

Nonverbal Communication as a Symbol of Love in Long Distance Relationship (LDR)

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Abstract. Communication is a form of interaction that humans do in conveying various forms of messages both verbally and nonverbally. In some cases, such as describing the expression of love and affection towards a partner, humans use nonverbal communication. Research on nonverbal communication as a symbol of love for long-distance partners in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic was carried out using descriptive qualitative research methods. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews using a purposive sampling technique. There were 5 informants. The data analysis process went through the data collection stages. data reduction, data display and conclusions.. The results show that the classification of nonverbal messages in sign language can be represented by the use of emojis when exchanging messages. Furthermore, the language of action can be represented by how couples communicating while in their long distance relationship like exchanging messages, video calling, and so on. Finally, object language can be represented by giving surprises or gifts, exchanging photos, and so on. The conclusion of nonverbal communication as a symbol of affection for long-distance partners can be represented by 3 classifications of nonverbal messages, namely sign language, action language, and object language. The advice given can always maintain the warmth of the relationship even though you are in the middle of a long-distance relationship and better understand each other's love language.

Keywords: Nonverbal Communication, Love Language, Couples, Long Distance, Pandemic.

1. Introduction

As social beings, we are always involved in communication. Most usually, when we communicate, we use both verbal and nonverbal language. During conversation, both verbal and nonverbal language complement each other and cannot be separated. In simple terms, nonverbal communication can be interpreted as communication represented by symbols or signs. This is in line with the meaning of the word 'nonverbal' in the Big Indonesian Dictionary, not in conversation or not in language. Basically, nonverbal communication is any type of communication in which the message itself is not spoken. As a result, because each language has its own set of rules for how words are used, nonverbal communication is seen as more universal¹. Nonverbal communication includes the use of objects in one category as a means of expression in another language (object language), gestures as a sign language (sign language), and body actions or movements. as a tool to convey meaning (language of action)². In some conditions, nonverbal communication can be more honest, because it is expressed spontaneously and there is relatively little distortion of the message. Basically, verbal and nonverbal communication, like the north pole and the south pole, cannot be separated and complement each other. Where verbal communication becomes an explicit message while nonverbal communication becomes an implied message. In interpersonal communication, nonverbal factors greatly determine the meaning of interpersonal communication.

Author Jalaluddin Rakhmat's book "Psychology of Communication" by Mark L. Knapp proposes that nonverbal communication serves five different purposes. Repetition which is the first function is used to repeat a concept that has been conveyed orally. For example, when we wave to greet or say goodbye to someone³. The substitution or substitution of spoken symbols is the second. For example, the letter "O" can be changed to one thumb raised and four fingers clenched. The rejection of verbal communication or its reinterpretation as something else is a contradiction, according to the third point. It is a paradox when someone claims to be fine but has tears in their eyes after crying. Fourth, complete the oral statement by increasing and completing its meaning. Here, hugs are designed to provide moral support, such as when we hug someone while offering words of encouragement to someone who is depressed. Finally, there is accentuation which means affirming the verbal message or underlining the verbal message. For example, we say that we are excited while clapping³.

Gary Chapman originally popularized the idea of love languages in 2010 with the publication of his book *The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate*. According to Chapman, there are five categories of love languages, and everyone has a primary love language. Basically, everyone has all the principles of love languages⁴. The term "primary love languages" refers to the one or two love languages that are more common in a person than other love languages. Words of affirmation, quality time, acts of service, getting gifts, and physical contact are five different types of love languages. Basically, love and language are universal. That is, it can be felt and addressed to anyone regardless of age and status. The language of love can help us to better understand what is the most appropriate treatment so that someone especially a partner feels the most loved.

When we know someone's love language, we can increase their satisfaction from being in a relationship with us. In addition, we can also minimize conflicts that can occur due to misunderstandings that are actually our form of asking for attention or affection. Since it was first detected in 2019 in the Wuhan area, China. During this pandemic, many activities have changed, from formal activities such as work and school to non-formal activities such as gathering with friends or going out on weekends with family. Because of this pandemic too, the government has issued many new policies to run side by side with activities that continue to be restricted. This has an impact on couples who have certain love languages such as acts of service, physical touch, or quality time. Where they can't express their love directly. Based on the description above, researchers feel the need to conduct research that examines and discusses nonverbal communication applied through the language of love during the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers feel that the topic above is an interesting topic and relevant to current conditions. Because just as this pandemic has changed many of our ways of doing activities, researchers want to observe and find out how this pandemic has affected and possibly changed someone's love language which is studied through communication science, especially nonverbal communication.

Based on the results of the background description above, the researcher decided to formulate the macro problem as follows: "How is Nonverbal Communication a Symbol of Affection for Long Distance Couples in the Middle of the Covid-19 Pandemic?" To analyze the research focus on the macro problem formulation, the researcher has determined the micro problem formulation as follows: What is object language, How is sign language, What is action language as a symbol of affection for long-distance partners in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic? The typical procedure used to find theories related to research subjects is a literature review. by searching a diverse collection of studies on a subject that the researcher has selected and which he then uses to aid his investigation. Systematic identification, discovery, and analysis of documents that provide data relevant to the subject of research is a literature review. In the literature review, the researcher begins by reviewing previous research that is related and relevant to the research being conducted. Thus the researcher gets supporting, complementary and comparative references and provides an initial description of the studies related to the problems in this research. In connection with what was described in the previous chapter and sub-chapter, the title of this research is "Nonverbal Communication as a Symbol of Affection for Long-Distance Couples in the Midst of the Covid - 19 Pandemic".

Based on the research title, the researcher conducted a preliminary investigation in the form of a review of previous studies that examined the same and relevant topics to be analyzed by the researcher.

Basically, humans are social creatures who cannot function as a species without constant interaction. Like many other English words, "communication" is of English origin. The Latin word "communis" is the origin of the word "communicate". Communis, or "commun" in English, means exactly the same thing. For there to be any type of information transfer or mutual understanding in the communication process, there must be some degree of semantic overlap between sender and receiver. "Interpersonal expression" refers to the process of exchanging ideas and information between two or more people for a common purpose. Communication science is included in the umbrella of social sciences⁵. It is safe to assume that communication will always play an important role in society. As social beings, we engage in constant communication; it is the means by which we learn to understand one another. We can also share our thoughts, feelings and opinions with others through communication. So it is clear that talking to other people is very important for survival⁷

Communication that takes place between one or more people with the intention of sharing ideas or thoughts informally is sometimes referred to as interpersonal communication. In addition to ideas, someone can also express emotions, feelings, or other information. Mulyana said that: "Interpersonal communication is communication between people face-to-face which allows each participant to capture the reactions of others directly, either verbally or non-verbally. This interpersonal communication is communication that only two people, such as husband and wife, two colleagues, two close friends, teacher and student, and so on⁶. Based on the above knowledge, it can be concluded that interpersonal communication is the exchange of information between two individuals, often in a relaxed atmosphere where both parties expect to get an immediate response. When two people communicate without using words, they are said to be engaging in non-verbal communication. Simply put, nonverbal communication refers to interactions between people that do not involve spoken words. In theory, nonverbal and verbal cues can be parsed. However, in reality, these two forms of communication are interrelated, with one functioning as a complement to the other in our daily conversations. In fact, nonverbal communication is an integral part of verbal communication. We use more nonverbal communication than verbal communication, often unconsciously and indirectly.

This research is based on the researcher's way of thinking, which is represented by a conceptual framework. Within this framework, the researcher will try to describe the main research problem. The explanations collected will cover the theory and issues addressed by this investigation. By using descriptive techniques, perspectives and theories that become a reference and provide direction for researchers to interpret and explain the study of nonverbal communication as a sign of love for long-distance partners during the COVID-19 pandemic. By using descriptive techniques, researchers will examine the relationship between nonverbal communication and the language of love as an expression of affection.

The theory of nonverbal communication used by researchers in this study is the theory of classifying nonverbal messages from Jurgen Ruesch. Jurgen Ruesch explains that there are three parts to classifying nonverbal cues:

1. Sign language, namely signs that a person makes for communication purposes, such as giving a thumbs up to indicate that someone is willing to give a free ride in the car or demonstrating deaf sign language to replace words, numbers, or other signs.
2. Action language, which refers to any and all bodily movements not specifically or exclusively used as signals, such as walking. The action in progress therefore transmits a message which can then be picked up by the individual viewing it or paying for it. attention to him.
3. Object language, such as showing objects or clothing, as well as general nonverbal symbols, such as the size of a room, flags, paintings or portraits (pictures), music, and so on, can be considered as examples of object language. Deliberately⁷

From the description above, the researcher will later classify the existing love languages into the classification of nonverbal cues.

2. Research Methods

Research technique, also known as research methodology, can be broadly defined as a scientific approach to gathering reliable data with the aim of studying, creating, or demonstrating a body of knowledge that can then be used to understand, treat, and predict problems in a particular subject.

Sugiono defines research methods as techniques used by researchers in the stages of design, implementation, data processing, and drawing conclusions from certain research problems. A descriptive qualitative research approach was used in this study⁸.

In conducting research using qualitative research techniques, informants are one of the most important components. The information provided by the informants became the basis for observation and research analysis. Informants are people who are used to provide information about the circumstances and background of research⁹.

Purposive sampling was used to select informants in this study, and the weight of data collection was determined that the sample must meet the following requirements whether used as a data source or as an informant⁸:

1. A person who has achieved mastery or understanding of a subject through a process of enculturation, so that the subject is not only known but also internalized.
2. Individuals who are identified as still involved in activities that are the subject of research or who are seen participating in these activities
3. People who have sufficient time to respond to requests for information
4. Individuals who do not usually convey information that "packages" themselves in their own words.
5. People who were initially considered by researchers as "quite foreign", made them more interested in playing the role of teacher or resource person.

Researchers feel that the use of purposive sampling technique is the most appropriate technique and according to the needs of researchers in finding informants. Intake and selection of informants from this study amounted to 5 people consisting of 4 key informants and 1 supporting informant. In this study, the key informants referred to were 1 married couple and 1 lover who had a long-distance relationship. While the intended supporting informants are psychology students who have knowledge of the language of love.

The following are the qualifications of research informants who, according to researchers, are qualified and knowledgeable about this issue:

1. Informants are willing to spend time and provide information needed by researchers.
2. The informant is undergoing or has at least 6 months long-distance relationship experience.
3. Informants are husband and wife.

Valid research is research that can be proven through concrete data and information and not only based on the knowledge possessed by the researcher. Therefore, as a support for the description of the research above. The researcher collected data using the following data collection techniques: Library Studies, Observations, Interviews and Data Validity Tests assessing the validity of a finding or researcher's data on what actually happened in the field. Apart from being used to refute claims that qualitative research is unscientific, checking the validity of data is generally an important component of the body of knowledge of qualitative research¹⁰ Researchers can check the validity of research data as follows: Triangulation, Using Reference Materials, Discussion with Friend

The expression "data analysis" is used to describe the process of investigating and evaluating information in order to draw conclusions about the nature of the whole and the relationships between its constituent components. Scientists specializing in data analysis typically collect data before interpreting it, a practice known as "pre-processing." The researchers have analyzed the responses from the people they interviewed for this study. Researchers will conduct more interviews until they are satisfied with the results of the existing analysis and the data is deemed reliable for use in research if the answers given by the informants after being evaluated are still unsatisfactory or deemed insufficient.

Search for data, organize data systematically from interviews, field notes, and documentation, organize

data into categories, break down into units, synthesize, organize into patterns to choose what is important and what will be studied, and draw conclusions so that they are easily understood by oneself and others is an example of data analysis techniques¹¹. Inductive data analysis was performed to compile these results. Analyzing data in an inductive way requires extrapolation beyond the evidence provided.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings of the explanation of the background to the research, the methods and theories used and formulated are entitled "Nonverbal Communication as a Symbol of Long-Distance Couples' Affection in the Middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic". This discussion will be based on findings from the explanation of the background matters research. The findings of this study will be discussed in more depth based on the findings from the in-depth interview sessions used to collect data for this study. This chapter will describe various matters regarding the results of interviews conducted in July 2022 which researchers conducted with 3 married couples. The new analysis phase begins after the researcher obtains cooperation from the informants who will be used as research targets. At this stage of the research process, the researcher created observation guidelines and created a list of questions for interviews, data collection, and data analysis, all of which were carried out by the researchers themselves. This was done so that researchers could find out whether nonverbal communication functions as a symbol of affection for long-distance partners in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first thing to note is what the researcher did was to compile a list of questions to be asked during the interview based on the research focus, namely sign language, action language, and object language. These questions were asked during the interview. The researcher conducted interviews with informants who had been selected by the researcher in an effort to collect data which would then be analyzed based on the theory previously mentioned by the researcher. The purpose of this interview is to collect data which will then be analyzed based on theory¹².

3.1 Description of the Research Object

Indonesian Dictionary defines a partner as a person who becomes equal (soulmate, playmate, and so on). The couples examined in this study are long-distance romantic partners or long-distance partners. Hampton claims that the definition of a long distance relationship, also known as a long distance relationship, is when two people are physically separated and unable to become close for a certain period of time.¹³ There are three different time categories (0, less than 6 months, more than 6 months), three meeting categories (once a week, a week to a month, less than a month), and three meeting categories based on demographic data from research of participants who are in long-distance relationships. Far. distance (0-1 mile, 2-294 miles, over 250 miles.),¹⁴ For researchers to come to the conclusion that long-distance relationships consist of partners being geographically separated for a period of time (say, six months or more), making it difficult for them to be physically intimate or establish contact.

3.2 Description of Research Informants

The informant chosen by the researcher is someone (informant) who is considered by the researcher to have knowledge of the problems the researcher is studying and can answer the questions asked by the researcher. This is supported by the purposive sampling technique that the researcher used so that 5 informants were selected, consisting of 4 key informants, namely a husband and wife who were in a long distance relationship and 1 supporting informant who was a child of a married couple who be a key informant. As for the interviews that the researchers conducted at different times, the interviews were conducted for 5 days which were divided on July 18, July 20, July 21, July 23 and July 24 via Zoom Meeting and WhatsApp. On July 18 and 21, researchers conducted interviews with Mrs. Neni Sulastri after previously communicating via WhatsApp and telephone. Furthermore, on July 20 and 24, researchers had the opportunity to conduct interviews with Mr. Heru Supriyanto and Ananda Renisyifa. Finally, on July 23, the researcher conducted an interview with Mr. Taufik Riza and Mrs. Mira Sukmawati, after having difficulty determining a suitable time because it was a working day, Mr. Taufik Riza and Mrs. Mira Sukmawati were in different places with their respective activities, so the interview

could only be only on weekends. When Mr. Taufik Riza and Mrs. Mira Sukmawati were in the same place.

The researchers here mainly rely on descriptive research methods. With this approach, researchers first explain the phenomena studied in the field, then evaluate the collected data to find solutions to the questions posed. The results of research with a descriptive approach are written or oral descriptions of the activities of the research subjects.

In-depth interviews were used to collect data for this study. Using this method, scientists can gather information in its natural setting. Since the structure or guidelines for interviewing researchers are not conventional guidelines, they are free to ask more questions of informants if they feel the answers they receive are not clear.¹⁴

3.3. The Language of Signs as a Symbol of Love for Long Distance Partners in the Middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Based on the results of the researcher's interview with the informant, the researcher obtained data related to Sign Language as a Symbol of Love for Long Distance Couples in the Middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The researcher conducted interviews with the first informant, namely Neni Sulastri as the partner of Mr. Heru Supriyanto regarding the form of Sign Language in carrying out a relationship With his wife. In sign language, Neni said that she almost always uses emojis when exchanging messages (communicating) with her husband. Emoji are used as a form of Ibu Neni to be more expressive in expressing her affection or other feelings for her husband because as she said during this long-distance relationship, there are limitations to seeing facial expressions. So emoji are a substitute for facial expressions. That way, both from the side of the wife and husband provide the same action language. Heru, as her husband, gave the same feedback through emojis sent by Neni when exchanging messages.

Based on Ananda's narrative, the use of emojis by Neni is a habit that she does when she wants to express her feelings when exchanging messages because basically Neni herself is an expressive person. The use of emojis is a feature that Neni can maximize due to her limitations in expressing facial expressions or feelings due to her long-distance relationship. So even though there are obstacles to direct expression, Neni can still express herself by utilizing the existing features.

Based on the narrative of the informant and the explanation above, the researcher concludes that there is harmony in Sign Language that informants can do when they are in a long-distance relationship, namely by using emojis as a form of movement made with the aim of communicating. Even though there are differences in the intensity of how often emoji are used between informants, it can be interpreted that emoji have an important role in exchanging messages between partners. Emojis are also a complement to verbal communication that occurs between informants and their partners. In addition, emoji can also be interpreted as a substitute for words. The use of emoji is considered to be able to help overcome the limitations of the use of gestures or expressions. This is consistent with 2 of the 5 functions of nonverbal messages, namely substitution and accentuation. The substitution function means replacing verbal symbols. In this case it means a heart emoji that replaces the words "I love you" or "I love you". While the accentuation function means affirming or underlining the verbal message. For example, when sending a message like "very funny" accompanied by a laughing emotion at the end. Apart from being a substitute for expressions and gestures, the use of emoji can also minimize our misunderstandings in translating messages received. Often the impression that arises on the recipient of the message after reading the message sent is different from the intention of the sender of the message. For example, the sender of the message intends to answer "OK" with an ordinary feeling, but the recipient of the message may catch the word "OK" with the impression of being ignorant and unfriendly. Unlike when the sender of the message answers "OK" with a smiley smile at the end, the impression that appears after the recipient of the message reads the message will be more friendly.¹⁵

3.4 The Language of Action as a Symbol of Love for Long Distance Partners in the Middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Action language is part of the classification of nonverbal cues. All body movements that are not specifically or exclusively so the existing action transmits messages that can later be captured by people who act as communicants. As part of verbal communication, action language complements verbal communication.

Based on the results of the researcher's interview with the informant, the researcher obtained data related to Action Language as a Symbol of Love for Long-Distance Couples in the Middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The researcher conducted interviews with the first informant, namely Neni Sulastri as Heru Supriyanto's partner regarding the form of Action Language in living a relationship together his wife. The following are the answers given by the informants;

"Sometimes when you are on your way to Sukabumi or somewhere else, if you just sit in a chair on the bus, your hands are bound to be held. Sometimes I like to be shy with other passengers. Because it was time for us to be reflexive, because if my husband was there every day what would I hold it for sure I would get bored. I did this because my husband is far away, sometimes I hold it, sometimes my husband hugs me on the bus too. So when we meet, what do I do, whether it's holding hands or hugging or embracing, you often" (Neni Sulastri, Interview, July 2022)

Based on the answers given by Neni, the language of action can be seen from the physical contact that occurs, such as holding hands, embracing and hugging. Such an action can be interpreted as a signal of affection between Neni and her partner. Usually, physical contact occurs between Neni and her husband when they meet and spend time together. Neni and her husband are in a long-distance relationship because their work requires them not to be able to have physical contact for a long time. So, when there is time to meet, even if only briefly, Neni will use this time to make out with her husband. "What is clear is because in Sukabumi there are two houses, so one is below, the other is above. Sometimes Mother because she has a nephew that she has to pay attention to because her mother is also helped, sometimes when she comes back here her nephew teaches her too. While he has activities like that I find my own activities, when he's free, let's sit and talk like that. He's used to it, sitting in a chair like this, all of a sudden he came right over and bumped into it, hugged it, like in Sundanese, it's cipika - cipiki like that. He's the same way, so when he's quiet he can't let go of his cell phone until now, because he has a lot of activities, sometimes I tease him like that, "Don't, I'm busy, I'm coordinating," sometimes I tease him like That. Well, I sat next to him while watching him have his own activities."

Based on the responses and statements given by the informants above, the researcher concludes that physical contact is the language of the most dominant actions that occur between the 2 pairs of informants. Body movements such as holding hands, hugging, embracing are common things that occur between couples even though they are in a long-distance relationship. The intensity of physical contact that occurs between couples who are in a long-distance relationship and partners who are not in a long-distance relationship is clearly different, because those who are in a long-distance relationship rarely get the opportunity to have physical contact, so when there is an opportunity they will tend to have a higher intensity of physical contact. from couples who are not in a long-distance relationship.

Apart from physical contact, actions such as staying by your partner's side when your partner is sick, taking your partner to the market or shopping center, helping and serving your partner can also be said to be the language of action. The actions above can be interpreted as signals expressing affection for one another when verbal language is not used.¹⁶

3.5 Object Language as a Symbol of Love for Long Distance Couples in the Middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The use of an object or media either intentionally or unintentionally can be classified as object language. The use of objects can be in the form of paintings or portraits, clothes, music, and so on. Object language can be used to complete verbal communication or interpret a meaning.

Based on the results of the researcher's interview with the informant, the researcher obtained data related

to Object Language as a Symbol of Love for Long Distance Couples in the Middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The researcher conducted interviews with the first informant, namely Neni Sulastri as Heru Supriyanto's partner regarding the form of Object Language in living a relationship together his wife. In this object language, Neni said that when her husband asked Neni about what activities she was doing, Neni would take photos of the activities she was doing and vice versa. Sending photos about activities that are being carried out can also be said as a form of building trust between partners when carrying out a long-distance relationship. Photographing activities can also be an alternative to seeing activities carried out in person.

Based on the statements given by the informants, the researchers concluded that giving gifts or gifts such as clothes, sandals, and items that are needed, taking photos of activities that are being carried out, and making telephone calls (video calls) are forms of care and affection that can be done while undergoing long distance relationship. The things described above can be said as examples of the use of object language among long-distance relationship partners.

In object language, the use of photos and video calls can be used as a tool to minimize worries and channel existing feelings of concern. By exchanging photos or making video calls, each other will find out what activities are being carried out, how each other is doing, and ensure that each other is okay. Meanwhile, gifts or surprises and karaoke can be interpreted as expressions of affection through goods or in the case of karaoke through the meaning of the song. From the activities above, it means that there are already 3 functions of nonverbal messages that are taking place. First, accentuation, where the photo sent can reinforce verbal explanations such as what activities are being carried out. Furthermore, complement, where the existing photos and songs can enrich the nonverbal messages that have occurred. Finally, substitution, where substitution can be seen from gifts or surprises given as a substitute for symbols or other verbal activities.¹⁷

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of research described in the previous chapter can be concluded that; In long-distance relationship pairs, the form of sign language that occurs is the use of emoji which can represent the expression of the sender of the message to the recipient of the message when exchanging messages. Using emojis helps partners better understand the feelings that are being felt by each other and helps them better understand what is being said. In long-distance relationship pairs, the form of action language that occurs is physical contact which only occurs when partners meet for a short period of time. Physical contact that occurs in the form of holding hands, embracing, and hugging. In addition, serving and accompanying each other can also be said as the application of Action Language among long-distance partners. In long-distance relationships, the form of object language that occurs is in the form of giving gifts to each other, making phone calls (video calls), and sending photos showing the activities that are being carried out. Giving gifts can be interpreted as a form of love and care between partners. Meanwhile, making a telephone call (video call) and sending photos showing the activities carried out can be interpreted as a form of caring and medicine that reduces homesickness when you are far away.

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