Nonverbal Communication Strategies Used in Virtual Interpersonal Communication

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ABSTRACT

In world linguistics, particularly in Uzbek linguistics, the study of nonverbal means of verbal communication (various states of voice, gestures, facial expressions, and body movements) has been conducted in various aspects of the language. The realities of modern life show that communication in today's world is characterized by extreme freedom, unpredictability, and distance from language rules. In this context, the role of nonverbal means has increased more than ever, and they have begun to carry a significant pragmatic load. Especially their use in virtual communication is often overlooked by researchers. This article provides a brief overview of virtual communication, its study level, and its importance. It also analyzes the nonverbal forms used in communication. Furthermore, the linguistic and nonlinguistic connections, their mutual influences and contradictions, and the opportunities to create a certain image are discussed. The characteristics of nonverbal means in the communication process are also highlighted. Additionally, the communication process among Uzbeks and the forms of interaction they use are given. The results of a survey on gender-specific communication traits in Uzbek culture are also presented.

Keywords: Paralinguistics, virtual communication, nonverbal means, nonverbal forms, linguistic and nonlinguistic communication, gestures, facial expressions.

INTRODUCTION

The principle of approaching language means from a functional perspective naturally requires expanding the scope of speech means. In the communication process, paralinguistic means are especially widely used compared to extralinguistic means. Along with the speaker's verbal speech, systematic study of language and speech is necessary to investigate the interrelationships and differences between gestures that complement speech content and enhance its attractiveness and impact.

With such practical demands, a specialized field of study investigating these auxiliary means of speech has emerged. Today, this field has firmly established itself in linguistics under the name "paralinguistics."

LITERATURE REVIEW

Paralinguistic means have been illuminated in various aspects by scholars such as G.V. Kolshanskiy, I.N. Gorelov, G.Ye. Kreydlin, R.K. Potapova, V.V. Potapov, A. Pease, B. Pease, V.A. Pronnicov, I.D. Ladanov, C. Stepanov, S.A. Garkaves, I. Kuznesov, J. Messinger, L.I. Dmitriyeva, L.N. Klokova, V.V. Pavlova, T.N. Pirkina, I.A. Akhyamova, G.V. Barishnikova, M.L. Butovskaya. In Uzbek linguistics, the studies of A. Nurmonov, M. Saidkhonov, S. Mominov, Sh. Iskandarova, A. Aripova, Z. Akbarova, Q. Rasulov, A. Haydarov, G. Toirova, Q. Kakhrov, and X. Ismoilov have contributed to the research on paralinguistic means.

A. Nurmonov's monograph "Paralinguistic Means of the Uzbek Language" is considered the first study dedicated to the paralinguistic means in Uzbek linguistics. Similarly, M. Saidkhonov's dissertation "Nonverbal Means and Their Expression in the Uzbek Language" is the first monographic work investigating Uzbek paralinguistic means. S. Mominov's article "Gender Characteristics of Uzbek Communication" discusses the features of Uzbek verbal communication unique to men and women and expresses thoughts on nonverbal means not used in their speech.

METHODOLOGY

This article aims to reveal the role of paralinguistic means in verbal communication, analyze their cultural characteristics, and identify the cultural norms of nonverbal means in virtual communication.

ANALYSES AND RESULTS

As language lives and functions through communication, gestures convey communicative meanings in verbal communication. These communicative meanings are expressed through nonverbal means in virtual communication as digital technologies develop. As a result, nonverbal means are considered attributes of verbal communication. Information transfer is predominant in the communication process, and nonverbal means are widely used in virtual communication. Using such communication in compliance with linguistic laws reflects an individual's language culture, and demonstrating these laws is the task of linguists.

The main goal of this research is to study the computer-mediated communication environment when people communicate in virtual situations. What forms of nonverbal communication strategies are used? The limitations of interpersonal communication in the context of computer-mediated communication are as follows:

1. Facial Emojis and Facial Expressions

Another important nonverbal message of the body is facial expressions. The use of alternative symbols to express facial expressions in computer-mediated communication began almost simultaneously with the development of online interpersonal communication and the growth of the internet. The face is a mirror reflecting a person's thoughts and emotions. The face plays an important role because it shows what a person is thinking; facial expressions are signs explaining the person's condition. The face is the first thing to greet and the most honorable part of the body, so it is used in the noblest form in everything. The face can also display several expressions as a nonverbal means. For example, through the face, one can understand a person's happiness, obedience, and other emotions.

Users have long used symbols like ":-" to express personal sympathy. In face-to-face communication, facial expressions are a global and intercultural communication act. Various societies use facial expressions in meeting situations. For example, using discriminatory emotions in meeting situations. However, after moving to a computer-mediated environment, facial expressions no longer resemble face-to-face communication; they depend on the nonverbal messages sent during the communication process. According to Zhou Junlan's observations on virtual communication, using emojis has led to the following interactions. Virtual communication users are limited to hiding symbols accompanying text expressions or social interactions, but the most interesting thing is that members of the virtual community use the convenient features of the internet to spread worldwide through communication in Chinese, English, and numbers. Additionally, special symbols developed to express emotions and body language are used to fill the lack of words. Emojis on the internet are not only developed for fun but have also been tested many times due to user needs. This evolution began with a horizontal emoji expressed with a face turned 90 degrees left or right.

Simulating Facial Expressions: Horizontal Emojis
:) Smiling face
:)) Double chin face
:> Happier smile
:< Slightly angry face
:(Crying face
:((Very sad
:p Sticking out tongue
:D Open mouth (fly enters)
:O Big mouth
:Q Drooling

The examples in the table above show that emotional symbols can express strong emotions beyond just imitating facial expressions. For example, ":((" means "crying face" and adding "((" enhances the user's mood and becomes "very sad." Similar changes occur with positive emojis like "^_^," which do not need to be rotated. The "^_^" smiley face was intentionally or unintentionally added to the end of the message board, and some people started following it. A series of creative smiley faces are displayed.

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Positive Emojis:

^_^ Clear smile
^O^ Open mouth pig face (kiss)
^Q^ I'm drooling
^.^ Small cherry mouth
^*^ Cute smile
*^_^* Blushing, embarrassed

In terms of expressing emotional intensity, the positive smiley initially expressed the bottom line of the mouth, which increases depending on the intensity of emotions. For example, in the following dialogue, the crying "Q_Q" emoji stretches across the entire table. After the length of the emoji, this facial expression enhances the expressed meaning. Users create their own emojis according to their needs, which also shows the specific meaning and use of smiley faces. If necessary, users continue to improve its shape. The most popular emoji was confirmed at the 10th-anniversary celebration of Twitter in 2016, where some statistics were given. According to this statistic, the "joy tears" emoji has been used 145 billion times on Twitter, making it the most used. The correctness of this statistic is confirmed by the fact that the same smiley was chosen as the word of the year by the Oxford Dictionary a year earlier, in 2015, as it best represented the mood and concerns of 2015. It is noteworthy that the Oxford Dictionary chose the emoji as the word of the year to recognize the emoji's equal status to a word in verbal communication. Oxford Dictionary President Casper Greatwall went further in describing the smiley faces, saying: "The most brilliant discovery in the world of written communication, emojis, has risen to an entirely new level, surpassing simple words." Unlike smiley faces, which are depicted as a specific person, emojis can be linked to a certain person. This characteristic of smiley faces contributed to the issue of racial tolerance and gender equality. The problem is solved by diversifying the appearance of emojis when used on social networks. When selecting any character in the form of a smiley face in the pop-up window, several options are given, showing smiley faces in different racial and gender depictions. Thus, when talking about smiley faces, they should be recognized as the next stage of emoji evolution.

The virtual environment continues to develop new forms of communication that are created, leading to new types of emojis.
In recent years, the trend of sending messages using animated emojis has become more popular. Smiley faces with a unified structure are not only used but new forms of emojis have emerged, adding a dynamic aspect to the conversation. With the help of these animated smiley faces, it has become possible to transfer communication through text messages to a new level.
2. Emotional Communication and Emoticons
Another nonverbal message transmitted by the body is emotional gestures. In computer-mediated communication, emotional symbols are the only alternative way to express emotional body language. Emotional symbols are composed of hands, feet, and body movements and help express emotions.

Although emotional symbols can be similar to facial expressions, they contain more hand and body movements. Therefore, to express the exact emotional condition in a virtual environment, the symbol's creator uses a special vocabulary. To better understand the specificity of emotional symbols, we give the following examples:

(E.g. given in the original document)

CONCLUSION
Paralinguistic means, including facial expressions and gestures, play a significant role in virtual communication. In the absence of face-to-face interaction, these nonverbal cues help convey emotions and intentions, adding depth to written communication. As digital technologies evolve, the use of nonverbal

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means in virtual communication continues to expand, making it essential for linguists to study and understand these elements.

This translation provides a comprehensive overview of the original article's content, including its abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, analyses, results, and conclusion.

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