A Study of communication among persian speaking blind people: alternatives to eye contact

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Eye contact is a meeting of the eyes between two individuals. Unfortunately, making eye contact is difficult for the blind people to communicate and hence limits their social interactions. The present study is an attempt to investigate the alternative techniques to eye contact among Persian speaking blind people in terms of four major functions: 1) showing attention, 2) determining direct addressee, 3) signaling one's readiness, 4) turn-taking. Accordingly, twenty visually impaired females with a mean age of 28 years old were randomly selected and were also categorized into two major groups: 'totally blind and partially sighted'. Then, each group was assigned to two minor subgroups: 'congenitally totally blind, adventitious totally blind, congenital partially sighted and adventitious partially sighted'. Owing to this, 2 groups were separately organized into 2 different sessions to take videos. The data have been collected through 'video analysis' and then analyzed through some statistical tests: 'Chi-square, Cramer’s V and Lambda' and 'SPSS' as a statistical software. The findings reveal that 'showing attention' was with the most frequency distribution of other alternative techniques to eye contact among these 4 groups. Moreover, totally blind and partially sighted participants were similar to each other in using alternative techniques to eye contact in their communications. Likewise, congenitally totally blind and adventitious totally blind participants were also similar to each other in using 'showing attention' as an alternative technique to eye contact. By contrast, they were in some cases different from each other. Congenitally totally blind participants used 'determining direct addressee', but adventitious totally blind
ones used 'readiness' and 'turn-taking' with the most distributions of other substitutive techniques to eye contact