

Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Creativity In The New Normal Era

Ni Kadek Juliantari

STKIP Agama Hindu Amlapura

A. Introduction

The new normal policy issued by the Indonesian government brought changes to various aspects of human life. The new normal era is an adaptation of new habits that need to be done by the community in carrying out social activities without ignoring health protocols. The health protocol in question is to wear a mask, wash hands, and maintain a safe distance with others who are invited to interact. So, even though the activity seems normal, but all aspects of the health protocol must be obeyed by all people.

In daily life, every member of the community always conducts social interactions. During this time, the existence of the Covid-19 pandemic has limited the social interaction activities of the community with others. This happened because during the Covid-19 pandemic the community was emphasized to conduct physical distancing and social distancing. However, in the new normal era the community was directed to adapt new habits, namely carrying out activities as before, but still paying attention to health protocols. Likewise, in conducting social interactions.

Adaptation of this new habit also influences the communication patterns carried out by the community

that was originally directly communicating, during this pandemic and new normal era, communication activities are more likely to lead to indirect communication activities. In communicating in this new normal era, the use of verbal and nonverbal language is optimized, both in direct and indirect communication.

There are various forms of direct and indirect communication carried out by the people in this new normal era to keep in touch with others. This change in communication patterns is an interesting discussion because it is closely related to the attitudes and choices of language features used in communication. In addition, there are also communication creations that are carried out in this new normal era so that they become increasingly interesting as study material. Fisher (2004) and Swann (2018) revealed that communication creativity refers to the creation of new features or communication styles. Based on the description, several things that refer to the creativity of verbal and nonverbal communication in the new normal era are discussed in the next section.

B. Discussion

According to Mulyana (2005), communication is an interaction carried out by the speaker and the speech partner (in the context of oral communication), or the writer and reader (in the context of written communication). In the context of oral or written communication can be done by using verbal or nonverbal language (Kusumawati, 2016). Communication using nonverbal language can also be called verbal communication. Verbal communication is done by using words to convey ideas or opinions to others in the process of social interaction, while nonverbal

communication is carried out by utilizing body gestures or facial expressions that also reflect an action or response to the speech partner. In this new normal era, forms of verbal communication can be done directly or indirectly. The following is an explanation of each.

1. Verbal Communication

Verbal communication can be done directly or indirectly. In the new normal era during the Covid-19 pandemic, it seems that indirect verbal communication is more prevalent, while verbal communication is directly minimized. This kind of communication situation certainly happens because the real pandemic is not over and everyone is expected to continue to follow the health protocol, which is to keep a safe distance in the social interaction. Therefore, indirect verbal communication seems to be the right choice to deal with physical distancing and social distancing.

a. Direct Communication

Direct communication occurs when the speaker and speech partner meet directly and interact. However, in carrying out such communication activities, a safe distance of at least 2 meters must be kept in mind by speakers and speech partners. In direct communication in this new normal era, the tendency of people to the point convey the essence of communication to avoid prolonged social contact. Sometimes when the speaker and speech partner have found a comfortable point in communicating, in the sense that communication is connected, then usually forgets everything and includes also forgetting to apply health protocols. Therefore, social contact should be made as short as possible through to the point in the delivering messages.

b. Indirect Communication

Indirect communication that is rife in the new normal era of the Covid-19 pandemic is virtual communication. This virtual communication includes a number of communication activities that utilize digital media so there is no physical contact between the speaker and the speech partner. Virtual communication is done via communication via telephone (video call), or communication via chat (whatsapp, telegram, facebook), and communication via other applications (google meet or zoom). This virtual communication provides space for each individual to carry out social interactions or convey ideas in a complex manner without having to make physical contact with those invited to communicate. In the new normal era of the Covid-19 pandemic, this method was seen as a relevant choice to suppress physical contact and social contact, but still be able to carry out the role of social beings who needed interaction with others. In the new normal era, virtual verbal communication provides a variety of benefits for the community. These advantages include the following. First, communication can be effectively carried out without face to face. Second, distance is not an obstacle in doing communication. Third, health protocols (physical distancing and social distancing) can still be obeyed through virtual communication.

2. Nonverbal Communication

In addition to the dominant verbal communication done indirectly, in this new normal era nonverbal communication also tends to be carried out. A prominent form of nonverbal communication occurring in the new normal era of the Covid-19 pandemic is communication with body gestures and facial expressions.

a. Body Gestures

Nonverbal communication with body movements includes various actions / body movements that are used to respond or convey ideas. Forms of nonverbal communication by utilizing gestures include a nod of the head expressing agreement, a shake of the head expressing disapproval / rejection, including a hand expressing thanks or greeting, a thumbs up expressing praise or approval, and waving a hand declaring an agreement, goodbye, or rejection. Various nonverbal communication needs through body movements can be known based on the context of the conversation.

In addition to some commonly used body movements, it turns out that in this new normal era, nonverbal communication with other movements also appears, such as between the speaker and the speech partner clenching their fists, then combining the ends of their fists so they touch each other. Another unique way is that the speaker and the talking partner combine the elbows with each other so that they touch the elbow of the speaker and the talking partner. This unique method is used by speakers and speech partners as a substitute for a handshake. During the Covid-19 pandemic, a handshake was not expected because the spread of Covid-19 could occur through shaking hands. Therefore, instead of nonverbal handshake communication forms, hand coverage is used, fists clash with each other, touch elbows of the speaker and the talking partner, and gestures of the respect to declare ready.

To make it easier to understand the intended body gestures, the following are presented a number of illustrations that refer to nonverbal forms of communication through these body gestures.



Figure 01 Illustration of Hand Coverage

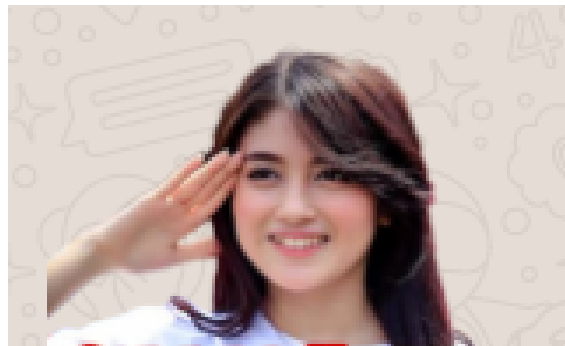


Figure 02 Illustration of Body Gesture "Ready"



Figure 03 Illustration of Combined Boxing
as a substitute for a handshake



Figure 04 Illustration of Colliding Elbows as a substitute for a handshake

Various body movements instead of handshakes are referred to by various groups as "greetings corona". "Salam corona" is used instead of a handshake. Therefore, to maintain the rope of solidarity in social interaction various forms of "greeting corona" emerge.

b. Facial expression

Nonverbal communication used by people in social interactions other than gestures is facial expression. These facial expressions include smiling (which expresses happiness), frowning (which expresses sadness), or various other expressions. This form of nonverbal communication is actually common among people before the Covid-19 pandemic. However, during Covid-19 and the new normal era that required every community to remain compliant with health protocols, one of which was still using masks, a change in facial nonverbal communication occurred.

Facial expression before the Covid-19 pandemic can be done directly. However, during the Covid-19 and the new normal era, facial expressions cannot be done directly because some faces are covered with masks. Therefore,

instead of expressing facial expressions, character masks are used instead. Examples of character masks can be seen in the following image.



Figure 05 Illustration of Facial Mimics Expressed Through Masks

Based on Figure 05, various facial expressions can be seen through the mask used. In pictures 05 numbers 1, 5, and 6 clearly show expressions of pleasure or cheerfulness; numbers 2 and 4 show teasing expressions; while number 3 shows flatfacial expression. Facial expressions can actually be done directly with the original face, but when the Covid-19 pandemic the face is covered by the mask, so facial expressions are replaced by character mask expression.

Various forms of verbal and nonverbal communication that emerged during the Covid-19 or the new normal era indicate unlimited creativity carried out by everyone in carrying out their role as social beings. This creativity occurs because of conditions that require everyone to

adapt to new ways. Thus, in order to be able to carry out effective communication and without causing offense due to changes in communication patterns that are done (for example, do not want to be invited to shake hands, facial expressions are not visible when being invited to communication), this kind of creativity is also done.

From this linguistic social phenomenon, it can also be seen that basically every person has the creative and productive power to create something new according to the situation and conditions they face. This is also a form of adaptation of new habits carried out by the people in the new normal era. For example, people are accustomed to greeting hands. However, the adaptation of the new habit of turning the handshake into a clash or elbow fist clash. This is one form of creativity carried out by people in the new normal era.

Richards (2013) argues that basically everyone is able to create something new based on the creativity that they have. That is, each person has a different creative power in expressing themselves, including in communication. This is actually inseparable from the adaptive nature of everyone. Every person basically has the ability to adapt to certain situations to maintain and establish social relationships on an ongoing basis, even at different adaptive levels between one individual and another.

Such language creativity is able to show novelty, both in terms of patterns and communication styles (Maybin & Swann, 2007). The creative use of language can be seen in a variety of communication contexts, both verbal and nonverbal communication with a variety of patterns or models. From this concept, it can be seen that communication activities or language behavior is actually not merely the activity of sequencing words to be understood by others, but there is the art of language

inherent in it. This language art in the new normal era emerged as a variety of forms of communication called "greeting corona" or nonverbal communication using character masks. This pandemic and new normal situation brought a change in the direction of the emergence of creative communication. Wahyuni (2016) revealed that language creativity can emerge from a variety of social situation support being faced.

In addition, the social factors of language users determine a person's creativity in communication. Szerencsi (2010) suggested that various factors turned out to affect one's creativity in language, such as the social factors of language users. One of them is the speaker factor and speech partner. Because the speaker and speech partner feel they have the same background, which is both experiencing difficult situations in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the new normal era is used to provide new sensations so that the mind can be refreshed from the tense things experienced during this. An example is the use of character masks as a substitute for original facial expressions that sometimes make a funny impression and can be used to entertain others.

Carter & McCarthy (2004) who agree with Chomsky suggested that creative capacity in the language also extends towards one's ability to construct contexts that give rise to interpretations of that language. All forms of communication actions that are raised can be understood in terms of the context that surrounds them. Even Swann (2018) expressly stated that language creativity in communication acts also includes language creativity in daily life with a variety of patterns and communication styles, such as those that emerged in this new normal era.

Language creativity in each individual is manifested through the use of words in communication activities

(Sumangala, 2014). However, now language creativity not only refers to the creative use of words, but also refers to various language features that have emerged in the digital age or variations in communication actions in the new normal era. The development of patterns or acts of communication of this kind actually becomes interesting material if used in language learning in schools so that the direction of language learning becomes more contextual and in accordance with the development of the situation at hand.

C. Conclusion

Based on the description of the discussion it can be concluded that the new normal era brings changes to a person's language / communication behavior. These changes were made as a form of adaptation of new habits made during the Covid-19 pandemic. Adaptation of new habits in relation to social communication is carried out through various forms of communication, both verbal and nonverbal communication. Verbal communication in the new normal era tends to be done virtually, while nonverbal communication is done with changes in creative body gestures ("greetings corona") and expressive facial expressions through character masks. Various changes in this communication pattern occur to be able to carry out social relations or interactions in the community effectively.

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