Ma. Carina Dizon
Charwina Mallari
Ma. Celeste A. Orbe
Edna Sibal

Given the situation, the primary issues at hand are: establishing communication, building rapport, and keeping safe. These problems may be addressed using the principles of effective inter-cultural communication, which lies heavily on non-verbal communication. One of the earliest proponents of non-verbal communication is Ferdinand de Saussure who stated that there are two aspects of non-verbal communication, namely: the acoustic image or sound pattern (signifier) and a concept of meaning (signified) and that these two are culturally-bound. These non-linguistic communication is further classified into three fields: kinesics or body semantics, metalinguistics or vocalizations and interjections, and proxemics or spatial arrangements. Nonverbal communication in general performs the three basic functions of managing identity, defining relationships, and conveying attitudes and feelings (but not ideas).

Applying these principles, the group of stranded persons should initiate communication using these three modes. In terms of kinesics or body semantics, the group of stranded persons should convey respect or subservience to the natives by "bowing" or staring down or looking away at the first instance of meeting. The act of bowing as in the case of the Japanese people denotes due deference to power or authority while the act of staring down or looking away means submission. The natives may take this gesture positively and accord the strangers the respect they deserve. Aside from conveying attitudes and feelings, the manifestation of respect works to define the relationship between the dominant "master|" and the subservient"visitor."

In terms of metalinguistics or vocalizations and interjections, the strangers should consciously follow the lead of the natives to establish communication. Repetitions may be taken to mean special interest in the message of the conveyor. Thus, the group of stranded men and women may repeat the utterances of the natives to signify their interest to decode the meaning or manifest the need for further clarification by scratching their head or giving a quizzical look.

Third, the use of proxemics is specially handy when establishing rapport with strangers. The arrangement of people in line should be considered. For example, to protect the women, the group may form a single line, with their women sandwiched between the male members. Unlike the Muslim culture where women are relegated to a slightly lower position than men in society, this physical arrangment of group members works to convey mutual respect among the members of the group, as well as deference for women. Moreover, during the first meeting with the elders of the natives, the distance of about 12 inches should be maintained as an inch closer would be taken to mean aggression or lack of respect for individual personal space. In turn, when the two groups have established a connection, both parties may elevate the group dynamics to another level until both have established a common code for communication. Eventually, the end goal of the communication process shall be for the natives to send off the visitors with goodwill.

Nonverbal communication tends to be relatively ambiguous and open to interpretation while its influence often depends on the nature of the 'listener' particularly when it is unclear whether the messages conveyed are deliberate or unconscious. In the case at hand, misunderstandings may occur because the functions of paralinguistic forms vary from culture to culture. However, universal nonverbals such as smiles, laughter and sour expressions may help ease up the tension.

References

Darn, Steve (n.d). Aspects of Nonverbal Communication. *The Internet TESL Journal.* Accessed on 22 September 2016 from http://iteslj.org/Articles/Darn-Nonverbal/.

Jain, Charul and Madhurita Choudhary (2011). "Action speak louder than words: Non-verbal mis/communication." *Journal of Media and Communication Studies.*Vol. 3 (1), January, 22-26.

de Saussure, Ferdinand. Course in General Linguistics. (1959). New York: The Philosophical Library.