Chapter 3: Verbal Communication

- How one acquires the ability to use words depends on three factors
  - Native architecture
    - FOXP2 gene enabled the emergence of behaviorally modern humans
    - FOXP2 gene makes clear that as a human, you have inborn language-transmission and language-acquisition devices—native architecture.
    - Transforms the surface structure of language (message-feedback) into an internal deep structure (sender-receiver) that you readily understand
  - Cognitive development
    - Development of the thinking and organizing systems of your brain
    - Involves language, mental imagery, reasoning, problem solving, and memory development
    - Began before birth
  - Environmental influences
    - Much of brain "wiring" resulted from environmental influences that took place as your parents and siblings had conversations with you, etc.
    - Language-acquisition support system

Strategic Flexibility

- Sapir-Whorf hypothesis
  - Suggests that language you use to some extent determines or at least influences the way in which you view and think about the world around you.
  - Your thoughts are affected by or influenced by your language

How Words Work

- Semantic Triangle
  - Indicates direct relationship between symbols (words) and thoughts
  - Triangle with symbol at one peak, thought, at the second peak, and referent, at the third
    - Thought—words we use as we think about the symbol
    - Referent—image we create as a result of the symbol
  - When you say a word you are vocally representing a physical object or abstract concept
- Denotative meaning—definition
- Connotative meaning—feelings or associations one has about a word (freedom, love)
- Ladder of abstraction
  - Diagram of how we abstract through language, classifications, types, categories, etc.
  - Assists communicators in finding the right rung on the ladder with enough detail for clarity, yet not so much that the detail gets in the way of the communication
  - This will help you better analyze your communications, understandings, and misunderstandings
  - This will help you immunize yourself against political propaganda, advertising and vacant rhetoric
  - This will allow you to make a number of personal adjustments as you become more aware of your own abstracting

Language

- The language environment is made up for four elements
  - People
  - Purpose
  - Rules of communication by which they achieve their purpose

    - Actual talk used in the situation
- Ritual language—responses are expected of you; you learn them when you are very young, from parents or others
- Inappropriate language
    - Racial/ethnic epithets
    - Insults on others' appearance
    - Blasphemous words
    - Aggressive words intended to control others
- Euphemism
    - Inoffensive word or phrase that is substituted for other words that might be perceived as unpleasant.
- Doublespeak
    - Words deliberately constructed for political purposes—words intended to impose a desirable mental attitude on those using them
    - Relate to euphemism except for two things: 1) doublespeak doesn't always have to do with unpleasant words and 2) doublespeak always relates to a political agenda
- Racist language
    - Tendency to describe the majority group, its actions and its members, in positive terms, whereas minorities are portrayed in a negative way
- Sexist language
    - Any language that is supposed to include all people, but, unintentionally excludes a gender
- Ablest language
    - Persons with disabilities

Styles, Roles, Group Memberships

- Style is the result of the way you select and arrange words and sentences
- Women respond better to stories, anecdotes, and metaphors whereas men are more statistical and fact-oriented; they appreciate a colder, more scientific and mathematical approach and women= personal, human, and literary
- Rapport-talk—women use this; language designed to lead to intimacy with others, to match experiences, and to establish relationships
- Report-talk—speaker goal is to maintain status, demonstrate knowledge and skills, and keep center-stage position
- Men more likely to look at problems in terms of "fixing them"
- Men more likely to interrupt and give more directives when in conversation
- Women use more pronouns, intensive adverbs, questions, and justifiers

Gender/Computer-Mediated Communication

- Males are more likely to post longer messages, begin and close discussions in mixed-sex groups, assert opinions as "facts," use crude language, use more aggressive and insulting speech
- Females are a bunch of smiles and laughter, and have aligned and supportive conversational style; post short messages, qualify and justify their assertions, apologize, etc.
- Powerful talk
    - Talk that comes directly to the point; does not use hesitation or qualifications; people who engage in this are more attractive/persuasive;

Language and Culture

- Dialect

    - Habitual language of a community
    - Distinguished by unique grammatical structures, words, and figures of speech
    - Community members who use it may be identified by region or by such diverse factors like education, social class, or cultural background
- Paralanguage
    - Spoken language accompanied by this
    - Vocal cues, or the way you say your words
    - Meaning can be influenced by pitch and rate, volume, and how often you pause

Working on Communication

- Clarity
    - That aspect or characteristics of style by means of which a thought is so presented that it is immediately understood, depending on the precision and simplicity of the language.
    - Jargon is language that can be so specialized that is inappropriate to use outside the field where it originated
    - Slang has its place when you are talking informally with your friends
- Vividness
    - Aspect of style by which a thought is so presented that it evokes lifelike imagery or suggestion
- Metamessage
    - Aka subtext
    - The meaning apart from what actual words express
    - We need to talk= I want to complain

Chapter 4: Nonverbal Communication

- Nonverbal communication—information communicated without words. Much of it is unintentional.
- Not part of the communication model/process
- Conversation Management
    - Using nonverbal cues to structure conversations

Differences between Verbal and Nonverbal

- Verbal follows specific rules of structure and grammar, words represent specific things, and it has culture and context bound meanings, conveyed linearly
- Nonverbal- expressing feelings; brain creates a composite of all the signals given off by a new experience.

Nonverbal on Internet

- Emotions (smileys) used to express facial expressions
- Ideas you choose to discuss (and way you choose to present them)
- Language choices, spelling and grammar, paragraphing, and sentence construction, even abbreviations
- Some nonverbal impressions depend on technology and how well you use it (font, color, font type, lowercase, etc.)
- Simple things convey expression (what you choose to omit, how quickly you respond,etc.)

Characteristics of Nonverbal Communication

- It is culturally determined
- May conflict with verbal messages