



Nonverbal Codes in Interpersonal Communication Between Genders of Japanese Native Speakers

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Article Info

Article History:

Received March 2023

Approved September 2023

Published October 2023

Keywords:

interpersonal communication, conflict, intergender, response, nonverbal

Abstract

This study aims to describe the response when male and female speakers of the Japanese language perform interpersonal communication, which is indicated by conflict by looking at the nonverbal codes and the nonverbal functions used by the threatened communicant. The reason for choosing this topic is that men and women often experience miscommunication when communicating interpersonally, which causes conflicts between men and women. Understanding each other's nonverbal codes shown by each communicator is a way to establish better intergender communication. The theory used is the theory of 3F (freeze, flight, and fight) from Navarro & Karlins (2008) and the theory of nonverbal functions from Ekman and Friesen (1969). The data collection technique used in this study is the note-taking technique and analyzed using a pragmatic equivalent technique. The results of this study show that men who feel threatened by women more often use the fight response, while women who are threatened use the freeze response more often. Men use 16 gestures, while women use 34 when they feel threatened. Looking at the other person is men's and women's most frequently used gesture. Men showed nonverbal codes 7 times, with the most nonverbal code shown being discomfort. Women showed nonverbal codes 18 times, with the most nonverbal codes shown being discomfort, nervousness, worry, stress and fear, and nervousness. There are 9 nonverbal functions in intergender communication, with repetition being the nonverbal function often shown. Women are more likely to get threats from men. Women use nonverbal communication more often.

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E-ISSN 2685-6662

P-ISSN 2252-6250

INTRODUCTION

During the hustle and bustle of rapid world development, all the needs that must be discussed carefully become very hasty. Slowly, various countries have abandoned high-context methods of communication or what is commonly known as high-context communication. Reasons such as inefficiency, implicitness, and seeming ambiguous and indirect have caused this communication culture to be replaced by low-context communication. Japan is one country that still maintains this high-context communication culture.

In Japan, people are often expected to share the same perspective when they communicate, making it harder to understand for people unfamiliar with their culture. Moreover, the concept of *aimai* and *chinmoku* in Japanese communication culture makes it difficult to know the message that Japanese people want to convey.

Aimai, written with the kanji 曖昧 (曖 *ai* or *kurai*, which means 'unclear', and 昧 *mai* or *musaboru*, which means 'dark'), is a condition that is unclear due to a word or thing having a double meaning. (Davies & Ikeno, 2002:9). *Chinmoku*, which can be written with the kanji 沈黙 (沈 *chin* or *shizum*' which means 'low tide' and 黙 *moku* or *damaru* which means 'silence' is a powerful form of communication that reflects the Japanese appreciation or value of silence which is simple and full of meaning (Davies & Ikeno, 2002, p. 51).

With the two concepts above, nonverbal communication is more valued than verbal communication. It is just that the use of nonverbal codes is different because it is influenced by culture, for example, gender. When interacting socially, men and women often face conflict due to cross-cultural differences. Men and women even deal with conflict in different ways. For most women, conflict threatens connections and relationships

and must be avoided in various ways. However, for men, conflict is a necessary means by which status is negotiated, so it must be accepted or perhaps even sought and enjoyed (Tanen, 1991, p. 73).

In Nugroho's (2000) research entitled "*Communication Style in Men and Women in Dating Status when Experiencing Interpersonal Conflict with Their Partners*", the aim was to determine the description of communication styles (instrumental and expressive) in men and women in relationship status when facing conflict. Interpersonal with the typology theory of instrumental and expressive communication styles from Parsons & Bales (1992). It can be seen that the most prominent men's communication style, when used in interpersonal conflicts, is the instrumental style, and the same goes for women. However, this communication style changes after men and women are faced with an interpersonal conflict. Women change their communication style to expressive, while men consistently use an instrumental style. Men's most prominent nonverbal behaviour during interpersonal conflict is looking at their partner's face, while women prefer to frown.

Based on this research, it can be concluded that when men and women experience interpersonal conflict, the styles and nonverbals will differ. Besides gender differences, nonverbal codes also vary depending on a country's culture. Asworo's (2020) research entitled "*Nonverbal Communication in the Film Umimachi Diary*" states that there are 28 nonverbal communications in the film *Umimachi Diary* and 8 nonverbal functions, with nodding gestures and 'Kanpai' being the gestures most used by Japanese people.

Seeing the importance of using nonverbal language makes researchers think that to minimize interpersonal conflict between genders, each communicator needs to know the meaning

of the nonverbal messages. In this research, researchers used the 3F theory from Navarro (2008). This theory reveals three responses shown by humans when facing a threat. For each response given, the communicant conveys a nonverbal message. It is a strong reason for researchers to conduct an "Analysis of Nonverbal Codes in Interpersonal Communication Between Japanese Teak Speakers". Hopefully, this research will provide benefits regarding the understanding of communicating with Japanese people for Japanese language learners in Indonesia and those who have the opportunity and need to communicate with Japanese people.

METHOD

This research began by looking for everyday problems, especially communication problems. Next, researchers conducted a literature study on definitions of gender communication, conflict, and nonverbal language. Next, the researcher chose the Japanese drama entitled "3 Nen A Gumi" and the Japanese film entitled "Promised Land" as data sources in this research because there was much data that was under the objectives of this research.

In this research, the researcher used note-taking techniques in collecting data, while the data analysis technique used was pragmatic matching techniques. This method is applied by referring to the self-defense response shown by each actor when faced directly with threats and danger. In this response, there are forms of nonverbal language issued by each actor when responding to a threat or language. The combination of these nonverbal behaviors and forms will form a nonverbal code.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data that has been collected, researchers analyzed the forms

of nonverbal language shown by men and women in threatened conditions. Previously, it was explained that nonverbal threats start from self-defense responses carried out by the man or woman. Researchers used Navarro's theory, namely the 3F self-defense theory (freeze, flight, fight). With this theory, researchers analyze the responses and forms of nonverbal codes of men and women. Then, these nonverbal forms will be classified using nonverbal function theory to see the function of these nonverbal forms. The following is an explanation to answer the existing problem formulation.

Example of a Woman's Freezing Response (Freeze):

W: 私と友達じゃありません。自殺する
ちょっと前って 手紙をもらって...そ
こにも書いてありました。

(Watashi to tomodachi ja arimasen.
Jisatsu suru chotto maette tegami wo
moratte... soko nimo kaite arimashita.)

'Me and him are not friends. Before
committing suicide, I received a letter
from him. There, it is written (the
reason)..'

P: 何で手紙あったらうよな...いや、
今べき珍しいな

(Nan de tegami atta daroo yo na...iya, ima
beki mezurashii na.)

'Why did he give you a letter? No, sensei
just feels strange. Why now?

Conflict situation: The male teacher (P)
asks a female student (W) to answer the
question of who caused their classmate
(Kageyama) to commit suicide.

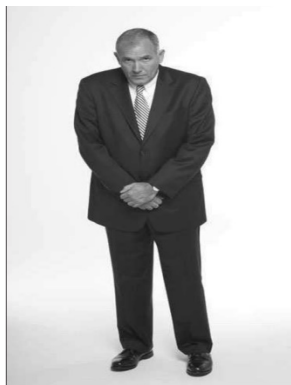
Threatened position: Woman

Response: freeze (stand still)

Nonverbal form: Tight shoulders/body
posture, clenched hands, restless legs,
staring at the person you are talking to.

In the data above, when a woman (W) receives a threat from a man (P), the first response shown to face stress and danger is a freeze response. Based on the opinion of Navarro (2008), the freezing strategy is the first response issued by the limbic brain defense system when humans face a threat or danger.

In protecting himself, W reduced his movements as much as possible. According to Navarro and Karlins (2008, p. 41), movement can attract the opponent's attention. In his nonverbal behavior, W showed the 'turtle effect', namely a gesture not to expose the head too much by raising his shoulders and lowering his head. This gesture is a nonverbal code that indicates that W seems to have lost confidence.



Picture 1: Turtle Effect



Picture 2: Nonverbal behaviour shown by women when threatened

Example of a Men's Freezing Response (Freeze):

W: ごしょ大学に先輩から全部聞きました。せんせいとごしょだいはごろらでどんなつながりをもっているか、もうこんなことやめてください。

(Gosho-Daigaku ni senpai kara zenbu kikimashita. Sensei to Goshodai wa goura de donna tsunagari wo mote iruka, mou konna koto yamete kudasai.)

(I heard from seniors who studied at that university (Gosho University), that Sensei and the university had a detrimental collaboration. Please stop that.)

P: 落ち着いてあれは。

(Ochitsuite are wa.)

(Calm down first. That...)

W: もしやめないなら教育機関に伝えます。

(Moshi yamenai nara kyouiku kikan ni tsutaemasu.)

(If sensei doesn't stop, I will report it to the educational institution.)

Conflict situation: The female student (W) knows about the dirty collaboration carried out by the male teacher (P) with the university. W threatened to report P to the education department if P did not stop his dirty collaboration.

Threatened Position: Men

Response: Freezing

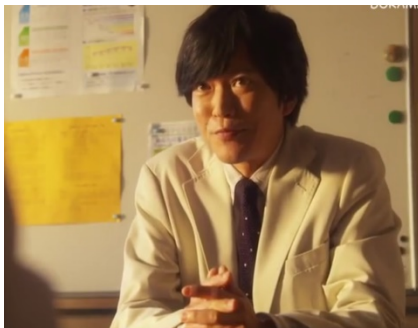
Nonverbal form: Bring both hands together with closed thumbs, backward hand movements, palms up and down, look at the person you are talking to, and open your mouth.

The response shown by the male teacher (P) when facing threats from female students (P) was to freeze. Previously, when P offered W a scholarship, it appeared that P was very confident in what he was doing. The gesture shown is holding the hand with the thumb facing upwards and showing the hand by placing it on the table. According to Navarro and Karlins (2008, p. 226), a thumbs up is a movement against the

earth's gravitational force, a nonverbal type associated with comfort and high trust.



Picture 3 : Thumb gesture indicating positive thought



Picture 4: Male teacher gestures before threatened

After being faced with a threat, the hand-gripping gesture changes. It can be seen from the hidden thumb gesture. This indicates stress and negative emotions. P also withdrew his grip, creating a distance that indicated a change in emotion. Tension can also be seen when P shows an expression of looking at the person he is talking to while opening his mouth. This shows negative emotions in P. Based on the gestures shown by P, it can be concluded that the code for these nonverbal forms is tension and negative emotions.

Furthermore, the data above found a nonverbal function: repetition (repeating a verbal message expressed nonverbally). It can be seen from the movement of opening your hands and moving them up and down while saying “落ち着いてあれは” (Calm down, that is..).



Picture 5: Thumb gesture indicating negative thought



Picture 6: Male teacher feeling threatened

Example of a Female Avoidance Response (Flight)

W: れいな惚れた男なんだからもっと自信してすなよ. じゃ...なんてはあたしが報うわれないから.

(Reina horeta otoko nan dakara motto jishin shitesunayo. Ja, ...nante wa atashi ga mukuu ware nai kara.)

'Because you are the person Reina likes, at least you are more confident! If not... I will be nothing...'

P: やっぱお前は俺のこと

(Yappa omae wa ore no koto.)

'So, it's true that you...'

W: そう、言うことは下手ねんだよ.

(Sou iu koto wa heta nen dayo.)

'I'm not good at that'.

P: へ?! どういうこと?!

(He?! Dou iu koto?!)

'Hah? What does it mean?'

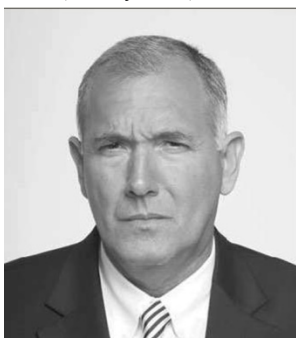
Conflict situation: The female student (W) unknowingly shows she likes the male student (P). P realized this and immediately asked what W meant, but W avoided it because P was not sensitive to his feelings.

Threatened position: Female

Response: Avoid (*flight*)

Nonverbal form: Furrowed eyebrows, blinking, smiling slightly, rolling your eyes, squinting.

In the data above, the response shown by female students when facing a threat or danger is an avoidance or flight response. The male student (P), who was late realizing that the female student (W) had feelings for him, slowly asked W. However, W chose to avoid the question. The gestures shown by W are furrowed eyebrows, blinking, smiling faintly, rolling his eyes, and squinting. The code for these nonverbal forms expresses negative emotions (annoyance).



Picture 7: form negative emotions and discomfort



Picture 8: A female student furrowed her brows

Furthermore, in the data above, a nonverbal function was found: contradiction (a nonverbal message opposite to a verbal one). It is shown by the smiling gesture shown by the female student when she is annoyed with the male student.

Example of a Male Avoidance Response (Flight)

W: さとみやっぱり持ってるね。それ
くら へた
に ,比べて下手れわ。

(Satomi yappari moteru ne. Sore ni kurabete heta ware.)
(Satomi is indeed a popular guy, compared to this guy..)

P: うるさいな (Urusai na)
(It's noisy!)

Conflict situation: A female student (W) who was standing next to a male student (P) who was washing his hands saw the other students talking about Satomi (a popular boy in her class) accidentally. W felt that P was the opposite and started comparing him to Satomi, making (P) uncomfortable.

Threatened position: Male

Response: Avoid (*flight*)

Nonverbal form: Awkward smiling, sighing, contact with objects/clothing.

In the data above, the response shown by male students when facing a threat is a flight response. If the freezing response is not enough to eliminate threats and danger, then the second response that the limbic brain will show is avoidance. This response aims to save oneself by avoiding and moving away from the source of danger..

Male students (P) who feel uncomfortable when compared to other people choose to avoid and not have social interactions with female students. He also smiled awkwardly, which indicated that he was uncomfortable interacting. The following nonverbal form is sighing and contact with clothing/objects. This nonverbal form is self-soothing from the male student (P) when experiencing stress and pressure. Based on the nonverbal form, it can be concluded that the code for the nonverbal form is discomfort.



Picture 9: Awkward smiles and avoidance are signs of discomfort

Example of fighting response from Men (Fight)

W: ごしょ大学から、高くの報奨取ってますよね。今回のけんも大臣頼みですよね。あなたは、生徒商品としてつかみてない。では、教育機関に伝えます。

(Goshou daigaku kara, takaku no housou tottemasu yone. Konkai no ken mo daijin tanomi desu yone. Anata wa, seito shouhin toshite tsukamitenai. Dewa, kyouiku kikan ni tsutaemasu.)

'This is from Goshou University. You have received great rewards. This time, you got a direct request from the minister. You think of students as goods. I will report all of this to the education department.'

P: そんなことしていいんですか。ベルムズ知ってるね。僕やまきはら先生にたてつことどうなることやろう。

(Sonna koto shite iin desuka. Beremuzu shitteru ne. Boku ya Makihara sensei ni tatetsu koto dounaru koto yarou.)

'Are you sure you will do it? Do you know Berumuzu? If Makihara sensei and I were found out, who knows what would happen...'

Conflict situation: The female teacher (W) knows about the dirty collaboration carried out by the male teacher (P) with the minister of education. He also intends to report the teacher and minister to the education service. P threatened that if W reported it, he would make a fake video to slander W.

Threatened position: Male

Response: Fight back (*fight*)

Nonverbal form: Bring both hands together with closed thumbs, eyebrows raised, forehead wrinkled, nostrils flared, looking at the person you are talking to.

In the sentence data above, the response shown by the male teacher (P) when facing a threat was to fight back or (fight). When the female teacher (W) left to report this case to the education service, the male teacher (P) detained her. P fought back by threatening W with a fake video from Beruzumu. The gesture shown by P is joining hands with a closed thumb gesture. This gesture indicates stress and negative emotions.

Next, the gesture shown by P was a furrowed forehead and raised eyebrows. According to Navarro and Karlins (2008, p. 289), a frown is seen when someone is in an unpleasant situation but cannot save themselves. This is seen when female teachers have found evidence of dirty collaboration between male teachers and ministers. The next gesture shown is the flared nostrils. This gesture shows that there is an indication of someone's intention to do or plan something. Based on the form of gesture shown, the nonverbal code shown by the male teacher is planning something or having hidden intentions.



Picture 10: brows furrowed in disguised nervousness



Picture 11: the nostrils bear a sign of intention

Example of fighting response for Female (Fight)

P: じゃ何で逃げるんだ。犯人じゃないんだったら何で逃げるんだ。あいかを帰せ！帰せないんだったら、死ぬね！

(Ja nande nigerun da. Hannin janain dattara nande nigerunda. Aika wo kaese! Kaesenain datta, shine!)

(Then, why did he run? If he was not the culprit, why did he run? Please give me back my Aika (Goro's granddaughter)! If Aika does not come back, die! (your child))

W: 本当に何もしていません、あのこ悪いことしたから、私のせい。

(Hontou ni nanimo shiteimasen, ano warui koto shita kara, watashi no sei.)

(He did not do anything. If he does something bad, it is all my fault.)

Conflict situation: W said that his son was not a bad person and did not do anything. P fought back and asked if W's child was innocent and why he ran because P suspects W's son if he killed P. W's grandson.

Threatened position: Female

Response: Fight back (*fight*)

Nonverbal form: Eyes wide open, eyebrows raised upwards, chin up, nose held high, lips in an inverted 'u' shape.

In the data above, the response shown by women when facing a threat is a fight. Goro (P) was angry and accused Yoko's son (Takeshi) of being the one who killed his granddaughter (Aika). Yoko (W) continuously assured P that her son was

not a murderer. If his son did something bad, W asked P to blame him, not his son. When responding to threats from P, Yoko (W) showed several nonverbal forms such as eyes wide open, eyebrows raised, lips in an inverted 'u' shape, chin up, and nose held high.

When showing nonverbal forms, W shows 3 gestural behaviors that oppose the earth's gravitational force, namely lips forming an inverted 'u' shape, chin up, and nose held high. Lips that disappear and the corners of the mouth drooping down are signs of increased nervousness and stress. This was proven when P accused W's child of being a murderer after all the residents found evidence and became suspicious of W's child. W experienced nervousness and severe stress over all the accusations given to his child.

Next is the gesture of the chin up and the nose held high. According to Navarro and Karlins (2008, p. 297), a chin that sticks out and a nose that is held high is a sign of comfort and self-confidence. In this context, the gesture shown by W is a form of high self-confidence after he defends his child. W's argument made him feel confident, so he showed such a gesture. The gesture of wide open eyes and raised eyebrows indicate self-confidence. Therefore, based on the form shown, the nonverbal code used by W is a code of high self-confidence.



Picture 12: Yoko's gesture when arguing



Picture 13: Lifting the chin and nose is a sign of confidence

From the data collected, 26 interpersonal communications between genders indicated interpersonal conflict. In this communication, 12 freeze responses were found, 8 flight responses, and 6 fight responses. In the responses given, there were 16 nonverbal forms shown by men and 34 nonverbal forms shown by women when communicating, and several nonverbal functions were found, namely: 1 complement function, 1 contradiction function, 4 repetition functions, 1 substitution function, and 2 Accentuation functions.

There were 7 responses found when men felt threatened by women. Fight is the response most frequently used by men with 3 uses. Men risk their status when facing interpersonal conflicts with women. This follows Tanen's theory (1991), where for men, conflict is a necessary means by which status is negotiated, so it must be accepted or perhaps even sought and enjoyed. The freeze and flight responses are used 2 times each. There are 16 forms of gestures that men show when responding to self-defense. The most frequently used gesture is looking at the person you are talking to, with 5 uses. Next, the gestures of smiling, joining hands with closed thumbs, opening the mouth, contact with clothing, and frowning are used 2 times each.

Based on the combination of forms and nonverbal behavior shown, there are 7 nonverbal codes shown by men when facing threats from women. These nonverbal codes appear according to the

type of conflict experienced by the communicant. These nonverbal codes include: a) losing self-confidence 1 time. b) discomfort 2 times. c) nervous and worried 2 times. d) Disappointment 1 time. e) negative emotions (annoyed) 1 time. f) nervousness 2 times. g) stress, nervousness, and fear 2 times. h) fear and alertness 1 time. i) disinterest 2 times. j) high self-confidence 1 time. k) sadness 1 time. l) lie 2 times.

In interpersonal communication between genders, 8 nonverbal functions were found. Repetition is the most frequently used function, namely 4 times. Accentuation is used 2 times. Meanwhile, substitution, complement, and contradiction are used once. The freeze response is the response most often used by Japanese women. This follows the *chinmoku* (silence) principle, implemented in Japanese communication culture.

Looking at the person you are talking to is a gesture most often used by men and women. In Japanese culture, looking at the person you are talking to is considered impolite, especially towards older people. However, when faced with a conflict and threat, Japanese people prefer to look directly at the person they are talking to rather than avoiding direct gaze. When facing a conflict, looking at the person you are talking to does not affect age range or gender. Women more often receive threats from men. Compared to men, Japanese women use nonverbal communication more often, using 7 gestures in 1 nonverbal code. This indicates that it is important to know the nonverbal meaning used by the person you are talking to.

CONCLUSION

Nonverbal communication is often used by Japanese people when communicating. Women in Japan are the communicants who use most nonverbal codes in communicating. In addition,

when facing a threat, women more often use the freeze response to defend themselves from the threat.

When facing a threat, Japanese men more often respond with a fight response. This is proven by Tanen's theory, where men prefer conflict to show their status. Japanese men and women use more staring gestures at the other person when they face an interpersonal conflict between genders.

This research was conducted by describing the nonverbal forms shown by different genders when facing threats and danger. This nonverbal form and behavior arise from a conflict, so the self-defense system in the human brain responds with the 3 Fs (freeze, flight, and fight). This research only focuses on gestures, whereas many other nonverbal forms can be researched further.

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