

## The Interplay of Verbal and Nonverbal

### Codes

Imagine listening to a computer-generated voice that pronounces each word perfectly but without any inflection or variety. Such a voice would be devoid **of** the rich sounds **of** nonverbal communication, which include pitch, volume, accent, **and** all the other qualities that characterize voices. Now, think about an e-mail exchange. Sometimes, the words people type are all that is needed. Other times, the words themselves are not enough, so people embellish them by adding bold typeface, italics, or extra punctuation marks such as ellipses or exclamation points. People also insert emoticons, which are symbols such as smiling or frowning faces, to add a nonverbal dimension to e-mail.

Conversely, it is difficult for humans to imagine a world that is completely nonverbal. When people visit foreign countries where they do not speak the language, they may try to use nonverbal communication such as pointing **and** facial expressions to get their message across, but without a common language to speak, interaction can be frustrating **and** counterproductive. As another example, think **of** the joy parents experience when their baby first starts to speak. Although children could previously communicate with their parents nonverbally, language opens up a whole new avenue **of** communication, allowing for more precise **and** intricate exchanges **of** information.

As these examples illustrate, verbal **and** nonverbal forms **of** communication are both essential parts **of** human interaction. Although both forms **of** communication can be used alone, they are more frequently used together. In this chapter, the interplay between nonverbal **and** verbal communication is explored. First, a brief history **of** the emergence **of** nonverbal communication as an area **of** research is reviewed. Next, nonverbal **and** verbal forms **of** communication are conceptualized **and** distinguished from one another, followed by a discussion **of** what constitutes verbal **and** nonverbal codes. This chapter ends with a brief section on future directions for research.

### History and Foundations

Various forms **of** nonverbal communication have been studied throughout the ages. **The** ancient Greeks **and** Romans studied how to use nonverbal behaviors to be more persuasive. During the 18th century, many Europeans were educated in the art **of** elocution—how to use gestures, posture, dress, **and** proper diction to make speeches more dramatic **and** emotional. **The** first social scientific perspectives on nonverbal communication emerged in the 19th century. Most notably, in his book *The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals*, Charles Darwin (1872/1904) examined how nonverbal behaviors communicate emotion in socially adaptive ways. In the latter half **of** the 20th century, psychologists **and** communication researchers began focusing more attention on nonverbal aspects **of** the communication process.

### *Ekman and Friesen's Early Contributions*

Paul Ekman **and** Wallace Friesen were among the first to examine how nonverbal **and** verbal codes work together. They described five relationships between nonverbal **and** verbal communication: repetition, substitution, complementation, contradiction, **and** emphasis (Ekman & Friesen, 1969). Repetition occurs when

the verbal **and** nonverbal message communicates the same thing. Saying "No" while shaking one's head or "Stop!" while putting one's hand out are examples **of** this. Substitution occurs when nonverbal behavior takes the place **of** a word or words. A nod may be used rather than the word "Yes," or a high-five may say "Congratulations!"

Complementation takes place when the nonverbal **and** verbal messages add to one another, sometimes to create a clearer meaning. For example, smiling while looking into a spouse's eyes **and** saying "I love you" communicates an especially high level of warmth **and** affection. Contradiction is at work when the verbal **and** nonverbal messages are at odds with one another, such as saying "I'm not mad" while looking away **and** making a surly face or being sarcastic, which occurs when speakers use vocal tone to indicate that they mean the opposite **of** what they are saying. Finally, emphasis involves using nonverbal communication to underscore what is being said. Yelling while saying "Watch out!" emphasizes the urgency **of** a dangerous situation, just as a hand gesture might indicate that a point someone is making is especially important.

Ekman **and** Friesen's (1969) early work also examined the following five types **of** kinesic behavior that help describe how body movement functions within the total communication process: emblems, illustrators, affect displays, adaptors, **and** regulators. Emblems refer to a set **of** body movements that "have a direct verbal translation" (Ekman & Friesen, 1969, p. 63). They can stand in for words entirely **and** often do so when verbal communication is difficult or inappropriate (Ekman & Friesen, 1969; see also Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1996; Streek & Knapp, 1992). Therefore, they are often used strategically. Emblems have a common verbal meaning within a given culture or social group. For instance, in U.S. culture, there are emblems that mean "Good luck!" (crossing one's fingers), "Way to go!" (giving a thumbs up), **and** "Stop!" (putting one hand up with the palm facing away from the face). Emblems are typically so well understood within cultural or social groups that they "are virtually independent **of** linguistic context" (Bavelas & Chovil, 2006, p. 100). However, when used outside one's own cultural or social group, emblems are frequently misunderstood. Giving a thumbs up is translated as "Way to go!" or "Congratulations!" in the United States, but in many places around the world, including Iran, the thumbs up is a rude, offensive gesture.

Affect displays are body movements that transmit internal emotional states (Ekman & Friesen, 1969), such as clenching one's fists to display anger or smiling to exhibit happiness (see Andersen & Guerrero, 1998, for a review). These body movements sometimes accompany speech **and** have the ability to replicate, say the opposite **of**, or qualify verbal communication (Ekman & Friesen, 1969). For example, a person might say, "I'm so angry with you," while displaying a furrowed eyebrow **and** showing his or her teeth (Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987), whereas another person might say, "I'm not jealous," while displaying a cold look. Some facial expressions **of** emotion need to be interpreted within the context **of** accompanying speech (Mead, as cited in Jones & LeBaron, 2002). Speech, however, is not a necessary component for the communication **of** affect (Bavelas & Chovil, 2006; Burgoon et al., 1996). People recognize stereotypic, universal facial displays **of** sadness, such as frowning **and** downcast eyes, in the absence **of** verbal communication (Bavelas & Chovil, 2006). When affect displays become easily recognized without speech, they may be classified as emblems because they are so easily interpretable (Ekman & Friesen, 1969).

Illustrators help describe, clarify, or emphasize something. Examples include drawing a declining line in the air when talking about a dropping number **of** car sales, pretending to kick a ball, drawing the shape **of** an A-line skirt in the air when describing it, pointing to a star in the sky while saying "That star," **and** using hand gestures to indicate the speed **of** a song when conducting a symphony (Andersen, 2008). Sometimes emblematic behaviors function as illustrators. For instance, a person might make a circle around her or his ear to indicate that someone is crazy while saying "psycho" (Ekman & Friesen, 1969, 1972). In this case, the emblematic behavior emphasizes **and** clarifies the meaning of the term *psycho*.

As the above examples suggest, illustrators are "movements which are directly tied to speech" (Ekman & Friesen, 1969, p. 68). Although illustrators sometimes repeat verbal communication (Burgoon et al., 1996;

Ekman & Friesen, 1969), as much as 80% **of** gestures in some research on face-to-face interaction involve "nonredundant information" (see Bavelas & Chovil, 2006, for a review). In fact, gestures that fall under the illustrator category may complement, emphasize, **and** sometimes even disagree with the spoken word (Burgoon et al., 1996; Ekman & Friesen, 1969). Some illustrators, such as batons **and** ideographs (Ekman & Friesen, 1969), are highly related to linguistic context, as "their meanings depend on the 'talk thus-far' **and** are worked out in the talk that succeeds them" (Streek & Knapp, 1992, p. 13; see also Bavelas & Chovil, 2006). For example, a person must rely on linguistic cues to determine the meaning **of** a raised eyebrow, which could be used to emphasize a word, show one's surprise or confusion, or flirt with someone, among other possibilities (Bavelas & Chovil, 2006).

Adaptors, or actions **of** the body used to "satisfy self or bodily needs," have no special connection to speech (Ekman & Friesen, 1969). Most adaptors are directed toward the self, such as moistening one's dry lips with a tongue, scratching one's arm, biting one's nails, twisting the ring on one's finger, or chewing on a pen. Some adaptors are directed at other people, such as tucking a strand **of** hair behind a friend's ear or wiping the dirt off a child's face. Adaptors are often enacted without intention or conscious awareness, although object adaptors may be used to intentionally communicate. Self-directed adaptors are used most frequently when people are alone or do not think that others are watching them (Ekman & Friesen, 1972).

**The** last set **of** kinesic behaviors, regulators, are body movements that are connected to verbal communication in a distinct way. Although they "carry no message content in themselves," they "convey information necessary to the pacing **of** the conversation" (Ekman & Friesen, 1969, p. 82). For example, a person may nod his or her head to encourage another person to continue speaking. Other regulators, such as eye contact or lack thereof, raising **of** an eyebrow, **and** shifts in posture, may indicate to a speaker to stop talking altogether, to repeat a message, **and/or** to let another person speak. Ekman **and** Friesen (1969) note that adaptors **and** affect displays can perform regulative functions in a conversation.

### ***Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson's Early Contributions***

At around the same time that Ekman **and** Friesen's classic work was published, Watzlawick, Beavin, **and** Jackson's (1967) groundbreaking book, *Pragmatics of Human Communication*, brought nonverbal messages to the forefront **of** the communication field. Prior to the 1960s, communication scholars tended to examine verbal messages related to persuasion, self-disclosure, **and** power without considering nonverbal messages. Two propositions from Watzlawick **and** colleagues' (1967) book changed this. Specifically, the authors advanced the famous propositions that one cannot not communicate **and** that every message has a content **and** relational level. According to the "one cannot not communicate" proposition, it is impossible for people to avoid communicating with others. Even when people do not speak, nonverbal behaviors such as posture, gestures, physical appearance, **and** facial expressions communicate messages.

In terms **of** the distinction between the content **and** relational level **of** messages, the content level refers to literal meaning, whereas the relational level refers to how a message is interpreted within a given context. On a relational level, a message is interpreted on the basis **of** the situation, the relationship people share, **and** the nonverbal behaviors people display. For example, imagine that Maria **and** Jake are sitting on opposite ends **of** a couch watching a movie. Maria says, "I'm cold." Her statement has a literal meaning, but it also has several potential relational meanings. If Jake interprets Maria to mean "Do something so I'm not so cold," he might rearrange the blanket on his lap so that it covers both **of** them or he might get up **and** switch the heat on. Perhaps Maria **and** Jake have been arguing **and** Maria's comment means that she is feeling cold toward him. Or perhaps saying "I'm cold" is a signal that she wants Jake to put his arm around her so that they can make up. **The** way Jake determines the relational meaning behind Maria's words would partially depend on her nonverbal communication. Did she smile **and** sound wistful when she said "I'm cold," or did she look away from Jake **and** sound tense? Understanding that every message has a content **and** relational level helps highlight how verbal **and** nonverbal communication work in concert to create meaning.

## **Distinguishing Nonverbal and Verbal Communication**

To fully understand the interplay **of** nonverbal **and** verbal communication, it is essential to conceptualize these terms **and** distinguish them from one another, especially since there is controversy in the scholarly community regarding where the line between verbal **and** nonverbal falls. For early nonverbal scholars, the issue was fairly simple: Words constituted verbal communication, **and** everything other than words constituted nonverbal communication (Burgoon & Saine, 1978; Eisenberg & Smith, 1971; Knapp, 1978; Mehrabian, 1972). Since then, however, researchers have argued that this definition is too broad **and** that it does not help people understand the qualities that distinguish verbal **and** nonverbal communication. For instance, if nonverbal communication is everything but words, does it include body movements such as involuntary blinking, which no one pays attention to? Most contemporary researchers would say "No" **and** argue that involuntary displays **of** behavior should not be studied as communication (e.g., Bavelas, 1990; Burgoon et al., 1996; Guerrero, Hecht, & DeVito, 2008). What about sign language or Braille? In these cases, the channel is nonverbal (gestures or touch), but the message is made up **of** words.

### ***Analogic Versus Digital Processing***

A more contemporary conceptualization **of** the distinction between nonverbal **and** verbal communication rests on whether the message is processed digitally or analogically (Andersen, 2008; Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Chua, 1988). When a message is processed analogically, people consider the whole message rather than dissecting it into smaller parts. In contrast, when a message is processed digitally, people make sense **of** it by looking at all the parts that make up the whole. Think about how children learn the alphabet. Often, they learn to sing their ABCs before they learn to say them. To a 3-year-old, "LMNOP" is usually a sound, not five distinct letters. This is because they have learned the ABCs by singing, which is an analogic activity. When they learn to say (**and** later write) each letter **of** the alphabet, they will be processing the information digitally. Analogic information, such as songs, artwork, facial expressions, **and** body movement, is processed primarily in the right side **of** the brain. Digital information, such as numbers, letters, **and** distinct words, is processed primarily in the left side of the brain (Andersen, 2008).

Some scholars have argued that communication is only nonverbal if it is processed analogically (Andersen, 2008). According to this view, nonverbal communication is continuous **and** holistic **and** as such is processed as a gestalt. This means that people see the "big picture" when processing nonverbal communication, just as young children see "LMNOP" as something bigger than each individual letter. **Verbal** communication, on the other hand, involves linguistic information that is processed digitally (Andersen, 2008). **Verbal** information consists **of** discrete units that are highly notational **and** logical, such as the individual letters **of** the alphabet or individual words in a sentence. (See Table 27.1 for the key characteristics distinguishing verbal **and** nonverbal communication.)

### ***Iconic Versus Symbolic Communication***

Most verbal communication is symbolic **and** culturally specific. When communication is symbolic, there is an arbitrary relationship between the word (or behavior) **and** what it means. For example, in English, the word *tree* came to refer to something that grows up from the ground **and** has a trunk **and** (usually) branches. However, people could have easily chosen another word to represent tree (e.g., maybe "huckily"). Indeed, in other cultures, there are many different words for "tree." These words do not resemble or relate to the trunk with the branches growing out **of** it in any real way; the association is arbitrary. People who do not know English would not connect the word *tree* to the image **of** the trunk with branches.

In contrast, many forms **of** nonverbal communication are iconic or intrinsic. Iconic messages resemble what they stand for. Examples **of** iconic messages include using one's hands to show how big, tall, thin, or short someone is; pretending to kick a ball or swing a bat; or pointing to show direction. Intrinsic behaviors are actions that show a person's internal state or constitute behavior in **and of** themselves. Examples include

smiling, crying, hitting, **and** kissing. These types **of** behaviors tend to be understood across cultures, although there may be differences in the cultural rules that govern them. As a case in point, kissing is universally understood as an affectionate action, but the rules for kissing vary by culture (e.g., kissing both sides **of** the face to greet someone is more appropriate in some parts **of** the world than others).

**Table 27.1 Key Distinguishing Features of Nonverbal and Verbal Communication**

<b>Nonverbal Communication</b>	<b>Verbal Communication</b>
Analogic	Digital
Usually iconic or intrinsic	Usually symbolic
Multimodal <b>and</b> variable	Unimodal <b>and</b> constant
More spontaneous	More strategic
Occurs in the here <b>and</b> now	Can refer to things removed in time <b>and</b> space (displacement)
Nonreflexive	Reflexive

Although it is tempting to classify words as symbolic **and** behaviors other than words as iconic or intrinsic, the distinction is not quite so simple. Onomatopoeia words, such as “buzz,” “flush,” **and** “tap,” are iconic **and** may be understood across cultures. Similarly, although many body movements **and** vocalizations are iconic or intrinsic, others are symbolic. For instance, emblems can be translated into words **and** have various symbolic meanings in different cultures. Crossing one’s middle finger **and** forefinger have different referents depending on one’s culture. In the United States, this gesture commonly means “good luck” if held up in front **of** one’s face **and** “I’m lying” if held behind one’s back. In other cultures, this gesture is a sexual symbol, a symbol **of** friendship, or an obscene gesture. Although gestures such as the U.S. “good luck” gesture often have iconic roots (“I’m with you” in the case **of** the good luck meaning; “We’re close” in the case **of** the friendship gesture; one person on top **of** another in the case **of** the sexual symbol), they evolve so that they become synonymous with a particular meaning, thus functioning as a symbol.

Overall then, the relationships between most verbal communication **and** their referents are arbitrary **and** culturally specific. In contrast, a considerable portion **of** nonverbal communication is iconic or intrinsic **and** therefore understood (at least sometimes) across cultures. There is a gray area between these two positions. This gray area is occupied by onomatopoeia words **and** emblems. Some scholars consider emblems to be a form **of** nonverbal communication, **and** other scholars consider them to be a form **of** verbal communication. Those endorsing emblems as nonverbal communication cite their iconic roots (Guerrero & Floyd, 2006), whereas those endorsing emblems as verbal communication cite their verbal translation **and** constancy (Andersen, 2008).

**Multimodal Versus Unimodal**

In face-to-face contexts, one key distinction between nonverbal **and** verbal communication is that the former is multimodal or multichanneled whereas the latter is unimodal or unichanneled (Andersen, 2008; Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, in press). This means that people can send various nonverbal messages at the same time. A person can simultaneously smile while leaning forward **and** gesturing, but a person can only say one word at a

time.

**The** multimodal nature **of** nonverbal communication separates it from verbal communication while also making it an especially complex **and** sometimes ambiguous form **of** communication. If a person engages in multiple nonverbal cues at the same time, which behavior should a receiver focus on most? A receiver may not even pick up on all the different nonverbal cues that are occurring. This is why people often process nonverbal communication as a gestalt—in other words, they create a global image **of** the person's behavior in their mind rather than trying to interpret each behavior separately (Andersen, 2008). Obviously, however, there is considerable room for misinterpretation, especially if the receiver ignores or downplays some potentially meaningful behaviors. Although verbal communication can also be misinterpreted (**and** often is), the unimodal nature **of** verbal messages leaves less room for ambiguity.

### ***Spontaneity Versus Intentionality***

**The** term *communication* itself is defined differently by various scholars. Some scholars believe that for communication— either verbal or nonverbal—to occur, a sender must direct a message to another person or persons (Motley, 1990, 1991). Other scholars believe that communication occurs whenever a receiver attaches meaning to another person's words or behavior (Andersen, 1991). Still others contend that communication occurs under either **of** these conditions (Guerrero & Floyd, 2006). **The** most common conceptualization **of** nonverbal communication is in line with the latter perspective, with nonverbal communication defined as nonlinguistic behaviors (body movement, vocal tone, facial expressions, etc.) that are either sent with intent or interpreted as meaningful by a receiver. This definition is appropriate for nonverbal communication because many forms **of** nonverbal communication occur spontaneously (Andersen, 1991). This is especially true **of** intrinsic nonverbal behaviors, such as crying, smiling, sighing, or speaking in a nervous voice. Such behaviors are often spontaneous expressions **of** a person's internal feelings. People tend to trust spontaneous nonverbal cues more than they trust words (Burgoon et al., 1996).

**Verbal** communication, in contrast, tends to be sent with intent. Sometimes, verbal communication is highly strategic; people purposely say things a certain way to try to reach a particular goal. Other times, verbal communication is intentional insofar as it is directed toward another person (Motley, 1990). Although people can botch up what they mean to say, they still have a choice as to whether to utter the words or not. Some nonverbal behaviors are harder to control. People have difficulty controlling tears in their eyes, fleeting facial expressions **of** emotion, **and** vocal anxiety because such behaviors are highly spontaneous.

**Of** course, some nonverbal communication is strategic. A person might fake a yawn as an excuse to leave a social gathering early or smile as a means **of** trying to manipulate someone or create a good impression. To further complicate matters, the line between spontaneity **and** strategy can be blurry. Take the case **of** emblems. Emblems such as the hitchhiker's thumb or the "OK" gesture are used like words **and** are therefore strategic. But many facial emblems (see Ekman & Friesen, 1969), such as a sad or a happy face, can be spontaneous or strategic, depending on the situation. In general, however, verbal communication tends to be more strategic, whereas nonverbal communication tends to be more spontaneous.

### ***Displacement and Reflexivity***

While nonverbal communication is unique in terms **of** its iconicity, multimodal nature, **and** spontaneity, verbal communication has the unique qualities **of** displacement **and** reflexivity (Burgoon et al., 1996). Displacement refers to the ability to refer to things that are removed in time **and** space. For example, people can talk about how they felt last week compared with this week or how they would like things to change in the future.

**Nonverbal** communication, in contrast, occurs in the here **and** now. Displacement is also related to being able to talk about things that are absent or nonexistent through the use **of** the negative. A daughter can tell her mother how she does not feel ("My throat doesn't hurt") as well as how she feels ("but my nose is really stuffed up"). It is more difficult to indicate negative states with nonverbal communication. **The** daughter could point to

her throat **and** shake her head, but this could be interpreted in multiple ways (i.e., as indicating that her throat feels bad rather than that it does not hurt). Thus, verbal communication has a much greater ability for displacement than nonverbal communication.

Similarly, verbal communication has the special quality **of** reflexivity (Burgoon et al., 1996), which means that language can reflect on itself. A son might tell his father, "I didn't mean to sound so sassy," **and** his dad might reply, "I didn't mean to sound so harsh." People also make statements such as "I wish I hadn't said that," "I'm not doing a good job telling you how I feel," "I think you misunderstood what I was trying to say," **and** so forth. Words allow people to refine **and** reconstruct the meanings **of** other words that were previously uttered in a way that nonverbal communication cannot.

## Nonverbal and Verbal Codes

Thus far, nonverbal communication has been conceptualized as analogic behavior that is multimodal, is usually iconic or intrinsic, **and** tends to be more universal **and** spontaneous than verbal communication. **Verbal** communication, in contrast, has been conceptualized as digital, symbolic, unimodal, **and** culturally specific. Displacement **and** reflexivity are two unique characteristics **of** verbal communication. Next, this chapter examines the various codes that constitute both nonverbal **and** verbal communication (see Table 27.2). A "code is a set **of** signals" that is associated with a unique message channel (Burgoon et al., 1996, p. 18). A channel is the mode **of** transmission, such as the voice, the body, or the environment. Within most channels, some messages are communicated nonverbally, whereas others are communicated verbally.

### Contact Codes

Within the area **of** nonverbal communication, prox-emics **and** haptics are both contact-related codes. Proxemics refers to messages communicated through the channel **of** space (Smeltzer, Waltman, & Leonard, 2008). For example, a nonverbal scholar studying prox-emics might be interested in the fact that romantic partners generally sit closer to one another than friends (Guerrero, 1997) or that employees sometimes position their belongings in a particular way to show their cubicle space or their "territory" on the lunchroom table (Smeltzer et al., 2008). Haptics, or tactile communication, refers to messages communicated through human touch, which may span from intimate touch, such as hugging **and** holding hands, to nonintimate **and** even aggressive touch, such as punching **and** kicking (Guerrero et al., 2008).

**Table 27.2 Nonverbal and Verbal Codes**

	<b>Nonverbal Communication</b>	<b>Verbal Communication</b>
Contact codes	Personal space	"Keep out" signs
Conversational distance	"Welcome" signs	
Territory	Signs posting rules regarding territory usage	
Hugs, pats, slaps		

Kinesic codes	Posture	American Sign Language
Facial expressions	Lipreading	
Expressive gestures		
Eye contact, gaze aversion		
Appearance codes	Hair, eye, <b>and</b> skin color	T-shirts with slogans
Height <b>and</b> body shape	Writing on team jackets or uniforms	
Facial features (e.g., nose shape)	Name labels	
Makeup		
Clothing <b>and</b> accessories		
Voice codes	Vocal qualities (pitch, volume, warmth, animation, etc.)	Spoken words
Singing, shouting, whispering		
Pauses <b>and</b> silence		
Environmental <b>and</b> artifactual codes	Architectural features	Signs identifying rooms, buildings, or streets
Furniture arrangement	Room or house numbers	
Pictures, flowers	Plaques or diplomas containing information	
Temperature, noise, lighting		
Time codes	Pacing, wait time,	Clocks,



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Perceptions **of** time as loose or exact

**Verbal** phrases  
related to time

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Olfactic codes

Perfume, deodorant

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Natural body odor

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NOTE: **The** types **of** communication listed here are meant to provide examples **of** verbal **and** nonverbal communication rather than a comprehensive list **of** codes.

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There are also verbal cues related to space **and** touch. For example, people regulate space using devices such as welcome signs, keep-out signs, **and** bumper stickers with sayings such as "If you can read this you're too close" (Andersen, 2008). Public territory **and** traffic are also governed by signs that tell people when **and** for how long they can park, when they can turn left or right, **and** whether a beach or park is public or private. At the hap-tic level, Braille is an excellent example **of** a tactile language that is processed digitally rather than analogically (Andersen, 2008). Braille is a language system complete with all the letters **of** the alphabet **and** punctuation necessary to string letters together to make words **and** to string words together to make sentences.

### ***Kinesic Codes***

When most people think about nonverbal communication, they think about body language. **The** formal name for body language is kinesics. Nonverbally, kinesic codes involve actions **of** the body that communicate signals without using touch or physical contact with another person (Burgoon et al., 1996). For example, posture, eye behavior, facial expressions, body movements (such as pointing or scratching one's arm), **and** most gestures fall under the nonverbal code **of** kinesics (Burgoon et al., in press; Guerrero et al., 2008). These types **of** kinesic cues can vary in terms **of** degree **and** intensity. A person can use demure eye contact to flirt or steady eye contact to intimidate. Similarly, a person's posture can vary from extremely relaxed to extremely tense.

**Verbal** kinesic cues, in contrast, tend to be more constant. In other words, there is much less variability in how people express verbal cues communicated through the kinesic channel. American Sign Language is a good example **of** a system **of** verbal communication that involves body movement. Like Braille, sign language includes behaviors that stand for words as well as letters that are strung together in logical ways that allow people to make sense **of** them. Similarly, lip reading is a form **of** verbal communication that involves being able to decode kinesic behaviors into words (Andersen, 2008).

While certain gestures, such as using one's hands to show how tall or short someone is, fall neatly into the category **of** nonverbal communication, others do not. Andersen (2008) argued that emblems such as the "good luck" gesture **and** "the finger" are actually forms **of** verbal communication because they are processed digitally like language **and** tend to be constant rather than variable. However, other scholars include emblems as a form **of** nonverbal communication (e.g., Burgoon et al., 1996; Knapp & Hall, 2006). Guerrero **and** Floyd (2006) considered emblems to be a form **of** nonverbal communication because such gestures nearly always share a resemblance to the words or ideas they communicate. Thus, their origins are iconic even though they become symbolic once they are universally understood within a given culture or social group. Moreover, gestural **and** vocal emblems (e.g., putting one's index finger over one's mouth **and** saying "shhh" to signal that someone

should be quiet) tend to be used strategically, whereas facial emblems (e.g., smiling or rolling one's eyes) tend to be much more spontaneous.

### **Physical Appearance Codes**

Fair or not, the way people look creates impressions. For instance, considerable research has demonstrated that there is often a halo effect for good-looking people. People assume that a person who is beautiful on the outside also has positive internal traits, such as being more sociable, honest, **and** socially skilled (Dion, 1986). There are numerous nonverbal cues related to physical appearance. Some **of** these cues involve signals sent from the way a person's body looks, such as hair color, skin color, size **of** body, **and** facial features. Other cues involve what a person wears, including clothing **and** accessories such as jewelry, ties, **and** scarves.

Although most physical appearances are nonverbal, some are verbal. People often wear T-shirts or jackets with slogans on them. In fact, some schools even have rules about what can **and** cannot be verbally represented on student clothing. **Verbal** cues on clothing can also show group membership. A baseball or dance team jacket, for example, might be emblazoned with both the individual's **and** the group's name.

### **Voice Codes**

Many people think **of** the voice as part **of** the verbal code rather than the nonverbal code. Yet the way people say words communicates important messages. Within the area **of** nonverbal communication, the terms *vocalics* **and** *paralanguage* are used to describe the part **of** spoken language that is nonverbal. Vocalics includes all the signals other than the words themselves that are sent through a person's voice. These include voice qualities such as pitch, accent, speaking rate (i.e., how fast or slow someone speaks), volume, **and** level **of** expressiveness, among numerous qualities **of** the voice (Burgoon et al., in press). Vocalics also includes how people say words—are they singing, shouting, or whispering? Pauses **and** silence are also part **of** the vocalic code. For example, the amount **of** time it takes for someone to respond to another person's question is a silence that can send a message, as are the silences that convey a cozy level **of** comfort between two people or an angry grudge.

Verbally, spoken words are part **of** the voice code. **The** ability to speak **and** to construct sentences in ways that make sense to others who speak the same language are essential skills for being able to communicate verbally. Thus, the ability to speak is not enough, nor is the ability to say words. Famous case studies **of** children who were raised in isolation or with animals have shown that there is a developmental window for learning how to encode language (e.g., Rymer, 1994). Specifically, children need to be exposed to language before puberty if they hope to be able to acquire the language skills necessary to communicate. Although children who were isolated during their childhood often learn hundreds or thousands **of** words, they do not understand grammar or syntax, **and** they, therefore, cannot put discrete words together in ways that communicate broader messages.

### **Environmental and Artifactual Codes**

Messages are also communicated via the environment **and** the objects within that environment. On the nonverbal side, there are myriad environmental cues, such as building design, color, furniture arrangement, noise, temperature, **and** artifacts (e.g., paintings, flowers). These types **of** environmental cues often frame communication by encouraging or discouraging social interaction (Guerrero et al., 2008). **The** objects people carry with them, such as purses, backpacks, briefcases, **and** cell phones, can also influence communication.

On the verbal side, signs that identify the names **of** buildings on college campuses, the office **of** the CEO, or the name **of** a street are all examples **of** verbal environmental cues. Room **and** house numbers can also be considered a form **of** verbal communication because numbers are processed digitally, as are letters **and** words. Some artifacts within environments also contain verbal communication. For example, some schools have a copy **of** the constitution posted on the wall. In museums **and** zoos, there are often placards that explain an exhibit or give facts about an animal. Personal artifacts, such as diplomas or awards hanging in one's office, contain verbal

information that can enhance a person's credibility **and** status.

### **Time Codes**

Researchers studying nonverbal communication use the term *chronemics* to refer to the ways people “use **and** perceive time” (Guerrero et al., 2008, p. 10). **The** way people use time is most closely related to communication. For example, being early or late communicates messages to others, as does the amount **of** time people are willing to wait for someone **and** the extent to which a person focuses on one versus multiple tasks at a time. Some people are oriented more toward the present, whereas others are focused on the future (Gonzales & Zimbardo, 2008). In the workplace, people are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs when they have a future time focus **and** less likely to be satisfied with their jobs when they feel pressured to work at a fast pace (Ballard, 2008). **Nonverbal** cues related to a fast-paced environment can contribute to feelings **of** pressure at work.

Time is also communicated through digital, verbal channels. **The** clock itself constitutes a highly digital mode **of** communication. In the United States, people frequently wear watches. Clocks are often on walls, computers, cell phones, **and** palm pilots. Verbally, people talk about “not having enough time to chat” or “having to go so I won't be late.” Thus, talk about time often serves to help people regulate their communication with others. As mentioned earlier, verbal communication is also unique in that people can refer to things in the present, past, **and** future by using language. **Nonverbal** communication only occurs in the present.

Interestingly, people from different cultures may vary in the extent to which they communicate about time using analogic versus digital cues. In some cultures, people view time precisely; in other cultures, people view time as loose **and** approximate (Hall, 1984). In the United States, people see time as fixed. When asked what time it is, people give the exact (or close to the exact) time. They also keep tight schedules **and** closely follow rules that regulate time. For individuals in this type **of** culture, digital forms **of** chronemic communication, such as watches **and** calendars, are especially important. In other cultures, such as Brazil **and** Southern Italy, time is treated more loosely; people are freer to be late or early for meetings; **and** analogic cues, such as how high the sun is in the sky **and** how dark it's getting, carry more meaning.

### **The Olfactic Code**

In contrast to the other codes discussed so far, olfactics is a code that is almost exclusively nonverbal. **Nonverbal** researchers use the term *olfactics* to refer to the use **and** perception **of** smell as related to communication (Burgoon et al., in press). Although people can talk about something smelling good or bad (just as we can talk about the time), smells are almost always processed in a holistic fashion. **The** study **of** olfactics includes research on how people adorn themselves with smells such as perfume (Aune & Aune, 2008). In many places around the world, **and** particularly in the United States, people use perfume, soap, **and** body deodorant to convey a particular image to others or to cover up odor. Natural odors related to hormones **and** DNA structures are also part **of** the olfactic code (Furlow, 1996), as are smells within the environment.

### **Future Directions**

Although scholars have made much progress in understanding the interplay between verbal **and** nonverbal codes **of** communication, much work remains to be done. One **of** the key issues relates to how much **of** the meaning associated with an interaction is derived from verbal versus nonverbal cues. Early estimates put the influence **of** nonverbal communication as high as 93%, but more recent studies suggest that nonverbal cues generally contribute about 65% **of** meaning, whereas verbal cues contribute about 35% (Burgoon et al., 1996). These percentages change depending on the task. When people are interpreting emotional cues, nonverbal communication is even more important. However, when people are trying to digest information, verbal communication is particularly critical. Future research should continue to explore how verbal **and** nonverbal cues contribute separately **and** in concert to create meaning.

Another important issue for future research is cultural differences. As discussed earlier in this chapter, some codes **of** communication are more easily understood across cultures than others. Researchers have also uncovered a number **of** cultural differences in the way people communicate nonverbally (for reviews, see Andersen, 2008; Burgoon et al., in press). Yet little is known about the interplay **of** verbal **and** nonverbal cues across cultures. Scholars have determined that some countries, such as the United States **and** Germany, are characterized as low context, which means that people rely more on precise information from verbal communication (Hall, 1984). Other cultures, such as those in Asia, are characterized as high context, which means that people rely more on subtle information from contextual **and** nonverbal cues. For instance, the Chinese system **of** writing is filled with intricacies that are rich in meaning. Similarly, the meaning **of** some Vietnamese words change based on how they are said. In high-context cultures, analogic codes reflected in writing **and** speaking style appear to fuse with digital codes related to written **and** spoken words in ways that people in low-context cultures may not understand. There may well be other differences in how verbal **and** nonverbal codes relate to each other across various cultures, so this is an important area **of** future research.

Another recommendation for future research is to examine how verbal **and** nonverbal communication work together to create patterns **of** reciprocity **and** compensation. Reciprocity occurs when people display behaviors that have similar meanings (Burgoon et al., 1996). So one person might smile, **and** the other person might say "I love you." Compensation occurs when people display behaviors that have opposite or very different meanings, such as one person looking away when another person stands too close to her or him. Thus far, most **of** the work on reciprocity **and** compensation has focused almost exclusively on nonverbal communication. Yet these codes could play off each other. For example, people might avert eye contact when conversation gets highly intimate or hug someone after receiving a compliment. Guerrero, Jones, **and** Burgoon (2000) demonstrated that people sometimes compensate verbally when their romantic partner acts avoidant (by saying things like "What's wrong?"), even though they reciprocate nonverbally by showing more negative affect. A better understanding **of** these types **of** patterns will bring scholars one step closer to understanding the intricacies **of** the interplay between verbal **and** nonverbal codes.

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—Lisa Farinelli

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