

The Language of the Body as A Means of Expression and Communication

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Submitted: 03 Sep 2020; **Accepted:** 05 Sep 2020; **Published:** 14 Sep 2020

Introduction

The body is “communication”, as it not only reflects the images that society projects, but is constantly changing in its expressions, just as the reality that surrounds it is constantly changing. These changes are determined through the encounters, from which it voluntarily and involuntarily becomes aware.

The changeability of the body must, therefore, always be experienced as an evolution and never as a possible pathology, as only the immobility of the body image can be considered unnatural and meaningless, as it does not express any experience or any adaptation to the other [1].

Everyone knows that body language is the ancestral language, the one that made it possible to establish communication between human beings, probably when no type of code had yet been developed, but “the other” was only body and sounds, gestures, looks, postures, facial expressions.

Edelman, in his research, points out that one of the first forms of progress, which allowed man to get out of his dumb and deaf solitude and therefore from his limited possibilities, was precisely the categorization of gestures and postures, which resulted from the combined actions of two beings, therefore from synergies, from tactile and visuo-motor coordination and from their elaboration by the vestibular apparatus and the cerebellum [2]. Therefore, the use of the body was the first step in the evolution, even mental, of the first men, who made an absolutely new logical effort and, above all, learned to insert it into categories to draw on and to refer to and that they were valid and recognizable, so as to spread and become universal. The real achievement was that the same physical movements were recognized as expressive of the same emotions and the same intentions, so the body has been, since time immemorial, the vehicle of meanings that an individual intends to give to himself and to the messages directed to the other than itself. However, the body as a presence is not enough, it speaks as it is expressive and this work of transforming ideas into gestures

capable of representing them constituted the necessary gymnastics for the human mind to transform itself from primitive to evolved. So, once again, the body is the protagonist of the development of the self [3].

Thanks to this organization / transposition of ideas, even today, with the term language, we mean a vast world of communication methods, which include all sorts of signals:

- what is generated by a movement
- what is generated by a glance
- what is generated by a sound emitted (word) or provoked (punch on the table).

What unites the universe of language and which transforms ideas and emotions into sounds or gestures is the advanced organization of all these modalities, according to a code, which not only corresponds to the inner world, but is universally recognizable from the outer world [4]. The gestures are used in a conscious and conventional way, according to a definition developed on both a cultural and social basis.

Over time, the movement, which comes from the language of the body, has allowed different and distant cultures to spread and communicate immediately, without the need for a translator.

Naturally, every man is led to translate into the movement what comes from his own culture and to manifest the origins of his own land.

With the passage of time, appropriate sign systems have been conventionally built to allow otherwise impossible communications (deaf and dumb).

Other systems have been developed to transform movement into other forms of which the most noble and significant is dance, where the same choreographies express and define environments

and eras that are a suggestive way for the members of a community to share and pass on their own cultural reality.

The set of body gestures, codified and shared, is repeated and loaded with reassuring and identifying functions, as it marks, explains and gives meaning to community events, myths, the cyclic nature of nature, religions and traditions.

In fact, in the festivals of all cultures there are ritual dances that speak of important themes for the life of each society: courtship, war, hunting, sowing and harvesting, work, the sacred.

Think above all of the myth, which, in addition to being told verbally, has been danced and mimed in all peoples since ancient times [5].

According to some statistics, about 70-80% of the information received by the brain comes from the eyes, compared to 10-15% that comes from hearing, in practice, it is first seen and then heard and to define the correct meaning of the gesture. we are therefore called to translate a series of additional information given by the tone of voice and the attitude of the interlocutor's body. Researcher Ray Louis Birdwhistell found that, on average, over the course of a day, we don't speak for more than 10-12 minutes and that a sentence lasts no more than 10 and a half seconds. On the basis of other estimates, the same scholar has defined that 65% of the interactions analyzed start from the body [6]. Other studies instead, carried out for example by the scientific journal PNAS, attest that the communication system of monkeys is such that they are the only animals, besides humans, to use a language that combines gestures with vocal calls and signs. face them. The predominance of communication, by means of gestures and the combination of different types of signals to reinforce the passage of information, found in different groups of monkeys, would have been decisive in the evolution of human verbal language.

Body movements

Researchers Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen classified five types of signals:

- Emblems, or non-verbal acts, directly translatable into verbal communication, known and shared by the members of the same group. These acts confirm or replace the speech they accompany, but they can also replace the speech, when it is not possible to speak because of too much noise, too much distance. An example of an emblem can be, for example, the movement of the hand to express the greeting.
- Illustrators, who serve, in fact, to illustrate what is said. They emphasize the speech or reproduce it physically, such as, for example, indicating something or someone who is nearby or tracing the outline of what we are referring to.
- Affect-displays or emotion displays, which are made up of the movements of the muscles of the face and body, connected to primary emotions such as happiness, sadness, surprise, fear, disgust, etc ...
- Regulators, which have the function of regulating the conversation shifts, ie the moments in which the word is

spoken or passed.

- Adapters, ie actions that communicate an effort to adapt to satisfy psychic or physical needs, or to express emotions suitable for maintaining or developing personal contacts. The main job of the adapters is to provide relief [7].

The movement, in addition to representing expansions and visible representations of postural function and action, is enriched in all its manifestations of emotional expressions and allows the transmission and reception of representative and intentional messages that ontogenetic events gradually allow to refine [8].

The body communicates in a non-verbal and immediate way through the movement, which arrives in no uncertain terms to represent the hidden emotional characteristics. The body in motion, before being a natural way of relating to the world, is therefore the tangible trace of the relationship between action and meaning, a dynamic expressive form that is capable of giving meaning to the person's attitudes and behaviors [8].

Body and didactics

It would be appropriate to highlight, as in our country, the awareness - all to be transformed, denied with new interventions - of a body absent in teaching should grow more and more. Starting from kindergarten or even primary school, the child / teenager is addressed only through a frontal lesson (teacher-child / mind-mind), therefore through a purely cognitive process. We speak to the child's head, but we must observe his responses, through the immediate ones of his body. Today's educational approach continues to consider the individual dimensions separate and not connected [9]. The teacher must be listened to through the body and also, in turn, listen to the student's body, in its bodily and facial expressions, also by studying the peculiar way in which the student's body reacts, adapting, rebelling or showing its attention., thus providing a precise thermometer of the success of the educator's message.

This gives us a great responsibility, because unlike the adult, who has already developed his filters, his defenses, his beliefs, his abilities, children are still in a very permeable phase and in a relationship with the adult, where, apparently he learns, there is the possibility of plagiarizing, of training and this can always be considered a risk and can therefore induce any of our actions to be charged with great responsibility.

Educating also brings with it a form of plural, social conditioning, but it is right to offer experiences to the child that are meaningful for him and immediately usable by a young mind, physically detectable, from and through the fastest language, that of the body.

And therefore, we must not try to transmit information, to overturn it in his head, but try to develop a learning terrain, lively, pleasant and motivating as a tool to favor the development of the person [10].

Every educator must be aware that, the younger the children,

the more they have a way of relating to the environment that is absolutely holistic, they do not divide the affective and relational aspect from what can be the transmission of information. Information is steeped in relationship, emotion, affection, the smaller they are and the more we find ourselves in this global information, the larger we become the more we tend to divide the various aspects.

Therefore, the initial approach with children must always be a global approach and, as such, can guide our method of building our own didactic progression, oriented on the body, whose language is the basis of knowledge.

Create learning opportunities through the body and movement

Movement becomes an intense educational tool when it is accompanied by control, intention and an opportunity for personality development. In other words, its development must be planned according to objectives tailored to subjective needs, which, however, always have collective implications and presuppose the possibility of being realized in an ad hoc training context. In general, the planning of an activity begins with the analysis of needs, the identification of the purposes and objectives and the definition of the contents [11].

Definition of the contents of new activities for the body's self-awareness

The hypothesized work is aimed at giving meaning and importance to direct experience, by listening to the internal rhythm and the relationship between being moved and moving through the body.

We invite the participants to go to a part of the space that is welcoming and safe for them, we invite them to assume a comfortable position, to place their hands on their eyes without compressing them, to darken their eyes and once closed, to lower their arms to their sides.

We invite them to free their minds from all forms of thought, leaving people free to navigate in consciousness, to experience bodily sensations, recalling any image, memory and association, to give them a shape through a spontaneous movement.

In the act of moving, the person sets out to discover new possibilities to behave, to know each other, to recover the body as one's own, to relate to others and to bring to light, in a more complete way, one's essence and identity.

The activity must be conducted for about 15 minutes, but the time can be increased if the group is already at a more advanced level of self-awareness. Once the path is finished, each participant is invited to write down a small excursus on what he remembers and what is most significant, introducing three key movements of the path just experienced [12].

The targets are: knowledge of one's body, breathing, awareness of the visual field, space and energy of movements. Development and mastery of one's body, without taking away the soul from gestures.

Conclusion

This type of activity is suitable for both children and adolescents. It allows you to teach participants to see each other, to recognize each other and to communicate their experiences with the attention and respect that are created when creative experiences of movement are shared.

But it is certainly capable of training educators, since it possesses the necessary requisites for them to become familiar with "seeing" their students, offering them their presence, in a welcoming and appropriate way to the relationship.

The sense of experience is the increase of personal awareness and creativity in every aspect, bodily, psychological and spiritual, through spontaneous movement.

In other words, this leads to developing the ability to be deeply present in personal experience, using all one's attention potential, to reach a state of listening, of self-observation, which allows one to bring to awareness what is implicit. and to the very awareness of reaching out to bear witness to itself.

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