

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