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IL LINGUAGGIO NON VERBALE E LE DIFFERENZE CULTURALI

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INTRODUCTION

Why should anyone study nonverbal language?

The reason is that knowing body language enhances the speaker's communication skills. It helps him or her deliver the message more clearly. It allows the listener to gain a better understanding of the verbal message being said, as well as to remember it more easily. People should study nonverbal language because it conveys more and stronger meanings than those expressed by words alone.

Our personal interest in such a nonverbal code started many years ago. We have always been fascinated by magic and illusions, and soon, we began to read how magic tricks were performed. The ones that struck us the most were about mind reading (mentalism), tarots and palm reading. Today we know that most of them rely deeply on the nonverbal language hints provided by the audience. People are scarcely aware of their bodies when they choose to communicate, even less when they are asked to, need to or must do so. Moreover, their bodies give away so much information about themselves and the people to whom they are talking.

Knowledge of nonverbal codes is essential if anyone wants to communicate efficiently. We students find out this fact at the beginning of our studies at Ca' Foscari Languages University. The majority of the information conveyed by a message is not expressed verbally but through gestures, items, distance between bodies and vocal cues. We did not even think about all these aspects until our professors told us so, especially when speaking a foreign language. We are so concerned about what to say and how to say it correctly that we forget to pay attention to all the other meanings we share, willingly or not. People from cultures other than our own can easily misinterpret these meanings.

In the first chapter of our work, we focus on intercultural communication to pinpoint its meaning and features and to find out which is the collocation of nonverbal codes in this system. In chapter two, we examine body language and all the aspects concerning this code: kinesics, proxemics and objectemics. In chapter three, we analyse the vocal cues that have an impact on communication. Finally, in chapter four, we conduct an in-depth examination of gestures and their cultural variations. This last chapter presents a collection of some of the most displayed movements worldwide, made with the arms, hands or head, along with the different meanings they convey from country to country.

As a conclusion to this introduction, it seems to us that language learners' textbooks provide a narrow scope of the topic of nonverbal language compared to its deep impact on and relevance to communication. Developing nonlinguistic competence should be a requirement for anyone facing the hard task involved in learning a new language.

1. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

"Communication is powerful: It brings companions to our side or scatters our rivals, reassures or alerts children, and forges consensus or battle lines between us" (Keating, 1994, p. 175).

The reasons why people communicate are often similar throughout the world, despite the differences in verbal and nonverbal symbols. Communication is important to:

- gather information about personal and cultural identity;
- collect data related to other people or subjects;
- satisfy a basic need (people are social creatures);
- Influence other people (instrumental goals).

"Human communication is a dynamic process in which people attempt to share their thoughts with other people through the use of symbols in particular settings" (Samovar et al., 2007, p. 29). Information transmitted through communication involves what we know, what we want to know and how we feel. Communication has different components, which all occur almost at the same time. According to Samovar et al. (2007, pp. 30–36), these components are as follows:

- Source: it refers to the person who begins to share "content" with another person. Messages are both sent and received by the source.
- Encoding: it pertains to the symbols that allow our feelings and thoughts to be delivered to the receiver. Symbols can be verbal, nonverbal or para-verbal and are regulated by vocabulary, grammar, syntax and culture.
- Message: it is the content expressed through symbols by the encoding.
- Channel: it indicates the means through which the message is delivered.
- Receiver: it is the person who gets (receives) the message.
- Decoding: it involves the process through which the receiver converts the symbols into their meanings.
- Feedback: it is the way the receiver reacts to the message sent by the source. Feedback can be verbal, nonverbal or para-verbal.

- Noise: it refers to “any intended or unintended stimulus that affects the fidelity of a sender’s message [and] disrupts the communication process” (Dunn & Goodnight, 2011, p. 11).

Furthermore, communication displays the following five main characteristics (Samovar et al., 2007, pp. 32–36):

- It is a dynamic process: messages produced cannot (most of the times) be retracted. Moreover, face-to-face communication is simultaneous, too; meanings are encoded and decoded at the same time;
- It is symbolic: symbols are only inferred. Every person gives a unique “definition” of the symbols that he or she produces or receives, through his or her own personal and cultural perspectives;
- It is contextual: context significantly influences the way messages are encoded and decoded. The main contextual elements influencing communication are as follows (Balboni & Caon, 2015, pp. 17–20):
    - Setting: it is the physical location in which communication happens. The setting is strongly affected by culture;
    - Time: it is one of the main sources of attrition during intercultural exchanges. The concept of time can vary a great deal from one culture to another;
    - Topic: it is related to cultural taboos and values;
    - Roles: they have to do with hierarchy and respect and are very culture dependent;
    - Aims: they can be explicit or implicit, also depending on the culture.
    - Psychological attitudes towards the receiver/s (culture, company, university and so on) have effects as well. A few of the main attitudes are sarcasm, irony, respect, admiration and distrust
    - Communicative acts/moves, such as apologising, greeting, asking and attacking, are also strictly ruled by someone’s own culture;
    - Text: it refers to what people say, write or transmit;
    - Extra-linguistic message: it is another influencing factor, which is the main topic of our paper;

    - Communicative genres mean that every culture has its own sets of rules regarding the display of social events;
- It is mostly learned: people belonging to different cultures have varying ways of expressing the same message. They learn new information through experience;
- It has consequences: "What we say and do affect others: how they perceive themselves, how they think about themselves, and how they think about others" (Wood, 2007, p. 30).

Hymes (1967) was the first scholar to discuss communicative competence, shaping the concept of the "model of interaction", later adopted in language teaching under the name "communicative approach". In Hymes' opinion, the speaker of a given language should not only be capable of correctly applying grammar rules to generate meaningful sentences, but he or she also ought to use these sentences according to the communication context. A good communicator should choose when to speak, when to stop, and what to talk about, to whom, when, where, and how. As Professor P. E. Balboni from Ca' Foscari University puts it, "*Comunicare significa scambiare messaggi efficaci*" ("To communicate is to share effective/efficient messages") (Balboni & Caon, 2015, pp. 15–20). Each word in the sentence is deeply meaningful. Communication has several aims:

- It is a voluntary act: it is not the same as information. Communication is used to achieve a person's purposes;
- Communication intends to share something: people generally do not talk to themselves (except those with mental health issues). To communicate means to share meanings with others;
- Communication aims to be effective and efficient: people mostly do not talk without a reason; they speak to attain a particular goal. They negotiate meanings and try to reach agreement with their interlocutors;
- Regarding the message conveyed, communication is not just about the words that people say. In this paper, we explain in detail how nonverbal and para-verbal languages also have a deep impact on communication. To communicate efficiently, people must know not only the language spoken in a determined

context but also their customs and traditions, gestures and the personal distances they maintain. In other words, they must learn their culture (Balboni & Caon, 2015, pp. 15–20).

Communicative competence is defined by the following attributes (Balboni & Caon, 2015, pp.15-26):

- Mental reality,
- It is also described by its realisation in the world, which is itself divided into three competences:
    - linguistic competence – knowing the syntax, morphology, phonology and vocabulary of the target language;
    - extra-linguistic competence – knowing the nonverbal and para-verbal displays of the target language;
    - contextual competence, with several dimensions:
        - psycholinguistic competence – knowing if something is doable based on a person's own ability to turn a mental reality into a social one;
        - sociocultural competence – knowing if something is adequate for the context;
        - pragma-linguistic competence;
        - intercultural competence;
        - *"de facto"* competence – knowing if something is actually displayed (and not only possible) in someone's society/culture.

Linguistic competence, extra-linguistic competence and contextual competence define what is usually called "*Sapere la lingua*" (Balboni & Caon, 2015, pp. 20–26). Mental realities then turn into action and are used as a tool for the linguistic abilities involving comprehension, production and manipulation. In turn, the process leads to "*Saper fare lingua*" (Balboni & Caon, 2015, pp. 20–26). When communicative competence turns into intercultural communicative competence, other abilities are needed to relate the cultures, mainly knowing how to:

- observe;
- Relativise;
- Suspend judgement;
- Listen actively;
- Communicate affectively;
- Negotiate meanings.

For a deeper insight into these abilities, we suggest reading the last chapter of "*La Comunicazione Interculturale*" (Balboni & Caon, 2015).

Communicative abilities and mental reality are also useful during communicative events, subjected to social, pragmatic and cultural rules (*Saper fare con la lingua*). During a communicative event, many factors can affect the outcome of an exchange. These factors are described by the acronym SPEAKING (Balboni, 2008, pp. 54–57):

- Setting and Scene: the setting refers to the physical circumstances of time and place. The scene is the psychological setting, such as the degree of formality and sense of play or seriousness;
- Participants: they comprise both the speaker and the audience. The audience can be distinguished as addressees and other listeners;
- Ends: they include purposes, goals and outcomes;
- Act sequence: it pertains to the form and order of the event;
- Key: it points to the clues that establish the "tone, manner, or spirit" of the speech act;
- Instrumentalities: they constitute the forms and styles of speech;
- Norms: they are the social rules governing the event and the participants' actions and reactions;
- Genre: it refers to the kind of speech act or event.

To develop their own intercultural communicative competence, students must focus on these aspects:

- Accept diversity;

- Know the prejudices and stereotypes of the target culture, and avoid generalisations;
- Know other cultures;
- Respect moral differences;
- Question their own cultural models when facing allegedly better ones (Balboni & Caon, 2015, pp. 20–26).

In our work, we focus on extra-linguistic competence, which is crucial for the correct and efficient interpretation of shared meanings.

2. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

"Nonverbal communication involves all those nonverbal stimuli in a communication setting that are generated by both the source and his or her use of the environment, and that have potential message value for the source and/or receiver" (Samovar et al, 2007, p.271).

According to a 1972 study by Albert Mehrabian (one of the first scholars to investigate body language), what people perceive in a message comes from three aspects: body movements (mainly facial expressions, 55%), vocal cues (volume, tone and rhythm, 38%) and the verbal aspect (words, 7%).

Birdwithstell (1970) claims that about 65% of communication is related to the visual channel, while the remaining part is tactile, verbal and olfactory. According to Del Campo (1977), only 15% of the oral interaction transmits information through verbal language, with 85% shared between nonverbal (70%) and para-verbal language (15%). Cassiddu (2004) maintains, "It is reasonable to believe in the existence of a central controlling system, in which the different types of inputs are translated in equipotent and integrable symbols during communication"; furthermore, "the role of nonverbal communication appears to be that of establishing, defining, or changing [the] relation among individuals". "While verbal language is strongly specialized in what to say, nonverbal communication is specialized in the manifestation of meanings and relational intents […]. And being nonverbal, communication build[s] usually on a continuum of senses/meanings […]; with respect to the discrete verbal language, it

also conveys very efficiently dynamic changes of psychological states" (data collected from Caon 2010, pp.30-33). Pease A. & Pease B. (2004, pp16-17), accordingly, are drawn to the conclusion that during selling negotiations, around 60–80% of the meeting impact is attributed to body language. Besides, the data seem to suggest that it takes about 4 minutes for a listener to form an impression about his or her interlocutor. During communication, then, what people say is strongly affected by how they say it. Balboni & Caon (2015, pp.53-54) clearly synthesise the concepts so far expressed:

- Visual information is processed before the linguistic one, first in the right hemisphere and then in the left one; people are first seen and then heard;
- About 80% of the information directed to the human brain is of the visual type, and 11–15% comprises the auditory type; people are more seen than heard;
- We choose whether to communicate based on what we see;
- If body language contradicts the verbal one, the listener believes the former rather than the latter. Visual information prevails over the linguistic one.

People rely on nonverbal language for many reasons, some of which are (Samovar et al., 2007, pp268-271):

- to express people's internal states: nonverbal messages are commonly used to express ideas, attitudes, feelings and emotions;
- to define an identity: a person's facial expression, style of dressing, personal items, scent, makeup, skin colour and other nonverbal codes enable others to gather valuable information while communicating;
- to regulate interaction: many movements of the body, eyes, face or hands, as well as the pauses during the speech, can be used with phatic function, such as opening or closing the conversation channel or regulating the flow of conversation;
- to strengthen the message and sometimes contradict it, if there is disagreement between the verbal and nonverbal message;
- to substitute words.

These nonverbal messages can be conveyed either intentionally or unconsciously, as Goffman (1957, p.2) points out:

The expressiveness of the individual (and therefore his capacity to give impressions) appears to involve two radically different kinds of sign activity: the expression that he gives and the impression that he gives off. The first involves verbal symbols or their substitutes, which he uses admittedly and solely to convey the information that he and the other are known to attach to these symbols. This is communication in the traditional and narrow sense. The second involves a wide range of action that others can treat as symptomatic of the actor (communicator), the expectation being that the action was performed for reasons other than the information conveyed in this way.

The nonverbal messages that people receive and those they convey belong to two categories:

(http://estriemaestri.altervista.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/slide_linguaggio_del_corpo.pdf, 3/10/2015)

- Macrosignals comprise all the gestures, postures and movements generated from body parts, such as arms, legs, hands, feet and so on, which are deeply influenced by the human brain and vary in duration from one second to a few seconds.
- Microsignals include all the subtle body movements (face, eyes and so on) with a duration of a fraction of a second, which are simple but almost impossible to influence.

Macrosignals and microsignals can further be divided into three categories:

- Appreciation: they are commonly related to the mouth (usually smiles and grins);
- Tension: such as scratching gestures;
- Refusal/Rejection: they are linked mostly to removal gestures.

The most important thing to remember, though, is that nonverbal messages can be ambiguous and can be influenced by many factors, such as social class, a person's own culture, education, gender, age, personal preferences and idiosyncrasies.

To fully comprehend the message being delivered, it is critical to integrate the verbal message to the nonverbal one. To understand the message correctly, three important rules must be followed:

- Read gestures and movements as a whole; it is a mistake to consider individual gestures because (as stated) they can be ambiguous. Gestures and words are very much alike;
- Be wary of the coherence between verbal and nonverbal messages;
- Read the gestures and movements in their own contexts. When a gesture is analysed, it is important to carefully examine the context and the communicative situation. For instance, someone with folded arms and a lowered chin could signify defensive behaviour. However, if he or she is standing outside in the falling snow during a winter evening, it could simply indicate that he or she feels cold.

Nonverbal codes belong to a close system, comprising only three components:

- body signals: facial expressions, gestures, contact, scents and noises of the body;
- distance between bodies;
- the meanings of items (especially status symbols), and clothes.

These three components are then related to three different sectors of communication sciences:

- kinesics – the study of body language interpretation, such as expressions and movements of the face and gestures;
- proxemics – defined by the anthropologist E. T. Hall as "the interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture" (1966, p.1);
- objectemics – which Professor Balboni (2008, pp.10-11) split between:
    - vestemics, referring to the clothes and accessories worn by people;
    - objectemics, relating in a closer way to the concept of the status symbol.

2.1 KINESICS

Kinesics studies the language of the body, focusing above all on the meaning of the movements made by our body. The term “Kinesics” itself comes from ancient Greek and literally means “movement”. The gestures and movements produced by our body are used for different tasks, such as:

- Accompanying verbal language,
- Substituting verbal language;
- Strengthening or weakening the meaning of words (Balboni et Caon, 2015, 53-54).

Birdwhistell introduces the term “Kinesics” in 1970, also providing a list of over sixty “kinemes” (or behavioural units) that are present in all cultures and social classes, but that are interpreted differently according to culture and class. The most common kinemes linked to the chest are listed below (Birdwhistell, 1970, p.294):

- T: Shoulder and trunk;
- Tn: Short trunk nod;
- TN: trunk nod or bow;
- xTx: rigid body;
- oTo: slumped body;
- T/: pelvic bend;
- T-/: Upper trunk bend.

Moreover, kinesics is a non-verbal behaviour linked to the movement of both a small part of the body and the whole of the body. All of the movements of the body owning communicative meaning can be categorised as kinesics. A very clear classification of them, written by Elizabeth Kuhnke, owner of the Kuhnke Communication, is available on the internet (https://elizabethkuhnke.wordpress.com/2011/05/10/kinesics-the-categories-of-gesture/) and we would like to quote it below:

- Emblems: these are non-verbal messages with a verbal equivalent (often used as a substitution for some verbal expressions). These are easily identifiable and the recipient immediately understands what they mean. The same gesture might have different interpretations according to the cultural context in which it is used;
- Illustrators: These are employed to create a visual image of what is being said with words and supporting verbal language. These are usually subconscious movements occurring more regularly than emblems, although their frequency varies a lot from culture to culture;
- Affective displays: these are mainly facial gestures displaying specific emotions. They are often involuntary movements and have the same meaning in all cultures. However, when they are voluntary, the culture involved will determine what is considered to be acceptable behaviour and to what extent certain emotions can be displayed;
- Regulators: these control, regulate and sustain the flow of a conversation, besides providing a feedback on how much the recipient has understood. These kinds of gesture may cause problems during political and business meetings, because cultural differences in their use can create misinterpretations both in content and in turn-taking;
- Adaptors: These are posture changes and other body movements that can be made either to achieve a precise purpose or to find a more comfortable position and feel at ease. Adaptors can be crucial to understand deeply what the interlocutor thinks, although one must be careful not to take a mere way of resolving a specific physical situation (such as being cold or uncomfortable) for changes in attitude and emotions.

The information conveyed by our body can be involuntary (such as sweating or trembling) or can be performed purposefully in order to underline a content that has already been communicated through words.

The parts of the body that are more responsible for providing messages are:

- Facial expressions (eyes and emotions)
- Hands and arms;

- Legs and feet;
- The direction of the body;
- Noises and bodily fluids.

2.1.1 FACE AND EMOTIONS

The emotions we feel are displayed mainly on our faces, whilst the rest of the body just reacts to how we feel. Most scholars in this field agree with each other about the fact that there are some universal manifestations of emotions that, thus, have common meaning. The most famous researcher in this field, Ekman, asserts: "the subtle creases of a grimace tell the same story around the world, to preliterate New Guinea tribesmen, to Japanese and American college students alike" (1975, pp.35-39). Signs such as fear, hate or joy can be understood despite cultural differences. There are three main categories of facial signs:

- Static signs: skin colour, shape and dimension of facial traits and bone structure;
- Long term changing signs: wrinkles, skin marks, variations in the muscular tone;
- Quickly changing signs: muscular movements, smiling, blinking eyes. Such signs are responsible for conveying:
    - Emotional messages;
    - Symbolic messages;
    - Punctuation (Ekman et Friesen, 2003 20-22).

The face is also a system that conveys multiple messages and signals. It does not only display emotions, but it can reveal other information (age, sex, race, personality, behaviour). However, this chapter will focus only on those quick changes that convey emotional messages. It has been discovered that there are at least six innate and universal facial expressions conveying approximately the same meanings in all cultures. The six emotions that are expressed in the same universal way are (Ekman, 2003, 37-178):

- Happiness;

- Sadness;
- Fear;
- Anger;
- Disgust;
- Surprise.

Notice that although such emotions are displayed in the same way in spite of cultural differences, the culture involved crucially determines whether and how it is possible to show certain emotions. The descriptions below are based on Ekman's (2003, 93-217) and Ekman et Friesen's publications (2003, 55-168).

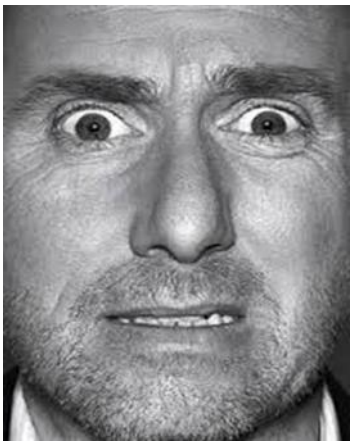
2.1.1.1 HAPPINESS

Lip Corners are pulled back and upwards, lips can stay closed, expose teeth or open together with the dental arches for an open mouth smile. Wrinkles going from the nose to the lip corners can also be present (nasolabial folds). The skin under the lower eyelid is pulled upward creating wrinkles on the lower part of the eye. Some wrinkles can also appear on the external corner of the eye, above all when we get older (crow's feet). Cheeks are usually pulled upward, conferring a roundish shape to the face. The intensity of the emotion is provided above all by the position of the lips and, as a result, by facial wrinkles and nasolabial folds created by such position.

2.1.1.2 SADNESS

Although the most extreme sadness can have no visible clues apart from a loss of muscular tone, a less intense form of sadness displays some typical expressions on the face. The inner corner of the eyebrows are drawn up and they are closer to each other. The skin below the eyebrow is triangulated, with the inner corner pointing upwards. The inner corner of the upper eyelid is raised. The lower eyelid is sometimes raised as well. The corners of the lips are down or the lip is trembling. Often the gaze is lowered. The intensity of the emotion is conveyed by a greater or lesser involvement of the various parts of the face.

2.1.1.3 FEAR



Eyebrows are raised, straightened and drawn together. Eyes appear wide open and tense and the lower eyelid is tense whilst the upper eyelid is raised. The part of the eye above the iris is exposed, showing the sclera. The mouth is often open, lips are stretched, tense and their corners are drawn back. Some horizontal wrinkles usually appear on the forehead, but they are not spread all over it, they just remain in the central part. The intensity of the emotion is displayed above all by the eyes. The greater the fear, the more the upper eyelid is raised and the tenser the lower one is. The intensity also influences the mouth, which tends to open wider, stretching the lips more as fear grows. Fear can leave one of the three areas of facial expression neutral, showing itself just on the other two areas and thus acquiring slightly different connotations.

2.1.1.4 ANGER

In order to have a clear expression of anger, all the three areas of the face have to be involved. Eyebrows are lowered and drawn together, thus producing vertical wrinkles between them. The lower eyelid is tense, the upper one is lowered. The eyes are staring fixedly. The upper part is smaller. The gaze is hard and penetrating. Lips can be pressed together, their corners straight or drawn down. They can also be tense, exposing teeth and shaping the mouth in a squared way. There are no horizontal wrinkles on the forehead. If there are, they are permanent wrinkles. Nostrils can be widened. The intensity of anger is concentrated in the tension of the eyelids, in the protruding eyes, in the strength with which the lips are pressed together, in the wideness of the open mouth.

2.1.1.5 DISGUST

This is displayed above all by the mouth and the nose, and subsequently by the lower eyelids and eyebrows. The upper lip is raised, the lower one is either raised or down and slightly pulled forward. The nose is wrinkled on its sides and its bridge. Cheeks are raised and so are the lower eyelids. Eyebrows are down. The eye is narrowed and numerous wrinkles appear below it. The intensity of disgust can be seen by observing the number of wrinkles on the nose and the height reached by the upper lip.

2.1.1.6 SURPRISE

Eyebrows are curved, high and raised and the skin below the eyebrow is more stretched than usual. Long horizontal wrinkles are present on the forehead (but not in all subjects, above all if they are children). Eyes are wide open. The lower lid is relaxed, the upper one is raised. The sclera is exposed above the iris and, sometimes, also below the iris. The jaw drops open, parting the lips and teeth. The mouth is relaxed. The intensity of the emotion is conveyed first by the opening of the mouth, and then by the raising of the eyebrows and the opening of the eyes.

2.1.1.7 COUNTERFEITING EMOTIONS

Ekman's studies particularly focused on the ways to counterfeit emotions. Even if this is a very interesting matter of study, it would be off topic considering what this essay has set out to examine until now. Therefore, we will only identify the three main kinds of actions used to mask emotions; we will leave, then, a list of references in the bibliography for whoever would be interested to study this field more in detail (Ekman, 2003, pp.186-190):

- Qualification: when an person juxtaposes the mimicry of a certain emotion with another one;
- Modulation: when a person makes a real effort to mask the intensity of a facial expression (until they completely inhibit the emotion);
- Falsifying: this includes three degrees:
    - Simulation: when we make a certain facial expression in order to imitate an emotion we are not feeling;
    - Neutralisation: when we try not to show our feelings;
    - Mask: trying to cover an emotion with a fake emotion that we are not feeling.

2.1.2 THE GAZE

The eye movement is controlled by four neural systems: one controls the saccadic curve between one fixation and the other, another allows us to follow objects in movement, whilst another compensates for the head movements and the last coordinates the movement in both of the two eyes, acting directly on the six muscles that move each eyeball (Robinson, 1968, pp.1032-1049).

Eye movement is often associated with particular traits or emotions. If somebody often looks downward, he or she will be described as modest, while eyes that are wide open can indicate earnestness, surprise or terror. Moreover, society imposed a series of norms linked to the eyes and the gaze. For example, we must not stare at strangers, keep eye contact for too long or stare at certain parts of the body. The most interesting aspects to analyse, as far as the eyes and gaze are concerned, are (Knapp et al., 2007, pp.295-322):

- Gaze and mutual gaze;
- Visual interaction;
- Dilation and contraction of the pupils.

2.1.2.1 GAZE AND MUTUAL GAZE

These are gazes directed to the eyes, the face, and sometimes to the boy of the interlocutor. The main types of gaze according to Allan and Barbara Pease (2004, pp.160-185) are:

- The social gaze: this is the type of gaze that we use in a non-threatening environment. During interaction we tend to look in the triangular area between the eyes and the mouth of our interlocutor. In this way we are not considered to be threatening;
- The intimate gaze: typical of interaction at a very close distance. The interlocutors look between the other person's face and lower body;
- The power gaze: this involves an area which is situated at the centre of the other person's forehead. It is often used to intimidate.

Obviously the gaze is not fixed for the whole conversation. Its duration depends on the following features: personality, topic, objects of interest in the environment of the interaction, fluency (fluent conversations allow more frequent mutual gazes). Normally, people look at each other for half of the conversation, looking more frequently at the interlocutor whilst listening rather than while they are talking. With a given distance of 180cm between two people, this the statistical data that has been collected (Argyle, 1975, 156):

- Individual gaze: 60%;
- Whilst listening: 75%;
- Whilst talking: 40%;
- Duration of the gaze: 3 seconds;
- Mutual gaze: 30%;
- Duration of the mutual gaze: 1 second and a half.

According to Knapp et al. (2007, 297-305) the gaze covers five functions:

- Regulating the flow of the communication;
- Monitoring the feedback;
- Displaying the cognitive activity;
- Expressing emotions;
- Communicating the type of relationship between the interlocutors.

2.1.2.1.1 Regulating the flow of communication

The presence of eye contact can indicate our desire to talk, inasmuch as the lack of eye contact tries to save us from undesired conversations. A clear example of this type of situation is the moment in which a school professor decides to give an oral exam and automatically all of his students stare at their desk in an attempt to desperately avoid eye contact with the teacher. When we pass by other people in a public place, we usually look at them for one small instant, before we move our gaze away, as if we want to acknowledge their existence. If we are interested in them, instead, the duration of our gaze will be longer, and it will be even longer if we would like to start a

conversation with them. During the conversation, as has already been mentioned above, listeners tend to look more at the other person than speakers, thus the speaker will be the one who determines the moments of mutual gaze.

Besides facilitating the opening or the closure of the channel of communication, eyes also provide signals that regulate turn-taking in the conversation. The people that are talking look at the other person just during grammatical pauses, at the end of a thought or sentence. They can use these pauses either to allow the other person to talk or to receive feedback from them. If there are more than two participants in a conversation, the person speaking will be the one to set the turns of the conversation by staring longer at the person that should talk next (Kalma, 1992, 21-39). For Beattie (1978, 27-52) the gaze of the speaker to their listener at the end of a sentence could indicate that the speaker is granting the turn to speak. Lastly, with the gaze we can also provide information about elements in our surrounding environment, in order that the other person notices them or to induce a change in their behaviour, in some cases.

2.1.2.1.2 MONITORING FEEDBACK

People look at their interlocutors in order to collect the reactions produced by their own words. Listeners usually communicate their attention and interest through eye contact (very culturally-dependent factor). The function of monitoring is more present in women than in men.

2.1.2.1.3 DISPLAYING COGNITIVE ACTIVITY

Eye contact is less frequent when difficult information or complicated concepts are being processed. For example reflections are more problematic than facts. It has also been demonstrated that eye movement towards one direction indicates the brain activity of the opposite hemisphere. Looking left indicates that spatial or emotional operations are being processed, while looking right indicates that a linguistic or intellectual activity is in course.

2.1.2.1.4 EXPRESSING EMOTIONS

The majority of studies on the expression of emotions is to be attributed to Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen. As already mentioned, there are six main emotions classified and each one of them presents specific features, as far as eyes and eyebrows are concerned (Ekman et Friesen, 2003, pp. 55-168):

- Surprise: raised and curved eyebrows, stretched skin below the eyebrows, open eyelids, upper eyelid raised, exposed sclera, usually both above and below the iris;
- Fear: Eyebrows raised and drawn together, upper eyelid raised (exposed sclera above the iris), lower eyelid raised and tense;
- Disgust: numerous wrinkles below the lower lids, eyelids drawn together but not tense, eyebrows down, upper eyelids down;
- Anger: Eyebrows are down and drawn together, thus producing vertical wrinkles between them. The lower eyelids are tense. The eyes are staring fixedly and they are hard and penetrating;
- Happiness: The skin under the lower eyelids has wrinkles, the lower eyelids can be raised but they are not tense. Some wrinkles can also appear on the external corner of the eye (crow's feet);
- Sadness: The inner corners of the eyebrows are drawn upwards. The skin below the eyebrow is triangulated, with the inner corner up. The inner corner of the upper eyelid is raised.

2.1.2.1.5 COMMUNICATING THE TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INTERLOCUTORS

According to Knapp et al. (2007, pp.297-305), the frequency of gazes, as well as their duration and quality, is linked to the type of relationship existing between two interlocutors. Whilst making a decision, people of a higher social status are looked at more frequently than those with a lower status. In the same way, powerful or people of a high status look more at the other person when they talk than when they listen, compared to the average person. We look more at the people that make a good impression on us and we appreciate more the people that we are looking at more frequently. Furthermore, looking at somebody more than what is considered to be normal often implies a request for more intimacy and commitment. It has been observed that happily married couples look at each other much more than couples with

family problems. However, in general, looking at a person for more than 10 seconds generates irritation, embarrassment and, sometimes, hostility. There are numerous factors that could influence the normal duration and frequency of gazes (Knapp and others, 2007, 309-322):

- Distance: Eye contact increases proportionally to the increase of distance amongst the interlocutors;
- Physical features: in conversations with disabled people, mutual gazes are less frequent. Sometimes even physical beauty can influence the frequency;
- Personal features: stereotypes on this aspect describe people that only look a little in the eyes of the interlocutor as cold, pessimistic, wary, defensive, immature, evasive, submissive, indifferent and sensitive. Anxious people look less at their partner, while dominant people look at their partners more. Self-confidence is represented by more intense and frequent gazes. Even intelligence seems to be linked somehow to eye contact behaviour. Some research demonstrate that people with a higher IQ look more frequently at their interlocutor, and vice versa; people that look more at their interlocutor are shown to be more intelligent. Being outgoing is also a feature that is related to a higher frequency of gazes;
- Psychopathological tendencies: a lot of mental diseases are characterised by a decrease of eye contact with the interlocutor (depression, paranoia, schizophrenia);
- Topics and tasks: when the topic is entertaining or interesting it causes an increase of mutual gazes. The intimacy of a topic can bring people to reduce mutual gazing. Cooperative activities brings people to look at each other more, on the contrary, competitive activities to look at each other less. Topics causing embarrassment, humiliation, shame or a sense of guilt provoke a drastic decrease in the frequency of mutual gazes. A persuasive attitude leads people to look more at their interlocutors, and so does credibility;

- Cultural/ racial traits: cultural norms can regulate the frequency and the duration of mutual gazes. In general, white people seem to look more at the interlocutor than black people do.

2.1.2.2 DILATION AND CONTRACTION OF PUPILS

The dilation and contraction of pupils can indicate an individual's level of interest, attitude, memory, decision-making process and various types of physical and mental problems. Normally, pupils enlarge in the absence of light or in dim light. Men's pupils enlarge more than women's when viewing nude images of the opposite sex. Women's pupils enlarge to a greater degree than men's when viewing maternal images such as 'mother with child' or 'child alone' (Hess and Polt, 1960, pp. 349-350). According to Hess's studies, the dimension of the pupils could also be related to emotions felt; pupils contracted in response to negative emotions and enlarged in response to positive ones. Pupils also enlarge as an involuntary reflex when looking at familiar objects. Pupil dimensions may vary when decisions are being made or information is being processed. Viewing individuals of races other than one's own causes the pupils to enlarge. Understanding the meaning behind pupils' varying dimensions is not simple. Pupils can enlarge and contract for a number of reasons: muscle movements, drugs, closing of the eyelids, mental effort or the anticipation of loud noises. The impact of pupil dimension on the person to whom one is talking must also be considered. Enlarged pupils make women seem more attractive to men, who tend to attribute better qualities to their partners (Hess, 1975, pp. 110-112, 116-119).

2.1.2.3 THE GLANCE AS GUIDE TO THE COGNITIVE PROCESSES

Eye movements can also provide important information about the way an individual processes and organizes his or her thoughts. Studies conducted by Bandler and Grinder, founders of the Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), reveal, among other things, that visual memories induce a subject to look up, whereas recalling sounds induces a subject to glance down to the right. If a subject is speaking to himself, he will glance down to the left. Grinder and Bandler's theories are interesting, but we believe they are headed in a different direction from our case study. In the bibliography, we have indicated the major titles for the study of NLP.

2.1.3 HANDS AND ARMS

According to Eastern medicine, the hands and arms are each divided into six meridians, and each of these meridians correlates to a particular body organ. Easterners believe that energetic unbalance along these meridians can provoke changing in attitudes and emotions felt. Consider an open hand with its palm facing up (Guglielmi A., 2004, pp. 142-145):

- Lung: from the inside of the arm to the thumb. Eastern medicine believes that if the thumb turns blue, this could indicate depression or deep sorrow; if the muscles are red, the individual could be anxious or stressed;
- Heart's master: from the internal part of the arm to the middle finger. The manipulation of this finger is said to increase sexual excitement;
- Heart: from the inside of the arm to the inside of the little finger. Redness or stiffness of the little finger can indicate heart problems.

Next, consider an open hand with its palm facing down:

- Large intestine: from the nose, along the inside of the arm, all the way to the forefinger. Manipulations at the level of the hand along this meridian should help fight states of weakness and uneasiness;
- Triple energizer: from the temple, along the upper part of the arm, all the way to the annular finger. Manipulations here should put body parts responsible for regulating body temperature into communication with each other;
- Small intestine: from the ear, along the back of the arm, all the way to the little finger. Redness along this meridian could indicate problems digesting nourishing substances.

One tends to think of *gestures* as referring to hand and arm movements, but this term can also refer to movements of the head. Gestures are typically displayed without physical contact, although contact can sometimes occur. Studies reveal that hand and arm movements are useful both for the speaker and the listener. These movements help a speaker grasp certain words through thought connections and better describe spatial

concepts and objects. For the listener, gestures increase the emphasis and clarify certain parts of the speech. They facilitate comprehension and help a listener remember the content (Hostetter, 2011, pp. 297-315). Furthermore, gestures are co-responsible for the flow and rhythm of the conversation. The more abstract an idea is, the more difficult it is to render it through the movement of arms and hands. Poggi I., divide gestures into four main groups: (http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.106.4116&rep=rep1&type=pdf):

- Autonomous / co-verbal. Autonomous gestures are those that can be used without the need for words. Autonomous gestures have their own meaning and can take the place of words. Co-verbal gestures are supported by the use of verbal language;
- Coded / creative. Coded gestures are those that are already present in one's mental grammar by virtue of the culture to which one belongs. Creative gestures are new gestures created by a subject during a conversation to mime actions or describe objects;
- Iconic / arbitrary. Iconic gestures are those that refer to the image they are recalling. Arbitrary gestures do not have a visual reason to be reproduced in that particular modality. This is the case, for example, with hand greetings from a distance;
- Symbolic. Symbolic gestures are those that are tightly bound to the culture to which one belongs. Their meaning is shared by all the members of that particular culture but can be obscure to others.

Gestures can also be classified as independent of the conversation, dependent on the conversation, or self-handling (Knapp et al., 2007, pp. 199-219).

2.1.3.1 INDEPENDENT GESTURES

Independent gestures, also called 'emblems', are those gestures that lend themselves to immediate verbal translation (usually from one to three words). These gestures have an autonomous significance and can be used in the absence of verbal text. This

particular type of gesture can develop considerably under certain conditions. This is the case with Italian sign language and other forms of language used by individuals unable to talk; for example, people swimming underwater or working in very loud surroundings. Emblems can also substitute for portions of speech during a conversation, can complete the meaning of a sentence and can be used by listeners to approve or disapprove of what is being said. Although emblems are independent, they are linked to the context of the situation, amplifying or specifying the meaning. Many attempts have been made to group the emblems. The following classification was made by Johnson, Ekman and Friesen (1975, pp. 335-353):

- greetings and salutes;
- answering;
- addressing;
- insulting;
- evaluating;
- referring to the physical or emotional state of a subject;
- talking of own's own condition / state.

Other studies on this subject have revised this classification into three major groups: interpersonal control, expression of one's own state and evaluation (Argyle, 1975, p. 189).

2.1.3.2 Dependent Gestures

Dependent gestures are commonly called 'illustrators'. They are tied to or accompany what is being said. These gestures can make verbal communication lighter and easier and can also convey a great deal of information. There are four kinds of illustrators (Knapp et al., 2007, pp. 212-219):

- Gestures (concrete or abstract) that are bound to the referent or the speaker;
- Gestures that indicate the relationship between the referent and the speaker;
- Punctuation gestures related to the speaker's speech;

- Interactive gestures, that help regulate and organise the speech.

2.1.3.2.1 GESTURES BOUND TO REFERENT/SPEAKER

The gestures included in this group are those that are apt to indicate a person or place to which the speech refers, gestures that imitate the shape or movement of the referent or gestures that demonstrate spatial relations to help the listener form a mental image of what is being said. Sometimes these illustrators can also represent abstract contents through gestures that work as metaphors. Finally, gestures bound to the referent can accompany thoughts and not necessarily words. When people try to solve a problem, especially a spatial one, they may move their hands to facilitate the task without the desire to dispense information to others.

2.1.3.2.2 GESTURES INDICATIVE OF REFERENT/SPEAKER RELATIONSHIP

Palms up can show uncertainty; palms down can display confidence; palms facing the person to whom one is talking can show affirmation; and palms facing oneself can be an attempt to give force to what is being said. The illustrators that belong to this group help us understand how what is being said is being evaluated by the person who is speaking.

2.1.3.2.3 PUNCTUATION GESTURES

Punctuation gestures are used to organise and provide emphasis to speech, or to some of its parts. If illustrators are employed to stress a particular element, they are usually displayed simultaneously with the stresses of a sentence. Gestures used as punctuation can also give rhythm to speech, separating different units with precise movements.

2.1.3.2.4 INTERACTIVE GESTURES

Speakers perform interactive gestures to captivate the person to whom they are talking; these gestures also regulate and organise the dialogue. Bavelas (1994, pp. 201-221) describes four kinds of interactive illustrators:

- Delivery illustrators. These are gestures performed to accompany either new information or information considered to be known by the listener. Delivery illustrators can also be used to add something to what has already been said, or when the speaker wants the listener to understand a meaning not verbally expressed;
- Quotation illustrators. These are used to refer to something said previously by the person to whom one is talking;
- Research illustrators. These gestures solicit specific feedback from the listener. They are used when a speaker cannot think of a word and seeks external help to complete the sentence. These illustrators can also be used by the speaker to seek agreement and consensus from the audience;
- Turn coordination illustrators. Along with prosody and other body movements, these gestures help in regulating the flow of conversation.

Efron (1941) developed a different classification which distinguishes six kinds of 'illustrators':

- Drumsticks: time and rhythm indicators;
- Indicators of people and objects;
- Indicators of relationships and movements in space;
- Pictograms: indicators of physical images and shapes;
- Ideograms: indicators of mental ideas and images;
- Gestures representative of body movements.

2.1.3.3 SELF-HANDLING

While the purpose of emblems and illustrators is to communicate meaning, self-handling seems to be related mostly to emotional meaning, connected above else to

stress, unrest, indecision, frustration and, occasionally, concentration. These gestures, directed towards the self, are much more frequent in response to personal questions, in conversations with a person of higher status, and in the presence of a member of the opposite sex. Wolf (1945) managed to identify some recurrent gestural features typical of particular emotions:

- Strong inhibition. This is manifested through unnecessary or stereotyped movements or through movements of withdrawal. The subject may touch his or her hair and can be characterised by motorial unrest;
- Depression. These sporadic gestures are intended to hide the subject. The movements are usually performed slowly and hesitantly;
- Euphoria. The subject moves rapidly, with widespread, spontaneous movements. The gestures are rhythmic and self-assertive;
- Anxiety. The gestures seek to hide the subject and are mostly directed to the face. The subject touches his or her hair, twists his or her hands, scratches his or her face frequently and clenches the fists, releasing them soon after (Argyle, 1975, pp. 193-198).

2.1.3.4 Frequency of Gestures

The frequency of hand and arm gestures is influenced by several factors, including the following:

- The possibility for the listener to see the gestures the speaker produces;
- The level of enthusiasm and participation in the topic at hand;
- The speaker's desire to make the speech comprehensible;
- The desire to dominate the conversation;
- The topic of the discussion. Abstract concepts are more difficult to display through gestures;
- The oratory skill of the speaker. The more difficult a speaker finds it to speak, the more he or she will use gestures to express concepts;
- The culture to which one belongs;
- The presence of mental images that can or cannot be shared.

2.1.3.5 INTERACTIVE SYNCHRONY

Regarding the movements of the body, Kendon (2000) speaks of 'interactive synchrony', referring to similar movements people perform, often imitating one another, during the interaction. When the speaker moves, the listener does the same; when the speaker changes the direction of his or her body movements, so does the listener. According to Kendon, there are two possible explanations for this phenomenon:

- Biological: self-preservation and self-defence;
- Social: suggesting agreement, understanding or subordination.

2.1.3.6 WIDESPREAD GESTURES

Among nonverbal codes, hand gestures and head movements convey the majority of meanings and display the most cultural variation. This aspect is the focus of the last chapter of this work, which will explore the variation in meanings of the most performed gestures from culture to culture. However, gestures with the same meaning worldwide do exist. Arm gestures, for example, can be divided into two main categories: barriers and outspread arms. Among the barriers, the most common gestures are:

- Folded arms. This arrangement suggests contrast, closure, protection but also diffidence (intended to demonstrate a lack of familiarity towards the interlocutor);
- Folded arms with hands tightened on the arms. This is a variation of the first barrier, indicating stress, frustration and sometimes even rage;
- One-handed barrier. This is a protective gesture hidden behind a feigned sense of ease;
- Clothes-fixing barrier. One hand touches the wristband or watch on the other hand, thus creating a partial barrier. This gesture suggests a slight discomfort typical of public meetings. It indicates irritability and tension;
- Protection of genitals and object barrier. These movements are usually associated with insecurity and irritability. If an object is used as a barrier, it is usually held in front of the body as a way to protect the self.

Gestures with outspread arms are usually associated with relaxation, willingness and sincerity, more so if the palms are facing upwards or towards the interlocutor. If hands are held vertically, perpendicular to the ground and moving from top to bottom, they display an insurmountable boundary, which can be either physical or abstract. Palms facing downwards with hands moving in the same direction can indicate feelings of dominance, either to rule over or to take advantage of the other person. Arms held behind the back give an impression of relaxation and self-confidence. If, however, one hand grabs the opposite arm, this could indicate an attempt to contain anger, the strength of the emotion being related to height of the grab along the arm. The position of the elbow carries meaning as well. Elbows projected outwards or upwards, for instance, could indicate superiority, hubris and a desire to dominate.

Like arms, hands can be used to perform gestures, the meanings of which are widespread throughout different cultures (Pease, 2004, pp. 37-77, 90-105, 122-137, and Guglielmi, 2004, pp. 123-136, 139-171):

- Wedge position: the fingertips of the hands touch each other. This position can reveal self-confidence or the subject's supposed superiority and dominance;
- Spearhead position: hands are intertwined, but the index fingers are stretched and touch each other. The subject may feel frustrated by the inability to express his or her thoughts. This gesture can also suggest self-confidence;
- Gun position: index fingers and thumbs point outwards. This position displays disagreement and a desire to verbally harass the interlocutor;
- Fisted hand: this usually indicates anger and hostility;
- Hands with intertwined fingers: this could indicate introversion, frustration, a need for protection, powerlessness und unrest, but also, occasionally, irritability and stress;
- Hands covering the mouth: what the speaker says is probably at odds with what he or she is thinking (one of the most common signals unwillingly adopted by liars);
- Finger scratching the nose: this indicates inconsistency between words and thoughts by the speaker. The gesture is an attempt to prevent the covering of the mouth;

- Fingers scratching the eyes: once again, the gesture reveals inconsistency between what one says and what one thinks. It is performed to move the gaze away from the interlocutor;
- Fingers touching the ear: this movement shows loss of interest in the topic. The listener does not want to keep listening and doubts the truthfulness of what is being said;
- Fingers scratching the neck: this gesture expresses indecision and lack of self-confidence;
- Hand against the cheek and index finger pointing at the temple: this is usually associated with interest in the listener;
- Head leaned on the hand: this shows boredom;
- Thumb over the chin and index finger towards the temple: this implies critical or analytical behaviour. The listener is judging or evaluating what the speaker is saying;
- Hand over the chin: this is a common gesture performed while making decisions.

Recent studies reveal that in the absence of gestural input, comprehension and memory drop critically. Furthermore, when gestures are not used, many more words and sentences are required to convey the same meaning (Knapp et al., 2007, p. 218). Gestures, then, are an essential tool for effective communication.

2.1.4 PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact between two adults is dependent on many criteria, such as their age, personality and sex, as well as their level of communication, their culture and their relationship (degree of intimacy). It is one of the first forms of human communication, and physical contact with parents is crucial for children in order to grow up strong and healthy. Within our brain, a wide area is dedicated to the processing of stimuli coming from the surface of the body. It is useful to bear in mind that, during the growing up process, the frequency of physical contact diminishes constantly until old age, when it starts increasing again. According to recent studies, the kind of contact considered most disturbing by men is that with people of the same sex, whereas for women,

physical contact with a stranger seems to be the most disturbing. Henley (1977) observed that the frequency of physical contact increases in specific situations:

- Giving information or advice;
- Giving orders;
- Asking for a favour;
- Persuading;
- Having an intimate conversation;
- Interacting at a party;
- Expressing excitement;
- Receiving worrying messages.

An increase of physical contact has also been observed in situations such as when introducing people, greeting, departing from people and in sports competitions. Physical contact in public is regulated by the culture of the subjects involved, which will determine its locations, ways of expression, intensity and frequency. Morris (1977) identifies 14 different kinds of physical contact in public:

- Shaking hands;
- Contact in order to guide somebody (with a function similar to the action of indicating with the finger);
- Patting: either as a sign of approval or with a sexual connotation;
- Arm in arm: shows a close relationship between the subjects;
- Arm around the shoulders: shows either love or friendship (if it involves two men);
- Hug: we observe this kind of contact when there are intense emotions;
- Hand in hand: indicates either an intimate relationship between two equals or protection if one of the two subjects is a child;
- Arm around the waist: shows more intimacy then the arm around the shoulder;

- Kiss: the different ways and characteristics of the kiss define the degree of intimacy between the subjects;
- Touch of the hand on the head: shows trust and intimacy;
- Head against head;
- Caress: there is usually romance between the subjects involved;
- Contact to hold somebody up: used above all with children and old people;
- Faking: pseudo-aggressive behaviour used to joke amongst friends.

Heslin and Harper (1983) provide a further categorisation of physical contact based on their different functions:

- Functional/professional: a touch necessary for the fulfilment of a task or the provision of a service, such as in a medical exam, a professional massage or a tailoring session to create custom clothes;
- Social/ formal: the most clarifying example of this category is shaking hands. This kind of contact comes from specific cultural and social rules;
- Friendship/warmth: this is the first category of physical contact which expresses appreciation for the subject. This type of contact is made in a public environment towards friends.
- Love/ intimacy: this expresses emotional bonding or attraction. This kind of contact is adapted very much to the receiver, so it is not stereotyped;
- Sexual excitement.

As far as the effects of physical contact are concerned, Jones and Yarbrough (1985, 19-56) classify them as follows:

- Positive: these are the kind of touches that express support, reassurance, appreciation, inclusion, feelings of affection or sexual attraction;
- Negative: they channel, above all, feelings of rage and frustration. They are common amongst children more than amongst adults;

- Emotional: the most common emotions seem to be rage, fear, happiness, disgust, love and fondness. The closer the relationship between the subjects involved, the easier it will be to identify their emotions only by observing their physical contact;
- Playful: as an attempt to reduce the seriousness of a message. Tickling is the most significant example of a playful physical contact;
- Persuasive: based on the positive effect of human touch and on the theory that physical contact unconsciously makes its interacting subjects closer. It can be used to achieve special goals but also to communicate strength, dominance and self-confidence;
- Control of the conversation: contact is useful to establish the turns of conversation together with eye contact and nonverbal language;
- Psychological stimulation: Physical contact can calm one down, stress one out or have sexual connotations;
- Involvement: human touch seems to increase the degree of participation of interlocutors;
- Task: that type of contact classified as functional/professional by Heslin and Arper;
- Relieving: this is based on some theories which are not scientifically proven but assert that physical contact has soothing properties from a physical and psychological point of view;
- Symbolic: because physical contact becomes more and more sporadic in adult life, outside of an intimate relationship, human touch often acquires deep and symbolic meanings. A clear example of this is represented by the positioning of the hands by religious men as well as peculiar contact between political leaders. Similarly, the desire of common people to touch their idols from the sporting or music world acquires a symbolic value as well.

People can communicate not only through physical contact with their interlocutors, but also through physical contact with themselves. Morris (1971) provides a list of the

most common:

- Defensive actions: these are very frequent, for example when we are scared we cover our ears or eyes with our hands;
- Adjustment actions: like, for example, adjusting your hair or scratching yourself;
- Special signs: signs that express specific messages, usually belonging to the culture of the subject involved;
- Personal intimacy: actions that produce comfort in the subject.

Some of these kinds of contact were named “adapters” by Ekman and Friesen (1972, 353-374) because they allow people to adapt to specific situations. Adaptions can be directed towards yourself, to someone else or to objects and their frequency is proportional to the degree of anxiousness, depression, stress, hostility, suspicion, low confidence, shame, sense of guilt, complex cognitive processing and a concentration on the subject who is making them.

Amongst the most frequent kind of human touch, handshaking has probably the most immediate meaning of all. In the past, this kind of greeting was extended to the whole forearm in order for people to make sure that their interlocutor was not hiding weapons. Nowadays, handshaking is geographically widespread and can convey different meanings between two interlocutors. First of all, it tells us if there is a relationship of dominance, submission or equality. This information is expressed by the angle of the hand: if the palm of your hand is downward it suggests dominance on your interlocutor. If your palm is upward it suggests submission, whilst a relationship of equality is observed when both of the two hands have a vertical position. Moreover, trust and honesty is suggested when both of the two hands grab each other (with an increase of reciprocal contact). In this case, the hand above could grab the wrist or even the elbow, the arm or the shoulder. The closer the hand is to the shoulder, the more authentic is the feeling perceived and the higher is the degree of intimacy. The strength with which you grab another’s hand is also a very important parameter. In general, a good handshake should be as strong as the one of our interlocutor in order to be perceived as pleasant by both (Allan & Barbara Pease, 2004, 45-67).

2.1.5 LEGS AND FEET

Feet as well seem to be divided into meridians. Plantar reflexology studies how to cope with physical and mental deficit through the manipulation of these meridians (Guglielmi A., 2004, 73-74):

- Spleen: this begins from the armpit and ends on the external part of the big toe. When the spleen is stressed, it produces a mental and physical rigidity. Therefore the subject will be inclined to dominate, discriminate, judge and to be stubborn;
- Liver: this deals with the internal part of the big toe. Liver disorders seem to be provoked also by raging, hostile and violently emotional behaviours;
- Stomach: this is linked to the second toe of the foot. A stressed stomach also provokes rage and hostility;
- Gall-bladder: from the temples, this falls along the sides of the body and continues down until the fourth toe. Again, disorders regarding this organ may cause rage and violent behaviours;
- Bladder: from the eyebrow, passing through the back and the heel, this ends at the fifth toe. A damaged bladder does not seem to have sensible effects on the subject's personality;
- Kidneys: from the collarbone to the bottom of the feet. Kidneys seem to be linked to fear and its manifestations.

Personality also appears to be linked to the direction of the tip of your feet when you walk (tips should normally be parallel).

- Tips pointing inward: this characterises reserved and reflective people;
- Tips pointing outward: this shows a tendency to distraction and a will to appear determined;
- Tips on the same line: this is the way that models walk on the runway; this kind of walk can be associated with both seduction and fragility (because of its shaky quality); both such qualities are considered attractive from a male point of view (Guglielmi A., 2004, 91-100).

Legs, as well as arms, reveal where a person wants to go. From the standing position, our legs can be positioned in four main different ways:

- Joined legs: this expresses a neutral approach and reveals very little information on what we think of a certain subject;
- Spread legs: this is a position of dominance adopted above all by men;
- One foot forward: it is necessary to move all the weight onto one side of the body. Having one foot forward reveals the focus of our attention, that can be either on a person or on the way out, if the conversation is not interesting enough;
- Crossed legs: this indicates an attitude of closure, submission or defence (Guglielmi A., 2004, 88-89).

Speaking of legs, we are able to notice many behaviours that correspond to different personalities. People cross their legs when they are standing in order to protect themselves (the crossing is a clear example of barrier). Spread legs try to communicate dominance, strength and confidence, whereas joined legs often suggest lack of confidence and fragility.

When we sit, legs can once more provide clues of our personality; as we mentioned already, crossed legs can communicate closure, defence or else a will to distance oneself from the conversation, whereas when we are relaxed our legs are free. Keeping the legs joined might suggest that we do not agree with what it is being asserted. Crossed ankles immediately communicates anxiousness and fear. Open legs reveal a will to dominate, but if we sit with legs astride, turning the chair the other way round and leaning with the arms on the back of the seat, we both put a protection in front of us and try to look relaxed and at ease. Women in particular show many different ways of sitting that convey precise meanings:

- Tips outward: instinctive, open and proactive;
- Tips inward: shy, fussy and methodical;
- Joined feet: unconfident, perfectionist, strict;
- Crossed ankles: disapproval and lack of self-confidence;

- Crossed legs: closure;
- Bent leg: closure masking fake openness (Pease A. & Pease B., 2004, 202-220 e Guglielmi A., 2004, 103-116).

2.1.6 Direction of the body and posture

The human being has three main postures (Argyle, 1975, 199-209):

- Standing;
- Sitting;
- Lying;

These three main positions of the body can then be modified by using the legs, arms, head and angles of the body. Such elements can be described in more detail as follows:

- Legs: elongated, open or crossed;
- Arms: open, folded, elongated along the sides of the body;
- Head: looking down, upright, tilted on the side;
- Angles of the body: the body can be bent forward, bent backward and bent on the side.

These elements can also be modified by the variable tense/relaxed. Postures derive mainly from interpersonal attitudes.

2.1.6.1 Interpersonal attitudes

The most easily recognisable relationships are dominant and submissive. Mehrabian (1969, 359-372) identifies dominance (and aversion) in a relaxed posture that presents the following features:

- Asymmetric positioning of the arms;
- Side tilt;
- Asymmetric positioning of the legs;

- Relaxed hands;
- Backward tilt.

A relaxed position is typical in informal situations, in dealing with people of the opposite sex, with subordinates and people of an inferior class. Attraction, fondness and sincerity are easily recognisable as well; Mehrabian (1972) also describes the characteristic a of a “simple and straightforward” posture, typical in the interaction with a pleasant interlocutor with whom we are willing to create more intimacy:

- Bending forward;
- Physical contact;
- Proximity of bodies;
- Eye contact;
- Bodies that face each other straight on.

Other signals that are easy to interpret are: folded arms, associated with rejection and rigidity, open arms, meaning acceptance and a positive attitude, and hands on the hips (elbows pointing outward), conveying a negative attitude. Another signal of a positive relationship is called “postural consistency” and consists of an imitation of the posture and movements of the interlocutor. “Postural consistency” can also be used to eliminate any situation of disadvantage between the interlocutors. Lowen A. (1991, 22-39, 103-140), describes five different postures in an upright position which sketch different personalities:

- Bent posture: the body is bent over, shoulders are bowed, the head is hanging forward and the chest is hollow; there is tension in the lower part of the body. People take on this posture when they have a constant and latent sense of need of other people;
- Split posture: The body is very thin, feet are oriented outward, arms are relaxed and stretched along the body and the face has no expression: the person seems to be split in two different halves along the line of the waist. This posture describes superiority, a will to depart from their inner part by displaying the

exact opposite attitude;

- Inflated Posture: A person with this posture appears out of proportion. The chest is swollen, the neck is tense and the pelvis is rigid. The legs look like they are too thin compared with the rest of the body. It sketches a hostile, bossy and controlling behaviour;
- Submitted posture: the body is hunchbacked, squat and podgy. The neck is also short and big and the shoulders are more forward than the rest of the body. The pelvis is in tension and bent inward and the bottom is contracted. These traits are typical of a person with buried anger that constantly tries to please others ending up with a submissive attitude;
- Rigid posture: Proportionate body, head held high, rigid neck, straight back, swollen chest, flat belly and contracted legs. These traits sketch a proud and rigid personality, communicating also frustration and sadness.

The theory beneath Lowen's categories is based on the idea that every obsession, as well as every emotional conflict, shapes the body in peculiar ways through chronic muscular tensions. Therefore, Lowen describes three of the most common shapes:

- The coat hanger: shoulders are up, the head is falling over and the feet are hardly touching the ground. The position of the shoulders reveals a constant state of fear, that is partly balanced by a physical attitude of challenge;
- The hump: more frequent in women, represents buried anger caused from a life full of frustrations and repressions;
- Half-bust: again, this posture is more frequent among women. The upper part of the body is dynamic whereas the lower part is rigid. This kind of person is taught to suppress their instincts and passions.

Posture influences the messages we are sending even whilst we are sitting. Interest toward a topic is conveyed with an upright or bent over position on our chair, whilst if we are not interested or we are tired we rest on the back of the seat. If we would like to leave the conversation, our body will stick to the back of the seat. Sitting on the edge of the chair stresses lack of time and a will to leave, if the body is bending

forward. If the body rests back on the chair, it communicates confidence and tranquility, above all if the legs are crossed. People can sit one in front of the other or side by side. In the former case there is a relationship between the interlocutors and a will to interact. In the latter, the kind of relationship is determined by how the two people sit side by side.

Furthermore, the hemisphere that we are using in a specific moment also has an influence our posture. For example if we are standing and our weight is all on the left leg, this might mean we are using the rational part of our brain. In the same way, if our weight is on the right leg, we might be using the creative and emotional part of our mind.

The direction that our body takes during a conversation is also full of meanings. In general, feet always point out the direction of our interest. When we stop somebody in order to talk to them, their head might be facing us but it is their body that will tell us if they are interested in what we are saying. If we are talking to somebody that is facing us but gradually directs their body towards the exit or towards a different direction, this could easily mean they are losing interest in what we are saying or that they are in a hurry and cannot stay and listen to us. Moreover, when in a conversation there are more than two participants, it might be interesting to use this technique to check who is getting the attention. If two people are talking and a third person joins them, a change in the direction of the bodies of the first two interlocutors will tell us if the third person is being accepted into the conversation. If so, the three interlocutors will shape a triangle made of their feet and bust. This willingness to accept other members into the conversation can be shown even prior to the attempt of somebody to get into it. In this case the position of the bodies of the two interlocutors will not be one in front of the other, but side by side, forming an angle of 45 degrees. For people that are sitting, the dynamics are exactly the same. A leg crossed in the direction of the interlocutor shows interest and acceptance. As mentioned above, the imitation of gestures, postures and movements means involvement, interest and agreement. There are three main positions a person can choose whilst sitting on a chair and talking with somebody. In the first case bodies and chairs form an angle of 45 degrees. Such an angle assures a relaxed atmosphere characterised by a high level of informality. If from this position one of the two interlocutors will sit in front of the other, it is usually because an honest direct answer is expected from the other. Moreover, if the interlocutors are positioned in an

angle of 45 degrees, it is usually because one would like to make personal or embarrassing question to the other without forcing them to answer. Therefore, we can sum up two main orientations of the body (Pease A. & Pease B., 2004, pp.268-274):

- Open positions: the interlocutors are positioned at an angle of 45 degrees, the distance amongst them depends on how interested they are in the topic and on how much they know each other;
- Closed positions: implying a greater deal of intimacy, the angle between the interlocutors is between 45 degrees and zero degrees. The distance among them is lower than the one between people who are in an open position. Notice that a frontal positioning can also imply threat when the two interlocutors are two men, while women feel threatened if the interlocutor is behind them.

2.1.7 SMELLS AND NOISES OF THE BODY

"Si tratta di prodotti del corpo che possono involontariamente informare sulle nostre reazioni ad un evento, ma che possono anche involontariamente comunicare sciatteria, sporcizia ed effeminatezza" (Balboni e Caon, 2015, pp.62-64). Il primo fra questi per frequenza è interesse è probabilmente il sudore, che può fornirci informazioni sullo stato emotivo (stress, tensione, nervosismo) o fisico (fatica, sforzo) del soggetto. Ancora, uno studio del 2012 condotto da Gün R. Semin e colleghi dell'Università di Utrecht e pubblicato su "Psychological Science" ha dimostrato che almeno alcune emozioni possono essere veicolate attraverso gli odori. Per provarlo il ricercatore ha fatto inalare ai soggetti l'odore di sudore prodotto da un gruppo di dieci maschi ai quali erano state provocate sensazioni di paura e disgusto. La reazione sulle facce dei soggetti non sembra lasciare adito a dubbi. Stati di tensione si manifestano oltre che con la sudorazione, anche attraverso l'alitosi mentre uno stato emotivo piacevole attiva la produzione di feromoni che producono accettazione e, a volte, eccitazione nell'interlocutore. Tra i rumori più frequenti prodotti dal corpo troviamo:

- Starnutire;
- Soffiarsi il naso;
- Ruttare;
- Rumori intestinali.

Tutti questi rumori assumono significati molto differenti a seconda della cultura di appartenenza. Rutti che da noi sono considerati assolutamente vietati in pubblico, sono segno di apprezzamento in altri Paesi come Asia o Giappone mentre in Oriente è considerato estremamente maleducato soffiarsi il naso in pubblico (ma in alcuni di queste zone è più che normale sputare per strada). Per concludere questa sezione, Balboni e Caon (2015, pp.62-64) comprendono tra i rumori del corpo anche quelli fàtici, responsabili di fornire un feedback al nostro interlocutore mentre sta parlando (feedback che può essere sia positivo che negativo). È il caso del suono "mh-mh" che produciamo quando ascoltiamo con attenzione.

2.2 PROSSEMICA

Il primo a parlare di prossemica è Edward t. Hall, antropologo. Questa sezione del linguaggio non verbale si occupa di scoprire i significati veicolati da distanze dei corpi e dalle relazioni di vicinanza esistenti tra gli stessi.

2.2.1 LO SPAZIO PERSONALE

Gli animali, come anche l'uomo, considerano un raggio attorno a loro entro il quale si sentono al sicuro e che considerano proprio e quindi cercano di proteggere. Negli umani il concetto di territorio si riferisce solitamente a oggetti fisici, spazi ed idee. Negli studi effettuati sinora vengono considerati tre tipi di territorio di diverse dimensioni (Argyle, 1975, pp.178-180):

- Lo spazio personale: Lo spazio che le persone mantengono intorno a loro stesse. Un'invasione di questa zona provoca spesso una sensazone di disagio;
- Il territorio personale: è un'area più vasta, posseduta e controllata da un individuo Rientrano in questo territorio la macchina, la casa con il suo giardino, l'ufficio e possono essere comprese persino zone temporanee come le stanze d'hotel e i tavoli del ristorante. Sono spazi che garantiscono una certa privacy ed intimità sociale;
- I territori domestici: Sono quegli spazi pubblici utilizzati da gruppi particolari di persone. Potrebbero rientrare in questa categoria i club, alcune zone private

di alcuni pub, patronati, aree speciali di hotel.

Per quanto riguarda lo studio della prossemica e dei linguaggi non-verbali, lo spazio che più influenza la conversazione è quello personale. La distanza che manteniamo con i nostri interlocutori quando parliamo ha una componente naturale che viene imparata da ogni bambino e che è ben chiara già a partire dai sette anni di età. Hall (1966), divide lo spazio personale in quattro diverse zone spaziali:

- Zona intima: tra i 15 e i 46 cm. Lo spazio compreso all'interno di questa bolla è considerato una proprietà personale. Si può toccare e sentire l'odore del proprio interlocutore ed è possibile parlare sottovoce. La visibilità è limitata. Solo agli innamorati, parenti o amici intimi è concesso di entrare. All'interno di questa zona intima è compresa la zona intima ristretta, propria dei contatti fisici più personali;
- Zona personale: tra i 46 e i 122 cm. Si può ancora toccare l'altro ma non è possibile sentirne l'odore. La visibilità è leggermente migliorata. È la distanza che manteniamo con colleghi e amici, alle feste, alle riunioni e agli eventi sociali;
- Zona sociale: tra i 122 e i 360 cm. Il tono della voce deve essere più elevato, i movimenti del corpo sono visibili e gli interlocutori passano più tempo a guardarsi. È la distanza che manteniamo con gli estranei e in generale da chiunque non conosciamo bene;
- Zona pubblica: dai 360 cm in poi. La distanza che manteniamo quando ci troviamo davanti ad un folto gruppo di persone, mantenuta soprattutto dalle figure pubbliche importanti (quanto più è importante la personalità, maggiore sarà la distanza mantenuta). Per esempio quando dobbiamo fare un discorso. I movimenti del corpo devono essere più enfatizzati e l'espressione del viso non è più chiara. Il tono della voce deve essere aumentato (da Allan & Barbara Pease, 2007, pp.188-189 e Argyle, 1975, pp.166-167).

Willis (1966, pp.221-222) scopre inoltre che queste distanze aumentano a seconda di chi ci troviamo davanti, secondo il seguente ordine:

- Genitori;
- Amici intimi;
- Amici;
- Conoscenti;
- Estranei;
- Portatori di handicap fisici;
- Malattie mentali, carcerati (soprattutto se violenti).

Le zone spaziali, come è facilmente intuibile, sono poi sottoposte a sensibili variazioni di ampiezza determinate da quelli che Sommer (2002, pp. 647-660) chiama "the best-substantiated findings about personal space":

- Sesso: ci si avvicina alle donne più di quanto non ci si avvicini agli uomini, le donne stanno più vicine tra loro quando parlano rispetto ai maschi, la bolla della donna è relativamente più piccola rispetto a quella dell'uomo;
- Età: parliamo più vicino a persone vicine alla nostra età con l'eccezione di persone molto vecchie e bambini piccoli (sotto i 6 anni), che prediligono sempre conversazioni ravvicinati;
- Differenze culturali e sociali;
- Argomento: "For intimates, personal topics may demand less conversational distance unless other factors neutralize this inclination" (Erickson, 1975). Insulti e commenti negativi aumentano le distanze interpersonali, le lodi le riducono;
- Setting: illuminazione, rumori, temperatura e spazio disponibile influenzano sensibilmente le distanze di interazione;
- Caratteristiche fisiche: sembra che maggiore sia l'altezza dell'interlocutore, maggiore sia la distanza mantenuta durante l'interazione. Lo stesso vale per la robustezza dell'individuo. L'essere grassi aumenta la distanza mantenuta dal nostro interlocutore. È mantenuta una maggiore distanza anche dalle persone con problemi fisici e mentali, soprattutto nelle fasi iniziali della conversazione;

- Orientamento attitudinale e emozioni: viene mantenuta una distanza maggiore da persone percepite non amichevoli rispetto a quelle considerate amichevoli. Gli stati emozionali hanno un effetto significativo sulle distanze mantenute. Esperienze traumatiche aumentano le distanze interpersonali. Allo stesso modo, persone chiamate a rispondere con frasi prestabilite ad un colloquio sono state valutate con qualità migliori minore era la distanza interpersonale;
- Caratteristiche della relazione interpersonale Le distante mantenure tra sconosciuti sono maggiori di quelle tenute da conoscenti o amici. Distanze ravvicinate possono essere associate a rapporti più stretti;
- Caratteristiche della personalità: Essere introversi o estroversi influenza la distanza che manteniamo durante una conversazione. L'ansia aumenta le distanze, la bassa autorità, l'interdipendenza, l'introspezione e il bisogno di autostima le diminuisce.

Insieme alla vicinanza, anche l'orientazione determina il grado di intimità dei rapporti interpersonali. Essa è "l'angolazione secondo cui le persone si situano nello spazio l'una rispetto all'altra. Di solito è l'angolo compreso tra una linea che unisce un individuo a un altro e una linea perpendicolare al piano delle sue spalle, cosicchè quando si fronteggiano esse si trovano ad un livello di 0 gradi" (Michael Argyle, 1975, p.167). Numerosi studi dimostrano che l'orientazione e la vicinanza sembrano mostrare una relazione di tipo inverso. Quindi ad una maggiore distanza corrisponde un'orientazione più vicina allo 0.

2.2.2 L'INVASIONE DEL TERRITORIO

Quando qualcuno entra nel nostro spazio possiamo rispondere positivamente o negativamente. Secondo Patterson (1976, pp.235-245) se la risposta è positiva allora ricambieremo il comportamento avvicinandoci a nostra volta, se la risposta è negativa adotteremo delle contromisure per ristabilire l'equilibrio. Tipiche risposte atte a compensare riguardano diversi codici; per esempio:

- Posizione;
- Gesti;

- Postura;
- Linguaggio verbale.

L'invasione può riguardare non solo i nostri corpi, ma anche il nostro spazio personale, le nostre proprietà, la nostra casa, lo spazio lavorativo o quello scolastico, il nostro quartiere e arrivare fino alla nazione (Brown & Robinson 2011, pp.210-224). Non tutte le aggressioni del nostro territorio sono uguali; Lyman e Scott (1967, pp.236-249) ne identificano tre diversi tipi:

- Violazione: o uso ingiustificato del territorio altrui. Questo può avvenire attraverso:
    - Occhi;
    - Voce o altri suoni;
    - Corpo;
- Invasione: è il tentativo di appropriarsi del territorio di un altro soggetto;
- Contaminazione: inquinare il territorio altrui attraverso ciò che lasciamo quando ce ne andiamo.

Come abbiamo detto, queste aggressioni alla nostra zona di controllo, se percepite come negative, provocano delle reazioni che mirano a ristabilire l'equilibrio iniziale. Le misure che adottiamo variano di intensità a seconda di determinati fattori (Knapp et al., 2007, pp.125-126):

- Chi ha violato il territorio; questo fattore è a sua volta scisso in diversi parametri:
    - Familiarità;
    - Sesso;
    - Status;
    - Età;
- Perché ha violato il territorio; questo a sua volta si divide in:

    - Desiderio;
    - Necessità;
- Che tipo di territorio è stato invaso. Secondo gli studi di Altman (1975) esistono tre territori principali:
    - Primario: possedimenti esclusivi del proprietario, case e camere da letto, oggetti personali, bolla personale;
    - Secondario: non di proprietà esclusiva del soggetto. Rientrano in questo gruppo la Tv, le riviste, le posate, i negozi del quartiere;
    - Pubblico: sono quei territori che tutti possono rivendicare come propri per un breve periodo: i parchi, le spiagge, i trasporti pubblici, una sedia o una poltrona (a meno che non sia la sedia preferita dal padrone di casa), ecc;
- Come è stata portata a termine l'invasione;
- Per quanto è durata l'invasione;
- Se consideriamo che sia un caso isolato o meno;
- Dove è avvenuta l'intrusione; questo fattore è relazionato poi al concetto di Densità della popolazione.

Due tecniche di difesa vengono comunemente adottate per rispondere a queste invasioni (Knapp et al., 2007, pp.126-129):

- Prevenzione: Consiste nel delimitare il nostro territorio, sia fisicamente che figurativamente, in modo da prevenire le invasioni e tenere gli estranei al di fuori del nostro spazio. Per fare questo ci si può anche servire di altre persone (qualcuno che può tenerci il posto mentre andiamo in bagno), o di oggetti, chiamati "markers". Più personale è il marker più a lungo una posizione potrà essere difesa.
- Reazione: quando qualcuno invade il nostro spazio siamo stimolati fisicamente, il nostro battito cardiaco accelera e abbiamo anche risposte di tipo cutaneo. Questa risposta ha un'intensità direttamente proporzionale all'intensità dell'invasione.

Fisher & Byrne (1975, pp.15-21) hanno osservato che tra estranei gli uomini si sentono più minacciati se l'invasione arriva frontalmente mentre le donne quando arriva lateralmente.

2.2.3 Densità ed Affolamento

Così come ci sentiamo attaccati quando qualcuno invade uno spazio che consideriamo nostro, allo stesso modo cerchiamo di non invadere quello altrui. Tutto questo però è possibile solo se la densità della popolazione non è troppo elevata. Per capire l'effetto di questo fattore sulla popolazione bisogna innanzi tutto distinguere tra (Knapp et al., 2007, pp.129-131):

- Densità: il numero di abitanti per unità di spazio. Chi cresce in zone rurali o montanare necessita di uno spazio personale maggiore rispetto a chi cresce nelle grandi metropoli;
- Affollamento: è una sensazione che può essere di alta o bassa intensità. I fattori che influenzano l'affollamento sono:
    - Ambientali: spazio ridotto, rumori, mancanza di risorse e possibilità di reperirne di nuove, presenza o assenza di barriere di proprietà;
    - Personali: Sesso, autostima personale, dominanza, bisogno di controllo, contatto sociale e precedenti esperienze con il sovraffollamento;
    - Sociali: contatti sociali ravvicinati non voluti e possibilità o meno di modificarne la frequenza, interazione forzata con persone appartenenti ad un gruppo non familiare, interazioni spiacevoli;
    - Relativi al successo: possibilità o meno di realizzare i propri obiettivi.

Numerosi studi sulle masse dimostrano che all'aumentare della folla, la riduzione dello spazio personale disponibile corrisponde ad un incremento dell'ostilità, motivo per cui durante le manifestazioni spesso la polizia interviene separando i presenti quando la situazione comincia a precipitare. Altman (1975) ha studiato i principali processi

responsabili deigli effetti negativi del sovraffollamento:

- Incapacità di controllare gli eventi;
- Interferenza con il perseguimento di un obiettivo;
- Eccessiva stimolazione sociale.

Ma un aumento della densità non è direttamente collegato ad un aumento di stress o comportamenti antisociali nei soggetti. Sebbene i comportamenti negativi possano essere presenti, gli altri fattori analizzati in precedenza nel nostro lavoro possono fungere come una forma di controllo che può essere un deterrente rispetto alle influenze negative. Ad ogni modo le persone cercano spesso di trovare un modo per adeguarsi alla situazione. Alcuni di questi metodi sono (Knapp et al., 2007, pp132-133):

- Trascorrere meno tempo con i diversi input (conversazioni più corte);
- Trascurare input a bassa priorità;
- Aiutare le persone alleviandole da alcuni dei loro compiti;
- Bloccare gli input.

2.2.4 Comportamento spaziale

Collegati al concetto di densità e affollamento sono i nostri comportamenti legati allo spazio disponibile.

2.2.4.1 In ascensore

Quando saliamo in un ascensore pieno, è più in generale quando siamo costretti in luoghi affollati, come potrebbe essere in coda per fare il biglietto al cinema o su un autobus o un treno, la maggior parte delle culture osserva delle regole tacite secondo un comportamento detto di “mascheramento”. Queste strategie sono possibili perché in casi di sovraffollamento tendiamo a considerare chi ci sta a fianco come “non-persone”, evitando in questo modo di reagire come se venissimo aggrediti nel caso di un’invasione del nostro spazio. Nel caso dell’ascensore le più comuni sono (Allan &

Barbara Pease, 2004, pp 190-191):

- Non parlare a nessuno;
- Evitare il contatto visivo;
- Non lasciar trasparire i sentimenti nel viso;
- Se si possiede un giornale o un libro, fingere di leggere;
- Cercare di evitare qualsiasi movimento;
- Guardare l'indicatore dei piani.

2.2.4.2 In macchina

Un guidatore normalmente cosidera suo uno spazio di 8-10 m davanti e dietro l'auto. È come se la sua bolla personale si espandesse di circa dieci volte. Allo stesso tempo, chi si trova all'interno dell'abitacolo spesso si considera invisibile e può fare cose che normalmente non farebbe tra altre persone (Guglielmi, 2004, p.25).

2.2.4.3 Da seduti

Regole della prossemica si applicano anche ai posti a sedere (Knapp et al., 2007, pp142-148). Si può operare una scelta:

- A lungo termine: per esempio quando vi continuate a sedere nello stesso posto lezione dopo lezione, ad un corso all'università;
- A breve termine: per esempio quando scegliete la poltrona al cinema.

La branca che studia in che modo le persone decidono di sedersi e l'organizzazione dello spazio nei piccoli gruppi è chiamata "small group ecology". Secondo le sue teorie la scelta dei posti raramente è casuale; il più delle volte è dettata da questi parametri:

- Leadership: sia a casa che in un meeting in ufficio, la posizione dominante ad un tavolo sembra essere quella a capo tavola. Allo stesso modo, se ad una persona verrà assegnata la posizione a capo tavola, questa persona assumerà più facilmente una posizione dominante durante la discussione rispetto alle

altre. Se un tavolo è occupato da cinque persone, tre da un lato e due su quello opposto, quello con il minor numero di persone avrà un'influenza maggiore (Howells and Becker, 1962, pp.148-150);

- Dominance: Entrambe le posizioni a capotavola ricoprono una posizione dominante (5a). Secondo alcuni studi è stato dimostrato che anche le posizioni in centrali-laterali dimostrano avere personalità dominanti, oltre a parlare più spesso e per più tempo. Le sedute intermedie invece sono occupate solitamente da persone più ansiose e che volevano allontanarsi dalla conversazione. Ward (1968, pp.83-90) afferma l'esistenza di una differenza anche per quanto riguarda le posizioni di dominanza, infatti "the two end position attracted task-oriented leaders, whereas the middle positions attracted socioemotional leaders, those concerned about group relationships and getting averyone to participate";

- Task: a seconda del tipo di scambio la posizione attorno al tavolo cambia:
    - Conversation: sedersi a parlare prima di una lezione o di cominciare la giornata di lavoro; la scelta più frequente è quella di sedersi ad angolo o di fronte.
    - Cooperation: Studiare assieme per un esame o lavorare assieme per un progetto; la posizione assunta maggiormente è quella fianco a fianco;
    - Coaction: Sedersi e studiare per esami differenti in biblioteca o sedersi ad un tavolo e leggere un libro. Questo tipo di situazione richiede più distanza tra le persone sedute ad un tavolo che occuperanno la sedia con la maggior distanza possibile l'una dall'altra;
    - Competition: è una situazione in cui due o più persone si trovano a doversi sfidare, per esempio durante una partita a scacchi o in un dibattito. La posizione maggiormente assunta è quella frontale.
- Sex and acquaintance: Cook (1970, pp.61-76) ha studiato tre casi di persone sedute in un ristorante e in vari bar:
    - Amici dello stesso sesso;

- Amici di sesso opposto;
- Coppie.

Al bar, Gli amici dello stesso sesso come quelli di sesso opposto prediligevano i posti ad angolo anche se amici più intimi preferivano sedersi lateralmente. Al ristorante, gli amici preferivano sedersi frontalmente. Più l'intimità cresceva, però, più altre combinazioni erano possibili;

- Introversion-extraversion: Gli estroversi preferiscono la seduta frontale rispetto all'interlocutore, oppure posizioni ravvicinate. Gli introversi preferiscono invece la lontananza, sia fisica che visiva.

2.3 VESTEMICA

Gli indumenti indossati da ciscuno di noi sono una grande fonte di informazioni per lo studente dei linguaggi non verbali. La teoria più importante in questo settore è quella di Goffman (1956) che parla della "presentazione di sé"; secondo questa teoria le persone riescono, attraverso un modo intenzionale di presentarsi, a modificare le impressioni che danno alle altre persone su loro stessi. Questa presentazione di sé può avere due scopi. Il primo è quello immediato, che mira a farsi assumere o a farsi degli amici; mentre il secondo è quello di migliorare la propria immagine. La stessa teoria di Goffman ci illustra anche quali siano gli aspetti che debbano essere comunicati (Argyle, 1975, pp.228-229):

- Mostrare quelle caratteristiche personali che sappiamo saranno approvate;
- Accentuare le caratteristiche che vengono considerate attraenti;
- Ostentare alcuni aspetti dell'immagine di sé;
- Aderire alle regole imposte dalla situazione o trasgredire intenzionalmente;
- Mostrare l'appartenenza ad un gruppo;
- Mostrare l'appartenenza ad un ceto sociale;
- Indicare un ruolo occupazionale.

Gli abiti sono fondamentali anche per la prima impressione che diamo. Dagli studi

risulta che una prima impressione sarà tanto migliore quanto il nostro stile si avvicinerà allo stile di chi vorremo impressionare e sarà adeguato al suo ambiente. Secondo Barnard (2001), i vestiti rivestono varie funzioni:

- Decorazione;
- Protezione fisica e psicologica;
- Attrazione sessuale;
- Affermazione di sé;
- "Negazione di sé";
- Mascheramento;
- Identificazione nel gruppo;
- Persuasione;
- Attitudine;
- Ideologia;
- Umore (reale o fittizio);
- Autorità/status/ruolo.

In altri casi l'uso di particolari abiti può essere legato a norme culturali o norme sociali. Gli indumenti generalmente possono (Knapp et al, 2007, pp.188-192):

- Fornire informazioni su una persona: alcuni dei tratti personali più comunemente individuabili attraverso il modo di vestire sono:
    - Sesso;
    - Età;
    - Cultura di appartenenza;
    - Appartenenza ad un gruppo;
    - Status economico-sociale;
    - Umore/personalità;
    - Attitudini/interessi/valori;

- Influenzare colui che li indossa: gli abiti aiutano a formare l'immagine mentale che ciascuno di noi ha di sé stesso. Sembra che i tratti più facilmente influenzabili attraverso i capi d'abbigliamento siano la sicurezza di sé e il senso di aggressività;
- Possedere particolari relazioni con la personalità di colui che le indossa: Rosenfeld e Plax (1977, pp.24-31) hanno portato avanti uno studio sottoponendolo a uomini e donne poi divisi tra "alti" e "bassi" in relazione al risultato ottenuto rispetto al parametro "esibizionismo" (i soggetti erano chiamati ad approvare o meno l'uso di costumi da spiaggia succinti) e studiandone poi i tratti della personalità. I risultati mostrano quanto segue:
    - Gli uomini che hanno ottenuto "alto" per questo tratto sono aggressivi, sicuri di sé, espansivi, insensibili, lunatici, freddi e impulsivi, con scarsa concezione delle proprie interazioni familiari;
    - Le donne che hanno ottenuto "alto" per questo tratto risultano radicali, distaccate nelle relazioni interpersonali, con un'alta opinione di sé e delle proprie convinzioni etico-morali;
    - Gli uomini che hanno ottenuto "basso" sono attenti a non scoprire i tratti del proprio carattere. Hanno una bassa concezione delle interazioni familiari e pensano che le persone siano facilmente manipolabili;
    - Le donne che hanno ottenuto "basso" sono timide, sincere, pazienti e tolleranti e si sentono inferiori.

Un altro fattore di importanza primaria nello studio della vestemica è quello relativo alla moda. Come gli altri settori del linguaggio non verbale, la moda è fortemente influenzata dalla cultura di appartenenza; a differenza di questi, però, la moda cambia ad una velocità molto elevata. In relazione a questo fattore, esistono due principali tipi di persone (Snyder, 1979, pp.85-128):

- Elevato auto-monitoraggio, che seguono la moda e cercano di conformarsi;
- Medio auto-monitoraggio, che preferiscono essere sé stessi.

2.4 Oggettemica

P. E. Balboni e Caon (2015, pp.68-76) scindono l'oggettemica dalla vestemica evidenziando soprattutto il ruolo degli status symbol. Tra questi quelli sui quali il Professore si sofferma sono quelli che indicano:

- La ricchezza: l'esibizione di ricchezza attraverso oggetti quali orologi, anelli o macchine può essere culturalmente approvata o meno; allo stesso modo, parlare di denaro apertamente può essere una mossa azzardata in paesi dove non si è soliti parlare nemmeno di proprietà o patrimonio personale;
- La raffinatezza: sono oggetti particolari che rimandano a gusti (particolari) del proprio interlocutore. Saper decifrare questi messaggi da una penna come da un paio di occhiali o da un porta sigarette può influire positivamente sulla nostra capacità di comunicare efficacemente;
- Lo status sociale: più che oggetti veri e propri in questo caso si parla di servizi a cui solo membri di un particolare strato sociale possono accedere. Possono essere macchine azienzali, scorta, autista personale, volo privato, ma anche conto aperto in un ristorante. Sono tutte informazioni preziose che ci aiutano a capire la persona con cui ci troviamo a conversare;
- Il rispetto per l'interlocutore: si intendono qui soprattutto offerte e regali. È questo un campo fortemente influenzato da variabili culturali. Offrire alcool o sigarette per esempio è di cattivo gusto in alcuni Paesi. Ancora regali che sono comuni in Italia possono avere altri significati all'estero (Basti pensare al significato dei fiori).

3. Il Linguaggio Paraverbale

La prosodia, oggetto di questo capitolo, comprende tutte le variazione della voce usate per accompagnare il discorso, modificarlo e/o veicolare il suo messaggio. La voce ha spesso una ruolo di grande importanza nella decodifica di svariate situazioni comunicative. Il modo attraverso il quale scegliamo di pronunciare le parole ha effetti sia sul contenuto che sulla relazione. Nel primo caso il risalto dato ad alcune parole serve a chiarire il significato del messaggio. Nel secondo non vengono solo fornite informazione, ma vengono anche espresse emozioni. Birkenbihl (1990, pp.165-195),

ritiene che il linguaggio del corpo sia da preferirsi rispetto al contenuto verbale in caso di incongruenze di significato tra i due, aggiungendo che riguardo all'intonazione, un suo turbamento sul piano della relazione porterà l'ascoltatore a concentrarsi più sul tono che sul contenuto verbale dell'informazione. La psicologa continua sostenendo che in molti casi sia "il tono che fa la musica" ad informare, e non il contenuto verbale. Per esempio per esprimere dispiacere per un ritardo non sarà importante che parole il ritardatario userà, purchè "suoni" dispiaciuto. Un altro caso in cui la prosodia sembra risultare più importante del contenuto verbale è quello della "conversazione passatempo" che la Birkenbihl definisce come "Una forma di comunicazione in cui non è il contenuto verbale delle nostre parole a trasmettere un'informazione, bensì soltanto il nostro tono". Conversazioni di questo tipo possono essere quelle in macchina, in aereo, in treno, o in ascensore se per un motivo si è forzati a parlare (sono spesso conversazioni legate all'imbarazzo creato dalla forzata intromissione nella zona intima altrui). Come abbiamo già accennato in precedenza, Mehrabian valuta l'impatto del paraverbale attorno al 38% nel processo di decodifica delle informazioni durante uno scambio comunicativo. Le caratteristiche principali delle vocalizzazioni sono (Argyle, 1975, p.136):

- Durata e quantità del discorso;
- Ampiezza;
- Frequenza fondamentale (tono) ed estensione del tono;
- Qualità della voce (spettro della frequenza x ampiezza): può caratterizzare una voce con attributi come ad esempio rauca, robusta, acuta, profonda;
- Profilo del tono: la variazione della frequenza di tempo.

Più semplicemente possiamo dividere le caratteristiche fondamentali tra (Birkenbihl. 1990, pp.170-189):

- Ritmo: l'andamento ritmico è l'aspetto più importante della parlata; l'alterazione di questo parametro e una sua variazione dalle aspettative suscita spesso nell'ascoltatore un senso di fastidio o disagio e può anche portare alla non corretta interpretazione del messaggio. Nelle performance in lingua straniera, inoltre, è stato dimostrato che piccoli errori di pronuncia non

vengono praticamente considerati, a patto che si riesca ad imitare il ritmo della parlata;

- Melodia dell'eloquio: è il modo in cui alziamo ed abbassiamo la voce. La melodia è spesso legata al tipo di proposizione e ai segni di interpunzione. Essa può trasmettere informazioni sia sul piano del contenuto che su quello della relazione;
- Velocità dell'eloquio: Nelle lingue indoeuropee le velocità normali vanno da 200 a 500 sillabe al minuto, secondo questo schema:
    - 200 sillabe al minuto = parlata lenta;
    - 350 sillabe al minuto = parlata normale;
    - 500 sillabe al minuto = parlata veloce;

  Ovviamente la velocità dell'eloquio è caratterizzata da molti fattori quali per esempio la cultura di appartenenza (francesi e italiani hanno una "velocità normale" più alta dei tedeschi). Variabili sono anche legate alla differenza di parlata di ciascun individuo e alla differenza nello stesso individuo in momenti diversi. In particolare, è stato osservato che le velocità maggiori si raggiungono quando il soggetto parla di cose che conosce bene ho che ha detto più di una volta o con frequenza. È il caso di locuzioni di uso corrente o cliché. Uno studio su questo tipo di parametro può quindi permettere di capire, solo ascoltando, quali siano gli argomenti su cui il nostro interlocutore è più ferrato e su quali invece si senta più insicuro. Allo stesso modo, se siete voi a parlare, dovrete esporre i concetti tanto più lentamente, quanto meno questi siano noti ai vostri ascoltatori;
- Volume: Un tono alto della voce può essere segnale di aggressività/desiderio di dominare oppure di partecipazione. Quanto più una cosa ci sta a cuore tanto più tendiamo ad alzare il volume della nostra voce;
- Chiarezza: quanto più siamo sicuri/abbiamo conoscenza di ciò di cui parliamo, tanto più chiara sarà (nella maggior parte dei casi) la pronuncia delle singole parole, e sarà più facile quindi per un ascoltatore capirci.

Le caratteristiche della voce di un parlante vengono giudicate dall'ascoltatore sulla

base di conoscenze pregresse, stereotipi ed altri fattori. Il processo che porta a questo giudizio è stato studiato da Scherer (1978 pp.467-487, 2003 pp.227-256) che ne ha ricavato un modello: la lente di giudizio non verbale. Per la corretta interpretazione di comportamenti non verbali (e di variazioni vocali), è necessario seguire questi passaggi (Scherer, 1978, pp.467-487 e 2003, pp.227-256):

- Lo stato o un tratto della persona (A);
- È riflesso in una sua variazione prosodica (B);
- Che è percepita dall'ascoltatore (C);
- Che si fa un'impressione sul parlante (D);
- Che può essere la base per una reazione o un cambiamento nell'ascoltatore (E).

I suoni prodotti da un parlante possono far parte del linguaggio o meno. Gli ultimi sono quel gruppo che comprende gemiti, lamenti, pianto, riso, e tutti gli altri versi che sono molto più legati ai suoni prodotti dagli animali che al linguaggio. Le vocalizzazioni legate al linguaggio si dividono in (Argyle, 1975, p.137):

- Segnali Prosodici: mettono in rilievo la sintassi dando enfasi e trasmettono informazioni emozionali;
- Segnali di sincronizzazione;
- Pause riempite: spesso indicano mancanza di scorrevolezza del discorso.

Le proprietà della voce sono prodotte attraverso tre sistemi principali (Argyle, 1975, p.138):

- Il posizionamento di laringe e corde vocali all'interno della gola che definiscono il timbro della voce. La vibrazione dell'aria responsabile della produzione del suono è prodotta dall'apertura e dalla chiusura della glottide;
- Il tratto vocale superiore, con le sue numerose pieghe, è attraversato dalla colonna d'aria. La disposizione di queste pieghe produce diverse armonie, cambiando la qualità del suono. Il tono di voce è aumentato dalla tensione muscolare, regolata dalla compressione e riduzione di varie parti della laringe e della faringe;

- Le labbra, insieme a lingua e bocca, sono responsabili della produzione di consonanti e vocali.

Le vocalizzazioni possono avere un significato compiuto oppure (Argyle, 1975, pp.136-149 & Knapp et al., 2007, pp.323-355):

- Esprimere emozioni;
- Atteggiamenti interpersonali;
- Veicolare informazioni riguardo il mittente (come sesso, età, classe sociale, regione di origine, persino a volte personalità).

3.1 Espressione delle emozioni

Numerosi studiosi hanno avvalorato la relazione esistente tra prosodia e manifestazioni delle emozioni. Uno degli studi principali è quello portato a termine da Scherer (1986, pp.143-165). Secondo i dati da lui raccolti le emozioni si possono "leggere" dal tono di voce. In particolare:

- Gioia/esultanza: aumento di tono, variazione del tono all'interno di un'espressione, variabilità del tono, intensità, quantità del discorso, profilo armonico;
- Depressione: Abbassamento del tono, variazione del tono all'interno di un'espressione, intonazione, intensità, quantità del discorso, profilo armonico;
- Ansia: aumento di tono, maggiore velocità e un maggior numero di incertezze nel parlare, pause vuote, voce di tipo aspirato (con ampie variazioni individuali);
- Paura: aumento di tono, variazione del tono, variabilità, molta energia nei toni più alti, quantità del discorso, speciale qualità della voce come nel pianto;
- Rabbia: aumento di tono nel furore, abbassamento di tono quando la collera è fredda, aumento di intensità, voce di qualità aspra, ritmo del discorso più sostenuto, improvvisi aumenti di tono e di sonorità su singole sillabe.

Secondo Frick (1985, pp.412-429), il profilo del tono è responsabile di sfumature sottili:

- Felicità: Profili armonici;
- Collera: aumenti improvvisi;
- Sorpresa: tono che sale;
- Sarcasmo: caduta del tono sulla sillaba posta in rilievo;
- Disprezzo: caduta del tono alla fine della frase;
- Civetteria: il tono scivola verso l'alto sull'ultima sillaba;
- Domanda: finale ascendente delle espressioni.

3.2 Atteggiamenti Interpersonali

Come abbiamo osservato in precedenza, il tono di voce influisce nella determinazione degli atteggiamenti interpersonali più delle parole stesse. Secondo alcuni studi condotti principalmente da Mehrabian e Williams (1969, pp.37-58), da Noller (1984) e da Pearce e Conklin (1971, pp.235-241) la prosodia è rilevante soprattutto per quanto riguarda:

- Felicità: caratterizzata da tono alto, variato, ritmo regolare e toni puri.
- Ostilità: caratterizzato da sonorità, concitazione, asprezza, tono abbassato. I profili tonali salgono bruscamente;
- Dominanza: voce sonora, tono basso, lenta e ad ampio spettro;
- Sottomissione: tono alto, meno risonanza, aumento finale del profilo del tono;
- Persuasione: caratterizzate da un eloquio più rapido, con volume di voce più alto e maggiore intonazione;
- Credibilità: Caratterizzata da tono e volume bassi con modeste variazioni. Secondo ulteriori studi voci di tipo nasale, gutturale, aspirata o tesa risulterebbero poco credibili e poco competenti (Addington, 1968, pp.492-503).

3.3 Informazioni sul Mittente

La conoscenza delle caratteristiche associate a prosodie diverse può migliorare molto la nostra performance, permettendoci, in alcuni casi, di accedere alle seguenti informazioni (da Knapp et al., 2007, pp.337-355 e Argyle, 1975, pp.144-149):

3.3.1 Personalità

Ricerche (Lippa, 1998, pp.80-107, Tusing & Dillard, 2000, pp.148-171) hanno cercato di descrivere la relazione esistente tra alcuni tratti della personalità e prosodia. I risultati mostrano che alcune caratteristiche sono effettivamente deducibili, nonostante siano facilmente influenzabili da fattori come le differenze culturali.

- Estroversione: tono più alto (maschi), più intensità vocale, ritmo più veloce, meno pause (femmine), meno esitazioni;
- Masculinità: enunciazione più povera, meno espressiva, tono basso, più lento, volume più alto;
- Dominanza: volume più alto; donne con tono di voce più basso sono percepite come dominanti .

Secondo Scherer (1979) un ritmo più veloce è segno di autorità, estroversione e competenza. Un tono più alto è segno di estroversione, autorità, sicurezza e competenza, ma anche di nervosismo e tensione. L'angoscia è caratterizata da un eloquio veloce, con pause vuote particolarmente lunghe. Le persone competitive, aggressive, impazienti e ambiziose tendono ad avere voci sonore, veloci esplosive, con variazioni di velocità e poche esitazioni nei cambi di turni di parola. L'associazione di personalità diverse con particolari tratti della voce è inoltre legata ad alcuni stereotipi (Addington, 1968, pp.492-503):

- Voce aspirata: giovanile, artistica;
- Voce piatta: maschile, pigro, freddo, introverso;
- Voce nasale: socialmente indesiderabile;
- Voce tesa: Vecchio, rigido, litigioso;
- Voce gutturale: vecchio, realista, maturo, sofisticato, ben adattato;

- Voce altisonante: energico, sano, artistico, sofisticato, orgoglioso, interessante, entusiasta;
- Voce veloce: animato, estroverso;
- Voce variata nel tono: dinamico, femminile, predisposizione estetica.

3.3.2 Classe Sociale

Le caratteristiche della prosodia di un parlante risultano spesso determinanti nel giudicare la sua classe sociale di appartenenza. In molti Paesi nel mondo accenti diversi sono caratteristici di diverse classi sociali (basti pensare all'Inghilterra), al punto che spesso persone studiano per migliorare la propria dizione nel tentativo di essere riconosciuti come appartenenti ad una classe sociale superiore rispetto a quella di appartenenza. È in parte questa la causa per la quale intervistati appartenenti a ceti inferiori mostrano esempi di "ipercorrettismo" (cercando di adattarsi alla pronuncia adottata dalle classi superiori) quando invitati a leggere brani o liste di parole. Stereotipi sono legati anche all'accento del parlante. Per esempio, accenti più prestigiosi vengono spesso percepiti come appartenenti a persone ambiziose, sicure, intelligenti, determinate e dedite al lavoro.

3.3.3 Sesso

Il sesso è uno dei tratti più facilmente riconoscibili dalla voce. Le femmine presentano, in generale, un tono più alto di voce, oltre che una maggior varietà tonale (soprattutto profili ascendenti come sorpresa e rappacificazione). Gli uomini d'altro canto usano più profili discendenti, usando un volume di voce più alto, interrompono più spesso e tendono a controllare la conversazione risultando più assertivo e meno cortese. Stereotopi comuni vedono nell'uomo un volume medio più alto e un tono più aggressivo, mentre nelle donne un tono più cortese, gentile e dimesso (Smith, 1979).

3.3.4 Età

Con l'avanzare dell'età, la velocità dell'eloquio diminuisce, e perde di fluenza. Con il passare degli anni la voce degli uomini si abbassa di tono. I fattori principali che possono dare degli indizi per definire l'età sono (Harnsberger et al., 2010, pp.523-

530):

- Flessibilità nel cambiare tono;
- Tremori;
- Velocità dell'eloquio;
- Volume;
- Qualità vocale;
- Controllo articolatorio.

3.4 Prosodia e comprensione

La varietà tonale aumenta la comprensione e l'interiorizzazione dei contenuti, mentre scarse qualità vocali e problemi di pronuncia, balbettii e mancanza di fluenza non sembrano interferire significativamente nel processo di comprensione. Gli studi hanno dimostrato che la comprensione comincia a diminuire quando vengono superate le 250-275 parole al minuto (parlando di messaggi nuovi) (Knapp et al., 2007, pp.346-347).

3.5 Prosodia e persuasione

Mehrabian e Williams (1969, pp.37-58) hanno identificato quali tratti della prosodia abbiano più possibilità di persuadere l'ascoltatore, dando insieme un'idea di credibilità, competenza e a volte, cambiandone l'attitudine:

- Eloquio sciolto;
- Breve ritardo nelle risposte;
- Variazione di tono;
- Volume di voce più alto;
- Maggior rapidità d'eloquio.

Quest'ultimo parametro, la rapidità d'eloquio, permette di avere un'influenza sull'ascoltatore solo nel caso in cui si cerchi di cambiare il punto di vista

dell'ascoltatore, mentre si rivela controproducente nel caso inverso (da Knapp et al., pp.348-349).

3.6 Prosodia e turni di parola

La prosodia aiuta anche nel regolare i turni di parola, soprattutto insieme ai linguaggi non verbali:

- Cedere la parola: permettere ad un'altra persona di parlare dopo che si ha concluso il proprio turno. Qualche volta lo facciamo ponendo una domanda, facendo in modo che il nostro tono salga alla fine della frase. Possiamo anche ottenere lo stesso effetto facendo si che il tono cada alla fine di una dichiarativa. Altri modi per cedere la parola sono il silenzio o una pausa piena;
- Richiedere la parola: si può richiedere la parola interrompendo o "parlando sopra" il nostro interlocutore. Un altro comune mezzo è chiamato "inizio balbettante" e consiste nel ripetere più volte la prima parola del proprio discorso per sucitare fretta. Si può anche aumentare la rapitidà delle proprie risposte per simulare impazienza.
- Mantenere la parola: per mantenere il proprio turno di parola i tratti prosodici più usati sono:
    - Aumento di volume;
    - Aumento di rapidità di eloquio;
    - Aumento della frequenza di pause piene;
    - Diminuzione di frequenza e durata delle pause vuote;
- Rifiutare di parlare: per far si che la persona con cui conversiamo non ceda il suo turno di parola si ricorre solitamente a segnali non verbali. Ad ogni modo, il silenzio è uno strumento prosodico abbastanza adeguato allo scopo (Knapp et al., 2007, pp.349-351).

3.7 Pause e silenzi

Le pause possono:

- Essere dovute alla complessità del messaggio in uscita;
- Rafforzare il significato delle parole che seguono;
- Dare il tempo al parlante di prendere una decisione;
- Dare tempo alla riflessione sui significati appena comunicati;
- Dare modo al nostro interlocutore di parlare (regolando il cambio di turno);
- Indicare distrazione, imbarazzo, paura, mancanza di scorrevolezza o nervosismo.

Le pause possono essere riempite (da rumori fàtici, di solito) oppure vuote. Sebbene le pause del primo tipo sembrino avere un effetto positivo e rilassante, soprattutto in situazioni di stress, tendono ad ostacolare i processi cognitivi (Knapp et al., 2007, pp.351-355, Argyle, 1975, p.149 e Birkenbihl, 1990, pp.183-184).

4. NATURAL VS CULTURAL

When we talk about non-verbal languages, we often tend to consider natural what might actually be cultural. Certainly, intercultural parallels do exist; there are similarities in how cultures employ this system. Similar expressions may indeed occur in other cultures, but the meaning people attach to them can differ from culture to culture. As Freddi points out «*L'uomo tende ad attribuire un carattere di "naturalità" ai fatti cinesici, il che sta alla base di diffusi stereotipi. Occorre prendere atto della natura sociale e pertanto della matrice culturale dei codici cinesici: i modi di gestire, di atteggiarsi, e di muoversi sono retti da codici fortemente strutturati che variano da cultura a cultura»* (Freddi, 1993, p.28).

Culture is everything but nature. While nature presents problems like the need for food, shelter, clothing, and procreating, culture provides ways to fulfil these needs (Balboni, 1999, p. 24). According to Triandis (1994, p. 23), 'Culture is a set of human-made objective and subjective elements that in the past have increased the probability of survival and resulted in satisfaction for the participants in an ecological niche, and thus became shared among these who could communicate with each other because they had a common language and they lived in the same time and place'. Therefore, with culture

related to geography, different communities around the world may find different ways to handle similar issues. In fact, cultures usually fulfil needs in similar ways. However, the five following factors generally differentiate cultures (Samovar et al., 2007, pp. 36-42):

- Religion: provides values, beliefs, and guidelines for some behaviours;
- History: stories about the past help people living in the present, creating identity and a sense of belonging, as well as providing values and rules;
- Values: 'Values are critical to the maintenance of culture as a whole because they represent the qualities that people believe are essential to continuing their way of life' (Bailey & Peoples, 2011, p. 26);
- Social Organizations: family, government, schools, tribes, and clans;
- Language: includes gestures, clothing, words, grammar, syntax, frequency, intensity, and modality with which each of these aspects are used.

4.1 Intercultural problems

Of these cultural-distinguishing factors, language is clearly the most pertinent to this case study. During communication between people belonging to different cultures, cultural misinterpretations of nonverbal language can lead to disharmony, rejection, and disagreement. Focusing on nonverbal language, Rosenthal et al. (1979) found the issues occurring during intercultural communication were mainly related to:

- Closeness, Contact, and Glances: the distance between people while communicating can vary significantly depending on the cultures of the speaker and the listener, as can the possibility of public and private contact and the duration and frequency of direct glances at the interlocutor's face or body;
- Expressiveness: showing emotion through the body;
- Different Meanings for the Same Gestures: neutral and even positive gestures can be negative gestures in other countries;
- Lack of Feedback by the Listener: this is mostly related to the phatic sounds and head movements people can or cannot utter or perform while listening;

- Symbolic Self-Presentation: conveyed by clothes, uniforms, personal items, and status symbols;
- Rituals: cultural rules, forms of greetings, and politeness.

Another classification by Knapp et al. (2007, pp .408-410) points out three main differences characterizing cultural nonverbal behaviour:

- High-Contact against Low-Contact: high-contact cultures (like the Italian culture) are characterized by closeness during interactions and frequent physical contact. In low-contact cultures (like the Japanese culture), people tend to talk farther away from each other, and physical contact is kept to a minimum;
- Individualism against Collectivism: individualistic cultures value personal rights, responsibilities, achievements, privacy, self-expression, individual initiative, and self-centred identity. Conversely, collective-oriented cultures value collaboration and group membership;
- High-Context against Low-Context: high-context cultures focus mostly on nonverbal behaviour and implicit and indirect messages, while low-context cultures value words the most.

The following chapter will discuss what many scholars consider the most consistently culture-dependent aspect mentioned thus far: gestures. Most gestures are culture-specific and can convey significantly different meanings in different social or cultural settings. Accordingly, Samovar et al. (2007, pp. 282-284) make a distinction between four main types of gestures:

- Idiosyncratic Gestures: these are gestures whose meanings come from features and properties of a particular culture (examples of idiosyncratic gestures are admiration gestures or gestures with sexual connotations);
- Beckoning Gestures: those gestures displayed to summon, to signal, to direct, or to entice;
- Agreement Gestures: those gestures performed to agree or disagree with what

is being said;

- Frequency and Intensity of Gestures: it is well known that some cultures are more demonstrative, and their respective gestures are displayed with greater frequency and intensity.

4.2 RESEARCH

The ability to understand nonverbal meanings delivered through body language, in spite of cultural variation, is a competence useful for everyone, not only those involved in language studies. Body signals are valuable for instance during meetings, negotiations, transactions, and sales. They are also an invaluable tool for medics and doctors. This is a brief interview with the 10 general practitioners working in "La Salute" Medical Centre in Marghera (VE), an Italian city with a high immigrant density.

Quelle che seguono sono una serie di domande sul Suo lavoro come medico di base. Verranno analizzate ed utilizzate in seguito come dati per la nostra tesi sul linguaggio del corpo. La ringraziamo per l'attenzione ed il tempo che vorrà dedicarci. Marco Munari

1. Quanti dei Suoi pazienti sono stranieri rispetto al totale (in percentuale)?
2. Rispetto a questo gruppo, con quanti condivide almeno una lingua comune (in percentuale)?
3. Con questi pazienti utilizza gesti o cambiamenti di velocità o volume nella lingua parlata per cercare di migliorare l'esito dell'incontro?
4. Questi pazienti stranieri parlano con la stessa libertà di temi come:
    - Gravidanze:
        - Si
        - No
        - Dipende dalla cultura
    - Malattie gravi:

        - Si
        - No
        - Dipende dalla cultura
    - Malattie in generale:
        - Si
        - No
        - Dipende dalla cultura
5. Le è capitato di affrontare tematiche di cui si sono dimostrati restii a parlare?
    - Si
    - No
6. Le è capitato di incontrare resistenze al momento di visitare una donna straniera?
    - Si
    - No
7. Pazienti stranieri che condividono una lingua in comune con Voi dimostrano lo stesso grado di formalità nei vostri confronti rispetto ai pazienti italiani a parità di familiarità?
    - Si
    - No
8. Le sembra che alcuni dei Suoi pazienti stranieri mantengano delle distanze maggiori/minori (invasione dello spazio) nei Suoi confronti? Se si, Le crea disagio?
    - Si
    - No
9. Il modo di segnalare il dolore/la febbre/la tosse o altri segnali comuni nel Suo lavoro vengono segnalati dai pazienti stranieri con gesti differenti da quelli italiani? E la loro intensità?
    - Si
    - No
10. Alla luce dell'esperienza maturata nel Suo campo, crede che sarebbe utile per un medico avere conoscenza delle principali differenze culturali esistenti al fine di migliorare il rapporto con i pazienti e l'esito delle visite?
    - Si, molto.

- Abbastanza
- Non molto
- Affatto

Follows, the answers provided by the GPs:

	Medico 1	**Medico 2**	**Medico 3**	**Medico 4**	**Medico 5**	**Medico 6**	**Medico 7**	**Medico 8**	**Medico 9**	**Medico 10**
Domanda 1 (Percentuale)	15	12	20	15	12	35	10	50	15	20
Domanda 2 (Percentuale)	100	10	99	30	10	50	80	70	50	99
Domanda 3	no	si	si	si	si	si	si	si	si	si
Domanda 4 A	Si	Dip.	si	Dip.	si	si	Dip.	si	Dip.	si
Domnada 4 B	Si	Dip.	si	Dip.	si	Dip.	Si	si	Si	si
Domanda 4 C	Si	Dip.	si	si	si	si	Si	si	Si	si
Domanda 5	no	no	no	si	no	si	Si	no	No	si
Domanda 6	no	si	no	si	si	si	Si	no	Si	si
Domanda 7	Si	si	si	no	si	si	Si	si	si	no
Domanda 8	no	si	no	si	no	si	No	no	no	no
Domanda 9	no	si	si	si	si	si	No	no	si	si
Domanda 10	Abb.	molto	molto	molto	molto	molto	Abb.	Abb.	molto	Abb.

Though the data collected are quite dissimilar, gestures seem to be the aspect that most of all can prevent the GPs from working at the top of their possibilities. Almost every doctor interviewed is aware that nonverbal language can assist him or her during the medical examination. What is more important, all of them believe that knowledge on this topic would be of use in his or her work. We are well aware that 10 subjects are not enough to provide a proper representation of the needs and the feelings perceived, but we are confident that tests on a larger scale would lead to similar conclusions.

Since GPs believed gestures to be the most problematic among nonverbal languages,

we want to conclude our paper with an overview on the main culture-related ones. What follows will not be a classification of inputs; there is too much variation between cultures, and this work would be unable to report the thousands of differences. What we aim to do is focus on the differences existing in the use of non-verbal codes around the world. We want to raise awareness in students about this topic, a topic too often omitted in normal *curricula,* particularly in high schools. To do so, we searched the Internet for any information about the main gestures that undergo cultural changes. We also interviewed more than 30 foreign patients of "La Salute" Medical Centre. We want to highlight that the data acquired comes from people belonging to different ages, genders, and social classes, all of which are factors that influence the different ways inputs are displayed. More importantly, the illustrated examples refer to particular regions in the countries we name (making a forced generalization); non-verbal language can be deeply modified by geography. However, once again, our goal is not to provide an unambiguous classification of world gestures, but to highlight differences (and existing similarities) in order to emphasise this important subject. For the gestures and non-verbal inputs taken into account in the following pages, we are borrowing, with few changes, the page setting used in Fabio Caon's '*Dizionario dei gesti degli italiani, una prospettiva interculturale*'. For some of the descriptions we quoted the page where we found the related gesture. We will indicate our sources here and in the bibliography not to weigh down the overview.

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IN ADDITION, SOME BOOKS HAVE BEEN VERY HELPFUL:

CAON F., PAVAN E. & LOBASSO F., 2007, *Manuale di comunicazione interculturale tra italiani e Greci*, Perugia, Guerra.

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4.2.1 GESTURES ACROSS CULTURES

DESCRIPTION:

the "OK" sign is made by connecting the thumb and forefinger in a circle and holding the other fingers straight. The gesture has been popularized by divers, opposed to the "pollice verso sign" used to indicate emersion.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) AMERICA, UK: often used to tell somebody that they have made a great meal. It basically means"great", or "absolutely fine".
b) FEW COUNTRIES IN EUROPE: rude gesture due to numerical interpretation reasons (you are a "zero").
c) LATIN AMERICA, BRAZIL, GERMANY AND A FEW MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES: the circular shape of the gesture gives it the meaning of *"anus"*.
d) AUSTRALIA COSTA D'AVORIO: it means zero.
e) GERMANY: it may mean a job well done or an offensive insult depending on the region.
f) GREECE, TURKEY: it means that a man is homosexual.
g) FRENCH: "zero"or "worthless".
h) JAPAN: "money".
i) ARAB WORLD: shaken at another person it symbolizes the sign of the evil eye.

An Arab may use the sign in conjunction with verbal curses.

j) ALBANIA: the “A-Ok” is the rudest gesture use to offend a member of the family.

k) IRAN: rude gesture.

l) MACEDONIA: United Macedonia salute.

m) EGYPT: Number “three”. If pointing toward the feet it can be used with children to threaten them.

DESCRIPTION:

thumb pointing upwards, the other fingers closed toghether in a fist. World War II pilots used to perform the signal to communicate they were “good to go” with ground crews. Scuba divers display it as command to ascend.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) UK: it is popularly known as "thumbs up". Can be use interchangeably with the "OK" signal.

b) EUROPE: it signals the number one, since they count from one to five beginning with the thumb for one and ending with the little finger at number five.

c) SOUTHERN SARDINIA, NORTHERN GREECE, NIGERIA, AFGHANISTAN: it is an obscene insult.

d) USA, UK, EUROPE, AUSTRALIA: hitch-hiking to the drivers.

e) LATIN AMERICA,WEST AFRICA, GREECE, RUSSIA, SARDINIA AND THE SOUTH OF ITALY: same meaning as "the finger".

f) MIDDLE EAST: the biggest insult you can display.

g) AUSTRALIA: if you move it up and down, it is considered as a grave insult.

h) THAILAND: it is a sign resembling stiking out your tongue in Italy. Childish gesture.

DESCRIPTION:

made by raising the index and middle fingers and separating them to form a V. The "V sign" might come in two formats: the former, with the palm faced outwards, and the latter, with the palm inwards. With the palm facing outwards it began to be used during World War II to indicate "V for Victory". A legend claims that the two-fingered salute or V sign derives from a gesture made by longbowmen fighting in the English army at the Battle of Agincourt (1415) during the Hundred Years' War. According to the story, the French used to cut off the arrow-shooting fingers of captured English and Welsh longbowmen, and the gesture was a sign of defiance of the bowmen, showing the enemy that they still had their fingers.

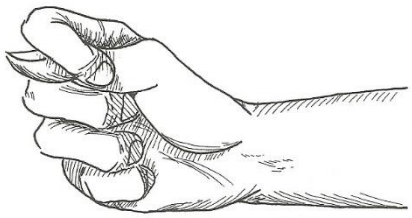
MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) AMERICA, BRAZIL: both the gestures mean "victory", or "peace and love", which seemed to become the primary meaning above all after anti-Vietnam protesters used it during the 60s.

b) GREAT BRITAIN, AUSTRALIA, IRELAND, NEW ZEALAND: if the outside of your hand is facing your target, you are insulting him/her.

c) ITALY: it can be consider rude if you place your nose between the two fingers.

d) CHINA, JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA, TAIWAN, THAILAND: used as an indication of cuteness when being photographed.



DESCRIPTION:

the "fig sign" is a gesture made with the hand and fingers curled and the thumb thrust between the middle and index fingers forming the fist so that the thumb partly pokes out. In ancient Rome, it was a fertility and good luck charm designed to ward off evil.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE: letter T (In International Sign "T" has been modified to avoid possible offense).

b) FRANCE, GREECE, INDONESIA, JAPAN, RUSSIA, SERBIA: it is considered an obscene gesture.

c) ANCIENT GREECE: this gesture was a fertility and good luck charm designed to

ward off evil.

d) PORTUGAL, BRAZIL, FRIULI, SICILY: image used in good luck talismans.

e) TURKEY: middle-finger equivalent.

f) COSTA RICA: rude gesture.

g) The gesture is also used in some countries in a trick played by adults and parents, with the intention of convincing their child that his or her nose has been taken away.

h) BOSNIA, SERBIA, OR CROATIA: the "fig" sign is addressed as the "šipak" (the most common use in Croatia) referring to the vagina. It is only used in comic contexts.

DESCRIPTION:

it is a hand gesture that is carried out by pointing the index and pinkie finger upwards and the two middle fingers and thumb curled towards the palm.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) recently adopted by fans of rock and heavy metal music. It was used as a Satanic salute during the 1960s.

b) AMERICA: often performed meaning “rock on”.

c) UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS IN AUSTIN: known as the “Hook ‘em Horns”. It is the slogan and hand gesture used as a greeting or to cheer for sports teams.

d) BASEBALL PLAYERS: used to indicate “two outs”.

e) BUDDHISM, HINDUISM: positive hand gesture , known as the "*Karana Mudra"* used to dispel evil.

f) SPAIN, PORTUGAL, GREECE, COLOMBIA, BRAZIL, ALBANIA, SLOVAKIA, CZECH REPUBLIC: used most often to disagree with football referees.

g) ITALY: gesture which means that a man’s wife is being unfaithful to him. It could also be used as a way to dispel bad luck.

h) HAITI: rude gesture.

i) CUBA: gesture coming from afro-cuban religion and used to dispel bad luck.

DESCRIPTION:

a hand with the index and middle fingers crossed. The oher fingers are curled towards the palm.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) Crossed fingers are used to superstitiously wish for good luck or to nullify a promise. Many western cultures make this gesture when wishing for good luck.

b) UK: National Lottery logo.

c) VIETNAM: this is an obscene gesture. The crossed fingers are said to resemble female genitals.

d) COSTA D'AVORIO: it could mean "don't move".

DESCRIPTION:

all fingers and thumb are together with the hand pointing upwards. It moves up and down at the wrist.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) ITALY: "What the hell are you talking about?", "Who do you think you are". It can indicate that a street is packed with people (Same gesture but shake your hand vigorously). It can also show that you are scared (Same gesture but open and close your fingers).

b) EGYPT: "Wait there".

c) WATERLOO: It means "what do you mean" or "what is wrong with you?'".

d) PATAGONIA: "crazy".

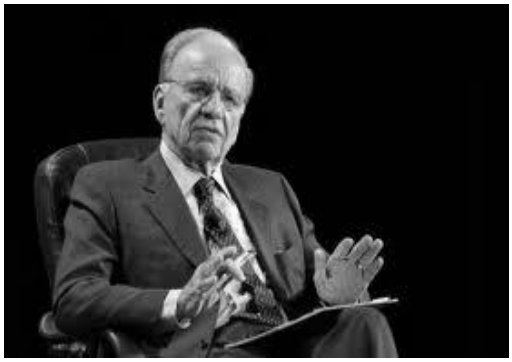
e) BRAZIL: If someone shows you the back of their hand, with the fingers pointing up, and closes the thumb against the fingers repeatedly, this means "full".

f) ITALY, BRAZIL: raising a hand and putting it in front or one's mouth could mean

“Let’s eat!”. The same gesture in Italy could also mean "I'm hungry".

g) COSTA RICA: "It’s so crowded!". Every finger represents one person, and that they are all very close to each other because there isn’t much space.

h) FEW COUNTRIES IN EUROPE: If the fingers are kept straight and together, held horizontal or upwards, while the thumb points downwards and the fingers and thumb snap together repeatedly the gesture can also be used to indicate that someone talks too much.



DESCRIPTION:

opening the palm to your target and stretching out the fingers.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) ITALY AND OTHER WESTERNIZED COUNTRIES: "calm down".

b) GREECE: known as a *moutza*, it is one of their most traditional insults, comparable to the American interpretation of the same signal as “talk to the hand, because the face isn’t listening”.

c) PAKISTAN, MANY PARTS OF AFRICA: The gesture is also an insulting one.

d) JAPAN: used against the Koreans. It can be translated as "animal", the signal is similar to the *moutza* in every way except they tuck the thumb into the palm.

DESCRIPTION:

curling the index finger towards oneself, the other fingers almost closed in a fist. Usually called "the dog call".

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) No-no gesture in many Asian countries.

b) PHILIPPINES: this gesture is only used for dogs and is punishable by arrest. They could also break your index finger in order to prevent you from committing the same crime again.

c) JAPAN: considered a rude gesture.

d) SINGAPORE: it is indication of death.

e) NORTH AMERICA OR NORTHERN EUROPE: It commonly means "come here." It is a gesture generally linked with seductive temptresses in Hollywood movies, beckoning for their targeted men to follow them into another room.

f) SOUTHERN EUROPE: "good bye".

DESCRIPTION:

the thumb is pushed toward the teeth, inside the mouth. The gesture is commonly called "the Cutis".

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) There is no equivalent in Western culture.

b) INDIA, PAKISTAN: It basically means "to screw somebody".

c) ITALY: Biting one's thumb was and still is an old rude Italian gesture. It is comparable to "the finger" in modern terms. In Verona, it was once used as a non-verbal equivalent of fighting words as attested by William Shakespeare's play Romeo and Juliet. The gesture is also a traditional Sicilian insult meaning “to hell with you”.

d) MOLDAVIA: the gesture is used to say “I'm thinking” or to express astonishment.

DESCRIPTION:

most likely derived from Ancient Greece, "the finger" is one of the most widespread obscene gestures throughout the Western world. It is performed by raising the middle finger leaving the other fingers closed in a clanched fist. the middle finger is probably the most universally-understood hand gesture in the world.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) SOME MEDITERRANEAN AND ARAB COUNTRIES: the index finger is preferred to the middle.

DESCRIPTION:

it is a gesture to single out someone from a crowd.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) Europe: it is rude to point fingers at others. This hand gesture is an indication of a "dominant to subordinate" behavior in the professional world.
b) United States: Not as markd as in Europe.
c) China, Japan, Latin America, Indonesia: very rude connotation.
d) many African countries: the index finger is used only for pointing at inanimate objects.

DESCRIPTION:

one or both hands up rose with the palm facing towards the opposite person.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) America, British countries: "stop". The hand is tilted forward. If the fingers are pushing down, it tells the person to sit down or settle.
b) Singapore or Malaysia: it means that one is trying to get someone's attention like a waiter or asking for permission to speak.

c) English slang: "talk to the hand", used to insult target person.

d) Greece: it is a highly insulting gesture. It is said to be a remnant of Byzantine times, when people could taunt shackled criminals by smearing their faces with excrement.

DESCRIPTION:

thumb and pinky outstretched, other fingers tight against palm.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) IN MOST CULTURES: the Thumb moves close to the ear and the pinky to the mouth as though they were a phone. Used to say, "I'll call you," or may be used to request a future telephone conversation.
b) HAWAII: commonly called shaka, it is an ubiquitous hand gesture that has become closely associated with the Aloha Spirit. It is a symbol that communicates understanding and fellowship and used to say hello, thank you, take care, goodbye.
c) AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE: letter "*Y*".
d) USA: The sign is often followed by waving as a greeting or acknowledgment. It can be used when driving as a signal of thanks to other drivers.
e) BRITAIN, NORTHERN EUROPE: signal for owners of older model Volkswagen

vans when passing each other on roads.

f) SPAIN, ITALY, UNITED STATES, PORTUGAL, BRAZIL: if the thumb points to the mouth, it means "drinking".
g) if the thumb points to the mouth, in some countries, it can also represent marijuana usage, in particular the use of a bong. This is usually accompanied by a sucking noise.
h) China: It is used to express number six.

DESCRIPTION:

the index and the thumb almost touch one another, the remaning fingers are closed in a fist shape.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) ITALY: the meaning of this gesture is half way between “small” and “few”.
b) SPAIN: It is a funny way to ask “Do you get it?” with your hand. A Spanish oral expression would be “*¿Lo captas*?”.
c) CUBA: used to express that someone is not ugly. The gestures is performed moving it from the right side of the body to the left.

DESCRIPTION:

the lips are closed and protruded in a "kiss shape".

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) In most cultures the meaning is well known, often use as a greeting or a demonstration of fondness toward sombody liked.
b) PHILIPPINES: travelers often ask local villagers for directions. If the destination is close enough, the quick reaction of a Filipino is to purse one's lips and point them that way.
c) HAITI: the gesture is used to say somebody is speaking too much.

DESCRIPTION:

One hand is placed flat atop the other with both palms facing down, fingers extended outward from the hand and thumbs stuck out to the sides. The thumbs are rotated to symbolize flippers.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

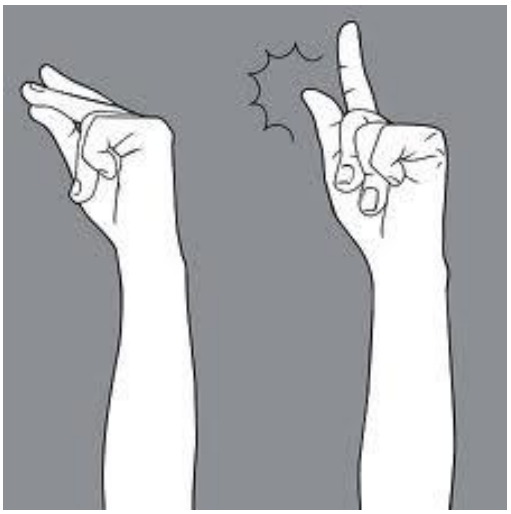
ENGLAND: Teenage code (of the moment) to signal to each other that a situation is embarrassing.

DESCRIPTION:

putting a slightly cupped hand, with palm down, under the chin and then flicking the fingers out.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) ITALY: commonly used to express indifference. It is quite rude.
b) ARGENTINA: It means “I don't know”, “I have no clue”.



DESCRIPTION:

it is the act of creating a cracking sound with one's fingers. Primarily this is done by building tension between the thumb and another finger and then moving the other finger forcefully downward so it hits the palm of the same hand at a high speed.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) UK, AMERICA: it signifies remembering or failing to remember. The finger snapped is often close to the temple. Some people also snap their fingers to catch the attention of others. Children may snap their fingers to indicate that they are eager to give the answer to a question at school.
b) LATIN AMERICA: this gesture is used as a way to say "Hurry up."
c) In many cultures, snapping fingers close to someone's face is considered to be an offensive gesture.
d) FRANCE: one can snap his or her fingers in order to get a taxi.
e) HAITI: they snap theit fingers asking for the bill in a restaurant.

DESCRIPTION:

tilting the head up and down or left and right.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) WESTERN EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA, AND THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT: tilting the head up and down for assent.
b) BULGARIA: tilting the head up and down for dissent.
c) IRAN: tilt your head down with a slight turn for yes, to signal no, move your head up and back sharply.
d) LEBANON: shaking the head from side to side means yes. To signal no, point your head sharply upward and raise your eyebrows.
e) GREECE: Tilt your head to your left and right sides to say yes. Either nods one's head upward or lift one's eyebrows upward to signals no.

DESCRIPTION:

the gesture is displayed by tapping with the closest fist on a surface. Usually known as

"Knocking on wood" gesture.

MEANINGS ACROSS CULTURES:

a) ITALY: one knocks on iron with the hand in an attempt of defeating or casting away evil. Another meaning of knocking the fist on a surface is to say that somebody is stubborn.

b) RUSSIA: this sign is used to indicate that someone being talked about is stupid.

c) UK, USA: Knocking on wood is a superstitious gesture used to ensure that a good thing will continue to occur after it has been acknowledged. However, it is sometimes used after speaking of a plausible unfortunate event, so that it does not actually occur.

d) GERMANY: Lightly tap knuckles on table to greet a large number of people at a table.

e) MOLDAVIA: the gesture means “silence please”.

f) EGYPT: it means stubborness if knocking to the temple.

We observed, however, that the gestures that more than any other undergo profound changes from one culture to another, are those related to greetings. In the following pages we illustrate some of the differences found during our work on this subject and report some examples found on the internet.

a) INDIA: hands joined, pointing upwards, *Namaste* literally means “I bow down to you”, or “Salutations to you”, used as handshake is used in the western world. When greeting an older person or someone important they bow down a bit to show additional rispect. Goodbye is never said in such final terms. It is always “We shall see you again” or “Come again” or “Thanks for coming”.

b) USA: it is normal for men to shake hands firmly when they meet, but it is quite unusual for men to kiss when they greet each other.

c) UK: They usually only shake hands when meeting the first time. Social kissing, is common in an informal situation between men and women and also between women who know each other.

d) FRANCE: including children, they shake hands with their friends and often kiss them on both cheeks, both upon meeting and leaving.

e) JAPAN: the common greeting for men and women as well is to bow when they greet someone.

f) ARAB COUNTRIES: they place a hand on your heart along with a slight bow is a sign of respect. After exchanging handshakes people embrace, pressing the cheeks to each other close friends or colleagues hug and kiss both cheeks upon greeting. They shake hands with the right hand only, for longer but less firmly than in the West. Holding hands even for a long period after shaking hands is a sign of friendship. Left hand usually grasps the elbow. Contact between the opposite genders in public is considered obscene. Do not offer to shake hands with the opposite sex. During the Hajj (pilgrimage), people may kiss only on the shoulders as a gesture of friendship and greeting. Salaam is an Arabic gesture of greeting consisting of a low bow with the hand touching the forehead.

g) ARGENTINA: they greet with a warm handshake, and with friends, they touch on the forearm or elbow lightly. Good friends will greet with an "abrazo".

h) BRAZIL: Greetings are carried out with handshakes accompanied with touching of the forearm, elbows, and pats on the back.

i) SAUDI ARABIA: Holding hands or taking someones elbow is a sign of respect and friendship.

j) WESTERN CULTURES: As new forms of greetings we can see the rap greeting, the fist bump, the high fiveand sometimes also the elbow bump.

k) SERBIA: Three-finger salute is a salute made by extending the thumb, index, and middle fingers.

l) Eskimo kissing is a common Inuit greeting. It is performed by two people touching noses.

m) THAILAND: It is rude to pat the back.

n) CHINA: Greeting is usually just a slight nod and bow. Sometimes people will applaud; this should be responded the same way.

o) COLUMBIA: Women hold forearms instead of shaking hands.

p) HUNGARY: they greet each other kissing on the cheeks. The most common way is to kiss from your right to your left. A firm handshake is common when men meet for the first time.

q) BELGIUM: people kiss on one cheek when they meet, regardless of the gender or how well they know each other.

r) RUSSIA: very firm handshake always maintaining direct eye contact. When men shake hands with women, the handshake is lighter. It is considered gallant to kiss women three times while alternating cheeks, and even to kiss hands.

s) ALBANIA: men shake hands when greeting one another. Depending on how close the men are with each other, a kiss on each cheek may be common as well. When a man meets a female relative, a kiss on each cheek, or two per cheek, is common. With friends or colleagues, normally a light handshake will do. Women may shake hands or kiss each other on both cheeks.

t) ARMENIA: a woman needs to wait for the man to offer his hand for the handshake. Between good friends and family members, a kiss on the cheek and a light hug are also common.

u) EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES: Waving your full arm side to side in many countries is recognized as saying 'hello' or 'goodbye'. However, in it is considered overly demonstrative.

v) SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, JAPAN, LATIN AMERICA: it can be confused for a 'no' or general negative response.

w) INDIA: it means 'come here'.

x) HAITI: close friends can greet eachother by linking their pinkies.

y) COSTA D'AVORIO: people use to greet one another by shaking the right hand while the left grabs the neck and the head tap with the other head three times.

CONCLUSIONS

As we saw nonverbal language is an essential component of intercultural communicative competence. Many scholars agree in maintaining that the vocal cues, the gestures, the touches, the items and the distances one keeps from the people he or she is talking to, has a deeper meaning and a deeper impact on communication than the words he or she utters. Furthermore, nonverbal messages can express meanings hidden or in contrast with the verbal ones. What is more, human beings can understand part of nonverbal messages without realizing it and unconsciously react to these stimula. Being aware of what the body gives off is critical to enhance one's own communicative skills. However, nonverbal language is not easy to learn. A single gesture, a movement or an item cannot be read in isolation, outside its context or untied from the verbal language or the other signals being performed. Some of the meanings carried along by these codes are the same worldwide, especially those related to emotions and personality, while others are subject to cultural variation. Among the latter, idiosyncratic, beckoning, and agreement gestures as well as the frequency and intensity with which gestures are performed seem to be those that more than all the other codes undergo cultural changes. The overall idea is that of a complex system of meanings, the comprehension of which requires in-depth studies and the knowledge of which will certainly distinguish a great communicator from an average one. Considered the importance of the topic at hand, we find italian linguistic literature on the topic to be insufficent/lacking. What follows is research we conducted over the occurrence of the most common nonverbal language-related words in the titles of all linguistic works produced from 1960 to 2014, gathered in the BELI (repertorio Bibliotecario dell'Educazione Linguistica in Italia) catalogue (after ruling out those titles which where evidently off-topic, even though presenting one of these words). Nearly no occurrence is found for any nonverbal language-related word, meaning that nonverbal language has not been the centre of almost any italian linguistic or communication study in the past 50 years of publications. In our opinion, being effective and efficient communication so deeply dependent on the good use of nonverbal codes, efforts should be made in the direction of a better circulation of these concepts.

LIST OF NONVERBAL-RELATED WORDS	COUNT OF OCCURRENCES
Cinesica	2
Vestemica	0
Oggettemica	0
Prossemica	0
Paraverbale	0
Non verbale	4
Gesti	3
Tono	0
Timbro	0
Volume	0
Territorio (interpersonale)	0
Spazio (interpersonale)	0
Status Symbol	0
Extralinguistico	0
Corpo/i	1
Testa	0
Viso	0
Braccia/o	0
Gambe/a	0
Postura	0
Odori	0
Umori	0
Rumori	0
Vestiti	0
Abbigliamento	0
Distanza/e	2
Oggetti	0
Stereotipi (culturali)	3
Pregiudizi (culturali)	2

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