

## **SOME NECESSARY TYPES OF BODY LANGUAGE USED IN JOB INTERVIEWS BY HAIPHONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Most young people, particularly university graduates, are concerned about how to respond effectively in job interviews. Although theoretical reviews on these interviews have appeared in a number of books and articles, few studies on using body language in job interviews have been conducted to investigate students' opinions on the effectiveness and impact of using it. The article works on the perspective of the final-year students of the Foreign Language Department of Hai Phong University on appropriate body language usage in job interviews. It is hoped that the findings of this study will assist students in making good and effective preparation for job interviews.

**Keywords:** *body language, job interviews, students' perspective.*

### **MỘT SỐ CỬ CHỈ GIAO TIẾP PHI NGÔN NGỮ CẦN THIẾT ĐƯỢC ÁP DỤNG TRONG CÁC CUỘC PHÒNG VẤN XIN VIỆC BỞI SINH VIÊN TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC HẢI PHÒNG**

#### **TÓM TẮT**

Làm thế nào để trả lời phỏng vấn xin việc hiệu quả luôn là mối quan tâm lớn đối với hầu hết giới trẻ, đặc biệt là sinh viên tốt nghiệp đại học. Những bài viết đánh giá về điều này đã được tìm thấy trong một số cuốn sách và bài báo, tuy nhiên vẫn có rất ít nghiên cứu về việc sử dụng ngôn ngữ cơ thể được thực hiện để điều tra ý kiến của sinh viên về hiệu quả và tác động của việc sử dụng ngôn ngữ cơ thể trong các cuộc phỏng vấn xin việc. Bài viết thực hiện dưới góc nhìn của các sinh viên năm cuối khoa Ngoại ngữ, Trường Đại học Hải Phòng về cách sử dụng ngôn ngữ cơ thể phù hợp trong phỏng vấn xin việc. Những kết quả của bài viết này hy vọng sẽ giúp các bạn sinh viên có sự chuẩn bị tốt và hiệu quả để có thể thành công trong các cuộc phỏng vấn xin việc.

**Từ khóa:** *ngôn ngữ cơ thể, phỏng vấn xin việc, quan điểm của sinh viên.*

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Body language is widely known as a form of non-verbal communication involving the use of the body, which is put as high as 80 percent of all communication

according to some researchers. Albert Morable (1977) noted a 7% – 38% – 55% rule, denoting how much communication was conferred by words, tone, and body language. Also, according to Laura

Schneider (2019), the body language (non-verbal signals) is approximately five times as effective as the spoken word in the interview process. The interviewee's visual 'first impressions' make the biggest contribution to an interviewer making their mind up either positively or negatively about him/her. These figures show that body language plays an important part in the way our messages are perceived by others as well as job interviewers. Therefore, this article investigates how the graduates of the Foreign Language Department, Hai Phong University used body language in job interviews and then identifies the obstacles and suggestions on effective body language usage in job interviews

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A variety of studies have been performed in the literature of people's communicating ways including non-verbal ones to assess the effectiveness of communication process. However, a study of the literature reveals that there has been very little research into the use of body language in job interviews. As Goldin-Meadow & Alibali (2013) underlined that nonverbal and verbal channels often have to be considered together to understand conveyed meanings hand gestures produced during speech are, along with the words, part of an integrated speech production system. Obviously, response or feedback is an integral part of the communication process. Through the feedback, communication can monitor or adjust their speech in order to have successful communication. When people communicate, there is a strong link between verbal and non-verbal types. Non-verbal channels are especially effective in supporting verbal ones when sharing feelings, attitudes or improving relationships. Humans communicate verbally to share information or to transmit knowledge, but they rely heavily on non-verbal communication to share feelings, emotions, or attitudes towards that information or knowledge.

According to Quang Nguyen (1996) non-verbal communication includes physical appearance - facial features, hygiene, neatness, hairstyle, skin, jewelry, cosmetics and style of clothing with accessories such as hats that complements intended outcomes. These characteristics convey impressions to others about attractiveness, social class, status, degree of conformity, intelligence, personality, style, taste, sexuality, and age. Many studies have proved the importance of physical attractiveness in initial social contacts and job interviews as well. A person's skills, the extent to which people view him or her as similar or compatible with themselves, and their confidence in the person's ability to get things done efficiently affect how credible and attractive he or she appears to others.

It would be correct to say that body language plays an important part in the way our messages are perceived by others. The most important thing in an interview is how to impress the interviewers that all candidates would like to reach perfection. Therefore, even if you have impressed the interviewer with your CV, body language is especially meaningful in an interview to determine the success of the interview result.

Based on the importance of body language in job interviews, the research on body language usage during job interviews was conducted among the final year students of Hai Phong University

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The study aims to assess the efficiency of using the body language of the final year students as job interviewees. Regarding this aim, the study posed two research questions:

Question 1: *How necessary is body language in the interview process?*

Question 2: *What types of body language do the interviewees use in their job interviews?*

### 3.1. Participants

The final-year students were the focus of the current study since they all have the intention of finding a job in a company. It is easy for them to complete this survey because they all have already practiced job interviews. The questionnaires will also indicate how much they are cognizant of their body language and use them in the interview in order to act well and succeed consequently. It could be a good chance for them to discover the gesture that they may not pay much attention to and then supplement it in their preparation for the interview.

### 3.2. Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

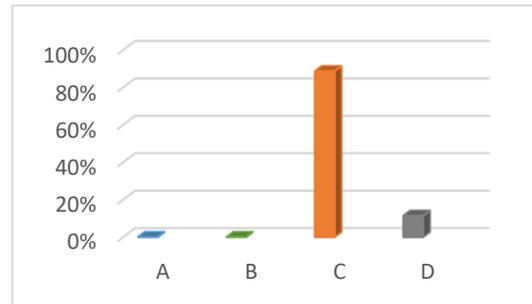
Questionnaires have been delivered to 70 final-year students at Hai Phong University to be finished within 5 to 10 minutes, and 100% of answers have been collected and used for the analysis.

Questionnaires are a useful option to consider when conducting a survey from a large number of individuals. This is because the researcher can benefit from many advantages. Firstly, survey questionnaires built with survey software are affordable. Secondly, the compilation of data is much simpler than other forms of surveys. Reports and graphs can be produced from the survey data, making statistical analysis a breeze. Finally, survey questionnaires are also practical. They enable to collect a significant amount of information from a large target group.

## 4. RESULT

We can divide 8 items into three main categories of questions: question 1 determines students' gender, and question 2 and 8 show students' awareness of the importance of appropriately using body language to the result of the interview. Five other questions determine students' real usage and attitudes towards using some typical types of body language in job interviews.

Before implementing job interviews, almost all students do realize the importance of body language during being interviewed. It can be seen in the following chart that 88.6% of respondents confirm that body language is really important while the percentage of people who think that it is indispensable accounts for 11.4% and nobody agrees with the idea that it is not important (Fig. 1).



(A. Useless; B. Not important; C. Important ; D. Indispensable)

**Fig. 1. Importance of body language**

The other questions are designed to make informants reveal their attitudes towards certain types of body language that they used in the job interviews. Regarding eye contact, 77.1% of the students chose the option of making frequent eye contact with the interviewer, only 8.3% would look directly at the interviewer and the percentage of people who look around the room, at the floor or at the other accounted for 7% and 8.6% of them would choose to make quick eye contact.

When students were asked whether smiling is important in the interview, 100% said "yes" and 77.1% gave the reason that they believed smiles showed their confidence and positivity. Besides, there were 8.6% of informants thought it helped them relax, and take away the stress or tension and only 2.8% agreed smile shows attention to the interviewer' saying.

It is clear from the result that shaking hands lightly and quickly seemed to be the favorite choice of all the informants (52.9 %) meanwhile shaking hands firmly for a few seconds is 47.1% and the correlation of types of handshakes is relevant.

It was a fact that most of the informants keep the same idea that by carrying that posture the interviewees could show interest, confidence, and also seriousness during the interview but still remain relaxed. In contrast with the choice for slouching or hanging sideways in the chair and sitting on the edge of the chair (9.6%, 14 informants), the percentage of sitting up straight with the back against the back of the chair was very high (91.4%, 56 informants).

Most students supposed that their choices above in the research were appropriate and helped them be successful in the job interviews.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, specific implications were drawn out to address the specific research subjects: students in final years or graduates. They all should be aware of the critical role that body language plays in the overall success of the interview, they are attentive that the interviewer will ask questions and they will pay attention not only to answer orally but also how interviewees say it non-verbally. It's imperative that the body language in a job interview shows them as a confident, positive, and capable person. So carefully follow some suggestions of body language listed below in order to give the right signal to the interviewer:

\* Sit straight and take a moment to be comfortable. Keep your posture straight with hands placed either on the table or on your lap, while the feet are kept firmly on the ground. Sitting like this helps you to stay relaxed and allows you to think and answer the interview questions calmly. Avoid crossing your arms and shaking your legs. If you look relaxed, it will encourage your interviewer's feelings in the interview.

\* Maintain your eye contact and don't be wooden in the interview since relaxed, confident people alter their facial

expressions to match what they're saying, and maintain good eye contact to help signify openness and honesty. Less-assured candidates, on the other hand, don't often maintain eye contact and tend to be very rigid, which can make them appear shy or even untrustworthy. Furthermore, you shouldn't overdo eye contact with the interviewers. Remember that a gaze that lasts longer than seven to 10 seconds can cause discomfort in the interview.

\* The expression of a smile can create positive emotional responses. In both job interviews and in real life, people are naturally drawn to a happy face, and the feel-good smiling releasing into your body will help you stay calm and upbeat.

Besides, in accordance with the implications for the students above, all job interviewees have also better focus on the preparation of adjusting certain types of body language for the job interviews. Due to the limitation of time and restricted scale of the research, several areas are left for further investigation such as the difficulties of using body language that students face in job interviews. It is hoped that the research may help the Hai Phong University students as well as job interviewees be aware that job interview body language plays a huge part in their success.

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