

Use of Kinesics: Family-Centered Ethical Identities of Personal Communication in an Urban and a Semi-Urban Context

Jayarathna R. N. H. M. D.¹✉, Angamma B. H.¹

Abstract

Belonging to one of the initiatives of human communication, kinesics represents the messages sent by the body including gestures, facial expressions, body movements, postures, gaze and gait. Since the family influence is one of the prominent phenomena on an individual's social behaviour, one's communication is highly shaped by related family; kinesics is also in it. All types of ethical considerations which stand toward the process of communication are immensely applicable for the use of kinesics due to their qualified contribution to quality communication. Under this circumstance, considering the process of communication in the family, the present study was done to achieve two objectives. One was to identify a common code of ethics in the use of kinesics and the other was to identify attributed values of the use of kinesics. The mixed research methodology was applied and qualitative data were collected by conducting interviews as the major tool while observation was also done. Following a simple socio-economic criterion, the families were categorized into five groups; by names, the families represent ancient folk, rural elite's ancestry, modern middle class, modern rural folk, and modern town folk. A sample of fifty families with a total number of ten families per group was randomly selected from the Kurunegala district covering urban and semi-urban settings. Three components of kinesics; namely 'frown', 'gait' and 'posture of worship' were considered. In the interviews, the family members' recognition, attitude, and practice of the particular kinesics were separately explored by deep questioning. Though the intensity of the frown is personalized, its impact seems more similar within the family with corresponding contexts than with outsiders. The frown is more controversial when dealing with aliens since it can convey both positive and negative indexes. An unintentional frown can occur for a variety of reasons, followed by guilt within and outside the family. Although there are obvious differences in the gait and posture of worship according to the family group, they are limited to usage as many of their attitudes toward those practices are very similar. By analyzing data on this non-verbal code of signals, concluded that many attributed values of kinesics are equal as a recognition than a practice to all kinds of families and the use of kinesics in any social context is openly or secretly controlled by family-centred ethics, which owe similar identities enabling to see a common code of ethics.

Keywords: *Ethics, non-verbal signals, gait, kinesics, postures*

¹ Department of Social Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

✉ Corresponding author: deejayarathna@gmail.com