

relationship with each other and with comparable systems from other sensory modalities is the emergent communication system achieved.³

Argyle flatly states, "Some of the most important findings in the field of social interaction are about the ways that verbal interaction needs the support of nonverbal communications.⁴ What are some of the ways in which verbal and nonverbal systems interrelate? How do nonverbal behaviors support verbal behaviors?⁵

Repeating. Nonverbal communication can simply repeat what was said verbally. For instance, if you told a person he had to go north to find a newspaper stand and then pointed in the proper direction, this would be considered repetition.

Contradicting. Nonverbal behavior can contradict verbal behavior. A classic example is the parent who yells to his child in an angry voice, "Of course I love you!" Or the person who is about to make a public speech whose hands and knees tremble, beads of perspiration form around his brow and he not so confidently states, "I'm not nervous." It has been said that when we receive contradictory messages on the verbal and nonverbal level, we are more likely to trust and believe in the nonverbal message.⁶ It is assumed that nonverbal signals are more spontaneous, harder to fake, and less apt to be manipulated. It is probably more accurate to say, however, that some nonverbal behaviors are more spontaneous and harder to fake than others—and that some people are more proficient than others at nonverbal deception.⁷ With two contradictory cues—both of which are nonverbal—again we predictably place our reliance on the cues we consider harder to fake. Interestingly, young children seem to give less credence to certain nonverbal cues than do adults when confronted with conflicting verbal and nonverbal messages.⁸ Conflicting messages in

³R. L. Birdwhistell, "Some Body Motion Elements Accompanying Spoken American English," in *Communication: Concepts and Perspectives*, ed. L. Thayer (Washington, D.C.: Spartan Books, 1967):71.

⁴M. Argyle, *Social Interaction* (New York: Atherton Press, 1969):70-71.

⁵Cf. P. Ekman, "Communication through Nonverbal Behavior: A Source of Information about an Interpersonal Relationship," in *Affect, Cognition and Personality*, ed. S. S. Tomkins and C. E. Izard (New York: Springer, 1965).

⁶Some evidence to support this notion is found in: E. Tabor, "Decoding of Consistent and Inconsistent Attitudes in Communication" (Ph.D. diss., Illinois Institute of Technology, 1970).

⁷See [I, A-E] for a discussion of our level of awareness of various nonverbal behaviors.

⁸D. E. Bugental, J. W. Kaswan, L. R. Love and M. N. Fox, "Child Versus Adult Perception of Evaluative Messages in Verbal, Vocal, and Visual Channels," *Developmental Psychology* 2 (1970):367-75.

which the speaker smiled while making a critical statement were interpreted more negatively by children than adults. This was particularly true when the speaker was a woman. Shapiro's work casts a further shadow on the "reliance on nonverbal cues in contradictory situations" theory.⁹ Shapiro found student judges to be extremely consistent in their reliance on either linguistic or facial cues when asked to select the affect being communicated from a list of incongruent faces and written messages. This suggests that through experience, some people rely more heavily on the verbal message while others rely on the nonverbal. Although one source of our preferences for verbal or nonverbal cues may be learned experiences, others believe there may also be an even more basic genesis—such as right-left brain dominance.

Substituting. Nonverbal behavior can substitute for verbal messages. When the dejected and downtrodden executive (or janitor) walks into his house after work, his facial expression substitutes for the statement, "I've had a rotten day." With a little practice, wives soon learn to identify a wide range of these substitute nonverbal displays—all the way from "It's been a fantastic, great day!" to "Oh, God, am I miserable!" She does not need to ask for verbal confirmation of her perception. Sometimes, when substitute nonverbal behavior fails, the communicator resorts back to the verbal level. Consider the girl who wants her date to stop "making out" with her. She may stiffen, stare straight ahead, act unresponsive and cool. If the suitor still comes on heavy, she is apt to say something like, "Look Larry, please don't ruin a nice friendship . . . etc."

Complementing. Nonverbal behavior can modify, or elaborate on, verbal messages. A student may reflect an attitude of embarrassment when talking to his professor about his poor performance in class assignments. Further, nonverbal behavior may reflect changes in the relationship between the student and the professor. When a student's slow, quiet verbalizations and relaxed posture change—when posture stiffens and the emotional level of the verbalized statements increases—this may signal changes in the overall relationship between the interactants. Complementary functions of nonverbal communication serve to signal one's attitudes and intentions toward another person.

Accenting. Nonverbal behavior may accent parts of the verbal message much as underlining written words, or *italicizing* them, serves to emphasize them. Movements of the head and hands are

⁹J. G. Shapiro, "Responsivity to Facial and Linguistic Cues," *Journal of Communication* 18 (1968):11-17.