

## EXTRA LINGUISTIC ISSUES IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: BODY LANGUAGE, TABOOS

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**Abstract:** The article provides information on body language and taboos, linguistic problems in intercultural communication. It is known that it is important to develop not only language skills, but also the competence of intercultural communication in people learning a foreign language. Intercultural communication, international cultural competence, differences between cultures and non-linguistic aspects of intercultural communication (worldview, rituals, customs, human language, taboos, stereotypes, role of society in multiculturalism, image) play an important role in language learning. It is important to use culturally appropriate features (greetings, politeness, ways of addressing, idioms, etc.) in communication, as well as to learn aspects of another language's culture. And detailed information is provided in the article.

**Key words:** *body language, nonverbal communication, eye contact, gesture, facial expression, taboos.*

It is known that language is an integral part of culture and plays a very important role in it. There is no culture without language. On the other hand, language is shaped by culture and it reflects culture. Cultures are different and each is unique.

However, language is not the only way we express our ideas and feelings. Body movements, eye contact, gestures, and facial expression can also convey messages. We call this non-verbal communication body language. Body language is as much a part of our culture as our verbal language. Even if we don't realize it, we communicate but much more than words when a conversation happens. By using facial expressions, gestures, etc. body movements, we send messages to those around us. Every culture has its own ways of expressing and conveying words through non-verbal communication and gestures. Learning the different general rules of body language in different cultures is very useful for our understanding of each other better. As William Shakespeare said: "There is language in her eye, in her cheek, her lip."

Body language refers to facial expressions, gestures, position, and movement and their relation to communication. They differ greatly from culture to culture, and there is no dictionary to translate them.

According to experts, nonverbal communication like body language makes up around 70-93% of all communication. This means, although we use our verbal communication (words) to share and speak our opinions, our body language will often communicate even more to our audience than we realise.

Facial expressions such as smiles, frowns, winking and yawns can have enormous consequences. Eye contact alone can carry and miscarry a lot of information and is more typical of the Western world. Staring at strangers is impolite. Extended eye contact is rude. Avoiding eye contact can be a sign of insecurity. Shifty eyes could diminish the credibility of one's words or could be interpreted as hiding something.

For example: some cultures, like the Italians, use the arms freely. Others, like the Japanese, are more reserved; it is considered impolite to gesticulate with broad movements of the arms.

Of all the body parts, the hands are probably used most for communicating non-verbally.

### **Hand**

Hand waves are used for greetings, beckoning, or farewells. The Italian "good-bye" wave can be interpreted by Americans as the gesture of "come here." The American "good-bye" wave can be interpreted in many parts of Europe and Latin America as the signal for "no." Handshaking is a form of greeting in most Western cultures. In the Middle East, a gentle grip is appropriate.

In most Asian cultures, a gentle grip and an avoidance of direct eye contact is appropriate. Hand-holding among the same gender is a custom of special friendship and respect in several Middle Eastern and Asian countries.

**Right hand.** The right hand has special significance in many societies. In certain countries in the Middle East and in Asia, it is best to present business cards or gifts, or to pass dishes of food, to get an attention, using only the right hand or both. Left hand is considered unclean in much of the Middle East and in parts of Indonesia.

The "O.K." signal. (the thumb and forefinger form a circle) means "fine," or "O.K." in most cultures, "zero" or "worthless" in some parts of Europe "money" in Japan an insult in Greece, Brazil, Italy, Turkey, Russia and some other countries.

### **Head**

Nodding the head "Yes" in most societies "No" in some parts of Greece, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Turkey Tossing the head backward "yes" in Thailand, the Philippines, India, Laos Rocking head slowly, back and forth "yes, I'm listening" in most Asian cultures.

In his scholarly work on taboos, Chris Drew (PhD) states: "A taboo - is an action that is frowned upon and considered inappropriate to practice or even talk about within a cultural group. A synonym of taboo is prohibition." - quotes.

The word taboo stems from the Tongan word tabu or tapu, which roughly translates to "forbidden". Captain James Cook learned about taboos on his 18th Century exploratory trips through the Pacific and brought the term back to England.

There are 3 Types of Taboos: cultural, religious, and food.

**Cultural Taboos** – A cultural taboo is something that is considered inappropriate to do or discuss within a specific cultural or sub-cultural group. Cultures such as the Tongans, French, Brazilians, and Native Americans all have their own taboos.

**Religious Taboos** – A religious taboo is something forbidden by a religion. Many actions and thoughts are banned by sacred religious texts such as the Torah, Old Testament, and Quran.

**Food Taboos** – A Food taboo is a restriction on what foods are considered appropriate to eat, as well as appropriate ways to eat foods. This can also apply to drinks. Some food taboos are enforced by religions and cultures

In conclusion, studying not only the language of other countries, but also the culture of this nation, intercultural communication, differences between cultures will prevent cultural and linguistic problems in the future.

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