

## Chapter 3: Verbal Communication

- How one acquires the ability to use words depends on three factors
  - o 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
  - o 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
  - o 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
  - o 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.
  - o Your thoughts are affected by or influenced by your language

### How Words Work

- Semantic Triangle
  - o Indicates direct relationship between symbols (words) and thoughts
  - o 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
  - o 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
  - o Diagram of how we abstract through language, classifications, types, categories, etc.
  - o 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
  - o This will help you better analyze your communications, understandings, and misunderstandings
  - o This will help you immunize yourself against political propaganda, advertising and vacant rhetoric

- o 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
  - o People
  - o Purpose
  - o Rules of communication by which they achieve their purpose
  - o 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
  - o Racial/ethnic epithets
  - o Insults on others' appearance
  - o Blasphemous words
  - o Aggressive words intended to control others
- **Euphemism**
  - o Inoffensive word or phrase that is substituted for other words that might be perceived as unpleasant.
- **Doublespeak**
  - o Words deliberately constructed for political purposes—words intended to impose a desirable mental attitude on those using them
  - o 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**
  - o Tendency to describe the majority group, its actions and its members, in positive terms, whereas minorities are portrayed in a negative way
- **Sexist language**
  - o Any language that is supposed to include all people, but, unintentionally excludes a gender
- **Ablest language**
  - o 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**
  - o 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**
  - o Habitual language of a community
  - o Distinguished by unique grammatical structures, words, and figures of speech
  - o Community members who use it may be identified by region or by such diverse factors like education, social class, or cultural background
- **Paralanguage**
  - o Spoken language accompanied by this
  - o Vocal cues, or the way you say your words
  - o Meaning can be influenced by pitch and rate, volume, and how often you pause

#### Working on Communication

- **Clarity**
  - o 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.
  - o Jargon is language that can be so specialized that is inappropriate to use outside the field where it originated
  - o Slang has its place when you are talking informally with your friends
- **Vividness**
  - o Aspect of style by which a thought is so presented that it evokes lifelike imagery or suggestion
- **Metamessage**
  - o Aka subtext
  - o The meaning apart from what actual words express
  - o 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**
  - o 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.