

RE-THINKING LIBRARY SPACES – GROUP WORKING AREAS AND THEIR IMPACT ON LIBRARY USERS

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Abstract

Is re-thinking library spaces about Communication?

People communicate with each other in a number of ways, depending on the message and of the context. Choice of the communication channel and the style of communicating also affects the process. So, there are various types of communication.

In the last decades, libraries turned into a social space for users and therefore, the design of libraries is in continuous change, in order to meet users' expectations and needs. *Keywords: social space, library, communication, chronemics*

1 The impact of nonverbal aspects in our lives

There is a permanent interdependence between verbal communication and non-verbal communication. It is estimated that the total impact that a person has on another 7% is due to verbal communication, 38% voice and 55% face expression (Monday 2004: 78). Other researchers are of the opinion that, out of total communication, the verbal channel occupies only 35%, the rest being occupied by the nonverbal channel (Pânișoara 2004: 78). The two modes of communication can be characterized by contrast. Ion-Ovidiu Pânișoară (2004: 78-29) following points are essential: unlike verbal communication that uses one way, word, verbal communication can expand into more areas of development, then, while verbal communication is almost totally controlled, the non-verbal is almost totally uncontrollable. Finally, verbal communication is organized and structured, and non-verbal is rather unstructured. The researcher considers that it is neglected that if nonverbal communication that is culturally determined, with codes nonverbal distinct that nonverbal messages may conflict with verbal messages, especially since they are largely unconscious are important in communicating feelings and attitudes (apud Crețu 2009: 86-87)

Synthesis of the nonverbal communication functions are: accentuating and completing the verbal communication, the possibility of deliberately contradicting certain aspects of the verbal communication, regulating the communicative flow, repeating and

updating the meaning of the verbal communication, the possibility of substituting aspects of the verbal communication (Lunar 2004: 79-80).

After Septimiu Chelcea *et alii* (2005) the components of nonverbal communication can be classified according to the sensory channel involved (seeing, hearing, tact, olfaction) and depending on the importance of the signals transmitted through these channels. Signals can be received by the visual analyzer (kinesic, proxemic, facial, ocular, artifacts) transmitted through auditory (vocal) and olfactory channels, and chronema, i.e. the perception of time, does not benefit from a specialized receptor organ, complex psychological, sensory and thinking at the same time.

2 The impact of kinesics

The term kinesic (which in Greek denotes the movement) was first used by American anthropologist Ray L. Birdwhistell (1918-1994) for "the study of body movements in relation to nonverbal aspects of interpersonal communication" (Chelcea et al., 2005, 41). This term is considered by Septimiu Chelcea to be the scientific approach to nonverbal communication, unlike the syntagms built with the term "language": *body language, body language, space language, speech language, or the language of clothing*. Today we find papers about "body language" that have the structure of dictionaries: for example, high head, eagle, hanging arms - nonchalance, etc. The author believes that such judgments are false and detrimental in interpersonal communication, placing themselves outside of science.

This category includes the five gestures proposed by Paul Eckman and Wallace V. Friesen (apud Ivan: 2009: 85-90):

- *emblems* - gestures used for certain words or structures: for example, signs used for OK or "peace"
- *illustrators* - accompanying gestures illustrating the verbal message, such as a sign of the head or hand along with the "Let's Go" call.
- *regulators* - gestures that regulate communication, such as the affirmative gesture of nodding while the interlocutor speaks.
- *facial expressions* - "micro-facial movements that sense our emotional states" (apud Ivan 2009: 87) and which may be intentional or not.
- *adapters* - "self-manipulation or manipulation of objects related to individual needs or emotional state of persons" (Chelcea *et alii* 2005: 36).

Loredana Ivan points out that the distinction between the four categories of nonverbal behaviors (emblems, illustrators, adapters and regulators) is not so easy to do, as identifying a nonverbal sign will be gesture, the intentional character of the gesture making some researchers consider gestures only emblems and illustrators (Ivan 2009: 89):

3 The using of space

Apart from our hands or eyes, we also transmit information and the way we use a certain space. (speakers, politicians who sit close to the audience and turn their eyes, and they get another effect). The term was first used in 1914 by Edward T. Hall in a study of the social space as bio-communication in which the author delimits four inter-human distances (Chelcea *et al.* 2005: 45):

- a.) "intimate distance" (up to 40-50 cm), accessible only to very close persons
- b) "personal distance" (50-75 cm) that defines the limit of contact with the other, the reaction to the invasion of this space depends on the relationship with the person.
- c) "social distance" (1,5-3 m) is "the distance at which most of the usual individual interactions take place" (Chelcea *et al.* 2005: 46).
- d) "Public distance" (3-6 m) is the distance the individual feels protected.

There are differences between cultures, for example, there are contact cultures (Arabic or Mediterranean) - where corporal touches are encouraged, both in public and private, and non-contact cultures (such as the American or North American) . For example, at a business meeting with a North American he would appreciate that he moved a gesture to take him by his shoulders or to kick his back with his hand to express joy. The above mentioned author draws up a table showing what is the remote, social, personal and intimate distance or proximity. Decreasing the distance from those with whom they communicate is considered a clear sign of solidarity.

Also, placing the furniture in a room plays an important role in nonverbal communication by using space in a particular way.

4 Artefacts

Septimiu Chelcea states that "clothing, ornaments, clothing accessories communicate the person's biology (man / woman) to an age class (young, mature, old) in a socio-economic category (peasant / townsman, employer / worker), to one profession or another (military, priest, etc.) "(Chelcea *et al.* 2005: 52). When analyzing dress in the context of non-verbal communication, geographic, cultural and historical determinations must be taken into account. On the one hand, there are elements of clothing dictated by daily necessities (thick clothing in winter, brief and light summer clothing or in areas with high temperament of the globe). On the other hand, the items of clothing, colors or accessories indicate different mentalities, traditions, and intentions. For example, in Western Africa, the white is the color of the devil, not of innocence, and in aforementioned Africa, black is the color of joy. Clothes are the symbol of personal and social identity. Whether fur clothes or even footwear always showed wealth and prosperity. In western cultures, brief clothing is allowed, while in the Eastern tradition, especially in the Arab countries, it is not. It was observed that the length of the skirt is an economic barometer, during periods of decline, the skirt is long, in the prosperity period it is wearing the skirt (Chelcea *et al.* 2005: 55). Clothing and accessories communicate information about the person concerned, whether they belong to a particular social category, geographical area, etc., and about the modest or

bold kind of being. Often non-conformist adolescent clothing is a form of non-verbal communication.

5 The haptic and visual contact

In interpersonal relationships, the look provides important feedback about each other's reactions. Extending visual contact can mean anger, in other contexts a sign of friendship, love, etc. People look more when listening, keeping their eyes from 3 to 10 seconds. The eye movement, which also varies from one culture to another, in contact cultures, is also researched, and individuals engage more frequently in shifts.

Interpersonal relationships also depend on skin information, though it is often erotic. Already in the little child there are taboos about touching the body. In daily life senior citizens have the privilege of skin contact. The boss can put his hand on the shoulder of his subordinate, but not the other way round. Body tugs are strictly socially and culturally regulated. For example, in Islamic culture it is forbidden to touch the body of women by foreign persons as well as looking at their faces. Other gestures include: hand grip, hand kissing, kissing on the mouth, hugs, self touch.

6 The role of smell and time using

The smell is a signal and one of the first used in the evolution of life on earth. It is true that in interpersonal communication adults are less well served by olfactory signals compared to visual and hearing aids. Unfortunately, yet a psychosociology of odors is still not written.

The term "chronemics" is proposed by the same Edward T. Hall in 1949 to designate the study of the time communication function, considering that time is one of the foundations on which any culture is based and around which all activities are structured. There is a difference between monochronic (linear) and other polychronic (characterized by the effect of multiple activities at once). In monochrome cultures, such as North America and Europe, punctuality is highly valued. The same cannot be said about polychronous cultures such as Africa or South America, where delaying a meeting or a course is not a negative thing. Hall also states that in any culture three distinct temporal systems can be distinguished: technical (measured) time, formal time (the time-conscious mode) and informal time (rules on perceiving and using time learned during socialization). Punctuality is one of the most important elements of the informal time system. The development of interpersonal relationships depends to a great extent on the punctuality of the partners. The Japanese have, for the most part, the feeling of the value of time, but also the technical ability to measure it. Legally punctual, the waiting time conveys a strong chronological signal. In addition to cultural models, expectation also has a large subjective charge. In sociological studies there is a connection between scientific time, mathematically measured and social time, involving certain emotional states.

6.1 Changes for academic libraries during last decades

While traditional library was collection centered, development of digital library-led to less attendance, many academic branch libraries closed or merged, libraries turned into a social space for users and the library's visibility and usage increased.

Academic library mission is to support the teaching and research programs and to develop collections and services according to curriculum and level of research.

The flow of information in digital age research is without regard for structure, whereas libraries are entirely about structure, classification systems and hierarchies of knowledge, as well as the physical space, including book ranges or degrees of privacy for study or group work. Physical space, in short, conditions user experience, regardless of the bottomless riches of digital worlds

(Hannah Bennet, *The Psyche of the Library*, 2013, p.175)

The library users (students) physically entered the library to use the collection for their research. Large university libraries have been transforming into information commons – one step learning center that promotes collaborative student learning. They also provide educational and cultural programming

The information commons concept begun in 1992 at the University of Iowa, **who** opened its “University Arcade” - a *playground for the mind*. **That meant** embedded – computing, library research resources, multimedia technology.

A library space contained – flexible and modulate furniture that could accommodate different activities.

The focus of the library moved away from *collection activity* to *re – imagining* the use of library space. **What libraries actually do now:**

- Education
- Inclusion
- Social services
- Public spaces
- Digital Literacy
- Social justice
- Community needs

The library is no longer a space, it has become a concept. There are new designs for changing functions within the library space and they can they impact a person's experience beyond offering a modern study space. The architectural code has to shape the research process and the library buildings have to be inspiring in order for the libraries to complete their newfound and acquired role.

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