

Application of Non-Verbal Communication in Interpersonal Relations "Coach - Athlete"

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Abstract:

Communication between people has existed since the very beginning of human civilization. As an extremely complex process, it continues to be difficult to define in a way that can cover all its aspects that it compiles and generates.

Whether verbal or non-verbal - communication expresses every change that occurs between individuals in the process of their communication. Communication is an art through which we successfully share significant and important information with each other and as such it exists in all spheres of our lives, incl. and in sports. It is the way coaches pass on their knowledge, skills and experience; through which they want to motivate and stimulate the teams; through which they provide information that will allow athletes to train effectively, productively and continuously improve and refine their performance. Whether the interpersonal "coach-athlete" relationship is based on communication with words, gestures, facial expressions or body language, they are based on communication, i.e. it is both verbal and non-verbal.

This article aims to show the important aspects of non-verbal communication and its application in interpersonal relationships between coaches and athletes, based on the importance of non-verbal communication and the requirements for its effectiveness. The reasons for choosing this topic are based on the statement that in the interpersonal relationship "coach - athlete" and sports in general, non-verbal communication has not only a significant application in this relationship, but is also a strongly dominant communication process between teams and their coaches.

Keywords: Non-Verbal Communication, Interpersonal Relationships, Coach, Athlete, Sports Activity

Introduction

The whole process of development of our civilization is characterized by many changes in the behavior not only of individuals but also of human relationships as a whole. In this continuous course of development, we learn to control our behavior - its affects, impulses, emotions. This not only presupposes, but also imposes the need to differentiate one's own behavioral aspects, to get to know others, their attitude to the world and their personal position. In the social world, this acquaintance requires the observance of certain norms - very important for the person and for his public presentation to the audience.

Many psychologists, sociologists, non-verbal communication experts deal with the focus of public presentation and with regard to all dependencies and regularities in people's behavior. On the other hand, the differentiation of human behavior covers all aspects of public life, constantly changing the activities of people, incl. and sports activities, and thus turns them into a kind of social key to "unraveling" the components of nonverbal communication and their successful application in interpersonal relationships in sports.

In our time, sport is a major factor of social significance, and athletes are seen as "national heroes" on whom is placed a huge social responsibility to fans and spectators who identify with them. Thus, in this kind of social key, through the components of non-verbal communication (facial expression, look, gesture, posture, etc.), the main aspects of non-verbal behavior in the interpersonal relationships of coaches and athletes are sought.

It can be said that the issue of non-verbal communication in sports is a topic that is always very strong and relevant. In general, communication is the art of successfully sharing meaningful information with people using an exchange of experiences. Every coach constantly during his career wants to motivate the athletes he works with, to provide them with information that will allow them to train much more effectively to improve their performance. Non-verbal communication is also part of the whole communication process, sometimes even much more meaningful and successful than verbal communication approaches.

All this determines the main purpose of this publication, which seeks to show how nonverbal communication finds its application in interpersonal relationships between coaches and athletes.

The conclusions and summaries of the study confirm the importance of nonverbal communication in people's sports behavior and outline guidelines for the application of models of this type of communication in the theoretical field of sport.

Materials and Methods

In order to reach its results and findings on the application of nonverbal communication in sports with a focus on interpersonal relations "coach – athlete", this article reviews the observations and research of scientists and authors in the field, focused mainly on this, that a number of conclusions stand out and are analyzed, which outline a key aspect – non-verbal communication has not only a significant application in interpersonal relationships in sports, but is also a strongly dominant communication process between teams and their coaches.

For the purpose of the article the methods of theoretical and scientific analysis, comparative analysis, systematic analysis is used - through observations, collection and summarization of information, as well as review, analysis and formation of conclusions of publications on the topic.

Today, many contemporary authors study in depth the interdisciplinary nature of nonverbal communication, which gives reason for research and application in relation to sports. Many authors do not fail to mention the social value of sport as a “multifaceted phenomenon that is measured by economic, political, educational, educational, health and moral goals, penetrating the most important aspects of contemporary life” (Zaberska, 2009, p. 17). Other nonverbal researchers believe that “sports behavior deserves more attention than it receives “(Moris, 2007, p. 477). There is also strong support for the thesis of Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning on the development of human civilization and the changes that this development requires in all spheres of life, incl. and in sports.

As we have repeatedly mentioned, the science of nonverbal communication deals in detail with facial expressions, gestures and posture. Non-verbal communication includes information that is “emitted by the appearance and movements of the body (body signs and signals) or transmitted through changes in voice (through sound, color, light, smell), as well as through spatial behavior and, consciously whether or not, intentionally or accidentally, an impact on the material environment by one individual is accepted by the tactile organs of another individual and the possible influence of his behavior is taken into account” (Rumenchev, 2006, p. 15). Given this, it can be said that the most studied type of nonverbal communication is the one that studies facial expressions and body movements. This type of nonverbal communication is called “kinesics”. It is no coincidence that Shefflin and Duncan define kinesics as “a motor modality through which all functions of nonverbal communication are realized: subtext function, synchronizing function, feedback function, modal-emotional function” (Rumenchev, 2006, p. 28).

There is evidence that coaches who have a negative attitude towards nonverbal communication express different types of negative nonverbal actions, while those who have a positive attitude towards nonverbal communication express different types of positive nonverbal actions. According to researchers, this suggests a link between nonverbal communication and the coach's leadership style (Weinberg & Gould, 1995, pp. 205-225).

Given the constant possibilities for creating unforeseen situations in a team, under no circumstances can it be assumed that each style is correct or that there is an ideal leadership style. It all depends on the factors influencing the degree to which a style is appropriate, the type of team, the nature of the sport, the nature of the skills required by the coach, the characteristics, qualities and personality of the athletes in the team and the team as a whole and last but not least - from the personality of the sports leader. In all situations, however, the coach's leadership style corresponds closely to the nonverbal communication process in the relationship between him and the athletes.

An effective leader-coach is able to change his style to meet the needs of the current situation in the team, so he can “maneuver” and change his non-verbal communication approaches, but they always express positive non-verbal actions. Democratic leaders can quickly become coercive when faced with a crisis in the team, but they have a clear idea of what they are doing and why. In them, the strength of non-verbal communication will be consistent with the impending change and its successful management to achieve the goals of the team, i.e. even through coercive leadership style (based on the democratic one), they also carry the positive non-verbal aspects of communication. Bad leaders change their style at random, so the athletes on their team get confused and don't know what to expect next. This is also reflected in non-verbal communication, i.e. it is logical in this type of leadership style to observe a negative attitude towards non-verbal communication and to express negative non-verbal actions.

Good leaders can also change their style when working with individual athletes according to their characteristics. Some players need more positive guidance, therefore more positive

nonverbal communication skills. Others respond best if they participate in decision-making with their coach.

We should not forget the fact that the decoding of non-verbal communication in the “coach-athlete” relationship depends a lot on the sensitivity of the recipient of the non-verbal message, which may be the reason why sometimes positive or negative non-verbal actions do not have the expected effect. (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003, p. 321). In other words: the more sensitive individual will always perceive the negative side of nonverbal communication much more severely and extremely negatively; may feel unwell; to doubt his abilities; to lose stimulus, and when it is systemic, it can lead to permanent demotivation and unwillingness to work and achieve high sports results. Conversely, the more sensitive individual will always respond much more motivated and encouraging to positive nonverbal actions in the relationship between him and the coach. Therefore, it can be said that motivation is among the main techniques used by leaders, incl. and for more effective implementation and achievement of team goals. The practical realization of the motivation in the sports and training process presupposes a choice of techniques, methods, approaches that best reflect any problems that may arise - incl. and regarding the non-verbal actions used in the communication process. In addition, each leader must take into account the factors influencing the motivational process (organizational structure of the club, team climate, requirements for players, etc.).

In principle, maintaining a constant dialogue and communication (verbal and non-verbal) between the team and the leader can help each party to understand the other party's position on all issues related to the implementation of team goals. In this way, the optimal result can be achieved not only for the team, but also for the sports club as a whole.

Results and Discussions

As a rule, coaches, incl. Physical education and sports teachers have a specific (distinctive) work environment. This presupposes and requires specific verbal and non-verbal communication as a basis for quality and effective training and presentation of athletes.

Sports coaches aim to make their work an effective process, which is not least the building of the personality of athletes in a healthy social environment. Interpersonal interaction and communication between the coach and the athlete is a key tool for achieving this goal.

Results of research in the field of non-verbal communication show that the transfer of information takes place (Pease & Pease, 2003, p. 27):

- by verbal means - 7%;
- with sound means (including tone and intonation of the voice) - 38%;
- with non-verbal means - 55%.

In order for the interpersonal communication “coach – athlete” to be effective, the coaches use the verbal communication in their classes by applying the general pedagogical verbal methods - description, explanation, instruction, comments and remarks, instructions, analysis, etc. Verbal communication is of great importance for communication, stimulates the activity and motivation of the athlete. It is crucial for the realization of their joint activities and for achieving high sports results.

The classes during the trainings are characterized by collectivism, where everyone strives to be empathetic to each other. This empathy is most often expressed in encouraging words both from the coach to the athletes and between the athletes themselves. The volume of the voice with which instructions are given or an attempt is made to attract a player's attention is much greater than in other activities. Coaches (most of the time) have to speak loudly, but this

should not be taken negatively (such as rudeness and / or threat) - this is also dictated by external factors such as the size of the gym (if the training is in the gym) , acoustics, open space and in no way interferes with the solution of educational and training tasks. In order to be properly understood by athletes, the coach must have clear communicative competence. In other words, the communication during training is in accordance with the conditions of its conduct and is directly related to the implementation of training and sports tasks of athletes.

The coach cannot and should not be a speaker during training. Excessive “oratory” can disrupt the density of the lesson itself and this can lead to a decrease in performance and psychological attitude of the athlete, which leads to boredom and sometimes injuries. Verbal communication during the training process must be short, accurate and clear in order to be understood and perceived by athletes, even in physical fatigue and in a competitive environment.

The successful realization of the training process is inconceivable without the non-verbal communication between coaches and athletes and between the athletes themselves during the training and especially in the competitive activity. The coach largely sends conscious non-verbal signals to the athletes from his work. Unconscious signals are undesirable and can be misunderstood, so sports coaches should try to apply them minimally in their work.

Non-verbal communication in the training process is realized through signs and signals that are informative for both the coach and the athletes and athletes. It includes messages conveyed through various gestures, facial expressions, spatial behavior and more. Non-verbal communication can reveal “the emotions, thoughts and feelings of sports coaches and athletes before, during and after a training session or competition” (Peltekova, 2013, p. 356).

The research of Russian specialists in the field of sports pedagogy and psychology allows us to draw conclusions about the importance of game communication in organizing joint motor activities during play in team sports. In the first place, experts identify “the need to increase the effectiveness of communication by timely and accurate transmission of information for the implementation of tactical actions between each member of the sports team” (Gogunov & Martianov, 2004, p. 3).

The main ways of non-verbal communication in the interpersonal relations “coach – athlete” are the following:

- Eye contact;
- Facial expression;
- Head movement;
- Hand gestures;
- Body posture;
- Spatial behavior, etc.

Eye contact is an important part of the communication between the teacher and the students, as well as between the students or competitors. It is usually done between two students or between a teacher and a student. Eye contact is usually followed by hand gestures, which are accompanied by word instructions.

The facial expression and facial expressions made by the coach show approval or disapproval of the action performed by the athlete. During a competition, it is important for sports coaches to control themselves in the use of facial expressions of disapproval in order to avoid psychological stress in athletes.

The movement of the head, the position of the shoulders and the upright posture of the coach is an important message to the athletes, which is perceived as a positive attitude towards the upcoming work and shows confidence in their strength during the competition.

Hand gestures are most often associated with direct training and competition work and complement oral instructions. They can also show praise or rebuke. They are the most visible part for all participants and their use is of great importance for non-verbal communication. The gestures of sports coaches made during competitions are also seen by the audience, so they can be perceived as a desire for support, but also as a kind of provocation. Their proper use is a manifestation of exceptional sports and training skills.

The posture is an indicator of the mood of the participants in the training and competition activities. From the position of the coach one can judge his perception of the current sports situation. Through it, he can convey to athletes a sense of optimism, anxiety, tension or indifference. With the same force the posture of the athletes shows the coaches their attitude to what is happening. When athletes in the training process know each other well, this way of communication can be crucial for successful mutual understanding, because in most cases poses are a kind of controlled emotions.

The spatial behavior of sports coaches during a competition in most cases is consistent with restrictions in the sports regulations of the sport, the size and noise in the gym or stadium. In most cases, when giving instructions, coaches are close to the athletes. This is perceived positively and is dictated by the situation. The perimeter of the personal space between the participants in sports activities is not covered by the generally accepted norm for interpretation of the distance between two persons.

Non-verbal communication is always used in combination with verbal, but in a different ratio. Many studies have been done to establish the percentage ratio between them. It has been shown that when transmitting information during an interview, the ratio between verbal and nonverbal communication is 35% to 65% in favor of nonverbal communication (Shipunov, 2003, p. 37).

The combination of words and gestures is very important for communication during the training process and between coaches and athletes. In addition, there is a noticeable difference in communication during regular training and sports competition. This difference is dictated by the competitive nature and importance of the result - victory or loss, ranking and decent performance. The longer coaches and athletes are together, the better the communication between them. The better the communication, the more successful the performance of the athletes in the competition will be.

Conclusion

The analysis shows that the nature and significance of the relationship “coach – athlete” in the context of interpersonal constructions of nonverbal communication, build a sense of closeness, trust and respect, common orientation, common goals, complementary roles and tasks. The impact of the interpersonal "coach-athlete" relationship on success is obvious, and the very nature of this relationship plays an important role in the development of the athlete both as a performer and as a person.

In modern sports, non-verbal communication also serves to reveal the existing opportunities for improving interpersonal relations “coach – athlete”, to improve the work of teams and achieve much higher results. In this way, an opinion can be formed about how and how successfully or unsuccessfully the coach copes with the dialogue he leads with his team and / or his communication skills in general. For this reason, it is in the interest of every sports club to have good and competent in terms of communication coaches. Communication in sports gives an insight into the extent to which the professional knowledge, skills and training of the players are adequate to the requirements of the team. Along with this, the key role of the

leader in sports as one of the most important participants in the process is extremely important for achieving these goals. As a successful communicator and in his competencies of many personal characteristics, he is a kind of buffer between the team and achieving the team's goals.

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