered. For instance, nonverbal cues can significantly influence the perceived credibility and approachability of the communicator, impacting audience engagement and understanding (Andersen, 1987). Furthermore, the cultural context in which communication occurs can shape both verbal and nonverbal interpretations, making it essential for extension workers to be culturally competent and adaptable in their communication strategies.

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