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November 27, 2020

## Different Communication in Basketball Discourse Community

### **Introduction**

A discourse community is that members have the same goals and achieve these goals through active communication (Brog, 2003). Members will conduct continuous communication and feedback through a certain communication mechanism. They will understand and use special terms and jokes in this community. At the same time, there will be some members with sufficient professionalism to ensure the operation of the discourse community. Through these simple definitions, we can find that we are participating in different discourse communities every day, such as UWP 001 class, a church group and so on. The basketball team I participated in my Chinese high school is also a good discourse community. The members have a strong tacit understanding and a sense of belonging to the team. I am very interested in this.

Basketball is a sport that requires high coordination. The characteristic of basketball games is considered to be "speed, by each player's obligation to efficiently express himself on any position, by the fantasy of his tactical and technical exercises" (Gheorghe et al., 2014). Every year, my high school selects students to join the basketball team. The selected students are often found to have basketball experience and passion through tests. There is a teacher as our coach. He has eight years of basketball game and education experience. Therefore, he can provide us with very professional guidance and suggestions. The goal for all of us is to win in all basketball games. In order to achieve this goal, we train for about two hours every day until graduation. In this process, we will practice basketball skills and share game experience. But we hardly use writing to communicate. Because writing on the basketball court is a very inefficient and inconvenient choice. In training and games, members use both language and body movements to convey ideas or give feedback. We will use some professional basketball vocabulary, such as forward, bank shot, double dribble and so on. In addition to these basketball terms, there are also some special words and gestures within our team. As a member of the basketball team, I think Unity and belonging of my basketball discourse community have a deep connection with the way of communication. Therefore, I explore the communication methods of my basketball discourse community and the impact on teamwork in this project.

### **Method**

To understand the impact of language and nonverbal language on teamwork, I interviewed several members of my basketball discourse community. Their positions in the team and the time they participate in are different, which can better represent the situation of the entire team. Aiguo Du is our coach. He is also a very good basketball player with 5 years of basketball game experience. Yiwen Zhang is a partner who joined the basketball team with me two years ago. She has participated in many competitions. She is the leader of the team. This is equivalent to the coach on the game. Ran Feng is a member who just joined the team this year. She is the small forward, the main scorer in the team. She needs to try to score in various situations (sometimes it can be very difficult). My question is mainly about the language and body

movements they use, whether they will adjust in different situations, and how they feel about teamwork.

In addition, I plan to add some information about the gestures and special language used by the basketball team to increase the comparison between different basketball discourse communities.

**Result**

<p><u>Question 1: In the basketball team, how do you communicate and interact with other people?</u></p>		
<p>Aiguo Du: I will tell you directly how to do it. When everyone is doing well, I will encourage everyone. If someone has not had a good attitude, I will be very angry and have a harsh tone.</p>	<p>Yiwen Zhang: I said less on the field. Because I want to avoid the opponent and pass the ball to the right player. But when I'm off the court, I love chatting with everyone. Everyone shared life and game experience together, which made me feel very interesting and warm.</p>	<p>Ran Feng: During the game, I will use some simple words to indicate that I can receive passes and score points. During training, I mainly listened to the strategy arrangements of the coach and the captain, and then gave them my thoughts.</p>
<p><u>Question 2: Do you have some special communication "signs" with other members?</u></p>		
<p>Aiguo Du: I am mainly responsible for formulating some strategies and helping players adjust their rhythm and mentality during the game. I may say a lot in daily training. But in the game, I will convey it to everyone through simple words. For example, in training, I will tell players to <i>"pay attention to area defense"</i> and <i>"pay attention to man-to-man defense"</i>. But in actual games, when I find a defensive loophole, I will shout <i>"defense!"</i></p>	<p>Yiwen Zhang: I think the point guard is an important part of the team. Because I need to observe the players and opponents on the field and decide who to pass the ball to. I sometimes find that the players are all being defended, and I touch my chin to signal everyone to disperse, and I take the ball alone to shoot.</p>	<p>Ran Feng: I sometimes see Yiwen ask me through her eyes if she can catch the ball. I am accustomed to checking with my surroundings before expressing whether I can catch the ball. Nodding or raising hand shows that this way works.</p>

Q3: What do you think of the team? Is there a sense of belonging?		
Aiguo Du: I have been a coach for five years. Everyone is not familiar with the team at first. But basketball is not a personal project. Reasonable communication, or quarreling, even some boys will fight. But these will become the ways of communication between players.	Yiwen Zhang: As the leader, I am one of the people who have the most affection for this team. I came to this basketball team with you (Ziqi Wang). We discussed the secret code together. When I do it on the court, I think there is a special connection between the us. I believe everyone on the team is like this. We are connected in various ways.	Ran Feng: Although I just joined, I really like it here. What I met here is not only the members of the team, but also the friends in life. We discuss daily life and study together. Many partners older than me often give me very useful advice or comforting hugs. This makes me feel that I am being accepted in this team. This also makes me believe them more in the game!

### Analysis/Discussion

Through interviews, I found that, regardless of whether there is a long time or not, everyone agrees that verbal language and nonverbal language are important to basketball team. Coach often needs to explain strategies to members through words. But when teaching some basketball skills and adjusting the team atmosphere, nonverbal language can help him teach better. The communication methods and content between team members are richer. Both Yiwen and Ran stated in the interview that both verbal and nonverbal languages are often used by them. Some interesting personality themes and special gestures will increase their closeness to the team.

In daily training, members tend to communicate directly to promote understanding and team atmosphere. Verbal communication can help clarify the strategy and understand others' thoughts. Because everyone's position in the team is different, the perspective is also very different. In many cases, we make judgments for others based on our own ability and position. But this judgment is not necessarily very accurate. In the game, because of this wrong estimation, coordination errors may be caused. However, verbal communication can effectively avoid this problem. Members can directly inform members of their situation and ideas through language. For example, when someone is not good at shooting, her favorite strategy is to pass the ball to others. But for those who are good at shooting, passing is not necessarily the best way to score.

*"Yiwen, why didn't you pass it to me just now?"*

*"Because I found that many players are defending you. If I pass the ball to you, you may have difficulty breaking through."*

*"No. If the ball is passed to me in time, I can shoot directly. This can also keep some opponents away from other players."*

*"Sorry, I overlooked that you could shoot directly. In the next training I will try to pass it to you in this situation!"*

*"of course!"*

(personal interview, 2020)

In addition, verbal communication also helps the atmosphere to be positive. When some members throw a good ball, others often use positive words to encourage them, such as “*Good job!*” “*You’re little Nan Chen!*” Nan Chen is a very powerful female basketball player in China. We use her name to describe the member who does very well. If a member feels frustrated because of her performance, we will also use some words to comfort her, such as “*Would you like to eat something delicious together?*” “*You are already great this time. We should make some adjustments to the tactics.*” Simple encouragement will increase the members' sense of accomplishment. They will also be more willing to work hard in the team. Therefore, through language communication, members will not have misunderstandings. And members can encourage and praise each other. It is easier to help members like each other, thereby promoting team unity.

In the competition, members tend to use non-verbal language. Due to the fast pace of basketball games, members often don't have time to speak complete sentences. Coaches use simple words, such as "rebounds" instead of long sentences like "Ran, watch for rebounds." (personal interview, 2020). There will be some special gestures between members to convey information. For example, raising your hand means you can pass the ball, nodding your head means hitting the ball and so on. These gestures are not complicated. Use in the game will not waste too much physical strength and time. They effectively maintain communication between members, while also preventing opponents from understanding. This non-verbal communication creates a unique bond and sense of belonging between members, which makes them distinct from other discourse communities. The nonverbal language is "provide for growing transescent and environment of trust, care and love."(Garner and Acklen, 2015) These factors are indispensable for a team. Therefore, teamwork between members is more successful.



These gestures may seem like simple celebration or meaningless. But in fact, these actions convey information to the numbers. But we don't understand the meaning.

I have not found standards and instructions on nonverbal language in basketball teams on the Internet or database. My coach thinks this is related to the uniqueness between each team. Each member has different behavior habits. And these nonverbal behaviors are like the special "password" inside the team with a unique interpretation. Its purpose is to prevent people outside the team from understanding the intention. Therefore, few uniform standards stipulate the gestures of communication within the team. And this uniqueness makes the members of the team

have a sense of belonging. Because they are using a "special language" that others easily do not understand.

### **Conclusion**

Basketball is a highly collaborative project. As ordinary viewers, it seems difficult for us to fully understand why there is such a tacit understanding between members. But when we regard it as a discourse community, by analyzing the communication and feedback mechanism between members, the answer to this question seems obvious. Facing different situations, different languages allow members to maintain good communication. The members will make full use of language communication during the training time to achieve the familiarity between members. In the game, body language will play a huge role. These will ensure that members always have a way of communication, thus ensuring the success of the entire team. Since the basketball discourse community has an important part of the game, nonverbal language is as important as verbal language. When we communicate in more diverse ways, the senses and content we use to obtain information will increase. Thus, our sense of participation and belonging is constantly improving. If the communication is eliminated, this discourse community can hardly operate.

Although the basketball discourse community has special communication methods and game elements. But this is still a community for everyone who loves basketball. The discourse community I joined is only for students who have basketball experience and passion in my high school. But there are many basketball discourse communities in every region. Actively communicate with others, seriously participate in training and with a sense of team honor will make you feel the sense of participation and belonging in your basketball discourse community!

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