

Kinesics: When the Human Body Speaks

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Abstract:

Human body is the manifestation of variety of emotions and actions. It is one of the best creations of almighty to naturalise human emotions and predicaments which neither a scientifically produced Robot can produce nor any scientific or artificial prototype of human body can create. What marks the study of Kinesics, in particular, is never-solved puzzle. It is nothing but a meticulous study centered on human body movements. The movements being mute and unspoken can magically convey the very idea of human temperament. They are the epitomes of human volitions, emotions and thoughts. The present research paper throws significant light on the notion and explores in a particular context, the impact of body gestures in identifying human temperament and running thoughts and emotions at the time of particular moment.

Keywords: Non-verbalisation, de-verbalise, paralanguage, perceptiveness, intuition. etc.

Introduction:

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, we are witnessing the emergence of a new kind of social science – the non-verbalisation. When, we think of human being as an animal. The only thing which distinguishes man from other animals is the power of expression. I think, this power of expression is more reliable and valid form of communication than your speech. The form of expression has a wide impact on the personality. If we think about the Bollywood stars like Amitabh Bachchan, an angry young man, the tragedy king Dilip Kumar or Shahrukh Khan, whatever the epithets we confer upon them, it is their power of expression and body language on the screen which wins the hearts of mass of people. So, when I think about the power of expression i. e. the power of body language. I am always wondered that human body is a wonder-car carrying all sorts of emotive organs with it. Human body is the manifestation and embodiment of all human feelings. It is desirable that expression is always cheered and speech is always considered. Speech is to think and expression is to feel. The body can be read through the mode of expression. If someone says “I love you” looking into your eyes with passion; that breaks heart and makes man mad for a while. So, expression is that which can make man mad. I think one should have killing expressions to catch the sympathy and obtain the due consideration of audience.

As far as the technical study of body language goes, perhaps, the most influential pre-twentieth century work was Charles Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* published in 1872. This spawned the modern studies of facial expressions and body language and many of Darwin's ideas and observations have since been validated by modern researches around the world. Since that time, researchers have noted and recorded almost one million non-verbal cues and signals. Dr. Albert Mehrabian found that, the total impact of a message is about seven per cent verbal and thirty-eight per cent vocal and fifty-five per cent non-verbals.

Most researchers generally agree that the verbal channel is used primarily for conveying information while the non-verbal channel is used for negotiating interpersonal attitudes and in some cases, is used as a substitute for verbal message for example, a woman can give a man a 'look to kill;' she will convey a very clear message to him without using her speech faculty of mind. Since, body language acquires a universal appeal and impact, it becomes imperative to attain a certain level of proficiency just like any other languages. It needs to be improved with conscious efforts and constructive design. After all, what constitutes a body language? In scientific terms, it is termed as 'Kinesics.' The specific codes referred to Kinesics taken for analysis and discussion in this paper are:

1. Personal Appearance: It is the most impressive as well as depressive part of a person. It constitutes your whole appearance with positive outlook and smile on face. It is the stating key of nonverbal impression which you want to make upon the audience. It is as much as the gorgeous interior of a house. The following things make or mar the personal appearance.
2. Dress: It is an outer reality of a person. Fifty per cent of person's judgment can be made looking at his neatness. If you look at Bollywood stars, their drapery impresses us as much as their personality. It is their starry cloths which make them stars none the less it is their clothes which make them politician. Dress is half of your personality. Therefore, it is important you select a dress that is neatly washed, properly ironed and fits you well. In a fantasy, we can say that, dress to kill others.
3. Posture: it refers to the way we sit, stand and carry ourselves. It communicates the way we visualize the world around us. Therefore, a professional has to maintain and cultivate elegance in his/ her sitting, standing and walking posture.
4. Gestures: It refers to the body movements which support and emphasize the state of mind of an individual. These are the specific mute codes performed by the human body which connote a message better than the talk.
5. Facial expressions: Face is an index of mind. It is the real presenter of human emotions and volitions. By reading face of an individual one can guess about his personality and mood in which he is running at the moment of interaction.

Actually, the term was first used in 1952 by Ray Birdwhistell, an anthropologist, who wished to study how people communicate through posture, gesture, stance and movement, later popularised during the late 1960's by members of the counter-culture seeking to de-verbalise human communication. Part of Birdwhistell's work involved filming people in social situations and analysing them to show different levels of communication not clearly seen otherwise. The study was joined by several other anthropologists, including Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson. Drawing heavily on descriptive linguistics, Birdwhistell argued that all movements of the body have meaning (i.e. they are not accidental) and that these non-verbal forms of language (or paralanguage) have a grammar that can be analysed in similar terms to spoken language. In this connection, (Knapp 1972:94-95) asserts:

A 'kineme' is similar to a phoneme because it consists of a group of movements which are not identical, but which may be used interchangeably without affecting social meaning.

On the other hand, Birdwhistell (1985: 158) estimates that:

No more than 30 to 35 per cent of the social meaning of a conversation or an interaction is carried by the words. He also concluded that there were no universals in these kinesic displays - a claim disproved by Paul Ekman's analysis of universals in facial expression.

A few Birdwhistell-isms are as follows:

1. Social personality is a temporo-spatial system. All behaviors evinced by any such system are components of the system except as related to different levels of abstractions.
2. Even if no participant of an interaction field can recall, or repeat in a dramatized context, a given series or sequence of body motions, the appearance of a motion is of significance to the general study of the particular kinesics system even if the given problem can be rationalized without reference to it.
3. All meaningful body motion patterns are to be regarded as socially learned until empirical investigation reveals otherwise.
4. No kineme ever stands alone.

Modern functions of the Term:

In one contemporary application, kinesics is used as symbols of dishonesty by interviewers. Interviewers look for clusters of movements to determine the veracity of the proclamation being uttered. Some associated words may be:

- Emblems – these substitute for words and phrases.
- Illustrators – these accompany or reinforce verbal messages.
- Affect Displays – it shows emotions.
- Regulators – these control the flow and pace of communication.
- Adaptors – these release physical or emotional tension.

Kinesics is an important part of non-verbal communication behavior. The movement of the body, or separate parts, conveys many specific meanings and the interpretations may be culture bound. As many movements are carried out at a subconscious or at least a low-awareness level, kinesics movements carry a significant risk of being misinterpreted in an intercultural communications situation.

Perceptiveness and intuition in the study of kinesics:

From the technical point of view, whenever we call someone 'perceptive' or 'intuitive', we are referring to his or her ability to read another person's non-verbal cues and to compare these cues with verbal signals. In other words, when we say that, we have a gut feeling that someone has told us a lie, we really mean that their body language and their spoken words do not agree. Women are generally, more perceptive than men and this fact has given rise to what commonly referred to as 'woman's intuition' because women have an innate tendency to pick up and decipher non-verbal signals, as well as having an accurate eye for small details. This is why a few husbands can lie to their wives and get away with it and why, conversely, most women can pull the wool over a man's eye without his realising it.

Inborn, genetic, learned and cultural signals in the study of kinesics:

Much research has been done whether non-verbal signals are inborn, learned, genetically transferred or acquired in some other way. Evidence was collected from the observation of blind and deaf people who could not have learned non-verbal signals through the auditory or visual

channels, from observing the gestural behavior of many different cultures around the world. In a nutshell, it would be appropriate to contend that; kinesics is nothing but presenting bodily emotions and volitions naturally through natural codes. It is a gift given to mankind by the nature and almighty. It use is up to you. How you use it, whether for creation or demolition.

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