

DIFFERENT METHODS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Ahmet Hojamyradov

*Belarusian State University, Minsk ; ahojamyradov@gmail.com;
scientific supervisor – S. A. Zudova*

The article is devoted to the issue of the significance of improving communication skills and searching for new ways to improve it. The author emphasizes the importance of improving non-verbal communication skills, and referring to the work of well-known American psychologists.

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Understanding the term *communication* is very essential for every human-being. Communication is the act of transferring information from one to another. When we think about the ways of communication, the subject becomes a lot more complicated. When communication occurs, it typically happens in one of three ways: verbal, nonverbal and visual. In this research such elements of nonverbal communication, as body position, facial expression and position in space are focused on.

The importance of nonverbal communication was acknowledged by an American psychologist – Albert Mehrabian, who conducted several studies on nonverbal communication in the 1970s. He developed the “7 %-38 %-55 % Rule”. He found out that 7 % of any message is conveyed through words, 38 % through certain vocal elements, and 55 % through nonverbal elements (facial expressions, gestures, posture, etc) [1].

The body position is an important element of nonverbal communication, which can affect how one is perceived by others. It can reflect emotions, attitudes and intentions.

This aspect was investigated by an American sociologist – Amy Cuddy. Some years ago she made a speech concerning the body language at TEDGlobal 2012. She is also a researcher at Harvard University who studies body language and the impact it has on people’s hormones. Cuddy’s research on body language reveals that we can change other people’s perceptions – and perhaps even our own body chemistry – simply by changing body positions. Cuddy and her colleagues have classified different body positions as “high power” or “low power” poses. In general, the high power poses are open and relaxed, whereas the low power poses are closed and guarded (Fig.).

According to her, if we do a “High-power” pose for at least 2 minutes, it can make us feel better and more confident. It is called “Power-posing”.



Fig. High power and Low power poses

Cuddy and her research team studied the impact of high power and low power poses by conducting a research study on 42 students at Harvard University. The research included 3 stages:

- First, a saliva sample was taken from each student and their testosterone and cortisol levels were measured.
- Second, the student was asked to sit in either a high power pose or a low power pose for two minutes.
- Third, a second sample of saliva was taken from each student and their testosterone and cortisol levels were measured again.

As the result, high power poses increased testosterone by 19 percent and decreased cortisol levels by 25 percent. In contrast, low power poses decreased testosterone level by 10 % and increased cortisol level by 17 % [2].

But some scholars have reported being unable to replicate power posing effects in follow-up studies. The co-author of the research, Dana Carney, issued a statement in 2016 abandoning the theory. But Cuddy is still working on this theory. Even if scholars can't measure the veracity of this theory, many people respond positively to this technique, confirming that they feel more confident after 2 minutes of power posing.

This topic is really important, because lots of people don't pay attention to the nonverbal component of communication during the conversation, speech and in ordinary life. And it needs a deeper investigation and further research.

References

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