



*Inaugural Lecture Series 73*

**NON-VERBAL  
COMMUNICATION IN  
COUNSELLING  
THERAPY**

By I. Olu. Makinde

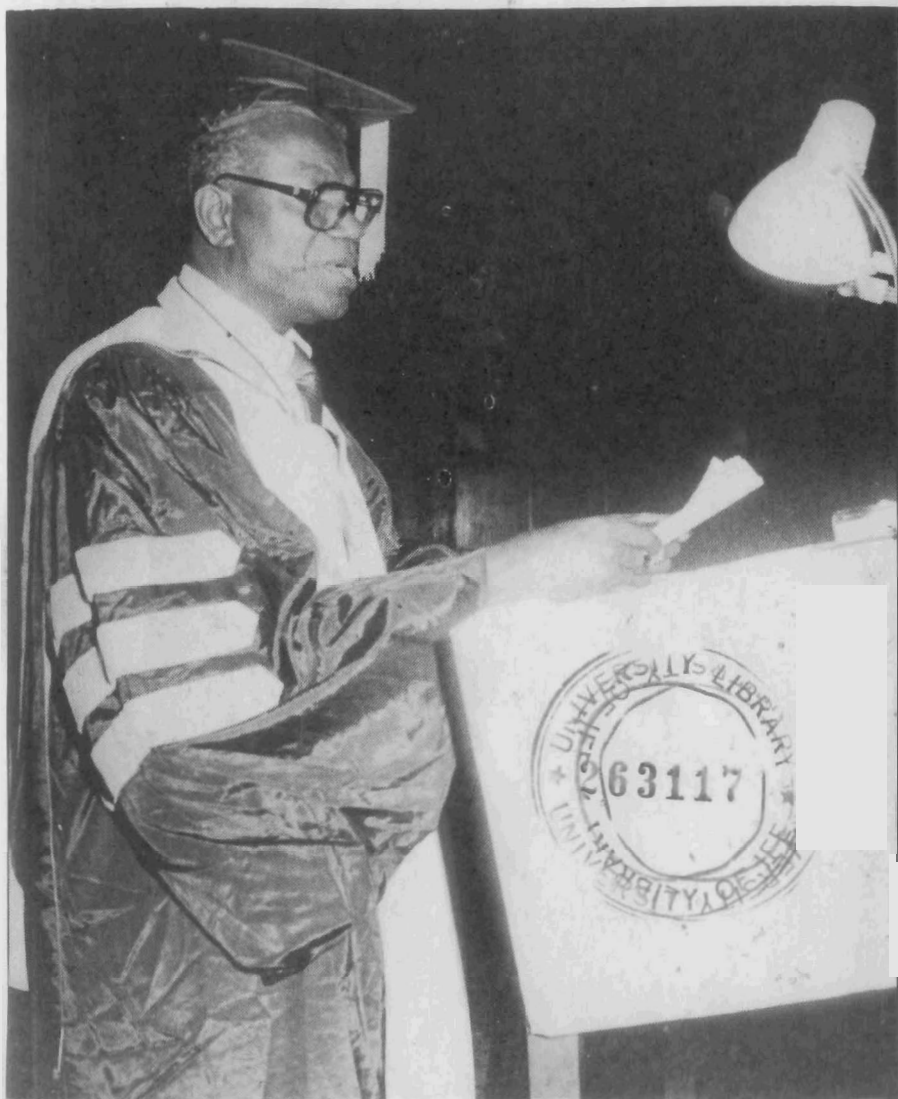
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Professor I. Olu Makinde

**NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN  
COUNSELLING THERAPY**

*by*

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## Introduction

We may not have reflected very deeply on how certain parts of the body beside the tongue and the mouth communicate. This non-use of words is what psychologists refer to as “dialogue in silence”. Behind it lies most of our hidden and inner psychology, inclinations, attitudes, mental health, career aspirations and numerous other social revelations. Its influences on covert thought processes, interpersonal relationships, bargaining, negotiating, cooperating, aggressing and other social manifestations are enormous. I have therefore chosen the topic “Nonverbal Communication in Counselling Therapy” for this Inaugural Lecture not only because of the stated influences above, but also because of its place in indigenous African counselling that I am trying to bring into consciousness, and because of the currency it is generally gaining in psychotherapeutic research. In actual fact, non-verbal communication has indirectly subjected world economies, internal, foreign or external affairs of countries to a battle of survival in a competitive scientific and technological age.

What is non-verbal communication? How does it apply in counselling therapy? What is its effect? Had empirical studies proved it to be so important? What are its limitations? Answers to these and many other questions will be attempted in this lecture. But before we do so, let us restate some facts that can lead us to the concept.

1. Only human beings use words grouped together in a certain order to communicate to people and animals, to discuss people, things and ideas, and to convey a sensible and definite meaning. At the same time, human beings are capable of employing body movements to communicate distinctly. To some of these body movements we attach meaning as communicators and we expect our communicants to infer meaning as well. However, we sometimes allow some inferences to escape us and thus we misunderstand human behaviour.

2. Animals too communicate; and they use the non-verbal means principally for their need expression and for protection. For example, gorillas in Rwanda cluster together for a *tête-à-tête* while one of them watches for an impending danger; but you can never tell which one is watching and which one is communicating. Horses neigh and gallop, bees hum and flit, apes gibber and swing, cats purr and steal, monkeys chatter and climb, wolves howl and lope, lions roar and prowl, pigeons coo and flutter and birds whistle and fly, to mention a few. Of course, during mating seasons especially, some animals have been studied in the use of their non-verbal communication to invite their sex mates for the acts.
3. Biologically, while human beings talk, they also employ non-verbal communication for a variety of purposes.

Invariably, what I am introducing is that in a situation where verbal communication is *not* or may not be meaningfully understood, we usually resort to the commonly understood and universal non-verbal means. Suppose a man whose boat capsizes swims to a nearby shore on a lonely island of the Southern Pacific. There, neither English nor his mother tongue is spoken and he cannot be understood when he speaks either English or his mother tongue. He has no other alternative but to smile, raise both hands, beckon, shake his head forward, backward and sideways, behave like a friend and like one in trouble needing help so that he might not be shot as an enemy. His verbal communication of "Ye!" "help", "come near", "I am in trouble", "rescue" etc. might be mistaken to mean "I am here to fight and capture you". In the light of this observation and the usefulness of non-verbal communication even in times of danger and trouble, and in consideration of it as a key to the Pandora box of behaviour, I present the following as the specific objectives of today's lecture:

1. to reiterate briefly the subject-matter of counselling and consultation and the influences of silent communication;

2. to invoke in my audience a heightened sensitivity of the way human beings communicate non-verbally both in a counselling situation and elsewhere in the community without recourse to verbal expressions that may sometimes be faked and invalid;
3. to highlight my research findings based on pragmatic, naturalistic and holistic frame of interpretations; and
4. to make recommendations for the advancement of counselling psychology and its professional service in Nigeria as a whole.

To fulfil these objectives, I intend to point out behavioural incongruities that have formed the subject matter of counselling and consultation, to approach counselling in the context of Western and indigenous practices and to explain kinesics, paralinguistics and proxemics. I also wish to discuss graffiti as observable non-verbal behaviour, which Thoresen (1974), Krumboltz (1969), Wolpe (1969) and other counselling psychologists regard as the pre-occupation of counselors and finally to draw implications of the use of these non-verbal processes from research studies.

### The Concept of Counselling, Guidance and Consultation

It is generally accepted by all psychologists that the subject matter of counselling is human behaviour. While some psychologists define behaviour as activities performed by organisms including man, others, emphasizing the neurological basis of behaviour, describe it as a response to environmental contingencies. Thus, behaviour is seen as being prompted by a number of physiological as well as environmental factors. That means, to behave, a person must do something; and to do something, the factors outside the skin must have provoked behaviour or at least sent signals. Such factors include psychological as well as physiological needs, motives and social stimuli. Overall, behaviour may be defined as the activities of human organisms, i.e. thinking, feeling and overt acting in certain environmental contexts. In the process of behaving or in an attempt to satisfy certain needs, human

activities and responses may be overtly unacceptable to the environment and even to self. Human activities such as relating, decision making, problem solving, learning, studying, passing and failing tests and examinations, eating, playing, resting and sleeping, conversing, loving and marrying and even dying (because some people commit suicide for no apparent just cause) may become so negative to the extent that they constitute danger to self, to the family, to the immediate community and even to the wider society. This is where counselling comes in; for it is its role to seek to ameliorate situations. Thus, counselling can therefore be referred to as a series of direct contacts with individuals aiming toward better discernible goals or willing for positive change of behaviour. Because counselling is more than advice giving, Bary & Wolf (1963) defined it as a process of internalized learning that allows a client or a student the exploration of his feelings, motivations and experiences, and further allows him to relate them to behaviour. Rogers (1962) referred to counselling as a permissive relationship which allows the client to gain an understanding of himself to a degree which enables him to take positive steps in the light of new orientation. Joseph Perez (1965) summarized the concept by saying:

Counselling is an interactive process co-joining the counsellor who is vulnerable and needs assistance, and the counsellor who is trained and educated to give the assistance, the goal of which is to help the counsellor learn to deal more effectively with himself/herself and (to deal with) the reality of his environment.

After a series of lectures and workshops on counselling, I came to the conclusion that counselling is an enlightened process whereby *people help people* by facilitating growth, development and positive change through an exercise of self understanding. This definition arises from my recognition of the role of Western-trained and knowledgeable people wanting to be appointed in schools and colleges as counsellors, and also the recognition of the roles of parents, guardians,

teachers, peers, community elders and, of course, the indigenous African practitioners in the helping profession.

Counselling service is no longer to be regarded as a novelty in African schools and colleges; neither could it be regarded as the nurtured baby of the Western world alone. Counselling has always been with us in Africa from the time of our unwritten civilization era. For instance, I have grown in the counselling profession to realize that the indigenous African practitioner bases his assumption of counselling on the fact that the generic man is both rational as well as social and that man does not exist alone in the world. Man needs the assistance of the "helping other" to achieve competence. Through counselling, he engages in direct consultation, discussion, deliberation, confrontation, assessment, exchange of ideas and in decision making in a relaxed atmosphere in the interactive environment. Thus, the generic *Babalawo* in Yoruba indigenous divination and counselling or the *Obozi* among Igala and Tiv, the *Bokaye*, *Ogbafa* and *Dibia* among the Igbo, the *Omufunmu* among Bigisu Uganda, the *Nganga* among the Tanzanians, *Uzenakpo* among the Ibibio, and the *Sikidy* in Malagasy, to mention a few in Africa, are able to help clients awaken to consciousness through esoteric devices and incantations, wonder-working words that I termed in one of my works in 1983 "psyche working words", and through body motion, through music and through consultation with "*Ori*" the biological as well as the psychological and religious head. It is believed that the perfect and mysterious words and phrases employed by the indigenous African practitioners are inspired by a god-head, *Ifa* or its equivalent in all parts of Africa and the Diaspora; thus, the words recited are experienced by their clients as efficacious, effective and tension-reducing. No wonder Fabunmi (1975) once said "To learn *Ifa* is to learn how to understand the problems of men and women and how that *Ifa* can guide in the solution of such problems."

In Yorubaland, the indigenous African practitioners believe that wisdom and knowledge are achieved by consulting

with *Ifá* (the deity of knowledge, counselling, divination, etc.) who informs and directs our day to day activities. Thus, Lijadu (1908) and Epega (1937), followed by Abimbola (1968), Bascom (1969), Repo (1974) and Makinde (1976), to mention a few, have explained *Ifa* in its legendary history, supporting the evidence of *Ifa*'s involvement in medico-psychology and counselling therapy from the inception of Yoruba culture. A short *Ifa* verse reads:

Ogbón ní í jé Ifá  
 Ìmò ní í jé Ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀  
 Ohun tí a fẹ̀ kò yé ni  
 (tabì)  
 Ohun tí a fẹ̀ kó yéni  
 Là á dá Ifá sí,

The above translates

Wisdom is known as *Ifá*  
 Knowledge is the other name of Ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀ (*Ifá*)  
 It is because we want  
 To be informed of what we do not know or are ignorant  
 of,  
 And to be directed in what we know,  
 That *Ifá* exists to help us at all times.

Furthermore, both the Western and the indigenous African practitioners agree that counselling is important for bringing about the much needed positive change in mankind; and that counselling is the soul and heart without which a self understanding man cannot be produced. In other words, counselling is the brain and heart or the tap root of the guidance programme. In guidance, the counsellee or client is directed, aided, led, informed, assisted, piloted or tutored cognitively without recourse to how he/she feels. As important as counselling may be, it still represents a part of the total guidance and counselling process which is to help individuals achieve self understanding, self direction, and maximum adjustment for a happy and satisfying living. In that light, the role of the

counsellor as a practitioner in the guidance and counselling service is to help a client identify and analyse a problem, determine a goal, and develop a plan for reaching that goal. This central responsibility of determining and analysing a problem, fashioning an attainable goal and mapping out plans for reaching the goal involves actions. Such actions are mapped out in a guidance service which are regarded as the body of psychotherapy. Consequently, while guidance is cognitively knowledge-based, dealing with principles, facts and methods, counselling is affective, dealing with value orientation, perception, motivation, needs and feelings. While guidance is less personal and less intimate, counselling is more personal, intimate, private and confidential. While guidance is more informative and didactic usually initiated by a counsellor, counselling is largely emotional, flexible, and less didactic, usually initiated by a client or a counsellee. In sum, counselling as the heart and soul of psychotherapy is instituted to guide the activities of the human organism (thinking, feeling and overt actions) so that such activities may be acceptable and profitable to self and to the environment.

### Theories of Non-verbal Behaviours

We went to some length explaining what behaviour is all about and what therapy through counselling can be embarked upon so that we could appreciate the role and place of non-verbal communication in the production of self changed individuals especially for clients that may verbalize the untruth. The panacea for internalized learning (Bary & Wolf, 1963), the dealing with reality (Perez, 1965), the development of a new behaviour (Lewis, 1970), the clearing away of entangling and hampering tentacles, (Arbuckle, 1970), the facilitation and growth and development through self understanding and the desired awakening to consciousness (Makinde, 1983) is found in most of our unconscious and sub-conscious emissions. Positive or negative body movements exhibited *before, during* and *after* any counselling interaction are very important emissions because they serve as cues to

interpret past, present and future behaviours. "Everything the patient does, obvious or concealed, is an expression of the self" said Perls (1970). While a client may be obviously conscious of his words at therapy, he is not aware of his non-verbal behaviour most of the time. As such, there are leakages on which the counsellor can capitalize upon for clarification, reflection, interpretation, explanation and exploration (Passons, 1975).

For instance, we are all aware that when a sick person reports at the clinic or hospital for severe headache and fever, the doctor observes the eyeballs, the furrows on the forehead, the whole body, the patient's feeling of fear and horror and such other observations before he (the doctor) applies the stethoscope for rate of breathing, the thermometer for degree of body temperature, and before he uses other instruments to detect intensity. The body movements and other behaviours of a really sick man at the consulting table will be glaringly different from those of a labourer who feigns illness only to get approval for a three-day sick leave. Unintentional non-verbal leakages portray the self-acclaimed "sick patient" more accurately than his verbal messages to the extent that the medical doctor may recommend for him sick leave and placebo, but not the scientifically tested pills for headache and fever. In like manner, the client (and sometimes the counsellor too) is discovered at the counselling table by the kind of body language he expresses or the kind of body movements he presents.

Freud (1901) and Phipps (1959) discovered that clients like patients must self-disclose all of their thoughts and feelings in the analytic counselling session from where counsellors can pick up cues for diagnosis and eventual meaningful solution. For example, if a counsellor finds that a client begins to talk cheerfully about events in his childhood days, and suddenly the client lapses or stops talking abruptly, then the counsellor must find out what was bottled up and why the sudden silence. It may be because of certain resistances which may lead to slips of tongues, occasional stammering,

sudden silence, deliberate dosing, sleeping and even dreaming. All these resistances originating from either the id, the ego or superego observed by the counsellor or psychoanalyst become important tools for interpreting the client's problems. Trained counsellors and psychotherapists pay very much attention to these body communications, observing as Lord Chesterfield (1694–1773) did in one of his letters to his son that:

Learning is acquired by reading books, but the much more necessary learning, the knowledge of the world, is only to be acquired by reading men, and studying all the various editions of them.

Consequently, you cannot counsel a client or student without reading and understanding through his body motions. The mouth speaks and so does the rest of the body. If however you succeed without attention to the non-verbals, it might not be effective and self-sustaining. The client only makes you to believe so. We have found that verbal exchanges, on which many of us capitalize, do not operate in a vacuum. Rather, verbal exchanges are a complex process involving people, words and body movements. It is only by considering these dynamic elements together that we could follow the progress of a negotiation or the expected result of a counselling interaction. Ralph Emerson (1803–1882) too put it rightly when he said "the eyes of men converse as much as their tongues with the advantage that the ocular dialect needs no dictionary, but is understood the world over." And Yoruba ancestors said it rightly in this form too:

Pánsá ò fura  
Pánsá já 'na  
Ajà o fura  
Ajà jìn sílẹ̀

Literally translated, it means:

The perforated drying calabash did not observe  
The perforated drying calabash fell into the stove  
The attic did not behold,  
The attic gradually came down.

Furthermore, the training of indigenous practitioners demanded for adroit observation and noting minutest details of happenings. For instance, they have learned that when a royal python moves fast in the afternoon, there is danger and misfortune; when they observe that the eyes of their clients suddenly turn red, there is anger showing disagreement at home or in the society; and when a man suddenly grows bushy hair and leaves his beard untrimmed for no specific reason, it is the beginning of temporary or permanent madness if not quickly arrested. The indices of the cowries or cola *accuminata* to forecast *ò yàn tàbí kò yàn* meaning “yes or no”, “okay” and “not okay” are only complements or supplements of what are already known through observation.

### Dimensions of Non-verbal Communications

Normally, non-verbal communications are kinesics, paralinguistics, and proxemics. However, I am equally interested in graffiti as a fourth dimension because it is midway between non-verbal and verbal languages.

#### 1. Kinesics

Kinesics or body motion behaviours include body movements, facial expressions, eye behaviour, gestures and postures. Birdwhistell (1970) however included physical characteristics that remain relatively unchanged during a conversation or during a counselling session such as body physique, height, weight and general appearance. *Direct eye contact* may indicate expressions of feeling or willingness for interpersonal exchange. Lack of sustained eye contact may signal withdrawal, embarrassment or discomfort (Exline & Winters, 1965). Perhaps that is why the Yoruba say *Ojú lórò wà* especially to loved ones meaning “Your facial appearance tells me to proceed or to stop exhortation and love making.” Darting, or rapid eye movement may mean excitement, anger or poorly fitting contact lenses. Moisture or tears in the eye may have contrasting emotional meanings for

different people. Eye shifts away from the counsellor to a wall, for example may indicate that the client is processing or recalling information. However, while Anglo Americans use eye contact as a way of determining attentiveness, Mexican-American, Japanese, Afro-American and Africans avoid eye contact as a form of respect for the counsellor or therapist. It could therefore be extremely hazardous for a counsellor to conclude automatically that lack of eye contact from a counsellee indicates inattentiveness, rudeness, aggressiveness, shyness or low intelligence.

*Smiles* all over the world are associated with the emotion of happiness or joy about some thought, feeling or action. Human beings are the same in this emotion. However, we still have degrees of smiles such as broad and upper lip smiles. Tight lip quivering or biting lips may connote anxiety or sadness. An open *mouth* without speaking could indicate surprise or difficulty in talking. Ekman, Friesen, & Ellsworth (1972) agree that the *face* is the primary communicator of emotional information. The face of the other person may be the most important stimulus in a counselling interaction.

The movements of the *head* can be a rich source for interpreting a person's emotional or affective state in a counselling situation. Nodding the head up and down may imply apparent confirmation or agreement. Shaking the head from left to right or right to left may signal disapproval or disagreement and hanging the head down toward the chest may reflect sadness or disapproval. *Shoulder* shrugging may mean uncertainty, puzzlement, ambivalence or frustration and slouched, rounded or turned-away shoulders may mean reluctance to disclose. Relaxed, *unfolded arms* and *hands* gesturing may signal openness to interpersonal involvements or accentuation of points in conversation or happiness at some news. In like manner, the automatic perspiration of the *palms* in any conversation may reflect anxiety or arousal. If the *legs* and *feet* appear comfortable and relaxed, the person may be signalling openness to interpersonal exchanges.



Shuffling feet or tapping feet (for which I received twelve strokes of the cane and had to cut about one quarter hectare of grass at the primary school) definitely means anxiety, impatience and expression of adjournment. Overall, *body* rocking backward and forward in a chair or squirming in the seat or sitting erectly or rigidly at the edge of a chair may mean tension, anxiety, concern, or worry. Body orientation at an angle, not facing the counsellor or therapist directly or slouching in the seat may mean unwillingness for continued interpersonal relationship.

It is most important to remember that the conjectured meanings we have abstracted and presented for the selected areas of the body may not have much meaning unless viewed and considered within the context of cultures (Anglo, Hispanic, African or Asian), and considered within the context of individuals, the interview relationship, the topic for conversation and in conjunction with paralinguistic cues.

## 2. Paralinguistics

In addition to observing body motion, successful counsellors also identify non-verbal cues called paralinguage; that is the "how" of the message. These include vocal qualities and vocalizations (Trager, 1958), silent pauses and speech errors (Knapp, 1972). The voice level, the pitch and fluency of speech provide a wealth of information about a person's emotional state and attitude. The voice level refers to the volume of speech and the pitch refers to intonation. A person who speaks in whispers or at an almost inaudible level may have difficulty in self-disclosing or discussing a sensitive topic. Irregular changes in a pitch or louder pitch may mean that sensitive emotional topics are being discussed. Changes in voice level and pitch should be interpreted along with accompanying changes in topics of conversation and changes in other non-verbal behaviours.

Again, it should be remembered that voice level may vary among cultures. American psychologists pointed out that typically, Americans have louder voice levels than people

of other cultures. In counselling a client from a different cultural background, an American or African counsellor should not therefore automatically conclude that a client's lower voice volume indicates weakness or shyness.

Fluency in speech refers to relatively the absence of hesitations, stuttering and speech errors. Hesitation and speech errors may indicate a person's sensitivity about topics in conversation. For example, a person may be speaking quite fluently in an interview, and then suddenly, after a shift in the topic, the person's speech becomes halting and tentative. Shifts in topics or content may also result in changes in the rate of rhythm of speech. Counsellors should be cautioned to remember that directness in conversation is affected by cultural values. In some cultures, indirectness in speech is regarded as "a prized art", not as a sign of evasiveness. For example, the Yoruba epitomize this by saying, *Lówélówe là á lù ilù àgídìgbò, ológbón lo njoò, òmòràn ni o sí ò mọ*, meaning it is a prized art to beat the talking drum which only the wise can understand and dance to. In addition, autonomic responses can also provide excellent indices or cues to a person's emotional state. For example, clammy hands, shallow breathing, sweating, pupil dilation, paleness, blushing, or rashes on the neck may provide cues about anxiety, excitement, keen interest, anger, fear, or embarrassment. These autonomic responses usually indicate some kind of arousal which may be positive or negative, depending on the specific cues, the context of the conversation, and the preceding client message.

## 3. Proxemics

Of interest to counsellors is the area of proxemics bordering on the use of social, environmental, and personal space (Hall, 1966). Proxemics involve the size and utilization of the counselling room, or any other learning space, arrangement of the furniture in the room, seating arrangements and distance between counsellor and counsellee. Proxemics also include a variable that seems to be very

important in any human interaction – that is territoriality. Many people are possessive not only of their belongings and property, but also of the space around them. In counselling, space and territoriality are affected by several aspects of the physical environment. To the Anglo Saxons in particular, a smaller counselling room could inhibit verbal productivity of counsellees (Haase & Tepper, 1972). And to the Africans in particular, conducting an interview in a public area might reduce the level of counsellee's self-disclosure (Tolahan & Slaikeu, 1977). A counsellee may communicate his feelings of anxiety and an increased level of arousal on the infringement of personal space by his reactions to the physical environment provided. For example, a counsellee who moves back from or does not move closer to the counsellor may be indicating a need for more space. The counsellee's comfort level also may be detected from the seating position he chooses. A counsellee who needs protection may sit behind a desk or a table while a counsellee who feels fairly comfortable may take a chair closer to the counsellor. However, it should be noted that non-Anglo Saxon clients such as those from Latin America, Africa, and Indonesia may feel more comfortable conversing at less distance and at less space. All the same, the counselling and divinatory room of the typical Yoruba *babaláwo* is about 10' x 10' cubicle. The client sits on the same mat with the *babaláwo* and while the client concentrates on the *ding* of the *Òpèlè* for the correct *Ifa* verse, the *babaláwo* concentrates more on the client's non-verbal emissions. Many *babalawo* clients are not aware of this special expertise.

#### 4. Graffiti

My researches on graffiti have revealed that they are conscious crude illustrations, drawings and writings scratched on stones, walls, plasters or some hard surface inside or outside the counselling room or on sheets of papers outside or during counselling interactions. They are freely associated with body language or body movement in that their practice and mean-

ing are cues that may help interpret the working of the mind. Theoretically, it is observable that the private preoccupations of the human mind usually find an uninhibited discharge when a person is securely alone and free from external observation. At such times, the mind experiences a kind of psychological purgation which may take the form of a soliloquy. Thus, a semi-conscious drawing on the wall or scribbling of few words, phrases or sentences on such objects might present the working of the mind. And if no object is available for this kind of discharge, other avenues such as mind wandering from one thought preoccupation to the other might occur. Therefore "harboured thoughts" in people's minds, unmet or thwarted needs and unfulfilled or half fulfilled aspirations usually find a ready outlet in the privacy of rooms, toilets and bathrooms. A collection of writings and drawings made at such private sessions lead to a rewarding interpretation of how human minds operate. Of course, in the classroom when a lecture is being delivered or in the counselling room when an interpersonal exchange is going on, students and clients do scribble involuntarily. Images made at such periods are usually helpful, if deciphered or decoded, to pinpoint the real problem to be discussed at counselling sessions; and if discussion has already begun to find a workable solution. Individuals who engage in graffiti at counselling sessions especially are not securely alone but their minds wander away from what is being discussed to the territory beyond. They therefore unconsciously scribble, draw, paint and respond from that territory or region beyond.

The other type of graffiti which is commonly found on the walls and chalk boards during Students' Union election and during preparations for demonstrations is also a mid-point between non-verbal and verbal communications. I will soon demonstrate why they should be taken seriously.

#### Non-verbal Researches and Counselling Services

Although non-verbal communication is a treasure that truly exists as far as we have been able to identify, its study

has generated numerous hypotheses and theories that have neither been accepted nor rejected. Assuming that we can define emotion X or movement Y, could it be relied upon across cultures, contexts and individuals? By what means is emotion X or movement Y learned, stored, produced, processed and understood? For instance, it has been argued sufficiently in the American culture that direct eye contact in an interpersonal relationship means willingness to share and exchange ideas. Along with it may be a smile which means readiness to open up, happiness and, or comfort, and attentiveness to work with a counsellor. When an American breaks eye contact, it could be interpreted to mean avoidance, defensiveness, discomfort and preoccupation with other things. Whereas in most African communities, eye contact with people that are older is regarded as disrespectful, insulting, contemptuous and impolite. To the Africans in indigenous communities, an effective interaction takes place when the client puts down his eyes for courtesy, soberness and positive reflection. The Jewish people have been found to attach no significant meaning to eye contact. So, the meaning of eye contact or no eye contact cannot be readily interpreted for or against counselling therapy.

Let us take another example from proxemics. Culturally and on a one to one basis, an African client, particularly if of the opposite sex, will not sit too close to a counsellor. If he or she does, it is interpreted wrongly to be love-making, and other clients or students coming in or passing by will keep a distance if they do not actually run away. Whereas, when an American counsellor detects that his client is moving away and not close, he senses that the client is uncomfortable because his space has been invaded, at worst eroded, and is probably unwilling to continue interaction. The Italian and Jewish clients have a tendency to speak when they are close together whether they want counselling involvement or not. In a group setting where there is no suspicion of any form, the Africans too would use very small space to converge together for discussion. In fact it is not unusual to find

six or eight family members eating from the same bowl in a very small room.

Despite the fact that all of the above are authentic findings about the use of kinesics, paralinguistics, and proxemics, to decode across cultures and to infer at counselling sessions would still be with caution. A knowledge of the cultural background of clients is paramount to the effectiveness of the interpretation of non-verbal languages. At best, we can only construct a reliable classification system of all observable non-verbal cues following Gladstein's (1974) findings after twenty five years of reviewing empirical literature. The classification should be employed with caution in all counselling situations. So long as literature has not negated their usefulness in therapeutic practice, it seems clear that, armed with a basic knowledge of the key concepts and issues of non-verbal communications in an environment or community, a counsellor can construct a model that will be both comfortable and helpful in his day-to-day assignments.

### The Yoruba *Babalawo*

At this juncture, I would like to turn to an aspect of my research that has attempted to make my expertise relevant to the African situation. This centres on the Yoruba *babalawo* or his counterpart in all parts of Africa and the Diaspora. I found through observational studies that they make use of considerable non-verbal communication in most of their therapies. I found also that the evolution of many of their constructs is largely traceable to a number of non-verbal communications. Their scientific practices based on the use of the *Ifa* literary corpus consisting of 16 principal *Odu*, 240 *omo odu* or junior *odu* and up to 1680 verses in each *Odu* are constructs originating first from non-verbal actions, and later transcribed into verbal expressions. No one *Babalawo* knows all the verses of the *Odu*. However, they all know what the *Odu* mean as depicted in the *Odu Ifa* game. They are:

|                            |   |            |
|----------------------------|---|------------|
| Ọ́fún méjì or Orangun meji | — | greatness  |
| Ọ̀sé méjì                  | — | prosperity |

|                |   |                   |
|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Ìrètè          | — | death             |
| Òtúá           | — | health            |
| Òkànràn        | — | fortune           |
| Òtúurúpòn meji | — | danger            |
| Ìká meji       | — | longlife          |
| Òsá meji       | — | riches            |
| Ògúndá meji    | — | safety            |
| Òbàrà meji     | — | poverty           |
| Òwónrín meji   | — | success           |
| Ìrosùn meji    | — | advice            |
| Òdí meji       | — | love              |
| Ìwòrì meji     | — | hatred            |
| Òyèkú meji     | — | happiness         |
| Èjì Ogbè méjì  | — | doubts & concerns |

Of course, the *Odu* may be grouped into families in order to facilitate easy and spontaneous interaction with clients and in order to translate non-verbal feelings into quick recitation of verses. We have:

Table 1

| Family  | Members                                  | Number |
|---------|--|--------|
| Ògúndá  | Òtúá<br>ìrètè<br>òsá                     | 4      |
| Òkànràn | Òtúurúpòn<br>Òbàrà<br>Ìká                | 4      |
| Òfun    | Òwínrín<br>Òsé<br>ìrosùn<br>ìwòrì<br>Odu | 6      |
| Òyèkú   | —  | 1      |
| Ogbè    | —  | 1      |
| Total   |  | 16     |

Similarly, each positive *Odu* has a negative component. Hence, the *babaláwo* could observe that if you did not come to consult about children, fertility or wives, you could have come to consult about lack of children, witch attack, sin against ancestors and about inheritance. The *babalawo* also makes use of the issue of dualism in his therapy and you can easily succumb to one of them. There is the recitation “*méjì, méjì ni Olórun da ilé aiyé: takọ tabo, tọsán tòru, tọjò t’èrùn, tibi tire,*” etc. etc. meaning God creates male and female, wet and dry, day and night etc. etc. The table below shows positive and negative interpretations of *Odu*.

Table 2

| Positive Odu  | Negative Component   |
|---|--|
| 1. Riches (honour, houses, vehicle, money, good harvest, live-stock etc.) | Poverty (want, lack of wife, lack of promotion, bad luck etc.)               |
| 2. Child (twins, children, wife fertility, ancestors)                     | Barrenness (lack of fertility, witch attack, sin against ancestors or Orisa) |
| 3. Longlife (health, happiness, absence of enemies and of witch attack)   | Death (Sickness, bad dreams, depression, accidents, sorrow, injuries)        |
| 4. Fortune (heritage, good luck, promotion, good sales, love, advice)     | Loss (of money, children, post, job, rank, properties etc.)                  |

In my tape-recorded interviews with some Yoruba *babalawo* of the then Western State in 1972, there was a consensus that many verses are recited to stimulate non-verbal behaviours especially because the relationship between man and his society is constantly changing and in order to divinate with already noticed non-verbal emissions. They also told

me that while the client is concentrating on the *Opele* indices, they (babalawo) are concentrating on the non-verbal actions of the clients and the appropriate Ifa verse to choose and recite for a match. I specifically inquired from those interviewed about the verse “Orunmila says it should be done bit by bit” ( *Orunmila ni o di iherehere* ) as was recorded by Bascom (1969, p. 140f). I was reliably informed that the “first verse of *Ifa*” came from *Eji Ogbè* and that when it is employed at divination or counselling sessions, clients typically exhibit certain non-verbal communications in the directions of getting their concerns expressed and wishing for success and prominence.

Because I have not been initiated into the *Babalawo* cult, I will call on Papa Chief Fabunmi to recite the verse “Orunmila ni o di iherehere”. It reads ...

*Èjì Ogbè* verse on clearing doubts for successful ventures

Ọ̀rúnmílà ni o di iherehere  
 Mo ní herehere lǎ jorí eku,  
 Iherehere lǎ jorí eja,  
 À t'òkun t'òsa lǎ gborí  
 Erinlá kí kere n'Ífẹ ǒ d'áiyé  
 A kí igbá dudu t'erin  
 A kí se yèkètè t'ẹfòn  
 Ojá kí í toja ì-gbà-le  
 Elu-Kelu kí í t'Oni  
 Ọ̀kun kí í t'òkun Yemideregbe  
 Yemideregbe l'orúkọ à pé Olókun  
 Ọ̀rúnmílà ni Ka won nìbù  
 Ka won ni ro.  
 Gbogborogbo l'owó yo j'orí  
 Gbogborogbo ni m̀rìwò òpe  
 Yọ jògómò  
 Igbó ki idi  
 Kí ìròkò Kí ó ma yọ  
 A ki ikere jọ  
 Kí t'agogo ki ó ma yọ

Tèmí yọ tèmí yọ lǎkò nké  
 Njé ti yesi ni o yọ ri jù dedere?  
 Dedere oran ope ni o yorí jù, — dedere  
 B'Ogan yo, a jánà  
 Dedere oran ope ni o yorí jù, dedere  
 Temi yọ, temi yọ l'akọ Ke  
 Dedere oran ope ni o yorí jù, dedere  
 A kí í ko eré jọ  
 Kí t'agogo ki ó ma yọ  
 Dedere oran ope ni o yọ ri jù, dedere ...

Literally translated, it means:

Slow and steady win the race. Though we are not as large as the elephant, or as stout as the buffalo, nor is our connection as long as the beads of the Sea Goddess, we will succeed if we try. Just as the hand reaches much higher than the head, and young palm fronds, so shall we be stronger and better placed than our fore-fathers. No forest is so dense that the *iroko* tree (mahogany) cannot be seen; no music is so loud that the gong cannot be heard. That this client will excel to the heights of his determination, that he will be prominent among his associates and that he will succeed in whatever he undertakes.

Similarly, the verse from *Ọ̀dí*, may be used by the practitioner, if he has observed that the client is in need of love, wife, sex mate, or money to pay for dowry. The Verse from *Ọ̀dí meji* on need for money to get married and to be socially acceptable recites thus: ...

Ọ̀dí meji, ese ekini  
 Ilé ni mo jòkó sí  
 Ni gbogbo ire n'wó tuurutu wáá bámi,  
 Mo jokoo ainàró  
 Mo ríre Ọ̀rò to pọ rẹgẹde  
 A difá fun Ọ̀dí

Tí n şawo lo si òde Okò  
 O jokoo f'eyin t'igi akòko  
 Ire gbogbo n da wa o  
 Iḡiriri, igiriri  
 Ibi a f'iyò si ni iyò şomi si  
 Ire gbogbo da wa o  
 Iḡiriri igiriri  
 Okè ki i yò ti i fi i gb'ebò tìrè  
 Ire gbogbo da wa o  
 Iḡiriri, igiriri

*From Òdí Meji, verse one*

This is a verse to show that clients will always be lucky, fruitful and rich and get married easily if they can strive daily and place themselves strategically in the best market area, and sell their good with cheerfulness.

Of course, if the Yoruba *babaláwo* starts a learning session with his apprentice or a counselling session with his client and he begins with the *Ifa* verse on “Little children do not see *Odu* free of charge” (*Omòdé ò fojú b'Odù lasán* recorded by Abimbola, 1976, p. 22), the apprentice or client consciously or unconsciously dances, smiles and shows some excitement. If the apprentice or client is in deep sorrow, he/she will not dance or smile and that means a lot to the indigenous African practitioner. It reads, ...

Omòdé ò fojú b'Odù lasán  
 Agba ò f'òju b'Odù ni òfè  
 Eni t'ò ba f'òju b'Odù yoo sì d'Awò  
 A difa fun Oṙàngún, Ile Ilá  
 Ti o gbalejo lati ode Idan  
 Won ni b'ò ba f'òju b'alejo  
 Orin ni o maa ko  
 A f'òjú b'Odù

A ríre o.  
 A f'òjú b'Odù  
 A ríre.  
 Àwa ma ma kúkú f'òjú b'Odù  
 A ò kú mọ,  
 A f'òjú b'Odù  
 A ríre.

Little children do not see *Odu* free of charge;  
 Old people do not see *Odu* without paying a fee;  
 He who sees *Odu* will become an *Ifa* scholar.  
*Ifa* divination was performed for Orangun of Ila,  
 Who would receive a visitor from the city of Idan.  
 He was told that when he saw the visitor,  
 He should start singing  
 And start dancing  
 We have seen *Odu*  
 We have found good fortune  
 We have seen *Odu*  
 We have found good fortune.  
 We have certainly seen *Odu*.  
 We shall not die  
 We have seen *Odu*  
 We have found good fortune.

*(Abimbola, 1976, p. 22–23)*

The emphasis is on the last words “we have certainly seen *Odu*, we shall not die; we have certainly seen *Odu*, we have found good fortune.” If the client has not found good fortune, he/she will hesitate to chorus and sing.

This same scholar of Yoruba traditional thought, Professor Wande Abimbola, also uses a lot of variants of *Ifa* verses by way of jokes and witty sayings at Congregation, Appointments and Promotions Committee meetings and at the Senate to trigger involuntary non-verbal actions, to make members comfortable and to stimulate heightened sensitivity and willingness to follow proceedings. I remember him

say recently at the Appointments and Promotions Committee meeting to a member who wanted to guess for the reason why the Vice Chancellor, Professor Abimbola, was late. He replied: *Alákoba, aya Esule; Eléran n̄wá ẹran, o ní ẹ jẹ ki ọkọ òn ó dé.* literally meaning "the woman was ready to volunteer information about the lost goat when her husband is around." Everybody at the meeting laughed and yelled and that was how the meeting was brought to a good order before proceedings began.

As an analytical scholar, I must, however, warn that up till now, no one has really analysed the gains of indigenous counselling and found whether it is the non-verbal communications triggered or the psyche words used or the totems and lyrics, the odes, the sonnets, the music, the climate or the personality of the professional that is most significant for the gains recorded or observed. Yet, studies and observations have shown that the *babaláwo* is able to diagnose problems correctly through his mastery of the different non-verbal languages of the community clients as exhibited; and in some cases, as already classified in the constructs. It is a fact that the indigenous Yoruba *babaláwo*, the *Obozi* and others set up practice on the assumptions that two persons are in contact, that one is incongruent, vulnerable and anxious, and the other is congruent and together in harmony; that the first is experiencing unconditional positive regard and empathetic understanding (the conditions through which he exhibits non-verbal cues) and that the second (therapist or counsellor) is taking notes of them for proper analysis, diagnosis and synthesis.

Similarly, I have found in my studies of graffiti that the scratches, drawings and daubing may display authors' disgust, sadness, fear, surprise and happiness, approval, fulfilment and joy. In a study and analysis of 240 graffiti which I gathered in 1976 at the male and female toilets of the University of Ife Halls of Residences (Fajuyi, Awolowo and Moremi Halls), Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Education buildings, and Students Union and Sports buildings, I found

that students' graffiti centred on the themes of sex and sexuality, politics and religion, morality and customs, illicit fulfilment through drugs and dissatisfaction with established norms.

Only recently, at the Faculty of Education election into the Education Students' Association executive, some graffiti emerged. The students whose pictures were defaced and with such comments as "Baba, you don come again", "you go use our money to chase gals", "go learn how to pose", "you are too slow", "no way, "sume", "I can see fraud in your eyes," "you don lose", "you go consume our money", "fugitive offender", "He de handsome", "na handsome we go chop?", "na lie, he be austerity master proper," "you are never serious", etc. etc. did not win the election. If I were the student who had such enormous uncomplimentary comments, I would have analysed them properly and thought of withdrawing my nomination the night prior to the election.

#### Interpersonal Counselling Session

It is also appropriate at this juncture to share with you a recent counselling experience involving Ade who initially presented a vocational cum educational problem as what was really bothering him. For the sake of confidentiality, Ade is not the real name of the client in question. The "Ade" of this case was an eighteen year old Part I student. He walked into my office one morning in April, 1983 and told me that Doctor X referred him to me. On inquiry, he told me that he would like to change Faculty; that he would like to change to Law and that Doctor X said I would be the appropriate person to plead with the Dean of Education to approve his request since the Dean of Law was already willing to have him. I told him to follow me to Room 101 at the Faculty Building where we do 'one to one' and group counselling. I requested him to tell me the vocation he was aspiring to. He said "International Relations." Thereafter, the interview began.

*Counsellor(Co):* You may wish to tell me how you then came to Education in the first instance.

*Student (St):* The only Faculty I was admitted after three attempts with JAMB examinations.

*Co.:* You therefore wish to use Education as a stepping stone.

*St:* No.

*Co:* Why then do you wish to cross to Law if your aspirations are for International Relations and no longer for teaching?

*St:* I don't know.

*Co:* Could it be that your parents wish that you cross to Law?

*St:* Not really.

*Co:* Who or what is behind this new aspiration?

*St:* I don't know (I noticed, however, that Ade was not concentrating very much. He was busy drawing a sketch and not looking up at my face; and his answers were becoming slow and incoherent)

*Co:* Actually, Law and International Relations are interrelated and you could be a world renowned diplomat if you study Law at the undergraduate level and International Relations at both Masters and Ph.D. levels (He raised up his biro and said)

*St:* Is that right?

*Co:* Yes!

*St:* Then I'm in business.

*Co.:* However, before we conclude the process of consulting with the Dean of Education to release you to Law, are there other personal reasons for your opting for Law and not Education with Political Science?

*St:* None.

*Co:* (As I said earlier, Ade continued drawing lines and sketches, and was dotting the back of his "Use of English" folder. By the time we spent thirty minutes interacting, he had drawn a picture. At that point, I interjected). You are really engaged in something fascinating!

*St:* Yes, just a drawing.

*Co:* Would you like to tell me about it?

*St:* Certainly! It is the drawing of a beautiful girl in the Faculty of Law who I would like to start intimacy with.

*Co:* Well Fine! Would you like to talk about it before we come back to your Law or International Relations?

At this time, Ade described her vividly to me for about fifteen minutes, and I did not mistake the girl for someone else when I met her on the third floor of Education building where she and her mates take one of their courses.

From this act and the description of it, I could infer that Ade's sudden aspiration for Law and no longer for Education/Economics or International Relations is the passionate affection for his beauty. He would like to do all in his thought and action to create proximity and finally interact more and more with her. We succeeded in convincing the Dean of Education with academic reasons to let Ade transfer to Law. But whether Ade captured the ideal girl in the 1983/84 session is another matter for a follow-up research and another paper in future.

What is important for us today is the "harboured thought" of Ade which for a long time has pre-occupied his mind and which he has unconsciously verbalized in his scribbles, daubings, scratches and drawings.

According to Sluzki and Vernon (1971), a student or client who is engaged in graffiti drawing is introvertedly engaged in a paradoxical message. It is so structured that it asserts something and asserts something about its own assertions. The two assertions thus become mutually inclusive. Also, such a paradoxical message involves two levels of injunctions. At the first level, the meaning of the message cannot be easily decided. At the second level, the message conflicts with the first. The latter injunction commonly communicated in a non-verbal way takes precedence or priority. That is what we found in Ade's scratches and daubings which



can be regarded as an introverted Rorschach inkblot because of its different interpretation in the eyes of the beholders. To you and others, this figure could have been an African masquerader, a plant or a tree, a frog, a container, a house on stilts or something to amuse. However, to Ade, it is the portrait of his beautiful African girl who he later described vividly in his own perceptual language. To have refused Ade transfer to Law after we knew by intuition, inquiry and counselling his reasons for wanting to do so may probably result in further anxiety and probably voluntary withdrawal from the Faculty or at best end up with a pass degree in Education.

Graffiti, non-verbal languages and the *babalawo* system of communication should not be regarded as my only pre-occupation in counselling therapy. As a frontliner in the Nigerian guidance and counselling service, I have made desperate efforts to cut the path towards institutionalization of the profession and to make its concepts acceptable as an essential ingredient of our educational process. I believed that it is only when the therapeutic service is universally accepted in our schools and colleges that action researches could be heightened. I have therefore directed efforts towards a self-initiated and self-directed Faculty of Education Counselling Unit where we deal with frustrated, lonely, discouraged, uncertain, puzzled and bothered students. Since the attempt began in January 1974, we have helped education students find solutions to their diverse problems including information about their National Service placement and how to go about higher education generally. In particular, there was a statistics of "Outreach" Parts II & III students combining Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry or Biology with Education between 1975 and 1980. The students benefited from our special tutoring and referral programmes in that 60% of our "outreach" students improved their results by the time they got to their final years. Ade's problem as earlier diagnosed and solved and the above example of failing or borderline science education students benefit-

ing from our counselling arrangements, and other personal and confidential matters dealt with and solved are more than enough to call for an improved and expanded guidance and counselling service for all students in the University.

### Implications and Recommendations

The discussion of our research findings has certainly raised issues and problems which call for policy guidelines, planning and concrete recommendations.

1. Firstly, Nigerian teachers and lecturers should no longer regard as deviant and disruptive certain non-verbal behaviours that are exhibited in the classroom. The pupils or students who tap their feet (as I did in the primary school and got punished for it), flip pages of paper or book, whistle, laugh, hum, cough unwittingly and pinch or kick may have a reason or reasons for doing so. The teacher who could not stop to find out reasons for such a behaviour or turn such a behaviour to a learning experience could endeavour to send such a student to the counselling room or counselling centre if one exists. Education in Nigeria has reached the stage of using guidance counsellors who could apply a humanistic helping mode to reduce such non-verbal exhibits. Teachers and lecturers should recognize the fact that school discipline needs become part of the educational experience rather than a punishment activity especially if the objective of the Revised National Policy on Education (1981) to produce individuals who are capable of coping with the society and individuals who are capable of self-actualizing is to be realized. After all Bienvenu (1974) said that the use of verbal or non-verbal communication is the attempt to get through to each other, a process of transmitting feelings, attitudes, needs, facts, beliefs and ideas. Therefore, facial gestures, silences, touch, hearing and moving in the classroom should be studied and turned into useful educational experiences.

2. Secondly, graffiti as "an ancient animal language" according to Meerlo (1971) should be further studied by teachers, scientists, psychologists, sociologists and historians in order to find a common forum of solving people's problems especially the problems of school adolescents who indulge in their writings without speaking up. An early study and analysis of such writings may lead to attempts at curbing sources of strains and stresses that gave rise to them in the first instance; and such penetration may eventually lead to the improvement of the welfare of uncomfortable school adolescents. The study of community graffiti at the airport, railway stations, cinema houses and other public buildings is among my envisaged assignments for the next few years.
3. Thirdly, we have analysed the indigenous African counselling practitioner who at therapy not only capitalizes on non-verbal communications of clients but also accepts clients with positive regard, gets involved in them and believes strongly in a positive result. He uses his unwritten constructs and verses to direct interpersonal relationship and he observes keenly the non-verbal languages of the client in order to direct, manage, steer, assist and inform positively. The "psyche" or the sub-conscious of clients attracted and appealed to him even before such knowledge was discovered by Friedrich Nietzsche, William James, Sigmund Freud and/or Carl Jung. His recognition of the healing forces, or solutions to problems operating in every patient or client which at the onset may be deficient in vigour and which his training tried to mobilize is enormous. Modern counsellors should therefore learn how they operate and how they use the lyrics, aphorisms, odes, cognomen and *ese Ifa* to interact with clients who may need them eventually. Effective counselling cannot be divorced from the client's cultural background; and as Fadipe (1970) said, the reassuring cohesion of the extended family, the comforting sense of continuity with ancestors

- and the uninterrupted consultation with the community counsellor (otherwise labelled the *babalawo*) has social values for helping an upright personality to arrive. In other words, we cannot practise sound and effective counselling without borrowing from the curricula of the indigenous African practitioners.
4. The fourth implication of this lecture is its usefulness in the art of international relations or in diplomatic activities and in the field of combating crimes internally which are important preoccupations of our present military administration. In his 1984 inaugural lecture, Professor Ojo-Ade of Modern European Languages observed that the best way to know and deal with your enemies is to learn their language. I guess this observation includes their verbal and non-verbal languages. To really fight neo-colonialism, neo-imperialism, the new economic slavery, perpetual overlordship and domination, we really need to learn and understand advances in Western non-verbal communications and their interpretations. We shall forever be at sea at international round table conferences, foreign aid and negotiation panel discussions, and in other sensitive assignments including our security matters if we do not know what the politician's handshake means, what the ordinary wave of the hand or two hands of a foreign head of state, or the raising of two fingers and the crossing of a third mean with regard to the Western European communicant or the Soviet envoy. Like the knowledge of mathematics has brought physical science to where it is today; like chemistry and physics have contributed to breakthroughs in biology; like the contributory effects of sciences have helped to advance medicine; and as breakthroughs in economic history have helped in evolving political science, so can diplomacy, international relations and foreign affairs benefit from the study of non-verbal communications and their empirical interpretations. Neither the civilian nor the military

government holding the realms of power could any longer compromise the use of guidance counsellors who specialize in non-verbal languages for their diplomatic engagements in the international arena. The United States of America, Britain, Western Germany, France and other powerful nations of the world draw their diplomatic counsels from among experts who studied men in their natural environments and who combine psychology of interpersonal relationships with law and allied disciplines. Nigeria can no longer afford to do less.

5. Finally, there is a lesson of reward coming after labour, perseverance and committed pioneering effort. The picture I have painted has hidden the dogged and relentless struggle we embarked upon to convince the generality of university people and the Federal and State Ministries of Education that teaching, research and services based on guidance and counselling concepts will yield dividends in our country and help to resolve some of the perennial and agonizing problems of schools and college systems and the outer society. It took endless workshops, conferences and seminars to make a very small break-through. Up till now, we are still brainstorming for a full academic Department of Guidance and Counselling in the Faculty of Education and a university wide Counselling Centre as well. We are still to achieve these. What we can then recommend to the University is that in addition to the full Guidance and Counselling Department there is a need for a University Counselling Centre that is not necessarily a unit or branch of the Directorate of Students' Affairs. Students need academic guidance, vocational and career guidance and human relations counselling in addition to being corrected if they make mistakes or contravene University regulations. An additional Directorate of University Students' Counselling will be able to cope with many problems while the Directorate of Students' Affairs could continue concentration on food and discipline problems.

## Appreciation

Before I conclude this lecture, I would like to express my gratitude to the University for creating the Faculty of Education that brought Professor A. Babs Fafunwa here in 1966/67 academic session. This eminent scholar was the first Nigerian to speak the language of guidance and counselling and to introduce its education in the Faculty. The Faculty and the University have not done badly ever since the discipline was introduced. Similarly, I would like to thank the staff and students of the Department of Educational Foundations and Counselling for their contribution to meaningful and worthwhile researches on human behaviour despite some handicaps earlier mentioned. After all, this lecture is to inaugurate the chair of counselling psychology in that department, which I understand is in compliance with Minute 2551, subsection VI of the 149th Meeting of Senate on 23rd January, 1980 where the Committee of Deans recommended further clarifications on inaugural lectures. My standing here publicly to justify the occupation of this professional chair is to the credit of colleagues in my Department, to the credits of Masters and Ph.D. students we have nurtured and produced in the Department (and there are many of them now), to the credit of the Faculty of Education as a whole, and to the credit of the Counselling Association of Nigeria of which I was the first President. My colleagues and postgraduate students guide, criticize, appreciate and use verbal and non-verbal communications to electrify my incentives and capacities.

In addition, after about twenty years of teaching and being educated in the process, my interest in educational counselling surfaced at the Baptist Girls' High School, Osogbo in 1968. By the time I got to the University of Massachusetts, my focus on indigenous African counselling began with my exposure to Wande Abimbola's publication on "*Ifa* as a body of knowledge and as an academic discipline" (1969). This paper was made available to me at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. For this initial information and further

studies of the *babalawo* divinatory and counselling system and their scientific astrology and mathematical calculations without the use of paper and pencil, I am thankful. I also owe a deep debt of gratitude to late Professor Oluwole Awokoya who challenged me to write a book on guidance and counselling and read meticulously my first draft and offered useful suggestions. His sweet memory lingers on. Last but not the least is my mentor and initiator, Papa Chief Dr. M.A. Fábùnmi, the *Ọdọlé Atóbase* of Ile-Ife and an honorary graduand of this University. I thank him sincerely for serving as my principal informant, interpreter of difficult *ẹsẹ Ifá*, and as my demonstrator on many other occasions.

### Conclusion

Mr. Vice Chancellor, distinguished scholars, ladies and gentlemen, it does not seem humanly possible for a counsellor — even if armed with a reliable dictionary of non-verbal cues, which is yet to exist — to weigh all contextual factors in all of their infinite permutations and arrive at the definite meaning of the non-verbal language occurring at any given counselling session or at any other moment. The study of non-verbal communication of emotion is like a treasure hunt with no adequate map, tools or even a clear notion of what the prize looks like but according to Schlesinger (1978) there is a conviction the treasure exists and that its discovery will benefit the counsellor as well as the counsellee. It is likely that in the course of therapy, counsellors will become familiar with all kinds of non-verbal languages which clients adopt, and that they would be able to recognize departures indicating unusual tension, sadness, anger, joy and happiness as the indigenous African practitioners, who are proficient in this direction, have beheld.

So far, it has been sufficiently demonstrated that spoken words are not the only way of communicating and in fact, spoken words may be faked and the results become invalid. People communicate better and effectively when they combine expression of their eyes and faces through smiles, ges-

tures of their heads and noses, designated movements of shoulders, ankles, hands, and feet, with their conscious verbal expressions. The way people dress, use eyes and body, use the waves of the hands, (even among husbands and wives at home or outside the home) and the way people generally manifest themselves through silences and other involuntary motions are cues to human character and a good personification of their total personality. These movements are not only observable at the counselling table, but at all gatherings and meetings. In order not to miss the understanding of human behaviour, we must all be aware of this universal second language usually referred to as “dialogue in silence”.

I believe  
 The greatest gift  
 I can conceive of having  
 From any one  
                   is  
 To be seen by them,  
 Heard by them,  
 To be understood  
                   and  
 Touched by them:  
 The greatest gift  
 I can give  
                   is  
 To see, hear, understand,  
 And to touch,  
 Another person.  
 When this is done,  
 I feel

Contact has been made: (Satir, 1976).

Finally, I will end this Lecture in the style Jesus Christ used at his inaugural sermon in Nazareth when he read from the book of Prophet Isaiah and said:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
 Because he annointed me to preach  
 Good tidings to the poor:

He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
 And recovery of sight to the blind,  
 To set at liberty them that are bruised,  
 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.  
 And he closed the book and gave it  
 back to the attendant (this time the Vice  
 Chancellor) and sat down

(Luke 4: 18–20a)

“ON THE CHAIR”

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