

Linguistics 201 A Concise Introduction to Linguistics

Chapter 11: Nonverbal Communication Pgs. 327-334, 343-344

- Nonverbal Communication - any communication that occurs between people, usually within each other's presence, by means other than spoken or written words or the signs of a sign language.
 - o A firm stance, stern gaze, etc.
- Kinesics is the study of communicating with body movements or, as it is sometimes called, body language.
 - o Movements are called kinesic behaviors.
 - o Kinesic behaviors are often synchronized with the individual's own speech and body, making a sort of dance.
- Emblems - nonverbal acts that have very specific meanings.
 - o Most are produced by hands but there are some that can be produced by the face. (dropping the jaw, holding mouth open, etc.)
 - o Emblems are also called speech-independent gestures & autonomous gestures.
 - o Different cultures have different numbers of emblems and certain meanings have different emblems in different cultures.
- Illustrators - nonverbal behaviors that accompany speech and serve to clarify or emphasize what is being said.
 - o Illustrators and regulators are sometimes classified together as speech-related gestures.
 - Pointing at an object to indicate location.
 - Moving your arm and hand at a specific rhythm to illustrate the pace of an event.
 - Using a quick downward movement of the fist to emphasize a point.
 - Etc.
- Regulators - kinesic behaviors that shape or influence turn-taking in speech and listening.
 - o People give off nonverbal cues to the speaker about their understanding, if they want to say something, need to go, etc.
- Adaptors - kinesic behaviors that satisfy personal needs, such as nervousness, and are not meant to communicate.
 - o Some of these movements increase with increased anxiety.
 - For example, when people are taking part in public speaking they may put their hands in their pockets, etc.
- Kinesic behavior is a complex combination of emblems, illustrators, regulators, adaptors, and affect displays.
 - o Researchers believe these movements can be analyzed in a similar way to verbal language where it can be broken down into linguistic units.
 - Kinemes are considered by some researchers to be the elementary units of kinesic analysis and are analogous to a linguistic unit, such as a phoneme.
- Affect Displays - kinesic behaviors that communicate the real or faked emotional state of the communicator.
 - o Face is the primary site for conveying emotional states.

- o Are facial expressions universally understood?
 - There is rather high cross-cultural accuracy in judging emotions of happiness, fear, anger, surprise, sadness, and disgust in five literate cultures.
 - This could mean that the ability to understand facial displays and other nonverbal communication could be innate.
- There are four lines of evidence that lend validity to the claim that there is a genetic (innate) component to understanding of at least the six primary emotions (happiness, fear, anger, surprise, sadness, and disgust).
 - o The first line of evidence is the cross-cultural studies by Ekman.
 - o The second line of evidence is from a study of blind children.
 - They make facial expressions not much different from seeing children. Could not have learned the facial expression from observation so it must be genetic.
 - o The third line of evidence comes from a study of primates.
 - Display of emotions in humans and primates is very similar and are often evoked for similar reasons.
 - o The fourth line of evidence comes from brain-imaging studies.
 - Shows that emotions that lead to certain facial expressions are processed in the same areas of the brain for most people.
- Facial emblems - facial expressions that seem to have a dictionary definition, in the sense that their meaning can be easily "read".
 - o Are generally speech-independent gestures.
- Eyes are one of the most expressive parts of the face.
- Gaze - refers to looking behavior.
- Mutual gaze - used when people are looking at each other.
- Functions of Gazing:
 - o Regulating the flow of communication.
 - Gazing at a person in a certain way says "I am ready to communicate", etc.
 - Gazing is one way that turn-taking is controlled; kinesic regulators.
 - o Gazing patterns act as feedback.
 - If a person is barely looking at you while you are talking to them this signals disinterest to an American.
 - This isn't always the case though, psychological or emotional conditions could also cause this behavior.
 - Different cultures have different cultural meanings for gazing directly into someone's eyes.
 - o Gazing patterns change depending on whether a person is talking about factual things or reflecting on an abstract or complex concept.
 - Some people might close their eyes or look away if their thinking about something difficult, etc.
 - o Gazes can emit emotions.
 - o Gazes could give off signs about the nature of a relationship between two people.
 - Unless our culture has shaped us differently we tend to look at things and people who are more interesting to us.

- Physical appearance is dependent on how one dresses, what types of body adornments they may have (tattoos, scars, piercings, etc.), and physical characteristics such as height and weight.
 - o Dress and body adornment usually follow cultural conventions.
 - The dress of certain professions is a powerful communicator.
 - Body adornment can communicate many different messages.
- Nonverbal messages are often sent at the same time as verbal messages.