Chapter 5 Outline

(Italicized and bolded words are key words)

I. Nonverbal communication, commonly used to describe all human communication events that transcend spoken or written words, has many characteristics and functions.
   A. There are five characteristics of nonverbal communication.
      1. Nonverbal communication may be intentional or unintentional, since often when people communicate nonverbally, they are unaware of it.
      2. Nonverbal communication is primary, because it takes precedence over verbal communication.
      3. Nonverbal communication is continuous, because one is constantly communicating through nonverbal behaviors.
      4. Nonverbal communication is often ambiguous, since a nonverbal behavior may have different meanings depending on the user’s personality, family influences, and culture.
      5. Nonverbal communication is multi-channeled, since we use a variety of cues to make an interpretation.
   B. Nonverbal communication serves five primary functions.
      1. Nonverbal communication provides information by repeating, substituting for, emphasizing, or contradicting our verbal messages.
      2. Nonverbal communication regulates interaction as conversations are managed through nonverbal cues.
      3. Nonverbal communication expresses or hides emotion and affect, since one is able to show nonverbally how one feels about another person, or one may mask true feelings through nonverbal behaviors.
      4. Nonverbal communication manage impressions and identities.
         a. Immediacy behaviors are nonverbal actions that signal warmth, communicate availability, decrease distance, and promote involvement between people.
      5. Nonverbal communication expresses dominance and affiliation.

II. There are multiple categories of nonverbal communication.
   A. Body language is nonverbal communication through body motions, also known as kinesics, the study of body language.
      1. Eye contact is how and how much we look at the people with whom we are communicating.
      2. Facial expression is the arrangement of facial muscles to communicate emotional states or reactions to messages; emoticons are typed or graphic symbols that convey emotional aspects of online messages.
      3. Gesture is a movement of hands, arms, and fingers to describe or to emphasize.
         a. Emblems are gestures that can substitute completely for words.
      4. Posture is the position and movement of the whole body; body orientation refers to posture in relation to another person.
      5. Touch, formally known as haptics, is putting part of the body in contact with something.
         a. Spontaneous touch is touch that is automatic and subconscious.
         b. Ritualized touch is touch that is scripted and not spontaneous.
         c. Task-related touch is touch used to perform an unemotional function.
B. Paralanguage is communication through nonverbal sounds; it is comprised of five vocal characteristics, including pitch, volume, rate, quality, and intonation, which can complement or contradict meaning, while vocal interferences can disrupt messages.

1. **Pitch** is the highness or lowness of a person’s vocal tone.
2. **Volume** is the loudness or softness of a person’s vocal tone.
3. **Rate** is the speed at which a person speaks.
4. **Quality** is the sound of a person’s voice.
5. **Intonation** is the variety, melody, or inflection of a person’s voice.
6. **Vocal interferences** are extraneous words or sounds that interrupt fluent speech.

C. The third category of nonverbal communication is **spatial usage**, which is nonverbal communication through the use of the space and objects around us.

1. **Personal space** is the space around the place a person occupies at a given time; and **proxemics** is the study of personal space.
   a. **Intimate distance**, up to 18 inches, is comfortable spacing for private conversations among intimates.
   b. **Personal distance**, from 18 inches to 4 feet, is comfortable spacing for casual conversations with a normal amount of background noise.
   c. **Social distance**, from 4 to 12 feet, is comfortable spacing for impersonal or professional interactions such as a job interview or team meeting.
   d. **Public distance**, anything more than 12 feet, is comfortable spacing for people in a public forum where interaction and conversation is not desired.
2. **Acoustic space** is the area over which one’s voice or music can be heard.
3. **Territory** is the space over which we claim ownership.
4. **Furnishings** can be arranged to affect the space between people, and consequently convey messages about identity and interaction.

D. Nonverbal communication includes self-presentation cues, which are presented to others and are based on physical appearance, use of time, and use of smells and scents.

1. **Physical appearance** includes gender, race, body type, and facial features, as well as clothing, grooming, and body decorations.
2. **Artifacts** are the possessions we use to decorate our territory and communicate about our space.
3. **Olfactory cues** are nonverbal communication messages sent through smells and scents.
4. **Use of time** is how people view and structure their time.

III. There are cultural and gender variations in nonverbal communication.

A. Use and meanings of body motions, eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, and touch vary depending on the culture and gender of the communicator.

B. **Paralanguage** varies by culture and gender.

C. Cultural and gender variations occur in spatial usage.

D. Self-presentation in terms of appearance and use of time varies with culture and gender.

IV. When people act in ways that are different from what we anticipate, these **expectancy violations** create uncertainty for us.

A. Intentional expectancy violations are risky.

V. Improving nonverbal communication skills can be achieved by following some suggestions.

A. When sending messages, be aware of the following guidelines.
1. Be mindful of the nonverbal behavior you are displaying.
2. Adapt nonverbal behaviors to your purpose.
3. Adapt nonverbal cues to the situation.
4. Align nonverbal and verbal cues.
5. Eliminate nonverbal behaviors that distract from the verbal message.

B. When interpreting others’ nonverbal cues, be mindful of the following:
   1. Be mindful that most nonverbal cues are not emblems.
   2. Consider cultural, gender, and individual influences when interpreting nonverbal cues.
   3. Pay attention to all nonverbal communication cues and their relationship to verbal communication.
   4. Use **perception checking**, which is sharing your perception of another’s behavior to see if your interpretation is accurate.