

frequently used to accent the verbal message. When a father scolds his son about staying out too late at night, he may accent a particular phrase with a firm grip on the son's shoulder and an accompanying frown on his face. In some instances, one set of nonverbal cues can accent other nonverbal cues. Ekman, for instance, found that emotions are primarily exhibited by facial expressions, but that the body carries the most accurate indicators regarding the level of arousal.¹⁰

Relating and Regulating. Nonverbal communication is also used to regulate the communicative flow between the interactants. Some have labeled this a relational function. A head nod, eye movement, or shift in position—any one of these, or combination of them, may signal the other person to continue to speak or to stop speaking because you want to say something. Speakers generally rely on this feedback to determine how their utterances are being received—or whether the other person is even paying attention.

The future of research in human communication will also require an analysis of verbal and nonverbal behavior as an inseparable unit. Some efforts in this direction have already been made. Harrison¹¹ and Buehler and Richmond¹² have outlined basic frameworks for the analysis of verbal and nonverbal behavior in two person settings. Reece and Whitman,¹³ among others, are trying to isolate the verbal and nonverbal components which convey interpersonal "warmth." Exline¹⁴ is trying to relate eye behavior to various kinds of verbal material. Agulera¹⁵ found touch gestures by nurses changed the nature of their verbal interaction with patients. Goldman-Eisler¹⁶ is studying

¹⁰P. Ekman, "Body Position, Facial Expression and Verbal Behavior During Interviews," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 68 (1964):295-301. Also: P. Ekman and W. V. Friesen, "Head and Body Cues in the Judgement of Emotion: A Reformulation," *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 24 (1967):711-24.

¹¹R. Harrison, "Verbal-Nonverbal Interaction Analysis: The Substructure of an Interview" (Paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism, Berkeley, Calif., August 1969).

¹²R. E. Buehler and J. F. Richmond, "Interpersonal Communication Behavior Analysis: A Research Method," *Journal of Communication* 13 (1963):146-55.

¹³M. Reece and R. Whitman, "Expressive Movements, Warmth, and Verbal Reinforcement," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 64 (1962):234-36.

¹⁴R. V. Exline, et al., "Visual Interaction in Relation to Machiavellianism and an Unethical Act," *American Psychologist* 16 (1961):396. Also, see R. V. Exline, D. Gray and D. Schuette, "Visual Behavior in a Dyad as Affected by Interview Content and Sex of Respondent," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1 (1965):201-9.

¹⁵D. C. Agulera, "Relationship Between Physical Contact and Verbal Interaction Between Nurses and Patients," *Journal of Psychiatric Nursing and Mental Health Services* 5 (1967):5-21.

¹⁶F. Goldman-Eisler, *Psycholinguistics: Experiments in Spontaneous Speech* (New York: Academic Press, 1968).

the predictability of verbal content following pauses of various types and lengths.

Birdwhistell feels that the whole system of body motion is comparable to spoken language. He reports the existence of kinemes and various types of kinemorphs which combine to form higher level syntactic structures. These kinesic units are comparable to the phoneme, morpheme, and other syntactic units used to analyze spoken language. He even goes so far as to state that a well-trained "linguistic-kinesiologist" should be able to tell what movements a man is making simply by listening to his voice. In like manner, he claims to be able to tell what language the late New York Mayor, Fiorello LaGuardia, was speaking simply by watching his gestures. LaGuardia spoke Italian, Yiddish, and English.

Perspectives on the Prevalence and Importance of Nonverbal Communication

The importance of nonverbal communication would be undeniable if sheer quantity were the only measure. Birdwhistell, generally agreed to be a noted authority on nonverbal behavior, makes some rather astounding estimates of the amount of nonverbal communication taking place. He estimates that the average person actually speaks words for a total of only 10 to 11 minutes daily—the standard spoken sentence taking only about 2.5 seconds. He goes on to say that in a normal two person conversation, the verbal components carry less than 35% of the social meaning of the situation; more than 65% is carried on the nonverbal band.

Another way of looking at the quantity of nonverbal messages is to note the various systems man uses to communicate. Hall outlines ten separate kinds of human activity which he calls "primary message systems."¹⁷ He suggests that only one involves language. Ruesch and Kees discuss at least seven different systems—personal appearance and dress, gestures or deliberate movements, random action, traces of action, vocal sounds, spoken words, and written words. Only two of the seven involve words.¹⁸

It is not my purpose here to argue the importance of the various human message systems, but to put the nonverbal world in perspective. It is safe to say that the study of human communication has for too long ignored a significant part of the process.

Further testimony to the prevalence and importance of nonverbal

¹⁷E. T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959).

¹⁸Ruesch and Kees, *Nonverbal Communication*.