

Unit IV

Topic:

Body Language / Kinesics: (Non-verbal communication)

Often the physical movement of the body and their study is known as body language or kinesics. In this connection Raymond and John rightly remark. To them kinesics “is the way the body communicates without words, that is, through various movements of its parts”. No doubt, we express our emotions through words but often the inner states of emotion are expressed through different parts of the body and their physical movements. We can communicate or send the message even by nodding the head, blinking the eyes, shrugging our shoulders or waving our hands.

When we study body language, we look at the meaning of symbols that the physical movements of the body are communicating. Through outward body movements true inner emotions are reflected. For the expression of these inner body states, the face and eyes, gestures and physical appearance are to be studied. For self control, the presenter should pay attention to

his body language, for this following parts of kinesics should be considered:

- 1) Maintain eye contact
- 2) Face and eyes
- 3) Gestures
- 4) Body shape and posture
- 5) Appearance

1) Maintain Eye contact:

The speaker should maintain a steady eye contact because it is an effective means of developing rapport with the audience. If the presenter looks at the audience for a long period of time, it shows his intensity of interest. Eye contact as well as eye movements indeed help significantly in communicating successfully in oral communications.

2) Face and eyes:

Face is the index of mind. The face, it means, reflects what is going on inside the speaker. In this context, eyes tell us much more than other facial features. The facial expressions are associated with happiness, surprise, fear, anger and sadness. Even eyes, nose, cheeks or forehead express one’s inner goings on. For example, the eyebrows with upper and lower eyelids raised, giving a wide eyed effect indicate that the person is excited, surprised or brightened. Similarly if we look at someone or something for a long period of time, we show our intensity of interest. Eye contact and eye movements indeed help significantly in getting success in interviews, seminars, or other face to face oral communications. The interviewee or one who is giving the oral presentation should keep a pleasant face with a natural tendency to smile. He should maintain an open look and also make eye contacts with the interviewer or the members of the panel.

3) Gestures:

In addition to the face and eyes, other body parts move and convey meaning. These movements are known as gestures, the physical movement of arms, legs, hands and head. For example, if the arms are spread apart, shuffling from one leg to another and body slightly extended forward, these gestures convey meanings of nervous and intense.

As gestures have meanings so they should be coordinated with proper intensity of speech.

The greater the gesture the louder the speech and vice versa", comments a scholar. A presenter while facing the audience is advised to keep positive postures, since it indicates his positive personality.

Body shape and posture:

A third area of kinesics involves body shape and posture. As far as body shape is concerned, we can't do much about it since it is given to us by God. But with the right posture we can impress the interviewer and the audience.

Raymond and John D refer to the behaviourists who have studied the shapes of our bodies and have identified three types:

1) The ectomorph – thin youthful and tall.

2) The mesomorph – strong, athletic, muscular and boney.

3) The endomorph – fat, round and soft.

Indeed physical shape communicates hence let us try to be mesomorphs.

But it is not possible to be mesomorph since genetically either we are ectomorph or endomorph, then we can win our interviewer or the audience with good posture. A person with good and appealing body shape but with bad postures and unfavourable image will communicate a negative message.

5) Appearance:

By appearance we mean external appearance in which our dress, jewellery and make up play a pivotal role. The speaker should consider how others will view him in relation to how he wants to be seen. He should dress up himself in simple and sober dress.

Thus, kinesics, inclusive of facial expressions, gestures, body shape and posture will be the part of the messages, the speaker wants to communicate.