

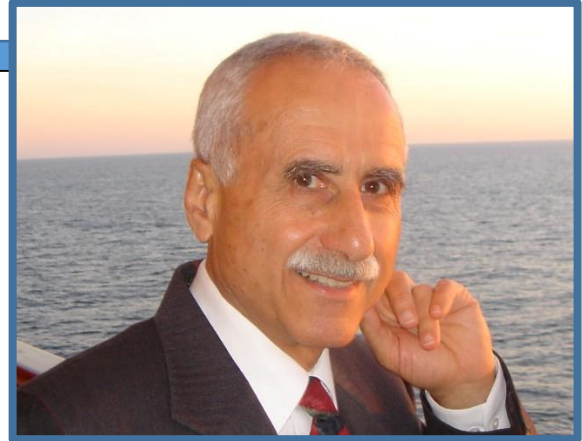
Communication Theories

Mehrabian

Professor Albert Mehrabian came up with a theory in 1967 about communication. He looked at simple day-to-day messages throughout his research as he wanted to find out how much we are influenced by someone's facial expressions and tone of voice. Mehrabian concluded that we receive a message like so;

- 7% of meaning in the words that are spoken
- 38% of meaning is paralinguistic (the way words are said)
- 55% of meaning is in facial expression

Although there is a lot of controversy with the statistics concluded, Mehrabian did not mean for this communication theory to be relevant to all kinds of communication.



Birdwhistell's Theory of Kinesics

Ray Birdwhistell's was a professor who spent up to 20 years of his life researching. He came up with his own theory of kinesics. Body language, technically known as Kinesics, is very essential in communication. Different body parts play specific role in communication. The role of different parts of the body in communication are;

1. Head: Holding your head high is a sign of honour, self-respect and self-confidence. A head bent low on the other hand, shows modesty, politeness or guilt.
2. Facial expression: All parts of the face, for example, the lines of the forehead, the eyebrows, the muscles of cheeks and also lips can reflect a message.
3. Eye contact: Eye contact is a powerful tool of communication. It can be used in positive ways to effectively express confidence, intellect, honesty, love, etc. However it can also reflect lies, anger, remorse, or negative attitude.
4. Gestures: Gestures are hand movements. Different hand movements convey different meanings, for example, banging fists off a table shows anger, and thumbs up is acknowledged as "very good"
5. Posture: Posture is the way we stand or sit. It is the position adopted by our body. There is a variety of postures including standing or sitting erect, leaning forward or backward etc. Sitting with your arms crossed is seen as angry or cross, whereas sitting with your back straight shows interest and positivity.

He stated that human communication needed and used all of the senses; and information conveyed by human gestures and movements were coded and patterned differently in various cultures. Birdwhistell argued that all movements of the body have meaning (are not accidental) and that these non-verbal forms of language have a grammar that can be analysed in similar terms of spoken language.

