

## VERBAL COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

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**Abstract.** *Language is an integral part of human lives and thus has a powerful influence on people's ability to communicate interculturally. The term 'language' may refer not only to spoken and written language, but also 'body language. In this article, however, we will focus on verbal codes only. People use language to convey their thoughts, feelings, desires, attitudes, and intentions. We learn about others through what they say and how they say it; we learn about ourselves through how others react to what we say. Verbal communication has been studied by scholars from a variety of disciplines, such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, political theory, and human geography, bringing diverse theories and perspectives into the study of communication and culture.*

**Annotatsiya.** *Til inson hayotining ajralmas qismidir va shuning uchun odamlarning madaniyatlararo muloqot qilish qobiliyatiga kuchli ta'sir ko'rsatadi. "Til" atamasi nafaqat og'zaki va yozma tilga, balki "tana tiliga" ham tegishli bo'lishi mumkin. Biroq, ushbu maqolada biz faqat og'zaki kodlarga e'tibor qaratamiz. Odamlar o'z fikrlarini, his-tuyg'ularini, istaklarini, munosabatini va niyatlarini etkazish uchun tildan foydalanadilar. Biz boshqalar haqida ular nima deyishlari va qanday aytishlari orqali bilib olamiz; biz o'zimiz haqimizda boshqalar aytganlarimizga qanday munosabatda bo'lishlari orqali bilib olamiz. Og'zaki muloqot antropologiya, psixologiya, sotsiologiya, siyosiy nazariya va inson geografiyasi kabi turli fanlarning olimlari tomonidan o'rganilib, aloqa va madaniyatni o'rganishga turli nazariyalar va istiqbollarni olib keldi.*

**Key words:** *intercultural communication, verbal code, communication styles, verbal communication, identity, human language.*

The language we speak defines our world and our identity. From childhood, we take for granted that our name describes who we are. A name connects us to our family origins and defines us as individuals. Many refugees or migrants have to change their names when they move into a new language community, and this may influence their identity. Moreover, language variations within cultures have an effect on how people communicate and how they categorize themselves. For example, people may use regional dialects to signify their identity as people from that region. The language or dialect we speak also influences the way we are perceived by others. The fact that someone speaks another language or speaks our language with a foreign or regional accent influences our social attitudes towards that speaker. Our language attitudes are also influenced by stereotypes and by the situations in which the language is used. Many people speak two or more languages, and may use these languages in different contexts and for different purposes (e.g., one language in public and another at home). Verbal codes refer to spoken or written language. A verbal code comprises a set of rules governing the use of words in creating a message, along with the words themselves. We acquire or learn the rules and contents of our native language (or languages) as we grow up; thus, we can express our thoughts, emotions, desires, and needs easily in our first language. The study of language begins with identifying its components and how they are put together. While studying human language, linguists focus on different aspects of the language system: sound, structure, and meaning. Lustig and Koester (2013) identified five interrelated components of language: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Collectively, knowledge of each aspect of the language system provides us with a holistic understanding of the nature of human language. Phonology explores how sounds are organized in a language. The smallest sound unit of a language is called a phoneme. The phonological rules of a language determine how sounds are combined to form words. For example, the phonemes [k] and [au] can be arranged to form the word 'cow' [kau] in English. Mastery of any language requires the speaker to be able to identify and pronounce different sounds accurately. This may prove difficult for second language speakers, particularly those

whose native language does not have a similar sound system to the new language. Morphology refers to the combination of basic units of meaning, morphemes, to create words. For example, the word 'happy' consists of one morpheme, meaning to feel cheerful. The word 'unhappy' contains two morphemes: happy and the prefix 'un' meaning 'not' or the 'opposite'. Used together, they refer to a feeling akin to sadness. Morphemes, and the ways in which they are combined, differ across cultures. In the English language, prefixes or suffixes constitute morphemes as well as individual words, whereas in tonal languages such as Chinese, tones are morphemes and the meaning of units depends on the tone with which the word is pronounced. Syntax concerns the grammatical and structural rules of language. We combine words into sentences according to grammatical rules in order to communicate. In English and other languages of the Indo-European family, people change the tense of a verb by adding a suffix or prefix or changing the morpheme, to describe past, present, and future events. In German, prepositions are often placed at the end of a sentence, whereas in French they are placed before nouns or noun phrases. Every language has a set of grammatical rules that govern the sequencing of words. Mastery of another language means knowing those grammatical rules in addition to building a stock of vocabulary. Semantics refers to the study of the meanings of words, and the relationships between words and the things to which they refer. A command of vocabulary is an essential part of linguistic proficiency in any language. When we learn a second language, we devote much time to memorizing words and their meanings, concrete or abstract. However, just memorizing words and their dictionary meanings is often insufficient for successful intercultural communication, because meaning often resides in a context. Linguists and social psychologists identify two types of meaning: denotative and connotative. Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a word or an object, and is basically descriptive. This is the kind of meaning we find in a dictionary. For example, a denotative description of a Big Mac would be that it is a sandwich sold by McDonald's that weighs a certain number of grams and is served with certain sauces. Connotation deals with the cultural meanings that become attached to a word

or an object. The connotative meaning of a Big Mac may include certain aspects of American culture – fast food, popular food, standardization, lack of time, lack of interest in cooking. Because connotative meanings are often emotionally charged, we may make mistakes about the messages we think we are sending to others. In one class, students were asked to bring in an object that reflected them as people. One young woman brought a large seashell. She listed the attributes of the shell as beautiful, delicate, natural, and simple. Other students found different attributes in the shell: empty, brittle, and vacuous. Language conveys meaning via its components, arranged according to rules. Morphemes combine with one another to produce the meaning of words, and words, in turn, combine to form sentences that yield additional meaning. Talk is achieved through the interdependent components of sounds, words, sentences, and meaning of a language. Linguists have developed descriptive and explanatory tools to analyse the structure of language. The study of language based on the assumption that language is a coherent system of formal units, and that the task of linguistic study is to inquire into the nature of this systematic arrangement without reference to historical antecedents, is known as structural linguistics. The rise of modern structural linguistics came largely through the influence of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in the early twentieth century. Saussure compared language to a game of chess, noting that a chess piece in isolation has no value and that a move by any one piece has repercussions for all the other pieces. Similarly, the meaning of a unit in a language system can be discerned by examining the items that occur alongside it and those which can be substituted for it (de Saussure, 1983). Structural linguistics dominated twentieth-century linguistics, as opposed to much work in the nineteenth century when it was common for linguists (or philologists, as they were often called) to trace the history of words. But structural linguistics was also criticized for being too narrow in conception. For example, generative linguistics, begun by Noam Chomsky (see later sections of this chapter), argues that it is necessary to go beyond a description of the location of items to produce a grammar that reflects a native speaker's intuitive knowledge of language.

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