

## Contribution Of Body Language On An Efficacious Interpersonal Communication

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*“Our individualism’s being appparent through the traces over our faces, is our weakest side that delated us, because our faces are observed and their expressions are believed more than our words.”*

Francis Bacon.

**Abstract:** Man’s being a social entity, is the result of his living together with others. In this way, we tend to recognize the world out of us as well as ourselves, by establishing relationships with them. By the help of this relationship, a communication medium becomes true. While the communication individual realized with the ones out of himself is called “interpersonal communication”, mentioned communication’s being sustainable depends on the effectiveness of the communication. And to assure an effective communication medium, communication abilities must be effective, too. An effective communication is undeniably important especially in interpersonal communication. In this context, it is known that bodylanguage was effective in communications being effective and healthy. In this way, it is possible to say that body language had a serious contribution on making the messages sent and taken between source and taker more clear, and on their becoming more understandable and significant in interpersonal communication. Moving through this thoughts, importance of body language in an effective interpersonal communication had been supported with informations gained through literature review, and it had been explained by examples how important body language was in an effective communication and which way it contributed communication, in this study.

**Key Words:** Effective communication, interpersonal communication, body language.

### INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal communication is a communication type executed for the aims like providing needs on various subjects, expressing the wishes, expressing ourselves to the others, establishing and sustaining relationships with the others. In this context, effectiveness ability of interpersonal communication whose source and target were formed by people, is bringing together the use of body language in communication. Body language is an effective way used in every kind of interpersonal communication. Thanks to the use of body language, as communication is getting richer, it becomes more healthy, and continuance of communication is supplied. Because many body moves which couldn’t be explained by words or put into words play vital role for communication. For instance, in a situation that words said were unsatisfactory for cheering up one who was crying because he was so sad, to go and hug him and share his grief can be more precious than many words that could be said. This situation, too, can lead communication strengthen, be precious and meaningful between individuals. Also, utilizing body language in interpersonal communication for improving emotions and thoughts positively is precious in terms of its laying the ground for effective communication. Our body language is the most effective thing in people’s having an opinion about us at first sight. Even if we don’t talk, we unconsciously implement interpersonal communication, because our bodies talk. Because of this, we must analyze and understand the body language well and make our bodies talk due to this for an effective communication to become successful in communication. As a matter of fact, effective use of body language is so important for interpersonal communication to be successful.

It is a known thruth that personalities lived in our history signed many successes both in interpersonal communication and social area by using body language effective. For instance, Conqueror Sultan Mehmet’s thin eyebrows indicates that he had a meticulous and detail caring personality. Also his eyes’ steadily looking at far horizons is perceived as the sign of his being after huge targets. Alternatively, Atatürk who was one of the leaders of our recent history bowed over the one he was listening to, and while this gives the impression that he approached serious to the one in front of him, it shows that he was a critical listener at the same time, and seems important in terms of reflecting the discretions of body language in a successful interpersonal communication.

In this study prepared by applying scanning model in order to be able to determine in which way body language makes contribution in an effective interpersonal communication, informations about the subject ahd been reached in literature, and study had been supported with examples and pictures.

## A GENERAL VIEW TO LITERATURE

While communication is defined as transfer or receive of the message wished to be conducted by oral, auidial, visual (or all together) using emotion and thought in order to make it clear to everyone; interpersonal communication is expressed as th process individuals transfer emotion and thought they cosciously or unconsciously wanted to transmit to each other, production and transmission of information/symbol by the people who were at the source and the target, their interpreting this transmission, and as a result of that a situation in which effective communication was provided to become sustainable (MEGEP, 2008: 7).

In Turkish Dictionary of Turkish Linguistic Society (2015), communication is defined as transmitting emotions, thoughts and informations to the others through the instruments like telephone, telegraph, television, radio. For communication that numerous definition made of, Zıllıoğlu, too (1993: 5), saying “If there is communication then there is interaction, and if there is interaction then there is communication.”, actually had underlined interpersonal communication also. Solomon and Theiss (2013) who stated that symbols were used in offering and sharing ideas in interpersonal communication, had pointed to the said symbols to be the talk sor the body moves used during interpersonal communication. On the other hand, emphasizing that nonverbal communication, in other words body language had an important place in interpersonal communication, authors declared that our body’s conscious or unconscious moves transmitted a message in the origin of communication, and these transmitted messages had different meanings from culture to culture.

Being a social entity, human needs a communication medium to overlevelse. Thanks to this communication medium, human has the oppurtunity to tell himself to the one in front of him, to transmit his emotions and thoughts, to express what his demands, needs and aims were, and to learn what were the thoughts of the ones in front of him about that matter. In this manner, a ground for an interpersonal communication is seen to be created. Emphasizing that the mentioned communication medium was the place where individuals make each other happy and have satisfaction, or setle on after quarrelling, Özşaker (2013: 4) states that individual had opportunity to understand his self esteem in consequence of positive or negative responses the ones in front of him gave.

Habermas (1997), is pointing that there were a few points in the basis of healthy performing of communication. According to this, subjects like every human’s being one and only, having the same rights with the one in front of him while establishing communication, and having right to decide, and there be voluntary basis in the relationship that would be established, and to show respect to the special life form the foundation of communication process’being effective and sustainable. Also Armağan (2014: 32) is telling that there was the thought to accept that the one in the opposite side was precious and special in constituting the basis of effective communication and preparing the ground to start a trustworthy relationship. If this is done with regarding the points like transferring emotions of thoughts without ruffling the opposite one’s feelings and with behaving inside the borders of respect, presenting natural behaviours, starting to talk with a smooth voice tone, being attentive to indicators except voice (gesture, mimic, body language), making it possible fort he others to participate communication, purifying from bias by being far from judgmental and accusatory expressions, and empathizing with, he states that both quality of communication would increase and it would lead individual to improve himself.

Body language has an effective duty in sending messages and understanding them in interpersonal communication. Emphasizing that body language was the first dealing tool of the people, Baltaş and Baltaş (2000: 111) had told that the states like emotion, thought, desire, need etc. Were transmitted to the other people by body language. While Selçuk (2000: 130) is declaring that body language which was characterized as nonverbal communication, Molcho (2000: 14) had drown attention that body language wasn’t unsteady like words, was hard to control, and at the same time was effective.

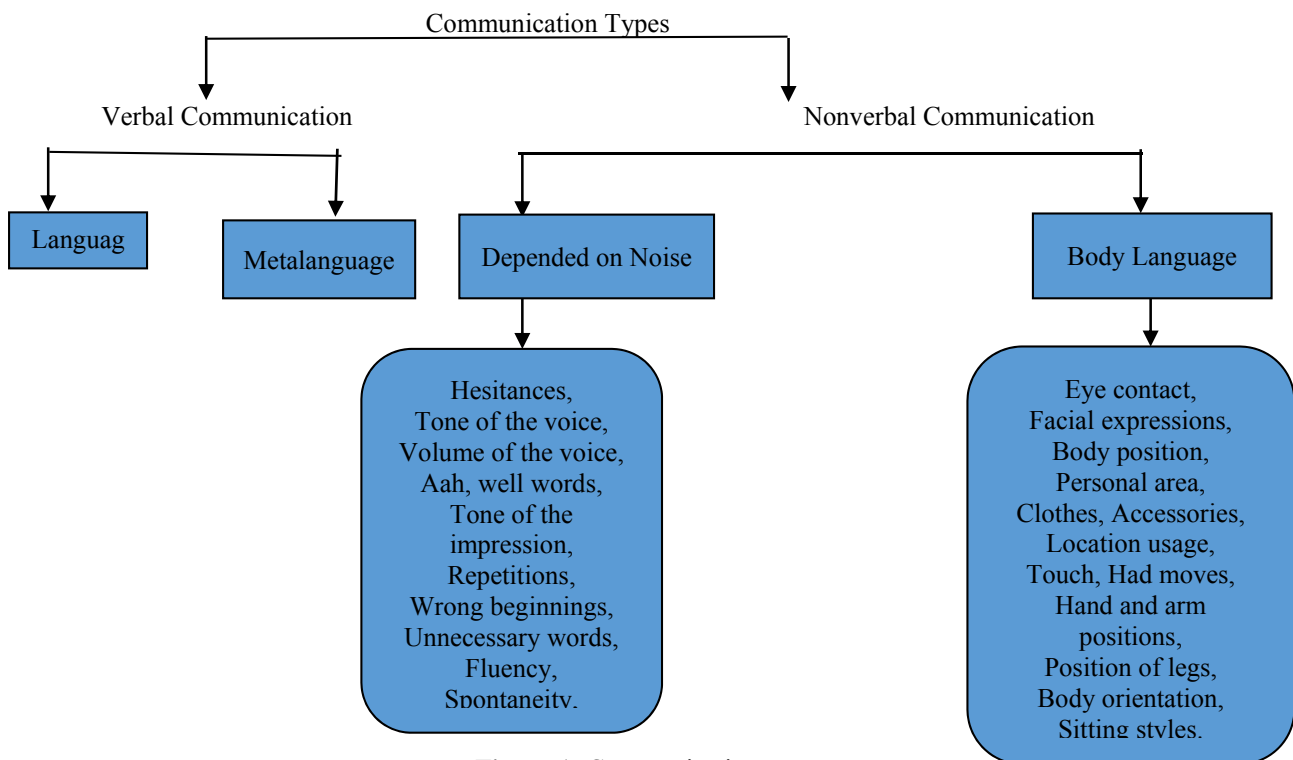
Studies implemented in national and international areas had emphasized the importance of body language. As communication, especially interpersonal communication was the subject, it had been understood that the importance of body language was hidden in reflecting the things left as secret, emotions, thoughts and expressions that wasn’t or couldn’t be put in words. A good reader can reach a precious treasure by solving these hidden secrets of body language. It is possible to say that an effective interpersonal communication occurred by the help of body language, as this stage was reached.

We couldn’t reach any applied research directly measuring body language’s effectiveness in interpersonal communication during literature review, but it had been determined that generally education scale of the matter was dwelled upon in the studies on this subject. According to this, in Habacı et al.’s (2013) study named “*Effects of Body Language on Education*”, what reflections of teacher’s body language in classroom and perceptions of students on this matter would be is told. It had been understood that the study emphasizing teacher’s making students feel himself by using body language, establishing an effective communication with his environment, being cheerful, affectionate, patient and tolerant while doing these, had been done as literature

review. Also Çalışkan and Yeşil's (2015) study titled "Teacher's Body Language On Education Process" is seen to be implemented similar to the studies of Habacı et al. In mentioned study, emphasizing that teacher was one of the architects of the society, it had been expressed that society had a certain effect on the change of society's cultural structure. It is narrated that body language of the teacher who is ahead of the society and a pathfinder for it was effective on students especially during teaching-learning process and was important on behalf of laying ground for providing a positive communication medium.

Studies about interpersonal communication is showing that verbal communication was effective in the rate of 30% but nonverbal communication 70%, and meaning in communication constituted face to face was understood 10 % from the words, 30 % from voice tone and 60 % from mimics (İzgören, 2000: 6). Facial expressions, body movements and voice tone had been always effective in making verbal communication meaningful in interpersonal communication. Thus, nonverbal communication had supported and reinforced verbal communication while giving important and trustworthy hints in giving the meaning and interpreting verbal context. Along with that, nonverbal communication can have more than one meaning because it reflects emotions. For instance, as silence can be understood as indicator of a certain esteem, it can also mean tiredness, anger, incuriousness and embarrassment. In situations like this, using verbal and nonverbal communication together to make meaning more understandable will be effective. Accordingly, Cüceloğlu's (1992) expressions on nonverbal communication that it indicates emotions, it is an effective type of communication, it is meaningful and so can be uncertain, draws attention.

Communication types are tried to be briefly explained in Figure.1 for fully epitomising the informations gathered as a result of literature review implemented, and showing the flow in communication implemented as verbal and nonverbal communication.



**Figure 1:** Communication Types

### Body Moves and Their Meanings

#### Head's Position:

Position the head takes is very important in interpersonal communication. While Schober (1994) states that even an ordinary pose of head largely affects interpersonal relation, Erdem (2009), emphasizes that if head position of the one was leaned in the one opposite to him during interpersonal communication, it meant that the one having this head move took the one opposite to him seriously.

*Eye Contact:*

With George Herbert's words, "The language the eyes talked is the same everywhere.", it is understood that one of the unchanging meanings of body language was eye contact in interpersonal communication. With our looks, our spiritual states like if we are interested in the subjects talked, and if we are angry or cheerful are emerged, too.

One of the basic terms of establishing a more effective communication with the opposite one in interpersonal communication is to establish eye contact. On condition not to disturb the opposite one but on behalf of making him feel that you listened to him, establishing short term eye contacts is important (Çalışkan and Karadağ, 2010). This state gives hints to both that the opposite one was valued and taken seriously, and a healthy communication was established.

Our emotions and thoughts we verbally expressed become more meaningful by integrating with our body movements and contribute interpersonal communication to be more effective with that. Those kind of expressions relating to body language is important in terms of their being helpful to reach interpersonal communication and to increase the effect of communication.

*Facial Expressions:*

There are six main points in facial expressions which was one of the expression styles of our emotions. It is possible to order them as happiness, fear, anger, astonishment, sadness and repulsion. In Figure.1 it is possible to see the image that these emotions were transmitted.

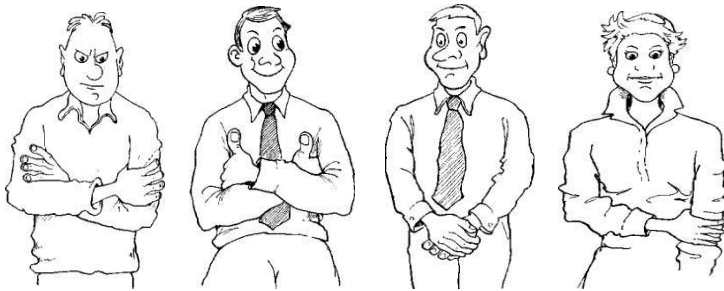


**Figure 1:** Facial expressions. *Source:* Saunders (2012).

*Hand and Arm Positions:*

One of the most effective body organ humans use to express themselves are hands. Hand movements' supporting the words told is important in terms of increasing the power of communication. Positions of the hands may be different in meaning. Accordingly, hands' being overlapped represents obliqueness. While hand's holding other hand's wrist on front part of body is meaning respect and retrain from, doing the same on back part is perceived as sign of eligibility. On the other side, hands' standing open to the one on the opposite is meaning that there was nothing to hide (Kaşıkçı, 2004).

When it comes to interpersonal communication, individual's taking himself a keying position to the outer world by crossing his arms can mean bonding a wall against communication. Because people tend to cross arms when they want to feel themselves safe (Çalışkan and Karadağ, 2010). Accordingly, in the arm positions shown in Figure.2, it is possible to see reflections of the expressions like feeling self under duress – stressed, having something to say, self-assured, and being half open to communicate.



**Figure 2:** Hand and arm positions.

It is approved to offer the figure below on account of its showing reflections of body language and giving little opinion about the meanings of the movements.



**Figure 3:** Body language graphics and their meanings.

Source: <https://tok2014.wordpress.com/2013/03/22/nonverbal-communication-and-body-language/comment-page-1/>

*Gesture and Mimic Actions:*

Use of facial moves is defined as mimic; moves emerged from the use of the other parts of the body like hand, arm, leg is defined as gesture (Altıntaş and Çamur, 2005). Each movement of the mentioned regions is loaded with a different meaning and message.

*Meanings of Generally Affirmed Body Moves:*

Body movements that we tried to explain the meanings of, are a kind of nonverbal communication and are called as physical movements helping to transfer message to the opposite one without talking. Goldberg and Rosenfeld (2014) who expressed that related movements could reach their common meanings in consequence of reviewing

the body movements, are talking about a classification. Accordingly, while defensive body movements are shown as crossing arms and legs, bending eyebrows downwards, less eye contacts, and standing strong; situations bending head sideways, touching cheek or chin, craning forward are matters of subject in evaluation movements. While movements squinting lips and eyes, swinging, clearing throat, playing with an object like pencil, jewel etc., and tipping fingers are indicating nervousness, regularly controlling the watch is the indicator of impatience, and smile, open eyes and hands, and a strong voice tone are showing that individual was earnest for the job that will be done. Also Saunders (2012) explained the meanings of body movements as “*Walking erect means confidence; rubbing hands, discomfort; uniting hands over chest, self-defence, discomfort, less attention; rubbing eyes, doubt and insecurity, tiredness; uniting hands at the back, anger; bending hands over cheeks, evaluating and thinking; eating nails, nervousness; touching slowly the nose, lying, being under pressure; playing with ear, dubiousness.*”

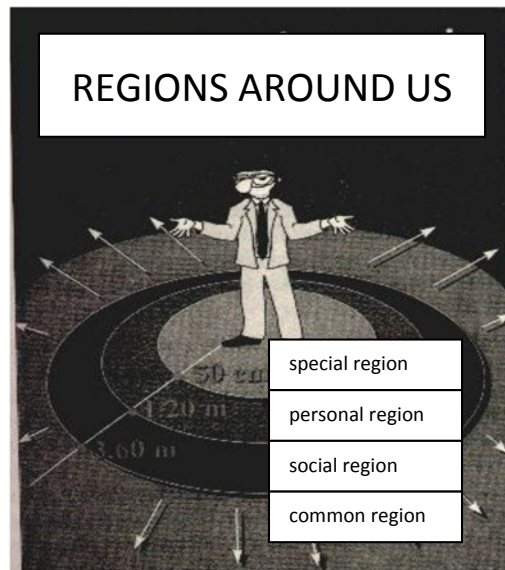
In this sense, in the light of informations obtained from literature, it is possible to summarize briefly which movement means what about body movements like that: **Hiding hand:** Hiding left hand means person is hiding something about his personal feelings or life. Hiding right hand means to hide something about vocational life. **Hiding thumbs:** Means anxiety, doubt, feeling under threat, and emotional discomfort. **Scratching head:** Points at whirl, trying to understand. **Rubbing ear’s back:** Means missing the point, whirl, anxiety. **Playing with forehead:** Represents states like hesitation, worry, doubt, trying to decide. **Touching between eyebrows:** Means focusing, concentrating, trying to remember. **Playing with lower jaw:** Means wish to express self, preparing self to talk. **Holding chin:** Means feeling self mistrustful and wish to be stronger, competition, power wish. **Hiding the mouth:** If it is done while listening; it indicates evaluating what was told and thinking, not believing the one on the opposite side, but if done while talking; it shows the reflection of situations like telling lies, shame and getting bored, and nervousness. **Pulling lips:** Means greed, self-focusing. **Touching lips:** Means wish to talk, having doubt about the thing told, hiding something. **Rubbing back of the neck:** represents negative behaviour and critical stand, but if it had been done during a mistake moment, it means positive, openness and optimism. **Crossing arms:** Means uneasiness, closeness, self-protection, less attention. **Arms at back:** Indicates hiding something and wish to establish authority.

As can be seen, numerous messages can be sent to the opposite ones without talking with body movements. This state that was tried to be explained with examples is noteworthy in terms of its showing again how important body language was in interpersonal communication. Alternatively, it is possible to say that some of the body movements that made communication this important and understandable can prevent someone’s interpersonal communication. To be careful about body movements used play an important role for communication to be sustainable, because while caring the use of body movements tried to be explained above in interpersonal communication makes communication more moving and understandable, it can also suddenly inhibit communication

Alternatively, some existing ranges while establishing communication with the opposite ones in interpersonal communication are drawing attention. Mentioned ranges are important in terms of showing familiarity relation between us and the ones we established communication with. What the mentioned ranges are and the meanings of them are briefly explained downwards.

#### *Regions Around Us:*

There are regional ranges in relationships person established in interpersonal communication. First of them is special region and it involves the area about 50 cm. far from the person himself. Actually we all have worlds surrounded with fences and take the ones we want inside these fences. Special region is the last point from these fences that we can take anyone near us. Another region is personal region and it involves a range of 120 cm. For instance, it is the region two friends keep while talking. We permit our associates, people we love and superiors to enter personal region. Another region is social region and its range is 360 cm. It is the area we stand with people we don’t know or have little familiarity in social activities like parties, meetings, sports contests. Last region can be named as common region and involves a limitless area. It is the area people who don’t know each other try to keep as soon as possible. For instance, it is the range we share while speaking to a crowded group. Figure.4, shows what kind of regions there are around us in the society we live (Reca, 2010; Açı, 2005; Pease, 1981).



**Figure 4:** Regions around us.

## CONCLUSION

If it is needed to make an extraordinary explanation of communication, especially interpersonal communication, imagination must be worked a little. Accordingly, you think a huge flower batch. Imagine that there were many flowers from rose to carnation, from daffodil to wallflower, from poppy to daisy, from tulip to orchid inside that bench. As it can be understood, it is possible to see that there were flowers competing each other with their different scents and tones as well as the colour festivity enchanting people with its visuality in a colourful bench. There, actually communication is exactly the same with this. There is a bond established between different people and transfer of expressions like emotion, thought, wish is exactly the same as it was in mentioned flower bench. Becoming a whole as it changes, interpersonal communication is a medium in which enrichment of communication is provided through creating awareness. Exactly as it was in that flower bench. In a medium formed through gathering together of the people totally different from each other, relations' being arranged, their being sustainable are possible with interpersonal communication which is the basic terms for different people to be able to live together like the flowers of different colour, scent and tone coming together.

There is a common point making it easy for people almost one by one different in every matters to understand each other. This fact named body language contributes interpersonal communication to be implemented in a healthy way, and helps the mentioned communication to be enriched, to become more meaningful and understandable. Contribute of body language to interpersonal communication is so precious, because it made way for generally the formation of a common language between the ones living in the same culture despite there are differences from culture to culture time to time, and made communication meaningful through supporting verbal expressions with behaviours. In order to show how important and precious body language was in interpersonal communication, it is possible to give the example that a single look was more effective than a description made full of pages. In other words, this example shows us that the announcement wanted to be expressed, the message wanted to be given is more effective than a writing formed with pages of words. In terms of communication's renewing itself, having action in it, being meaningful and understandable, making easy and enriching transfer of messages which can't be verbally expressed, but at the same time wished to be transferred, body language has an important place in interpersonal communication.

Being one of the most talked topics, effect of body language on communication had been noticed by Hungarian who was a choreographer and dance teacher in the year 1926. Hungarian had pointed importance and value of body language in being understandable in communication by saying "...we can forget the words said before and after; but we don't forget the moments involving voices, signs and physical movements." He had said that human could implement many movements through his body and each of these would have different meanings and improve, enrich communication and make it meaningful and would make it easier to be understood (<http://www.pdf-archive.com>).

It will be appropriate to finish this study contribute of body language to an effective interpersonal communication was tried to be explained with Charlie Chaplin's words "If I talk only the ones who know English

*will understand me, but everyone can understand a silent movie and world doesn't consist in America!*" Chaplin spotlights in this saying of his the importance of body language's use in interpersonal communication as an element enriching and increasing communication. We are expressing our pleasure, sadness, excitement and many more spiritual states through our body language and use this to simplify and make more active our communication. As a matter of fact, the most effective thing in understanding each other of the people who don't know each other, even know the languages of each other is the body language they used. In this way, when interpersonal communication is regarded, body language draws us a road map in order to understand what the opposite one felt. In this context, while we are communicating, we can predict what kind of a step we had to take and we can make decisions to adapt ourselves to the situation we were in. Briefly, use of body language in interpersonal communication is an important situation in terms of its simplifying clarity in communication as well as providing the duration of an healthy communication.

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