Interpersonal Relations

Language, Nonverbal Communication, Listening, Emotions

Nonverbal Communication: Chapter 4

Chapter 4

Nonverbal Communication

When we think about communication, we most often focus on how we exchange information using words. While verbal communication is important, humans relied on nonverbal communication for thousands of years before we developed the capability to communicate with words. Nonverbal communication is a process of generating meaning using behavior other than words. Rather than thinking of nonverbal communication as the opposite of or as separate from verbal communication, it's more accurate to view them as operating side by side—as part of the same system. Yet, as part of the same system, they still have important differences, including how the brain processes them. For instance, nonverbal communication is typically governed by the right side of the brain and verbal, the left.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 2–8. This hemispheric distinction has been clearly evidenced, as people who suffer trauma to the right side of their brain lose the ability to recognize facial expressions but can still process verbal communication. Conversely, people whose left hemisphere of the brain is damaged lose the ability to speak, read, and understand language. Interestingly, a person with damage to the left hemisphere of the brain who loses the ability to speak can often still sing since the creation, but not the reading, of music is governed by the right brain. The content and composition of verbal and nonverbal communication also differs. In terms of content, nonverbal communication tends to do the work of communicating emotions more than verbal. In terms of composition, although there are rules of grammar that structure our verbal communication, no such official guides govern our use of nonverbal signals. Likewise, there aren't dictionaries and thesauruses of nonverbal communication like there are with verbal symbols. Finally, whereas we humans are unique in our

capacity to abstract and transcend space and time using verbal symbols, we are not the only creatures that engage in nonverbal communication.Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 49. These are just some of the characteristics that differentiate verbal communication from nonverbal, and in the remainder of this chapter we will discuss in more detail the principles, functions, and types of nonverbal communication and conclude with some guidance on how to improve our nonverbal communication competence.

4.1 Principles and Functions of Nonverbal Communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define nonverbal communication.
- Compare and contrast verbal communication and nonverbal communication.
- Discuss the principles of nonverbal communication.
- Provide examples of the functions of nonverbal communication.

As you'll recall from our introductory chapter, a channel is the sensory route on which a message travels. Oral communication only relies on one channel, because spoken language is transmitted through sound and picked up by our ears. Nonverbal communication, on the other hand, can be taken in by all five of our senses. Since most of our communication relies on visual and auditory channels, those will be the focus of this chapter. But

we can also receive messages and generate meaning through touch, taste, and smell. Touch is an especially powerful form of nonverbal communication that we will discuss in this chapter, but we will not get into taste and smell, which have not received as much scholarly attention in relation to nonverbal communication as the other senses.

To further define nonverbal communication, we need to distinguish between vocal and verbal aspects of communication. Verbal and nonverbal communication include both vocal and nonvocal elements, andTable 4.1 "Vocal and Nonvocal Elements of Communication" shows the relationship among vocal, nonvocal, verbal, and nonverbal aspects of communication. A vocal element of verbal communication is spoken words—for example, "Come back here." A vocal element of nonverbal communication isparalanguage, which is the vocalized but not verbal part of a spoken message, such as speaking rate, volume, and pitch. Nonvocal elements of verbal communication include the use of unspoken symbols to convey meaning. Writing and American Sign Language (ASL) are nonvocal examples of verbal communication and are not considered nonverbal communication. Nonvocal elements of nonverbal communication include body language such as gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact. Gestures are nonvocal and nonverbal since most of them do not refer to a specific word like a written or signed symbol does.

Table 4.1 Vocal and Nonvocal Elements of Communication

	Verbal Communication	Nonverbal Communication
Vocal	Spoken words	Paralanguage (pitch, volume, speaking rate, etc.)
Nonvocal	Writing, sign language	Body language (gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, etc.)

Source: Adapted from Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice(London: Routledge, 2011), 45.

Principles of Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication has a distinct history and serves separate evolutionary functions from verbal communication. For example, nonverbal communication is primarily biologically based while verbal communication is primarily culturally based. This is evidenced by the fact that some nonverbal communication has the same meaning across cultures while no verbal communication systems share that same universal recognizability.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 17. Nonverbal communication also evolved earlier than verbal communication and served an early and important survival function that helped humans later develop verbal communication. While some of our nonverbal communication abilities, like our sense of smell, lost strength as our verbal capacities increased, other abilities like paralanguage and movement have grown alongside verbal complexity. The fact that nonverbal communication is processed by an older part of our brain makes it more instinctual and involuntary than verbal communication.

Nonverbal Communication Conveys Important Interpersonal and Emotional Messages

You've probably heard that more meaning is generated from nonverbal communication than from verbal. Some studies have claimed that 90 percent of our meaning is derived from nonverbal signals, but more recent and reliable findings claim that it is closer to 65 percent.Laura K. Guerrero and Kory

Floyd, Nonverbal Communication in Close Relationships (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006): 2.We may rely more on nonverbal signals in situations where verbal and nonverbal messages conflict and in situations where emotional or relational communication is taking place.Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 47. For example, when someone asks a question and we're not sure about the "angle" they are taking, we may hone in on nonverbal cues to fill in the meaning. For example, the question "What are you doing tonight?" could mean any number of things, but we could rely on posture, tone of voice, and eye contact to see if the person is just curious, suspicious, or hinting that they would like company for the evening. We also put more weight on nonverbal communication when determining a person's credibility. For example, if a classmate delivers a speech in class and her verbal content seems well-researched and unbiased, but her nonverbal communication is poor (her voice is monotone, she avoids eye contact, she fidgets), she will likely not be viewed as credible. Conversely, in some situations, verbal communication might carry more meaning than nonverbal. In interactions where information exchange is the focus, at a briefing at work, for example, verbal communication likely accounts for much more of the meaning generated. Despite this exception, a key principle of nonverbal communication is that it often takes on more meaning in interpersonal and/or emotional exchanges.

Nonverbal Communication Is More Involuntary than Verbal

There are some instances in which we verbally communicate involuntarily. These types of exclamations are often verbal responses to a surprising stimulus. For example, we say "owww!" when we stub our toe or scream "stop!" when we see someone heading toward danger. Involuntary nonverbal signals are much more common, and although most nonverbal communication isn't completely involuntary, it is more below our consciousness

than verbal communication and therefore more difficult to control.

The involuntary nature of much nonverbal communication makes it more difficult to control or "fake." For example, although you can consciously smile a little and shake hands with someone when you first see them, it's difficult to fake that you're "happy" to meet someone. Nonverbal communication leaks out in ways that expose our underlying thoughts or feelings. Spokespeople, lawyers, or other public representatives who are the "face" of a politician, celebrity, corporation, or organization must learn to control their facial expressions and other nonverbal communication so they can effectively convey the message of their employer or client without having their personal thoughts and feelings leak through. Poker players, therapists, police officers, doctors, teachers, and actors are also in professions that often require them to have more awareness of and control over their nonverbal communication.

Have you ever tried to conceal your surprise, suppress your anger, or act joyful even when you weren't? Most people whose careers don't involve conscious manipulation of nonverbal signals find it difficult to control or suppress them. While we can consciously decide to stop sending verbal messages, our nonverbal communication always has the potential of generating meaning for another person. The teenager who decides to shut out his dad and not communicate with him still sends a message with his "blank" stare (still a facial expression) and lack of movement (still a gesture). In this sense, nonverbal communication is "irrepressible."Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions(Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 21.

Nonverbal Communication Is More Ambiguous

In Chapter 3 "Verbal Communication", we learn that the symbolic and abstract nature of language can lead to misunderstandings,

but nonverbal communication is even more ambiguous. As with verbal communication, most of our nonverbal signals can be linked to multiple meanings, but unlike words, many nonverbal signals do not have any one specific meaning. If you've ever had someone wink at you and didn't know why, you've probably experienced this uncertainty. Did they wink to express their affection for you, their pleasure with something you just did, or because you share some inside knowledge or joke?

Just as we look at context clues in a sentence or paragraph to derive meaning from a particular word, we can look for context clues in various sources of information like the physical environment, other nonverbal signals, or verbal communication to make sense of a particular nonverbal cue. Unlike verbal communication, however, nonverbal communication doesn't have explicit rules of grammar that bring structure, order, and agreed-on patterns of usage. Instead, we implicitly learn norms of nonverbal communication, which leads to greater variance. In general, we exhibit more idiosyncrasies in our usage of nonverbal communication than we do with verbal communication, which also increases the ambiguity of nonverbal communication.

Nonverbal Communication Is More Credible

Although we can rely on verbal communication to fill in the blanks sometimes left by nonverbal expressions, we often put more trust into what people do over what they say. This is especially true in times of stress or danger when our behaviors become more instinctual and we rely on older systems of thinking and acting that evolved before our ability to speak and write.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 18. This innateness creates intuitive feelings about the genuineness of nonverbal communication, and this genuineness relates back to our earlier discussion about the sometimes involuntary and often subconscious nature of nonverbal communication. An example

of the innateness of nonverbal signals can be found in children who have been blind since birth but still exhibit the same facial expressions as other children. In short, the involuntary or subconscious nature of nonverbal communication makes it less easy to fake, which makes it seem more honest and credible. We will learn more about the role that nonverbal communication plays in deception later in this chapter.

Functions of Nonverbal Communication

A primary function of nonverbal communication is to convey meaning by reinforcing, substituting for, or contradicting verbal communication. Nonverbal communication is also used to influence others and regulate conversational flow.

Perhaps even more important are the ways in which nonverbal communication functions as a central part of relational communication and identity expression.

Nonverbal Communication Conveys Meaning

Nonverbal communication conveys meaning by reinforcing, substituting for, or contradicting verbal communication. As we've already learned, verbal and nonverbal communication are two parts of the same system that often work side by side, helping us generate meaning. In terms of reinforcing verbal communication, gestures can help describe a space or shape that another person is unfamiliar with in ways that words alone cannot. Gestures also reinforce basic meaning—for example, pointing to the door when you tell someone to leave. Facial expressions reinforce the emotional states we convey through verbal communication. For example, smiling while telling a funny story better conveys your emotions.Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 51. Vocal variation can help us emphasize a particular part of a message, which helps reinforce a word or sentence's meaning. For example, saying "How was

your weekend?" conveys a different meaning than "How was your weekend?"

Nonverbal communication can substitute for verbal communication in a variety of ways. Nonverbal communication can convey much meaning when verbal communication isn't effective because of language barriers. Language barriers are present when a person hasn't yet learned to speak or loses the ability to speak. For example, babies who have not yet developed language skills make facial expressions, at a few months old, that are similar to those of adults and therefore can generate meaning.Harriet Oster, Douglas Hegley, and Linda Nagel, "Adult Judgments and Fine-Grained Analysis of Infant Facial Expressions: Testing the Validity of A Priori Coding Formulas," Developmental Psychology 28, no. 6 (1992): 1115–31. People who have developed language skills but can't use them because they have temporarily or permanently lost them or because they are using incompatible language codes, like in some cross-cultural encounters, can still communicate nonverbally. Although it's always a good idea to learn some of the local language when you travel, gestures such as pointing or demonstrating the size or shape of something may suffice in basic interactions.

Nonverbal communication is also useful in a quiet situation where verbal communication would be disturbing; for example, you may use a gesture to signal to a friend that you're ready to leave the library. Crowded or loud places can also impede verbal communication and lead people to rely more on nonverbal messages. Getting a server or bartender's attention with a hand gesture is definitely more polite than yelling, "Hey you!" Finally, there are just times when we know it's better not to say something aloud. If you want to point out a person's unusual outfit or signal to a friend that you think his or her date is a loser, you're probably more likely to do that nonverbally.

Last, nonverbal communication can convey meaning by contradicting verbal communication. As we learned earlier, we often perceive nonverbal communication to be more credible than verbal communication. This is especially true when we receive mixed messages, or messages in which verbal and nonverbal signals contradict each other. For example, a person may say, “You can’t do anything right!” in a mean tone but follow that up with a wink, which could indicate the person is teasing or joking. Mixed messages lead to uncertainty and confusion on the part of receivers, which leads us to look for more information to try to determine which message is more credible. If we are unable to resolve the discrepancy, we are likely to react negatively and potentially withdraw from the interaction.Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 52. Persistent mixed messages can lead to relational distress and hurt a person’s credibility in professional settings.

Nonverbal Communication Influences Others

Nonverbal communication can be used to influence people in a variety of ways, but the most common way is through deception. Deception is typically thought of as the intentional act of altering information to influence another person, which means that it extends beyond lying to include concealing, omitting, or exaggerating information. While verbal communication is to blame for the content of the deception, nonverbal communication partners with the language through deceptive acts to be more convincing. Since most of us intuitively believe that nonverbal communication is more credible than verbal communication, we often intentionally try to control our nonverbal communication when we are engaging in deception. Likewise, we try to evaluate other people’s nonverbal communication to determine the veracity of their messages. Students initially seem surprised when we discuss the prevalence of deception, but their surprise diminishes once they realize that deception isn’t always malevolent, mean, or hurtful.

Deception obviously has negative connotations, but people engage in deception for many reasons, including to excuse our own mistakes, to be polite to others, or to influence others' behaviors or perceptions.

The fact that deception served an important evolutionary purpose helps explain its prevalence among humans today. Species that are capable of deception have a higher survival rate. Other animals engage in nonverbal deception that helps them attract mates, hide from predators, and trap prey.Peter A.

Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 276. To put it bluntly, the better at deception a creature is, the more likely it is to survive. So, over time, the humans that were better liars were the ones that got their genes passed on. But the fact that lying played a part in our survival as a species doesn't give us a license to lie.

Aside from deception, we can use nonverbal communication to "take the edge off" a critical or unpleasant message in an attempt to influence the reaction of the other person. We can also use eye contact and proximity to get someone to move or leave an area. For example, hungry diners waiting to snag a first-come-first- serve table in a crowded restaurant send messages to the people who have already eaten and paid that it's time to go. People on competition reality television shows like Survivorand Big Brother play what they've come to term a "social game." The social aspects of the game involve the manipulation of verbal and nonverbal cues to send strategic messages about oneself in an attempt to influence others. Nonverbal cues such as length of conversational turn, volume, posture, touch, eye contact, and choices of clothing and accessories can become part of a player's social game strategy. Although reality television isn't a reflection of real life, people still engage in competition and strategically change their communication to influence

others, making it important to be aware of how we nonverbally influence others and how they may try to influence us.

Nonverbal Communication Regulates Conversational Flow

Conversational interaction has been likened to a dance, where each person has to make moves and take turns without stepping on the other's toes. Nonverbal communication helps us regulate our conversations so we don't end up constantly interrupting each other or waiting in awkward silences between speaker turns. Pitch, which is a part of vocalics, helps us cue others into our conversational intentions. A rising pitch typically indicates a question and a falling pitch indicates the end of a thought or the end of a conversational turn. We can also use a falling pitch to indicate closure, which can be very useful at the end of a speech to signal to the audience that you are finished, which cues the applause and prevents an awkward silence that the speaker ends up filling with "That's it" or "Thank you." We also signal our turn is coming to an end by stopping hand gestures and shifting our eye contact to the person who we think will speak next.Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 53. Conversely, we can "hold the floor" with nonverbal signals even when we're not exactly sure what we're going to say next. Repeating a hand gesture or using one or more verbal fillers can extend our turn even though we are not verbally communicating at the moment.

Nonverbal Communication Affects Relationships

To successfully relate to other people, we must possess some skill at encoding and decoding nonverbal communication. The nonverbal messages we send and receive influence our relationships in positive and negative ways and can work to bring people together or push them apart. Nonverbal communication in the form of tie signs, immediacy behaviors,

and expressions of emotion are just three of many examples that illustrate how nonverbal communication affects our relationships.

Tie signs are nonverbal cues that communicate intimacy and signal the connection between two people. These relational indicators can be objects such as wedding rings or tattoos that are symbolic of another person or the relationship, actions such as sharing the same drinking glass, or touch behaviors such as hand- holding.Walid A. Afifi and Michelle L. Johnson, “The Nature and Function of Tie- Signs,” inThe Sourcebook of Nonverbal Measures: Going beyond Words, ed. Valerie Manusov (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005): 190. Touch behaviors are the most frequently studied tie signs and can communicate much about a relationship based on the area being touched, the length of time, and the intensity of the touch. Kisses and hugs, for example, are considered tie signs, but a kiss on the cheek is different from a kiss on the mouth and a full embrace is different from a half embrace. If you consider yourself a “people watcher,” take note of the various tie signs you see people use and what they might say about the relationship.

Immediacy behaviors play a central role in bringing people together and have been identified by some scholars as the most important function of nonverbal communication.Peter A. Andersen and Janis F. Andersen, “Measures of Perceived Nonverbal Immediacy,” in The Sourcebook of Nonverbal Measures: Going beyond Words, ed. Valerie Manusov (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005): 113–26.Immediacy behaviors are verbal and nonverbal behaviors that lessen real or perceived physical and psychological distance between communicators and include things like smiling, nodding, making eye contact, and occasionally engaging in social, polite, or professional touch.Mark E. Comadena, Stephen K. Hunt, and Cheri J. Simonds, “The Effects of Teacher Clarity, Nonverbal Immediacy, and Caring on Student Motivation, Affective and Cognitive Learning,” Communication Research Reports 24, no. 3 (2007): 241. Immediacy behaviors are a good way of creating rapport, or

a friendly and positive connection between people. Skilled nonverbal communicators are more likely to be able to create rapport with others due to attention-getting expressiveness, warm initial greetings, and an ability to get “in tune” with others, which conveys empathy.Ronald E. Riggio, “Social Interaction Skills and Nonverbal Behavior,” in Applications of Nonverbal Behavior Theories and Research, ed. Robert S. Feldman (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992), 12. These skills are important to help initiate and maintain relationships.

While verbal communication is our primary tool for solving problems and providing detailed instructions, nonverbal communication is our primary tool for communicating emotions. This makes sense when we remember that nonverbal communication emerged before verbal communication and was the channel through which we expressed anger, fear, and love for thousands of years of human history.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 27. Touch and facial expressions are two primary ways we express emotions nonverbally. Love is a primary emotion that we express nonverbally and that forms the basis of our close relationships. Although no single facial expression for love has been identified, it is expressed through prolonged eye contact, close interpersonal distances, increased touch, and increased time spent together, among other things. Given many people’s limited emotional vocabulary, nonverbal expressions of emotion are central to our relationships.

“Getting Real”

Teachers and Immediacy Behaviors

A considerable amount of research has been done on teachers’ use of immediacy behaviors, which points to the importance of this communication concept in teaching professions.Virginia P. Richmond, Derek R. Lane, and James

C. McCroskey, “Teacher Immediacy and the Teacher-Student Relationship,”

in Handbook of Instructional Communication: Rhetorical and Relational Perspectives, eds. Timothy P. Mottet, Virginia P. Richmond, and James C. McCroskey (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2006), 168. Immediacy behaviors are verbal and nonverbal behaviors that lessen real or perceived physical and psychological distance between communicators.Mark E. Comadena, Stephen K. Hunt, and Cheri J. Simonds, “The Effects of Teacher Clarity, Nonverbal Immediacy, and Caring on Student Motivation, Affective and Cognitive

Learning,” Communication Research Reports 24, no. 3 (2007): 241. Specific nonverbal behaviors have been found to increase or decrease perceived levels of immediacy, and such behaviors impact student learning, teacher’s evaluations, and the teacher-student relationship.Virginia P. Richmond, Derek R. Lane, and James C. McCroskey, “Teacher Immediacy and the Teacher-Student Relationship,” in Handbook of Instructional Communication: Rhetorical and Relational Perspectives, eds. Timothy P. Mottet, Virginia P. Richmond, and James C. McCroskey (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2006), 169, 184–85. Even those who do not plan on going into teaching as a career can benefit from learning about immediacy behaviors, as they can also be used productively in other interpersonal contexts such as between a manager and employee, a salesperson and a client, or a politician and constituent. Much of this research in teaching contexts has focused on the relationship between immediacy behaviors and student learning, and research consistently shows that effective use of immediacy behaviors increases learning in various contexts and at various levels. Aside from enhancing student learning, the effective use of immediacy behaviors also leads to better evaluations by students, which can have a direct impact on a teacher’s career. While student evaluations of teachers take various factors into consideration, judgments of personality may be formed, as we learned in Chapter 2 “Communication and Perception”,

after only brief initial impressions. Research shows that students make character assumptions about teachers after only brief exposure to their nonverbal behaviors. Based on nonverbal cues such as frowning, head nodding, pointing, sitting, smiling, standing, strong gestures, weak gestures, and walking, students may or may not evaluate a teacher as open, attentive, confident, dominant, honest, likable, anxious, professional, supportive, or enthusiastic. The following are examples of immediacy behaviors that can be effectively used by teachers:

- Moving around the classroom during class activities, lectures, and discussions (reduces physical distance)
- Keeping the line of sight open between the teacher's body and the students by avoiding or only briefly standing behind lecterns / computer tables or sitting behind a desk while directly interacting with students (reduces physical distance)
- Being expressive and animated with facial expressions, gestures, and voice (demonstrates enthusiasm)
- Smiling (creates a positive and open climate)
- Making frequent eye contact with students (communicates attentiveness and interest)
- Calling students by name (reduces perceived psychological distance)
- Making appropriate self-disclosures to students about personal thoughts, feelings, or experiences (reduces perceived psychological distance, creates open climate)

Teachers who are judged as less immediate are more likely to sit, touch their heads, shake instead of nod their heads, use sarcasm, avoid eye contact, and use less expressive nonverbal behaviors. Finally, immediacy behaviors affect the teacher-student relationship. Immediacy behaviors help

establish rapport, which is a personal connection that increases students' investment in the class and material, increases motivation, increases communication between teacher and student, increases liking, creates a sense of mutual respect, reduces challenging behavior by students, and reduces anxiety.

1. Recall a teacher you have had that exhibited effective immediacy behaviors. Recall a teacher you have had that didn't exhibit immediacy behaviors. Make a column for each teacher and note examples of specific behaviors of each. Discuss your list with a classmate and compare and contrast your lists.
2. Think about the teachers that you listed in the previous question. Discuss how their behaviors affected your learning and your relationship.
3. How much should immediacy behaviors, relative to other characteristics such as professionalism, experience, training, and content knowledge, factor into the evaluation of teachers by their students, peers, andsupervisors? What, if anything, should schools do to enhance teachers' knowledge of immediacy behaviors?

Nonverbal Communication Expresses Our Identities

Nonverbal communication expresses who we are. Our identities (the groups to which we belong, our cultures, our hobbies and interests, etc.) are conveyed nonverbally through the way we set up our living and working spaces, the clothes we wear, the way we carry ourselves, and the accents and tones of our voices. Our physical bodies give others impressions about who we are, and some of these features are more under our control than others. Height, for example, has been shown to influence how people

are treated and perceived in various contexts. Our level of attractiveness also influences our identities and how people perceive us. Although we can temporarily alter our height or looks—for example, with different shoes or different color contact lenses—we can only permanently alter these features using more invasive and costly measures such as cosmetic surgery. We have more control over some other aspects of nonverbal communication in terms of how we communicate our identities. For example, the way we carry and present ourselves through posture, eye contact, and tone of voice can be altered to present ourselves as warm or distant depending on the context.

Aside from our physical body, artifacts, which are the objects and possessions that surround us, also communicate our identities. Examples of artifacts include our clothes, jewelry, and space decorations. In all the previous examples, implicit norms or explicit rules can affect how we nonverbally present ourselves. For example, in a particular workplace it may be a norm (implicit) for people in management positions to dress casually, or it may be a rule (explicit) that different levels of employees wear different uniforms or follow particular dress codes. We can also use nonverbal communication to express identity characteristics that do not match up with who we actually think we are. Through changes to nonverbal signals, a capable person can try to appear helpless, a guilty person can try to appear innocent, or an uninformed person can try to appear credible.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Nonverbal communication is a process of generating meaning using behavior other than words. Nonverbal communication includes vocal elements, which is referred to as paralanguage and includes pitch, volume, and

rate, and nonvocal elements, which are usually referred to as body language and includes gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact, among other things.

- Although verbal communication and nonverbal communication work side by side as part of a larger language system, there are some important differences between the two. They are processed by different hemispheres of the brain, nonverbal communication conveys more emotional and affective meaning than does verbal communication, nonverbal communication isn't governed by an explicit system of rules in the same way that grammar guides verbal communication, and while verbal communication is a uniquely human ability, many creatures including plants, birds, and mammals communicate nonverbally.
- Nonverbal communication operates on the following principles: nonverbal communication typically conveys more meaning than verbal communication, nonverbal communication is more involuntary than verbal communication, nonverbal communication is often more ambiguous than verbal communication, and nonverbal communication is often more credible than verbal communication.
- Nonverbal communication serves several functions.
- Nonverbal communication affects verbal communication in that it can complement, reinforce, substitute, or contradict verbal messages.
- Nonverbal communication influences others, as it is a key component of deception and can be

used to assert dominance or to engage in compliance gaining.

- Nonverbal communication regulates conversational flow, as it provides important cues that signal the beginning and end of conversational turns and facilitates the beginning and end of an interaction.
- Nonverbal communication affects relationships, as it is a primary means through which we communicate emotions, establish social bonds, and engage in relational maintenance.
- Nonverbal communication expresses our identities, as who we are is conveyed through the way we set up our living and working spaces, the clothes we wear, our personal presentation, and the tones in our voices.

EXERCISES

- Getting integrated: To better understand nonverbal communication, try to think of an example to illustrate each of the four principles discussed in the chapter. Be integrative in your approach by including at least one example from an academic, professional, civic, and personal context.
- When someone sends you a mixed message in which the verbal and nonverbal messages

contradict each other, which one do you place more meaning on? Why?

- Our personal presentation, style of dress, and surroundings such as a dorm room, apartment, car, or office send nonverbal messages about our identities. Analyze some of the nonverbal signals that your personal presentation or environment send. What do they say about who you are? Do they create the impression that you desire?

4.2 Types of Nonverbal Communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define kinesics.
- Define haptics.
- Define vocalics.
- Define proxemics.
- Define chronemics.
- Provide examples of types of nonverbal communication that fall under these categories.
- Discuss the ways in which personal presentation and environment provide nonverbal cues.

Just as verbal language is broken up into various categories, there are also different types of nonverbal communication. As we learn about each type of nonverbal signal, keep in mind that nonverbals often work in concert with each other, combining to repeat, modify, or contradict the verbal message being sent.

Kinesics

The word kinesics comes from the root word kinesis, which means “movement,” and refers to the study of hand, arm, body, and face movements. Specifically, this section will outline the use of gestures, head movements and posture, eye contact, and facial expressions as nonverbal communication.

Gestures

There are three main types of gestures: adaptors, emblems, and illustrators.Peter A. Andersen,Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 36. Adaptorsare touching behaviors and movements that indicate internal states typically related to arousal or anxiety. Adaptors can be targeted toward the self, objects, or others. In regular social situations, adaptors result from uneasiness, anxiety, or a general sense that we are not in control of our surroundings. Many of us subconsciously click pens, shake our legs, or engage in other adaptors during classes, meetings, or while waiting as a way to do something with our excess energy. Public speaking students who watch video recordings of their speeches notice nonverbal adaptors that they didn’t know they used. In public speaking situations, people most commonly use self- or object-focused adaptors. Common self-touching behaviors like scratching, twirling hair, or fidgeting with fingers or hands are considered self-adaptors. Some self- adaptors manifest internally, as coughs or throat-clearing sounds. My personal weakness is object adaptors. Specifically, I subconsciously gravitate toward metallic objects like paper clips or staples holding my notes together and catch myself bending them or

fidgeting with them while I'm speaking. Other people play with dry-erase markers, their note cards, the change in their pockets, or the lectern while speaking. Use of object adaptors can also signal boredom as people play with the straw in their drink or peel the label off a bottle of beer. Smartphones have become common object adaptors, as people can fiddle with their phones to help ease anxiety. Finally, as noted, other adaptors are more common in social situations than in public speaking situations given the speaker's distance from audience members. Other adaptors involve adjusting or grooming others, similar to how primates like chimpanzees pick things off each other. It would definitely be strange for a speaker to approach an audience member and pick lint off his or her sweater, fix a crooked tie, tuck a tag in, or pat down a flyaway hair in the middle of a speech.

Emblems are gestures that have a specific agreed-on meaning. These are still different from the signs used by hearing-impaired people or others who communicate using American Sign Language (ASL). Even though they have a generally agreed-on meaning, they are not part of a formal sign system like ASL that is explicitly taught to a group of people. A hitchhiker's raised thumb, the "OK" sign with thumb and index finger connected in a circle with the other three fingers sticking up, and the raised middle finger are all examples of emblems that have an agreed-on meaning or meanings with a culture. Emblems can be still or in motion; for example, circling the index finger around at the side of your head says "He or she is crazy," or rolling your hands over and over in front of you says "Move on."

Just as we can trace the history of a word, or its etymology, we can also trace some nonverbal signals, especially emblems, to their origins. Holding up the index and middle fingers in a "V" shape with the palm facing in is an insult gesture in Britain that basically means "up yours." This gesture dates back centuries to the period in which the primary weapon of war was the bow and arrow. When archers were captured, their enemies would often

cut off these two fingers, which was seen as the ultimate insult and worse than being executed since the archer could no longer shoot his bow and arrow. So holding up the two fingers was a provoking gesture used by archers to show their enemies that they still had their shooting fingers.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 121.

Illustrators are the most common type of gesture and are used to illustrate the verbal message they accompany. For example, you might use hand gestures to indicate the size or shape of an object. Unlike emblems, illustrators do not typically have meaning on their own and are used more subconsciously than emblems. These largely involuntary and seemingly natural gestures flow from us as we speak but vary in terms of intensity and frequency based on context. Although we are never explicitly taught how to use illustrative gestures, we do it automatically. Think about how you still gesture when having an animated conversation on the phone even though the other person can't see you.

Head Movements and Posture

I group head movements and posture together because they are often both used to acknowledge others and communicate interest or attentiveness. In terms of head movements, a head nod is a universal sign of acknowledgement in cultures where the formal bow is no longer used as a greeting. In these cases, the head nod essentially serves as an abbreviated bow. An innate and universal head movement is the headshake back and forth to signal "no." This nonverbal signal begins at birth, even before a baby has the ability to know that it has a corresponding meaning. Babies shake their head from side to side to reject their mother's breast and later shake their head to reject attempts to spoon-feed.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 232. This biologically based movement then sticks with

us to be a recognizable signal for “no.” We also move our head to indicate interest. For example, a head up typically indicates an engaged or neutral attitude, a head tilt indicates interest and is an innate submission gesture that exposes the neck and subconsciously makes people feel more trusting of us, and a head down signals a negative or aggressive attitude.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 232–34.

There are four general human postures: standing, sitting, squatting, and lying down.Owen Hargie,Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 63. Within each of these postures there are many variations, and when combined with particular gestures or other nonverbal cues they can express many different meanings. Most of our communication occurs while we are standing or sitting. One interesting standing posture involves putting our hands on our hips and is a nonverbal cue that we use subconsciously to make us look bigger and show assertiveness. When the elbows are pointed out, this prevents others from getting past us as easily and is a sign of attempted dominance or a gesture that says we’re ready for action. In terms of sitting, leaning back shows informality and indifference, straddling a chair is a sign of dominance (but also some insecurity because the person is protecting the vulnerable front part of his or her body), and leaning forward shows interest and attentiveness.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 243–44.

Eye Contact

We also communicate through eye behaviors, primarily eye contact. While eye behaviors are often studied under the category of kinesics, they have their own branch of nonverbal studies calledoculesics, which comes from the Latin word oculus, meaning “eye.” The face and eyes are the main point of focus during communication, and along with our ears

our eyes take in most of the communicative information around us. The saying “The eyes are the window to the soul” is actually accurate in terms of where people typically think others are “located,” which is right behind the eyes.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 40. Certain eye behaviors have become tied to personality traits or emotional states, as illustrated in phrases like “hungry eyes,” “evil eyes,” and “bedroom eyes.” To better understand oculesics, we will discuss the characteristics and functions of eye contact and pupil dilation.

Eye contact serves several communicative functions ranging from regulating interaction to monitoring interaction, to conveying information, to establishing interpersonal connections. In terms of regulating communication, we use eye contact to signal to others that we are ready to speak or we use it to cue others to speak. I’m sure we’ve all been in that awkward situation where a teacher asks a question, no one else offers a response, and he or she looks directly at us as if to say, “What do you think?” In that case, the teacher’s eye contact is used to cue us to respond. During an interaction, eye contact also changes as we shift from speaker to listener. US Americans typically shift eye contact while speaking— looking away from the listener and then looking back at his or her face every few seconds. Toward the end of our speaking turn, we make more direct eye contact with our listener to indicate that we are finishing up. While listening, we tend to make more sustained eye contact, not glancing away as regularly as we do while speaking.Judith N. Martin and Thomas K. Nakayama, Intercultural Communication in Contexts, 5th ed. (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 276.

Aside from regulating conversations, eye contact is also used to monitor interaction by taking in feedback and other nonverbal cues and to send information. Our eyes bring in the visual information we need to interpret people’s movements, gestures, and eye contact. A speaker can use his or her eye contact to

determine if an audience is engaged, confused, or bored and then adapt his or her message accordingly. Our eyes also send information to others. People know not to interrupt when we are in deep thought because we naturally look away from others when we are processing information. Making eye contact with others also communicates that we are paying attention and are interested in what another person is saying. As we will learn in Chapter 5 “Listening”, eye contact is a key part of active listening.

Eye contact can also be used to intimidate others. We have social norms about how much eye contact we make with people, and those norms vary depending on the setting and the person. Staring at another person in some contexts could communicate intimidation, while in other contexts it could communicate flirtation. As we learned, eye contact is a key immediacy behavior, and it signals to others that we are available for communication. Once communication begins, if it does, eye contact helps establish rapport or connection. We can also use our eye contact to signal that we do not want to make a connection with others. For example, in a public setting like an airport or a gym where people often make small talk, we can avoid making eye contact with others to indicate that we do not want to engage in small talk with strangers. Another person could use eye contact to try to coax you into speaking, though. For example, when one person continues to stare at another person who is not reciprocating eye contact, the person avoiding eye contact might eventually give in, become curious, or become irritated and say, “Can I help you with something?” As you can see, eye contact sends and receives important communicative messages that help us interpret others’ behaviors, convey information about our thoughts and feelings, and facilitate or impede rapport or connection. This list reviews the specific functions of eye contact:

- Regulate interaction and provide turn-taking signals

- Monitor communication by receiving nonverbal communication fromothers
- Signal cognitive activity (we look away when processing information)
- Express engagement (we show people we are listening with our eyes)
- Convey intimidation
- Express flirtation
- Establish rapport or connectionPupil dilation is a subtle component of oculesics that doesn't get as much scholarly attention in communication as eye contact does. Pupil dilation refers to the expansion and contraction of the black part of the center of our eyes and is considered a biometric form of measurement; it is involuntary and therefore seen as a valid and reliable form of data collection as opposed to self-reports on surveys or interviews that can be biased or misleading. Our pupils dilate when there is a lack of lighting and contract when light is plentiful.Laura K. Guerrero and Kory Floyd, Nonverbal Communication in Close Relationships (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006): 176. Pain, sexual attraction, general arousal, anxiety/stress, and information processing (thinking) also affect pupil dilation. Researchers measure pupil dilation for a number of reasons. For example, advertisers use pupil dilation as an indicator of consumer preferences, assuming that more dilation indicates arousal and attraction to a product. We don't consciously read others' pupil dilation in our everyday interactions, but experimental research has shown that we subconsciously perceive pupil dilation, which affects our impressions and communication. In general, dilated pupils

increase a person's attractiveness. Even though we may not be aware of this subtle nonverbal signal, we have social norms and practices that may be subconsciously based on pupil dilation. Take for example the notion of mood lighting and the common practice of creating a "romantic" ambiance with candlelight or the light from a fireplace. Softer and more indirect light leads to pupil dilation, and although we intentionally manipulate lighting to create a romantic ambiance, not to dilate our pupils, the dilated pupils are still subconsciously perceived, which increases perceptions of attraction.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions(Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 40–41.

Facial Expressions

Our faces are the most expressive part of our bodies. Think of how photos are often intended to capture a particular expression "in a flash" to preserve for later viewing. Even though a photo is a snapshot in time, we can still interpret much meaning from a human face caught in a moment of expression, and basic facial expressions are recognizable by humans all over the world. Much research has supported the universality of a core group of facial expressions: happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and disgust. The first four are especially identifiable across cultures.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 35. However, the triggers for these expressions and the cultural and social norms that influence their displays are still culturally diverse. If you've spent much time with babies you know that they're capable of expressing all these emotions. Getting to see the pure and innate expressions of joy and surprise on a baby's face is what makes playing peek-a-boo so entertaining for adults. As we get older, we learn and begin to follow display rules for facial expressions and other signals of emotion and also learn to better

control our emotional expression based on the norms of our culture.

Smiles are powerful communicative signals and, as you'll recall, are a key immediacy behavior. Although facial expressions are typically viewed as innate and several are universally recognizable, they are not always connected to an emotional or internal biological stimulus; they can actually serve a more social purpose. For example, most of the smiles we produce are primarily made for others and are not just an involuntary reflection of an internal emotional state.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 35. These social smiles, however, are slightly but perceptibly different from more genuine smiles. People generally perceive smiles as more genuine when the other person smiles "with their eyes." This particular type of smile is difficult if not impossible to fake because the muscles around the eye that are activated when we spontaneously or genuinely smile are not under our voluntary control. It is the involuntary and spontaneous contraction of these muscles that moves the skin around our cheeks, eyes, and nose to create a smile that's distinct from a fake or polite smile.Dylan Evans, Emotion: The Science of Sentiment (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 107. People are able to distinguish the difference between these smiles, which is why photographers often engage in cheesy joking with adults or use props with children to induce a genuine smile before they snap a picture.

We will learn more about competent encoding and decoding of facial expressions in Section 4.3 "Nonverbal Communication Competence" andSection 4.4 "Nonverbal Communication in Context", but since you are likely giving speeches in this class, let's learn about the role of the face in public speaking. Facial expressions help set the emotional tone for a speech. In order to set a positive tone before you start speaking, briefly look at the audience and smile to communicate friendliness, openness, and

confidence. Beyond your opening and welcoming facial expressions, facial expressions communicate a range of emotions and can be used to infer personality traits and make judgments about a speaker's credibility and competence. Facial expressions can communicate that a speaker is tired, excited, angry, confused, frustrated, sad, confident, smug, shy, or bored. Even if you aren't bored, for example, a slack face with little animation may lead an audience to think that you are bored with your own speech, which isn't likely to motivate them to be interested. So make sure your facial expressions are communicating an emotion, mood, or personality trait that you think your audience will view favorably, and that will help you achieve your speech goals. Also make sure your facial expressions match the content of your speech. When delivering something light-hearted or humorous, a smile, bright eyes, and slightly raised eyebrows will nonverbally enhance your verbal message. When delivering something serious or somber, a furrowed brow, a tighter mouth, and even a slight head nod can enhance that message. If your facial expressions and speech content are not consistent, your audience could become confused by the mixed messages, which could lead them to question your honesty and credibility.

Haptics

Think of how touch has the power to comfort someone in moment of sorrow when words alone cannot. This positive power of touch is countered by the potential for touch to be threatening because of its connection to sex and violence. To learn about the power of touch, we turn to haptics, which refers to the study of communication by touch. We probably get more explicit advice and instruction on how to use touch than any other form of nonverbal communication. A lack of nonverbal communication competence related to touch could have negative interpersonal consequences; for example, if we don't follow the advice we've been given about the importance of a firm handshake, a person might make negative judgments about

our confidence or credibility. A lack of competence could have more dire negative consequences, including legal punishment, if we touch someone inappropriately (intentionally or unintentionally). Touch is necessary for human social development, and it can be welcoming, threatening, or persuasive. Research projects have found that students evaluated a library and its staff more favorably if the librarian briefly touched the patron while returning his or her library card, that female restaurant servers received larger tips when they touched patrons, and that people were more likely to sign a petition when the petitioner touched them during their interaction.Peter A. Andersen,Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 46.

There are several types of touch, including functional-professional, social-polite, friendship-warmth, love-intimacy, and sexual-arousal touch.Richard Heslin and Tari Apler, “Touch: A Bonding Gesture,” inNonverbal Interaction, eds. John M. Weimann and Randall Harrison (Longon: Sage, 1983), 47–76. At the functional- professional level, touch is related to a goal or part of a routine professional interaction, which makes it less threatening and more expected. For example, we let barbers, hairstylists, doctors, nurses, tattoo artists, and security screeners touch us in ways that would otherwise be seen as intimate or inappropriate if not in a professional context. At the social-polite level, socially sanctioned touching behaviors help initiate interactions and show that others are included and respected. A handshake, a pat on the arm, and a pat on the shoulder are examples of social-polite touching. A handshake is actually an abbreviated hand-holding gesture, but we know that prolonged hand-holding would be considered too intimate and therefore inappropriate at the functional-professional or social- polite level. At the functional-professional and social-polite levels, touch still has interpersonal implications. The touch, although professional and not intimate, between hair stylist and client, or between nurse and patient, has the potential to be therapeutic and comforting. In addition, a social-polite touch exchange plays into

initial impression formation, which can have important implications for how an interaction and a relationship unfold.

Of course, touch is also important at more intimate levels. At the friendship- warmth level, touch is more important and more ambiguous than at the social- polite level. At this level, touch interactions are important because they serve a relational maintenance purpose and communicate closeness, liking, care, and concern. The types of touching at this level also vary greatly from more formal and ritualized to more intimate, which means friends must sometimes negotiate their own comfort level with various types of touch and may encounter some ambiguity if their preferences don't match up with their relational partner's. In a friendship, for example, too much touch can signal sexual or romantic interest, and too little touch can signal distance or unfriendliness. At the love-intimacy level, touch is more personal and is typically only exchanged between significant others, such as best friends, close family members, and romantic partners. Touching faces, holding hands, and full frontal embraces are examples of touch at this level. Although this level of touch is not sexual, it does enhance feelings of closeness and intimacy and can lead to sexual-arousal touch, which is the most intimate form of touch, as it is intended to physically stimulate another person.

Touch is also used in many other contexts—for example, during play (e.g., arm wrestling), during physical conflict (e.g., slapping), and during conversations (e.g., to get someone's attention).Stanley E. Jones, "Communicating with Touch," in The Nonverbal Communication Reader: Classic and Contemporary Readings, 2nd ed., eds. Laura K. Guerrero, Joseph A. Devito, and Michael L. Hecht (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1999). We also inadvertently send messages through accidental touch (e.g., bumping into someone). One of my interpersonal communication professors admitted that she enjoyed going to restaurants to observe "first-date behavior" and boasted that she could predict whether or not there was going to be a second

date based on the couple's nonverbal communication. What sort of touching behaviors would indicate a good or bad first date?

During a first date or less formal initial interactions, quick fleeting touches give an indication of interest. For example, a pat on the back is an abbreviated hug.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and
Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 4. In general, the presence or absence of touching cues us into people's emotions. So as the daters sit across from each other, one person may lightly tap the other's arm after he or she said something funny. If the daters are sitting side by side, one person may cross his or her legs and lean toward the other person so that each person's knees or feet occasionally touch. Touching behavior as a way to express feelings is often reciprocal. A light touch from one dater will be followed by a light touch from the other to indicate that the first touch was OK. While verbal communication could also be used to indicate romantic interest, many people feel too vulnerable at this early stage in a relationship to put something out there in words. If your date advances a touch and you are not interested, it is also unlikely that you will come right out and say, "Sorry, but I'm not really interested." Instead, due to common politeness rituals, you would be more likely to respond with other forms of nonverbal communication like scooting back, crossing your arms, or simply not acknowledging the touch.

I find hugging behavior particularly interesting, perhaps because of my experiences growing up in a very hug-friendly environment in the Southern United States and then living elsewhere where there are different norms. A hug can be obligatory, meaning that you do it because you feel like you have to, not because you want to. Even though you may think that this type of hug doesn't communicate emotions, it definitely does. A limp, weak, or retreating hug may communicate anger, ambivalence, or annoyance. Think of other types of hugs and how you hug different people. Some types of hugs are the

crisscross hug, the neck-waist hug, and the engulfing hug. Kory Floyd, Communicating Affection: Interpersonal Behavior and Social Context (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 33–34. The crisscross hug is a rather typical hug where each person's arm is below or above the other person's arm. This hug is common among friends, romantic partners, and family members, and perhaps even coworkers. The neck-waist hug usually occurs in more intimate relationships as it involves one person's arms around the other's neck and the other person's arms around the other's waist. I think of this type of hug as the "slow-dance hug." The engulfing hug is similar to a bear hug in that one person completely wraps the arms around the other as that person basically stands there. This hugging behavior usually occurs when someone is very excited and hugs the other person without warning.

Some other types of hugs are the "shake-first-then-tap hug" and the "back-slap hug." I observe that these hugs are most often between men. The shake-first- then-tap hug involves a modified hand-shake where the hands are joined more with the thumb and fingers than the palm and the elbows are bent so that the shake occurs between the two huggers' chests. The hug comes after the shake has been initiated with one arm going around the other person for usually just one tap, then a step back and release of the handshake. In this hugging behavior, the handshake that is maintained between the chests minimizes physical closeness and the intimacy that may be interpreted from the crisscross or engulfing hug where the majority of the huggers' torsos are touching. This move away from physical closeness likely stems from a US norm that restricts men's physical expression of affection due to homophobia or the worry of being perceived as gay. The slap hug is also a less physically intimate hug and involves a hug with one or both people slapping the other person's back repeatedly, often while talking to each other. I've seen this type of hug go on for many seconds and with varying degrees of force involved in the slap. When the slap is more of a tap, it is actually an indication that one person

wants to let go. The video footage of then-president Bill Clinton hugging Monica Lewinsky that emerged as allegations that they had an affair were being investigated shows her holding on, while he was tapping from the beginning of the hug.

"Getting Critical"

Airport Pat-Downs: The Law, Privacy, and Touch

Everyone who has flown over the past ten years has experienced the steady increase in security screenings. Since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, airports around the world have had increased security. While passengers have long been subject to pat-downs if they set off the metal detector or arouse suspicion, recently foiled terrorist plots have made passenger screening more personal. The "shoe bomber" led to mandatory shoe removal and screening, and the more recent use of nonmetallic explosives hidden in clothing or in body cavities led to the use of body scanners that can see through clothing to check for concealed objects.Andrew R. Thomas, Soft Landing: Airline Industry Strategy, Service, and Safety (New York, NY: Apress, 2011), 117–23. Protests against and anxiety about the body scanners, more colloquially known as "naked x-ray machines," led to the new "enhanced pat-down" techniques for passengers who refuse to go through the scanners or passengers who are randomly selected or arouse suspicion in other ways. The strong reactions are expected given what we've learned about the power of touch as a form of nonverbal communication. The new pat-downs routinely involve touching the areas around a passenger's breasts and/or genitals with a sliding hand motion. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) notes that the areas being examined haven't changed, but the degree of the touch has, as screeners now press and rub more firmly but used to use a lighter touch.Derek Kravitz, "Airport 'Pat-Downs' Cause Growing Passenger Backlash," The Washington Post,

November 13, 2010, accessed June 23, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/12/AR2010111206580.html?sid=ST201011300538 5. Interestingly, police have long been able to use more invasive pat-downs, but only with probable cause. In the case of random selection at the airport, no probable cause provision has to be met, giving TSA agents more leeway with touch than police officers. Experts in aviation security differ in their assessment of the value of the pat-downs and other security procedures. Several experts have called for a revision of the random selection process in favor of more targeted screenings. What civil rights organizations critique as racial profiling, consumer rights activists and some security experts say allows more efficient use of resources and less inconvenience for the majority of passengers.Andrew R. Thomas, Soft Landing: Airline Industry Strategy, Service, and Safety (New York, NY: Apress, 2011), 120. Although the TSA has made some changes to security screening procedures and have announced more to come, some passengers have started a backlash of their own. There have been multiple cases of passengers stripping down to their underwear or getting completely naked to protest the pat-downs, while several other passengers have been charged with assault for “groping” TSA agents in retaliation. Footage of pat-downs of toddlers and grandmothers in wheelchairs and self-uploaded videos of people recounting their pat-down experiences have gone viral on YouTube.

1. What limits, if any, do you think there should be on the use of touch in airport screening procedures?
2. In June of 2012 a passenger was charged with battery after “groping” a TSA supervisor to, as she claims, demonstrate the treatment that she had received while being screened. You can read more about the story and see the video here:http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/carol-jean-

Saylor URL: http://www.saylor.org/books Saylor.org 258

price-accused-groping-tsa-agent-florida-woman-demonstrating- treatment-received- article-1.1098521. Do you think that her actions we justified? Why or why not?

3. Do you think that more targeted screening, as opposed to random screenings in which each person has an equal chance of being selected for enhanced pat-downs, is a good idea? Why? Do you think such targeted screening could be seen as a case of unethical racial profiling? Why or why not?

Vocalics

We learned earlier that paralanguage refers to the vocalized but nonverbal parts of a message.Vocalics is the study of paralanguage, which includes the vocal qualities that go along with verbal messages, such as pitch, volume, rate, vocal quality, and verbal fillers.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 69–70.

Pitch helps convey meaning, regulate conversational flow, and communicate the intensity of a message. Even babies recognize a sentence with a higher pitched ending as a question. We also learn that greetings have a rising emphasis and farewells have falling emphasis. Of course, no one ever tells us these things explicitly; we learn them through observation and practice. We do not pick up on some more subtle and/or complex patterns of paralanguage involving pitch until we are older. Children, for example, have a difficult time perceiving sarcasm, which is usually conveyed through paralinguistic characteristics like pitch and tone rather than the actual words being spoken. Adults with lower than average intelligence and children have difficulty

reading sarcasm in another person's voice and instead may interpret literally what they say.Peter A.

Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 26. Paralanguage provides important context for the verbal content of speech. For example, volume helps communicate intensity. A louder voice is usually thought of as more intense, although a soft voice combined with a certain tone and facial expression can be just as intense. We typically adjust our volume based on our setting, the distance between people, and the relationship. In our age of computer-mediated communication, TYPING IN ALL CAPS is usually seen as offensive, as it is equated with yelling. A voice at a low volume or a whisper can be very appropriate when sending a covert message or flirting with a romantic partner, but it wouldn't enhance a person's credibility if used during a professional presentation.

Speaking rate refers to how fast or slow a person speaks and can lead others to form impressions about our emotional state, credibility, and intelligence. As with volume, variations in speaking rate can interfere with the ability of others to receive and understand verbal messages. A slow speaker could bore others and lead their attention to wander. A fast speaker may be difficult to follow, and the fast delivery can actually distract from the message. Speaking a little faster than the normal 120–150 words a minute, however, can be beneficial, as people tend to find speakers whose rate is above average more credible and intelligent.David B. Buller and Judee K. Burgoon, "The Effects of Vocalics and Nonverbal Sensitivity on Compliance," Human Communication Research 13, no. 1 (1986): 126–44. When speaking at a faster-than-normal rate, it is important that a speaker also clearly articulate and pronounce his or her words. Boomhauer, a character on the show King of the Hill, is an example of a speaker whose fast rate of speech combines with a lack of articulation and pronunciation to create a stream of words that only he can understand. A higher rate of speech combined

with a pleasant tone of voice can also be beneficial for compliance gaining and can aid in persuasion.

Our tone of voice can be controlled somewhat with pitch, volume, and emphasis, but each voice has a distinct quality known as a vocal signature. Voices vary in terms of resonance, pitch, and tone, and some voices are more pleasing than others. People typically find pleasing voices that employ vocal variety and are not monotone, are lower pitched (particularly for males), and do not exhibit particular regional accents. Many people perceive nasal voices negatively and assign negative personality characteristics to them.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999),
71. Think about people who have very distinct voices. Whether they are a public figure like President Bill Clinton, a celebrity like Snooki from the Jersey Shore, or a fictional character like Peter Griffin from Family Guy, some people's voices stick with us and make a favorable or unfavorable impression.

Verbal fillers are sounds that fill gaps in our speech as we think about what to say next. They are considered a part of nonverbal communication because they are not like typical words that stand in for a specific meaning or meanings. Verbal fillers such as "um," "uh," "like," and "ah" are common in regular conversation and are not typically disruptive. As we learned earlier, the use of verbal fillers can help a person "keep the floor" during a conversation if they need to pause for a moment to think before continuing on with verbal communication. Verbal fillers in more formal settings, like a public speech, can hurt a speaker's credibility.

The following is a review of the various communicative functions of vocalics:

- Repetition. Vocalic cues reinforce other verbal and nonverbal cues (e.g., saying “I’m not sure” with an uncertain tone).
- Complementing. Vocalic cues elaborate on or modify verbal and nonverbal meaning (e.g., the pitch and volume used to say “I love sweet potatoes” would add context to the meaning of the sentence, such as the degree to which the person loves sweet potatoes or the use of sarcasm).Saylor URL: http://www.saylor.org/books
- Accenting. Vocalic cues allow us to emphasize particular parts of a message, which helps determine meaning (e.g., “She is my friend,” or “She is my friend,” or “She is my friend”).
- Substituting. Vocalic cues can take the place of other verbal or nonverbal cues (e.g., saying “uh huh” instead of “I am listening and understand what you’re saying”).
- Regulating. Vocalic cues help regulate the flow of conversations (e.g., falling pitch and slowing rate of speaking usually indicate the end of a speaking turn).
- Contradicting. Vocalic cues may contradict other verbal or nonverbal signals (e.g., a person could say “I’m fine” in a quick, short tone that indicates otherwise).ProxemicsProxemics refers to the study of how space and distance influence communication. We only need look at the ways in which space shows up in common metaphors to see that space, communication, and relationships are closely related. For example, when we are content with and attracted to someone, we say we are “close” to him or her. When we lose connection with someone, we may say he or she is “distant.” In general,

> space influences how people communicate and behave. Smaller spaces with a higher density of people often lead to breaches of our personal space bubbles. If this is a setting in which this type of density is expected beforehand, like at a crowded concert or on a train during rush hour, then we make various communicative adjustments to manage the space issue. Unexpected breaches of personal space can lead to negative reactions, especially if we feel someone has violated our space voluntarily, meaning that a crowding situation didn't force them into our space. Additionally, research has shown that crowding can lead to criminal or delinquent behavior, known as a "mob mentality."Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication:Saylor URL: http://www.saylor.org/books Saylor.org 262

Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 44. To better understand how proxemics functions in nonverbal communication, we will more closely examine the proxemic distances associated with personal space and the concept of territoriality.

Proxemic Distances

We all have varying definitions of what our "personal space" is, and these definitions are contextual and depend on the situation and the relationship. Although our bubbles are invisible, people are socialized into the norms of personal space within their cultural group. Scholars have identified four zones for US Americans, which are public, social, personal, and intimate distance.Edward T. Hall, "Proxemics,"Current Anthropology 9, no. 2 (1968): 83–95. The zones are more elliptical than circular, taking up more space in our front, where our line of sight is, than at our side or back where we can't monitor what people are doing. You can see how these zones relate to each other and to

the individual in Figure 4.1 “Proxemic Zones of Personal Space”. Even within a particular zone, interactions may differ depending on whether someone is in the outer or inner part of the zone.

Figure 4.1 Proxemic Zones of Personal Space

Public Space (12 Feet or More)

Public and social zones refer to the space four or more feet away from our body, and the communication that typically occurs in these zones is formal and not intimate. Public space starts about twelve feet from a person and extends out from there. This is the least personal of the four zones and would typically be used when a person is engaging in a formal speech and is removed from the audience to allow the audience to see or when a high-profile or powerful person like a celebrity or executive maintains such a distance as a sign of power or for safety and security reasons. In terms of regular interaction, we are often not obligated or expected to acknowledge or interact with people who enter our public zone. It would be difficult to have a deep conversation with someone at this level because you have to speak louder and don’t have the physical closeness that is often needed to promote emotional closeness and/or establish rapport.

Social Space (4–12 Feet)

Communication that occurs in the social zone, which is four to twelve feet away from our body, is typically in the context of a professional or casual interaction, but not intimate or public. This distance is preferred in many professional settings because it reduces the suspicion of any impropriety. The expression “keep someone at an arm’s length” means that someone is kept out of the personal space and kept in the social/professional space. If two people held up their arms and stood so just the tips of their fingers were touching, they would be around four feet away from

each other, which is perceived as a safe distance because the possibility for intentional or unintentional touching doesn't exist. It is also possible to have people in the outer portion of our social zone but not feel obligated to interact with them, but when people come much closer than six feet to us then we often feel obligated to at least acknowledge their presence. In many typically sized classrooms, much of your audience for a speech will actually be in your social zone rather than your public zone, which is actually beneficial because it helps you establish a better connection with them. Students in large lecture classes should consider sitting within the social zone of the professor, since students who sit within this zone are more likely to be remembered by the professor, be acknowledged in class, and retain more information because they are close enough to take in important nonverbal and visual cues. Students who talk to me after class typically stand about four to five feet away when they speak to me, which keeps them in the outer part of the social zone, typical for professional interactions. When students have more personal information to discuss, they will come closer, which brings them into the inner part of the social zone.

Personal Space (1.5–4 Feet)

Personal and intimate zones refer to the space that starts at our physical body and extends four feet. These zones are reserved for friends, close acquaintances, and significant others. Much of our communication occurs in the personal zone, which is what we typically think of as our "personal space bubble" and extends from 1.5 feet to 4 feet away from our body. Even though we are getting closer to the physical body of another person, we may use verbal communication at this point to signal that our presence in this zone is friendly and not intimate. Even people who know each other could be uncomfortable spending too much time in this zone unnecessarily. This zone is broken up into two subzones, which helps us negotiate close interactions with people we may not be close to interpersonally.Matthew McKay, Martha Davis, and Patrick Fanning, Messages: Communication

Skills Book, 2nd ed. (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 1995), 59. The outer-personal zone extends from 2.5 feet to 4 feet and is useful for conversations that need to be private but that occur between people who are not interpersonally close. This zone allows for relatively intimate communication but doesn't convey the intimacy that a closer distance would, which can be beneficial in professional settings. The inner-personal zone extends from 1.5 feet to 2.5 feet and is a space reserved for communication with people we are interpersonally close to or trying to get to know. In this subzone, we can easily touch the other person as we talk to them, briefly placing a hand on his or her arm or engaging in other light social touching that facilitates conversation, self-disclosure, and feelings of closeness.

Intimate Space

As we breach the invisible line that is 1.5 feet from our body, we enter the intimate zone, which is reserved for only the closest friends, family, and romantic/intimate partners. It is impossible to completely ignore people when they are in this space, even if we are trying to pretend that we're ignoring them. A breach of this space can be comforting in some contexts and annoying or frightening in others. We need regular human contact that isn't just verbal but also physical. We have already discussed the importance of touch in nonverbal communication, and in order for that much-needed touch to occur, people have to enter our intimate space. Being close to someone and feeling their physical presence can be very comforting when words fail. There are also social norms regarding the amount of this type of closeness that can be displayed in public, as some people get uncomfortable even seeing others interacting in the intimate zone. While some people are comfortable engaging in or watching others engage in PDAs (public displays of affection) others are not.

So what happens when our space is violated? Although these zones are well established in research for personal space

preferences of US Americans, individuals vary in terms of their reactions to people entering certain zones, and determining what constitutes a “violation” of space is subjective and contextual. For example, another person’s presence in our social or public zones doesn’t typically arouse suspicion or negative physical or communicative reactions, but it could in some situations or with certain people. However, many situations lead to our personal and intimate space being breached by others against our will, and these breaches are more likely to be upsetting, even when they are expected. We’ve all had to get into a crowded elevator or wait in a long line. In such situations, we may rely on some verbal communication to reduce immediacy and indicate that we are not interested in closeness and are aware that a breach has occurred. People make comments about the crowd, saying, “We’re really packed in here like sardines,” or use humor to indicate that they are pleasant and well adjusted and uncomfortable with the breach like any “normal” person would be. Interestingly, as we will learn in our discussion of territoriality, we do not often use verbal communication to defend our personal space during regular interactions. Instead, we rely on more nonverbal communication like moving, crossing our arms, or avoiding eye contact to deal with breaches of space.

Territoriality

Territoriality is an innate drive to take up and defend spaces. This drive is shared by many creatures and entities, ranging from packs of animals to individual humans to nations. Whether it’s a gang territory, a neighborhood claimed by a particular salesperson, your preferred place to sit in a restaurant, your usual desk in the classroom, or the seat you’ve marked to save while getting concessions at a sporting event, we claim certain spaces as our own. There are three main divisions for territory: primary, secondary, and public.Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 70–71. Sometimes our claim to a

space is official. These spaces are known as our primary territories because they are marked or understood to be exclusively ours and under our control. A person's house, yard, room, desk, side of the bed, or shelf in the medicine cabinet could be considered primary territories.

Secondary territories don't belong to us and aren't exclusively under our control, but they are associated with us, which may lead us to assume that the space will be open and available to us when we need it without us taking any further steps to reserve it. This happens in classrooms regularly. Students often sit in the same desk or at least same general area as they did on the first day of class. There may be some small adjustments during the first couple of weeks, but by a month into the semester, I don't notice students moving much voluntarily. When someone else takes a student's regular desk, she or he is typically annoyed. I do classroom observations for the graduate teaching assistants I supervise, which means I come into the classroom toward the middle of the semester and take a seat in the back to evaluate the class session. Although I don't intend to take someone's seat, on more than one occasion, I've been met by the confused or even glaring eyes of a student whose routine is suddenly interrupted when they see me sitting in "their seat."

Public territories are open to all people. People are allowed to mark public territory and use it for a limited period of time, but space is often up for grabs, which makes public space difficult to manage for some people and can lead to conflict. To avoid this type of situation, people use a variety of objects that are typically recognized by others as nonverbal cues that mark a place as temporarily reserved—for example, jackets, bags, papers, or a drink. There is some ambiguity in the use of markers, though. A half-empty cup of coffee may be seen as trash and thrown away, which would be an annoying surprise to a person who left it to mark his or her table while visiting the restroom. One scholar's informal observations revealed that a full drink sitting on a table could reserve a space in a university cafeteria for more than an

hour, but a cup only half full usually only worked as a marker of territory for less than ten minutes. People have to decide how much value they want their marker to have. Obviously, leaving a laptop on a table indicates that the table is occupied, but it could also lead to the laptop getting stolen. A pencil, on the other hand, could just be moved out of the way and the space usurped.

Chronemics

Chronemics refers to the study of how time affects communication. Time can be classified into several different categories, including biological, personal, physical, and cultural time.Peter A. Andersen,Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 65–66.Biological time refers to the rhythms of living things. Humans follow a circadian rhythm, meaning that we are on a daily cycle that influences when we eat, sleep, and wake. When our natural rhythms are disturbed, by all-nighters, jet lag, or other scheduling abnormalities, our physical and mental health and our communication competence and personal relationships can suffer. Keep biological time in mind as you communicate with others. Remember that early morning conversations and speeches may require more preparation to get yourself awake enough to communicate well and a more patient or energetic delivery to accommodate others who may still be getting warmed up for their day.

Personal time refers to the ways in which individuals experience time. The way we experience time varies based on our mood, our interest level, and other factors. Think about how quickly time passes when you are interested in and therefore engaged in something. I have taught fifty-minute classes that seemed to drag on forever and three-hour classes that zipped by. Individuals also vary based on whether or not they are future or past oriented. People with past-time orientations may want to reminisce about the past, reunite with old friends, and put

considerable time into preserving memories and keepsakes in scrapbooks and photo albums. People with future-time orientations may spend the same amount of time making career and personal plans, writing out to-do lists, or researching future vacations, potential retirement spots, or what book they're going to read next.

Physical time refers to the fixed cycles of days, years, and seasons. Physical time, especially seasons, can affect our mood and psychological states. Some people experience seasonal affective disorder that leads them to experience emotional distress and anxiety during the changes of seasons, primarily from warm and bright to dark and cold (summer to fall and winter).

Cultural time refers to how a large group of people view time. Polychronic people do not view time as a linear progression that needs to be divided into small units and scheduled in advance. Polychronic people keep more flexible schedules and may engage in several activities at once. Monochronic people tend to schedule their time more rigidly and do one thing at a time. A polychronic or monochronic orientation to time influences our social realities and how we interact with others.

Additionally, the way we use time depends in some ways on our status. For example, doctors can make their patients wait for extended periods of time, and executives and celebrities may run consistently behind schedule, making others wait for them. Promptness and the amount of time that is socially acceptable for lateness and waiting varies among individuals and contexts. Chronemics also covers the amount of time we spend talking. We've already learned that conversational turns and turn-taking patterns are influenced by social norms and help our conversations progress. We all know how annoying it can be when a person dominates a conversation or when we can't get a person to contribute anything.

Personal Presentation and Environment

Personal presentation involves two components: our physical characteristics and the artifacts with which we adorn and surround ourselves. Physical characteristics include body shape, height, weight, attractiveness, and other physical features of our bodies. We do not have as much control over how these nonverbal cues are encoded as we do with many other aspects of nonverbal communication. AsChapter 2 “Communication and Perception” noted, these characteristics play a large role in initial impression formation even though we know we “shouldn’t judge a book by its cover.” Although ideals of attractiveness vary among cultures and individuals, research consistently indicates that people who are deemed attractive based on physical characteristics have distinct advantages in many aspects of life. This fact, along with media images that project often unrealistic ideals of beauty, have contributed to booming health and beauty, dieting, gym, and plastic surgery industries. While there have been some controversial reality shows that seek to transform people’s physical characteristics, like Extreme Makeover, The Swan, and The Biggest Loser, the relative ease with which we can change the artifacts that send nonverbal cues about us has led to many more style and space makeover shows.

Have you ever tried to consciously change your “look?” I can distinctly remember two times in my life when I made pretty big changes in how I presented myself in terms of clothing and accessories. In high school, at the height of the “thrift store” craze, I started wearing clothes from the local thrift store daily. Of course, most of them were older clothes, so I was basically going for a “retro” look, which I thought really suited me at the time. Then in my junior year of college, as graduation finally seemed on the horizon and I felt myself entering a new stage of adulthood, I started wearing business-casual clothes to school every day, embracing the “dress for the job you want” philosophy. In both cases, these changes definitely impacted how others perceived me. Television programs like What Not to

Wear seek to show the power of wardrobe and personal style changes in how people communicate with others.

Aside from clothes, jewelry, visible body art, hairstyles, and other political, social, and cultural symbols send messages to others about who we are. In the United States, body piercings and tattoos have been shifting from subcultural to mainstream over the past few decades. The physical location, size, and number of tattoos and piercings play a large role in whether or not they are deemed appropriate for professional contexts, and many people with tattoos and/or piercings make conscious choices about when and where they display their body art. Hair also sends messages whether it is on our heads or our bodies. Men with short hair are generally judged to be more conservative than men with long hair, but men with shaved heads may be seen as aggressive. Whether a person has a part in their hair, a mohawk, faux-hawk, ponytail, curls, or bright pink hair also sends nonverbal signals to others.

Jewelry can also send messages with varying degrees of direct meaning. A ring on the “ring finger” of a person’s left hand typically indicates that they are married or in an otherwise committed relationship. A thumb ring or a right-hand ring on the “ring finger” doesn’t send such a direct message. People also adorn their clothes, body, or belongings with religious or cultural symbols, like a cross to indicate a person’s Christian faith or a rainbow flag to indicate that a person is gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, or an ally to one or more of those groups. People now wear various types of rubber bracelets, which have become a popular form of social cause marketing, to indicate that they identify with the “Livestrong” movement or support breast cancer awareness and research.

Last, the environment in which we interact affects our verbal and nonverbal communication. This is included because we can often manipulate the nonverbal environment similar to how we

would manipulate our gestures or tone of voice to suit our communicative needs. The books that we display on our coffee table, the magazines a doctor keeps in his or her waiting room, the placement of fresh flowers in a foyer, or a piece of mint chocolate on a hotel bed pillow all send particular messages and can easily be changed. The placement of objects and furniture in a physical space can help create a formal, distant, friendly, or intimate climate. In terms of formality, we can use nonverbal communication to convey dominance and status, which helps define and negotiate power and roles within relationships. Fancy cars and expensive watches can serve as symbols that distinguish a CEO from an entry-level employee. A room with soft lighting, a small fountain that creates ambient sounds of water flowing, and a comfy chair can help facilitate interactions between a therapist and a patient. In summary, whether we know it or not, our physical characteristics and the artifacts that surround us communicate much.

“Getting Plugged In”

Avatars

Avatars are computer-generated images that represent users in online environments or are created to interact with users in online and offline situations. Avatars can be created in the likeness of humans, animals, aliens, or other nonhuman creatures.Katrin Allmendinger, “Social Presence in Synchronous Virtual Learning Situations: The Role of Nonverbal Signals Displayed by Avatars,”Educational Psychology Review 22, no. 1 (2010):

42. Avatars vary in terms of functionality and technical sophistication and can include stationary pictures like buddy icons, cartoonish but humanlike animations like a Mii character on the Wii, or very humanlike animations designed to teach or assist people in virtual environments. More recently, 3-D holographic avatars have been put to work

helping travelers at airports in Paris and New York.Steve Strunksy, “New Airport Service Rep Is Stiff and Phony, but She’s Friendly,” NJ.COM, May 22, 2012, accessed June 28, 2012, http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2012/05/new_airport_service_rep_sti.html; Tecca, “New York City Airports Install New, Expensive Holograms to Help You Find Your Way,” Y! Tech: A Yahoo! News Blog, May 22, 2012, accessed June 28, 2012,http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/technology-blog/york-city-airports- install-expensive-holograms-help-way-024937526.html. Research has shown,though, that humanlike avatars influence people even when they are not sophisticated in terms of functionality and adaptability.Amy L. Baylor, “The Design of Motivational Agents and Avatars,” Educational Technology Research and Development59, no. 2 (2011): 291–300. Avatars are especially motivating and influential when they are similar to the observer or user but more closely represent the person’s ideal self. Appearance has been noted as one of the most important attributes of an avatar designed to influence or motivate. Attractiveness, coolness (in terms of clothing and hairstyle), and age were shown to be factors that increase or decrease the influence an avatar has over users.Amy L. Baylor, “The Design of Motivational Agents and Avatars,” Educational Technology Research and Development 59, no. 2 (2011): 291–300.

People also create their own avatars as self-representations in a variety of online environments ranging from online role-playing games like World of Warcraft and Second Life to some online learning management systems used by colleges and universities. Research shows that the line between reality and virtual reality can become blurry when it comes to avatar design and identification. This can become even more pronounced when we consider that some users, especially of online role-playing games, spend about twenty hours a week as their avatar.

Avatars do more than represent people in online worlds; they

also affect their behaviors offline. For example, one study found that people who watched an avatar that looked like them exercising and losing weight in an online environment exercised more and ate healthier in the real world.Jesse Fox and Jeremy M. Bailenson, "Virtual Self-Modeling: The Effects of Vicarious Reinforcement and Identification on Exercise Behaviors," Media Psychology 12, no. 1 (2009): 1–25. Seeing an older version of them online led participants to form a more concrete social and psychological connection with their future selves, which led them to invest more money in a retirement account. People's actions online also mirror the expectations for certain physical characteristics, even when the user doesn't exhibit those characteristics and didn't get to choose them for his or her avatar. For example, experimental research showed that people using more attractive avatars were more extroverted and friendly than those with less attractive avatars, which is also a nonverbal communication pattern that exists among real people. In summary, people have the ability to self- select physical characteristics and personal presentation for their avatars in a way that they can't in their real life. People come to see their avatars as part of themselves, which opens the possibility for avatars to affect users' online and offline communication.Changsoo Kim, Sang-Gun Lee, and Minchoel Kang, "I Became an Attractive Person in the Virtual World: Users' Identification with Virtual Communities and Avatars," Computers in Human Behavior, 28, no. 5 (2012): 1663–69

1. Describe an avatar that you have created for yourself. What led you to construct the avatar the way you did, and how do you think your choices reflect your typical nonverbal self-presentation? If you haven't ever constructed an avatar, what would you make your avatar look like and why?
2. In 2009, a man in Japan became the first human to marry an avatar (that we know of). Although he claims that his avatar is better than any human girlfriend, he

has been criticized as being out of touch with reality. You can read more about this human-avatar union through the followinglink: http://articles.cnn.com/2009-12- 16/world/japan.virtual.wedding_1_virtual-world-sal-marry?_s=PM:WORLD. Do you think the boundaries between human reality and avatar fantasy will continue to fade as we become a more technologically fused world? How do you feel about interacting more with avatars in customer service situations like the airport avatar mentioned above? What do you think about having avatars as mentors, role models, or teachers?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

• Kinesics refers to body movements and posture and includes the following components:

o Gestures are arm and hand movements and include adaptors like clicking a pen or scratching your face, emblems like a thumbs-up to say “OK,” and illustrators like bouncing your hand along with the rhythm of your speaking.

o Head movements and posture include the orientation of movements of our head and the orientation and positioning of our body and the various meanings they send. Head movements such as nodding can indicate agreement, disagreement, and interest, among other things. Posture can indicate assertiveness, defensiveness, interest, readiness, or intimidation, among other things.

o Eye contact is studied under the category of oculesics and specifically refers to eye contact with another person's face, head, and eyes and the patterns of looking away and back at the other person during interaction. Eye contact provides turn-taking signals, signals when we are engaged in cognitive activity, and helps establish rapport and connection, among other things.

o Facial expressions refer to the use of the forehead, brow, and facial muscles around the nose and mouth to convey meaning. Facial expressions can convey happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and other emotions.

• Haptics refers to touch behaviors that convey meaning during interactions. Touch operates at many levels, including functional-professional, social-polite, friendship-warmth, and love-intimacy.

- Vocalics refers to the vocalized but not verbal aspects of nonverbal communication, including our speaking rate, pitch, volume, tone of voice, and vocal quality. These qualities, also known as paralanguage, reinforce the meaning of verbal communication, allow us to emphasize particular parts of a message, or can contradict verbal messages.

- Proxemics refers to the use of space and distance within communication. US Americans, in general, have four zones that constitute our personal space: the public zone (12 or more feet from our body), social zone (4–12 feet from our body), the personal zone (1.5–4 feet from our body), and the intimate zone (from body contact to 1.5 feet away). Proxemics also studies territoriality, or how people take up and defend personal space.

- Chronemics refers the study of how time affects communication and includes how different time cycles affect our communication, including the differences between people who are past or future oriented and cultural perspectives on time as fixed and measured (monochronic) or fluid and adaptable (polychronic).
- Personal presentation and environment refers to how the objects we adorn ourselves and our surroundings with, referred to as artifacts, provide nonverbal cues that others make meaning from and how our physical environment—for example, the layout of a room and seating positions and arrangements—influences communication.

EXERCISES

- Provide some examples of how eye contact plays a role in your communication throughout the day.
- One of the key functions of vocalics is to add emphasis to our verbal messages to influence the meaning. Provide a meaning for each of the following statements based on which word is emphasized: “She is my friend.” “She is my friend.” “She is my friend.”
- Getting integrated: Many people do not think of time as an important part of our nonverbal communication. Provide an example of how

chronemics sends nonverbal messages in academic settings, professional settings, and personal settings.

4.3 Nonverbal Communication Competence

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify and employ strategies for improving competence with sending nonverbal messages.
- Identify and employ strategies for improving competence with interpreting nonverbal messages.

As we age, we internalize social and cultural norms related to sending (encoding) and interpreting (decoding) nonverbal communication. In terms of sending, the tendency of children to send unmonitored nonverbal signals reduces as we get older and begin to monitor and perhaps censor or mask them.Peter A.

Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 125. Likewise, as we become more experienced communicators we tend to think that we become better at interpreting nonverbal messages. In this section we will discuss some strategies for effectively encoding and decoding nonverbal messages. As we've already learned, we receive little, if any, official instruction in nonverbal

communication, but you can think of this chapter as a training manual to help improve your own nonverbal communication competence. As with all aspects of communication, improving your nonverbal communication takes commitment and continued effort. However, research shows that education and training in nonverbal communication can lead to quick gains in knowledge and skill.Ronald E. Riggio, “Social Interaction Skills and Nonverbal Behavior,” inApplications of Nonverbal Behavior Theories and Research, ed. Robert S. Feldman (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992), 23. Additionally, once the initial effort is put into improving your nonverbal encoding and decoding skills and those new skills are put into practice, people are encouraged by the positive reactions from others. Remember that people enjoy interacting with others who are skilled at nonverbal encoding and decoding, which will be evident in their reactions, providing further motivation and encouragement to hone your skills.

Guidelines for Sending Nonverbal Messages

As is stressed in Chapter 2 “Communication and Perception”, first impressions matter. Nonverbal cues account for much of the content from which we form initial impressions, so it’s important to know that people make judgments about our identities and skills after only brief exposure. Our competence regarding and awareness of nonverbal communication can help determine how an interaction will proceed and, in fact, whether it will take place at all. People who are skilled at encoding nonverbal messages are more favorably evaluated after initial encounters. This is likely due to the fact that people who are more nonverbally expressive are also more attention getting and engaging and make people feel more welcome and warm due to increased immediacy behaviors, all of which enhance perceptions of charisma.

Understand That Nonverbal Communication Is Multichannel

Be aware of the multichannel nature of nonverbal communication. We rarely send a nonverbal message in isolation. For example, a posture may be combined with a touch or eye behavior to create what is called a nonverbal cluster.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 21. Nonverbal congruencerefers to consistency among different nonverbal expressions within a cluster. Congruent nonverbal communication is more credible and effective than ambiguous or conflicting nonverbal cues. Even though you may intend for your nonverbal messages to be congruent, they could still be decoded in a way that doesn't match up with your intent, especially since nonverbal expressions vary in terms of their degree of conscious encoding. In this sense, the multichannel nature of nonverbal communication creates the potential of both increased credibility and increased ambiguity.

When we become more aware of the messages we are sending, we can monitor for nonverbal signals that are incongruent with other messages or may be perceived as such. If a student is talking to his professor about his performance in the class and concerns about his grade, the professor may lean forward and nod, encoding a combination of a body orientation and a head movement that conveys attention. If the professor, however, regularly breaks off eye contact and looks anxiously at her office door, then she is sending a message that could be perceived as disinterest, which is incongruent with the overall message of care and concern she probably wants to encode. Increasing our awareness of the multiple channels through which we send nonverbal cues can help us make our signals more congruent in the moment.

Understand That Nonverbal Communication Affects Our Interactions

Nonverbal communication affects our own and others' behaviors and communication. Changing our nonverbal signals can affect

our thoughts and emotions. Knowing this allows us to have more control over the trajectory of our communication, possibly allowing us to intervene in a negative cycle. For example, if you are waiting in line to get your driver's license renewed and the agents in front of you are moving slower than you'd like and the man in front of you doesn't have his materials organized and is asking unnecessary questions, you might start to exhibit nonverbal clusters that signal frustration. You might cross your arms, a closing-off gesture, and combine that with wrapping your fingers tightly around one bicep and occasionally squeezing, which is a self-touch adaptor that results from anxiety and stress. The longer you stand like that, the more frustrated and defensive you will become, because that nonverbal cluster reinforces and heightens your feelings. Increased awareness about these cycles can help you make conscious moves to change your nonverbal communication and, subsequently, your cognitive and emotional states.Matthew McKay, Martha Davis, and Patrick Fanning, Messages: Communication Skills Book, 2nd ed. (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 1995), 54.

As your nonverbal encoding competence increases, you can strategically manipulate your behaviors. During my years as a restaurant server I got pretty good at knowing what tables to engage with and "schmooze" a little more to get a better tip. Restaurant servers, bartenders, car salespeople, realtors, exotic dancers, and many others who work in a service or sales capacity know that part of "sealing the deal" is making people feel liked, valued, and important. The strategic use of nonverbal communication to convey these messages is largely accepted and expected in our society, and as customers or patrons, we often play along because it feels good in the moment to think that the other person actually cares about us. Using nonverbals that are intentionally deceptive and misleading can have negative consequences and cross the line into unethical communication.

As you get better at monitoring and controlling your nonverbal

behaviors and understanding how nonverbal cues affect our interaction, you may show more competence in multiple types of communication. For example, people who are more skilled at monitoring and controlling nonverbal displays of emotion report that they are more comfortable public speakers.Ronald E. Riggio, "Social Interaction Skills and Nonverbal Behavior," in Applications of Nonverbal Behavior Theories and Research, ed. Robert S. Feldman (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992), 12. Since speakers become more nervous when they think that audience members are able to detect their nervousness based on outwardly visible, mostly nonverbal cues, it is logical that confidence in one's ability to control those outwardly visible cues would result in a lessening of that common fear.

Understand How Nonverbal Communication Creates Rapport

Humans have evolved an innate urge to mirror each other's nonverbal behavior, and although we aren't often aware of it, this urge influences our behavior daily.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 251. Think, for example, about how people "fall into formation" when waiting in a line. Our nonverbal communication works to create an unspoken and subconscious cooperation, as people move and behave in similar ways. When one person leans to the left the next person in line may also lean to the left, and this shift in posture may continue all the way down the line to the end, until someone else makes another movement and the whole line shifts again. This phenomenon is known as mirroring, which refers to the often subconscious practice of using nonverbal cues in a way that match those of others around us. Mirroring sends implicit messages to others that say, "Look! I'm just like you." Mirroring evolved as an important social function in that it allowed early humans to more easily fit in with larger groups. Logically, early humans who were more successful at mirroring

were more likely to secure food, shelter, and security and therefore passed that genetic disposition on down the line to us.

Last summer, during a backyard game of “corn hole” with my family, my mom and sister were standing at the other board and kept whispering to each other and laughing at my dad and me. Corn hole, which is also called “bags,” involves throwing a cloth sack filled with corn toward another team’s board with the goal of getting it in the hole or on the board to score points. They later told us that they were amazed at how we stood, threw our bags, and shifted position between rounds in unison. Although my dad and I didn’t realize we were doing it, our subconscious mirroring was obviously noticeable to others. Mirroring is largely innate and subconscious, but we can more consciously use it and a variety of other nonverbal signals, like the immediacy behaviors we discussed earlier, to help create social bonds and mutual liking.

Understand How Nonverbal Communication Regulates Conversations

The ability to encode appropriate turn-taking signals can help ensure that we can hold the floor when needed in a conversation or work our way into a conversation smoothly, without inappropriately interrupting someone or otherwise being seen as rude. People with nonverbal encoding competence are typically more “in control” of conversations. This regulating function can be useful in initial encounters when we are trying to learn more about another person and in situations where status differentials are present or compliance gaining or dominance are goals. Although close friends, family, and relational partners can sometimes be an exception, interrupting is generally considered rude and should be avoided. Even though verbal communication is most often used to interrupt another person, interruptions are still studied as a part of chronemics because it interferes with another person’s talk time. Instead of interrupting, you can use nonverbal signals like leaning in, increasing your eye contact, or

using a brief gesture like subtly raising one hand or the index finger to signal to another person that you'd like to soon take the floor.

Understand How Nonverbal Communication Relates to Listening

Part of being a good listener involves nonverbal-encoding competence, as nonverbal feedback in the form of head nods, eye contact, and posture can signal that a listener is paying attention and the speaker's message is received and understood. Active listening, for example, combines good cognitive listening practices with outwardly visible cues that signal to others that we are listening. We will learn more about active listening in Chapter 5 "Listening", but we all know from experience which nonverbal signals convey attentiveness and which convey a lack of attentiveness. Listeners are expected to make more eye contact with the speaker than the speaker makes with them, so it's important to "listen with your eyes" by maintaining eye contact, which signals attentiveness. Listeners should also avoid distracting movements in the form of self, other, and object adaptors. Being a higher self-monitor can help you catch nonverbal signals that might signal that you aren't listening, at which point you could consciously switch to more active listening signals.

Understand How Nonverbal Communication Relates to Impression Management

The nonverbal messages we encode also help us express our identities and play into impression management, which as we learned in Chapter 1 "Introduction to Communication Studies" is a key part of communicating to achieve identity goals. Being able to control nonverbal expressions and competently encode them allows us to better manage our persona and project a desired self to others—for example, a self that is perceived as competent, socially attractive, and engaging. Being nonverbally

expressive during initial interactions usually leads to more favorable impressions. So smiling, keeping an attentive posture, and offering a solid handshake help communicate confidence and enthusiasm that can be useful on a first date, during a job interview, when visiting family for the holidays, or when running into an acquaintance at the grocery store. Nonverbal communication can also impact the impressions you make as a student. Research has also found that students who are more nonverbally expressive are liked more by their teachers and are more likely to have their requests met by their teachers.Timothy P. Mottet, Steven A. Beebe, Paul C. Raffeld, and Michelle L. Paulsel, "The Effects of Student Verbal and Nonverbal Responsiveness on Teachers' Liking of Students and Willingness to Comply with Student Requests,"Communication Quarterly 52, no. 1 (2004): 27–38.

Increase Competence in Specific Channels of Nonverbal Communication

While it is important to recognize that we send nonverbal signals through multiple channels simultaneously, we can also increase our nonverbal communication competence by becoming more aware of how it operates in specific channels. Although no one can truly offer you a rulebook on how to effectively send every type of nonverbal signal, there are several nonverbal guidebooks that are written from more anecdotal and less academic perspectives. While these books vary tremendously in terms of their credibility and quality, some, like Allan Pease and Barbara Pease's The Definitive Book of Body Language, are informative and interesting to read.

Kinesics

The following guidelines may help you more effectively encode nonverbal messages sent using your hands, arms, body, and face.

Gestures

• Illustrators make our verbal communication more engaging. I recommend that people doing phone interviews or speaking on the radio make an effort to gesture as they speak, even though people can't see the gestures, because it will make their words sound more engaging.

- Remember that adaptors can hurt your credibility in more formal or serious interactions. Figure out what your common adaptors are and monitor them so you can avoid creating unfavorable impressions.
- Gestures send messages about your emotional state. Since many gestures are spontaneous or subconscious, it is important to raise your awareness of them and monitor them. Be aware that clenched hands may signal aggression or anger, nail biting or fidgeting may signal nervousness, and finger tapping may signal boredom.

Eye Contact

- Eye contact is useful for initiating and regulating conversations. To make sure someone is available for interaction and to avoid being perceived as rude, it is usually a good idea to "catch their eye" before you start talking to them.
- Avoiding eye contact or shifting your eye contact from place to place can lead others to think you are being deceptive or inattentive. Minimize distractions by moving a clock, closing a door, or closing window blinds to help minimize distractions that may lure your eye contact away.

- Although avoiding eye contact can be perceived as sign of disinterest, low confidence, or negative emotionality, eye contact avoidance can be used positively as a face-saving strategy. The notion ofcivil inattention refers to a social norm that leads us to avoid making eye contact with people in situations that deviate from expected social norms, such as witnessing someone fall or being in close proximity to a stranger expressing negative emotions (like crying). We also use civil inattention when we avoid making eye contact with others in crowded spaces.Erving Goffman, Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 322–31.

Facial Expressions

• You can use facial expressions to manage your expressions of emotions to intensify what you're feeling, to diminish what you're feeling, to cover up what you're feeling, to express a different emotion than you're feeling, or to simulate an emotion that you're not feeling.Sandra Metts and Sally Planlap, "Emotional Communication," in Handbook of Interpersonal Communication, 3rd ed., eds. Mark L. Knapp and Kerry J. Daly (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002): 339–73.

- Be aware of the power of emotional contagion, or the spread of emotion from one person to another. Since facial expressions are key for emotional communication, you may be able to strategically use your facial expressions to cheer someone up, lighten a mood, or create a more serious and somber tone.
- Smiles are especially powerful as an immediacy behavior and a rapport- building tool. Smiles can also help to disarm a potentially hostile person or deescalate conflict. When I

have a problem or complain in a customer service situation, I always make sure to smile at the clerk, manager, or other person before I begin talking to help minimize my own annoyance and set a more positive tone for the interaction.HapticsThe following guidelines may help you more effectively encode nonverbal signals using touch:

- Remember that culture, status, gender, age, and setting influence how we send and interpret touch messages.
- In professional and social settings, it is generally OK to touch others on the arm or shoulder. Although we touch others on the arm or shoulder with our hand, it is often too intimate to touch your hand to another person's hand in a professional or social/casual setting.These are types of touch to avoid:Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions(Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 49.
- Avoid touching strangers unless being introduced or offering assistance.
- Avoid hurtful touches and apologize if they occur, even if accidentally.
- Avoid startling/surprising another person with your touch.
- Avoid interrupting touches such as hugging someone while they aretalking to someone else.
- Avoid moving people out of the way with only touch—pair your touch witha verbal message like "excuse me."
- Avoid overly aggressive touch, especially when disguised as playful touch(e.g., horseplay taken too far).
- Avoid combining touch with negative criticism; a hand on the shoulderduring a critical statement can increase a

person's defensiveness and seem condescending or aggressive.VocalicsThe following guidelines may help you more effectively encode nonverbal signals using paralanguage.

- Verbal fillers are often used subconsciously and can negatively affect your credibility and reduce the clarity of your message when speaking in more formal situations. In fact, verbal fluency is one of the strongest predictors of persuasiveness.Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2011),81. Becoming a higher self-monitor can help you notice your use of verbal fillers and begin to eliminate them. Beginner speakers can often reduce their use of verbal fillers noticeably over just a short period of time.
- Vocal variety increases listener and speaker engagement, understanding, information recall, and motivation. So having a more expressive voice that varies appropriately in terms of rate, pitch, and volume can help youSaylor URL: http://www.saylor.org/books Saylor.org 288 achieve communication goals related to maintaining attention, effectively conveying information, and getting others to act in a particular way.

Proxemics

The following may help you more effectively encode nonverbal signals related to interpersonal distances.

- When breaches of personal space occur, it is a social norm to make nonverbal adjustments such as lowering our level of immediacy, changing our body orientations, and using objects to separate ourselves from others. To reduce immediacy, we engage in civil inattention and reduce the amount of eye contact we make with others. We also shift the front of our body away from others since it has most of our sensory inputs and also allows access to body parts that are considered vulnerable, such as the stomach, face, and genitals.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 45. When we can't shift our bodies, we often use coats, bags, books, or our hands to physically separate or block off the front of our bodies from others.
- Although pets and children are often granted more leeway to breach other people's space, since they are still learning social norms and rules, as a pet owner, parent, or temporary caretaker, be aware of this possibility and try to prevent such breaches or correct them when they occur.

Chronemics

The following guideline may help you more effectively encode nonverbal signals related to time.

- In terms of talk time and turn taking, research shows that people who take a little longer with their turn, holding the floor slightly longer than normal, are actually seen as more credible than people who talk too much or too little.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 64.

- Our lateness or promptness can send messages about our professionalism, dependability, or other personality traits. Formal time usually applies to professional situations in which we are expected to be on time or even a few minutes early. You generally wouldn't want to be late for work, a job interview, a medical appointment, and so on. Informal time applies to casual and interpersonal situations in which there is much more variation in terms of expectations for promptness. For example, when I lived in a large city, people often arrived to dinner parties or other social gatherings about thirty minutes after the announced time, given the possibility of interference by heavy traffic or people's hectic schedules. Now that I live in a smaller town in the Midwest, I've learned that people are expected to arrive at or close to the announced time. For most social meetings with one other person or a small group, you can be five minutes late without having to offer much of an apology or explanation. For larger social gatherings you can usually be fifteen minutes late as long as your late arrival doesn't interfere with the host's plans or preparations.
- Quality time is an important part of interpersonal relationships, and sometimes time has to be budgeted so that it can be saved and spent with certain people or on certain occasions—like date nights for couples or family time for parents and children or other relatives.

Personal Presentation and Environment

The following guidelines may help you more effectively encode nonverbal signals related to personal presentation and environment.

- Recognize that personal presentation carries much weight in terms of initial impressions, so meeting the expectations and social norms for dress, grooming, and other artifactual communication is especially important for impression management.
- Recognize that some environments facilitate communication and some do not. A traditional front-facing business or educational setup is designed for one person to communicate with a larger audience. People in the audience cannot as easily interact with each other because they can't see each other face-to-face without turning. A horseshoe or circular arrangement allows everyone to make eye contact and facilitates interaction. Even close proximity doesn't necessarily facilitate interaction. For example, a comfortable sofa may bring four people together, but eye contact among all four is nearly impossible if they're all facing the same direction.
- Where you choose to sit can also impact perceived characteristics and leadership decisions. People who sit at the head or center of a table are often chosen to be leaders by others because of their nonverbal accessibility —a decision which may have more to do with where the person chose to sit than the person's perceived or actual leadership abilities. Research has found that juries often select their foreperson based on where he or she happens to sit.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 57–58. Keep this in mind the next time you take your seat at a meeting.

Guidelines for Interpreting Nonverbal Messages

We learn to decode or interpret nonverbal messages through practice and by internalizing social norms. Following the suggestions to become a better encoder of nonverbal communication will lead to better decoding competence through increased awareness. Since nonverbal communication is more ambiguous than verbal communication, we have to learn to interpret these cues as clusters within contexts. My favorite way to increase my knowledge about nonverbal communication is to engage in people watching. Just by consciously taking in the variety of nonverbal signals around us, we can build our awareness and occasionally be entertained. Skilled decoders of nonverbal messages are said to have nonverbal sensitivity, which, very similarly to skilled encoders, leads them to have larger social networks, be more popular, and exhibit less social anxiety.Ronald E. Riggio, "Social Interaction Skills and Nonverbal Behavior," in Applications of Nonverbal Behavior Theories and Research, ed. Robert S. Feldman (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992), 15.

There Is No Nonverbal Dictionary

The first guideline for decoding nonverbal communication is to realize that there is no nonverbal dictionary. Some nonverbal scholars and many nonverbal skill trainers have tried to catalog nonverbal communication like we do verbal communication to create dictionary-like guides that people can use to interpret nonverbal signals. Although those guides may contain many valid "rules" of nonverbal communication, those rules are always relative to the individual, social, and cultural contexts in which an interaction takes place. In short, you can't read people's nonverbal communication like a book, and there are no A-to- Z guides that capture the complexity of nonverbal communication.Peter J. DePaulo, "Applications of Nonverbal Behavior Research in Marketing and Management," Applications of Nonverbal Behavior Theories and Research, ed. Robert S. Feldman (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992), 64. Rather than using a list of specific rules, I suggest people develop more

general tools that will be useful in and adaptable to a variety of contexts.

Recognize That Certain Nonverbal Signals Are Related

The second guideline for decoding nonverbal signals is to recognize that certain nonverbal signals are related. Nonverbal rulebooks aren't effective because they typically view a nonverbal signal in isolation, similar to how dictionaries separately list denotative definitions of words. To get a more nuanced understanding of the meaning behind nonverbal cues, we can look at them as progressive or layered. For example, people engaging in negative critical evaluation of a speaker may cross their legs, cross one arm over their stomach, and put the other arm up so the index finger is resting close to the eye while the chin rests on the thumb.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 22. A person wouldn't likely perform all those signals simultaneously. Instead, he or she would likely start with one and then layer more cues on as the feelings intensified. If we notice that a person is starting to build related signals like the ones above onto one another, we might be able to intervene in the negative reaction that is building. Of course, as nonverbal cues are layered on, they may contradict other signals, in which case we can turn to context clues to aid our interpretation.

Read Nonverbal Cues in Context

We will learn more specifics about nonverbal communication in relational, professional, and cultural contexts in Section 4.1 "Principles and Functions of Nonverbal Communication", but we can also gain insight into how to interpret nonverbal cues through personal contexts. People have idiosyncratic nonverbal behaviors, which create an individual context that varies with each person. Even though we generally fit into certain social and cultural patterns, some people deviate from those norms. For example, some cultures tend toward less touching and greater

interpersonal distances during interactions. The United States falls into this general category, but there are people who were socialized into these norms who as individuals deviate from them and touch more and stand closer to others while conversing. As the idiosyncratic communicator inches toward his or her conversational partner, the partner may inch back to reestablish the interpersonal distance norm. Such deviations may lead people to misinterpret sexual or romantic interest or feel uncomfortable. While these actions could indicate such interest, they could also be idiosyncratic. As this example shows, these individual differences can increase the ambiguity of nonverbal communication, but when observed over a period of time, they can actually help us generate meaning. Try to compare observed nonverbal cues to a person's typical or baseline nonverbal behavior to help avoid misinterpretation. In some instances it is impossible to know what sorts of individual nonverbal behaviors or idiosyncrasies people have because there isn't a relational history. In such cases, we have to turn to our knowledge about specific types of nonverbal communication or draw from more general contextual knowledge.

Interpreting Cues within Specific Channels

When nonverbal cues are ambiguous or contextual clues aren't useful in interpreting nonverbal clusters, we may have to look at nonverbal behaviors within specific channels. Keep in mind that the following tips aren't hard and fast rules and are usually more meaningful when adapted according to a specific person or context. In addition, many of the suggestions in the section on encoding competence can be adapted usefully to decoding.

Kinesics

GesturesAllan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004).

- While it doesn't always mean a person is being honest, displaying palms is largely unconsciously encoded and decoded as a sign of openness and truthfulness. Conversely, crossing your arms in front of your chest is decoded almost everywhere as a negative gesture that conveys defensiveness.
- We typically decode people putting their hands in their pocket as a gesturethat indicates shyness or discomfort. Men often subconsciously put their hands in their pockets when they don't want to participate in a conversation. But displaying the thumb or thumbs while the rest of the hand is in the pocket is a signal of a dominant or authoritative attitude.
- Nervous communicators may have distracting mannerisms in the form of adaptors that you will likely need to tune out in order to focus more on other verbal and nonverbal cues.Head Movements and Posture
- The head leaning over and being supported by a hand can typically be decoded as a sign of boredom, the thumb supporting the chin and the index finger touching the head close to the temple or eye as a sign of negative evaluative thoughts, and the chin stroke as a sign that a person is going through a decision-making process.Allan Pease and BarbaraPease, The Definitive Book of Body Language(New York, NY: Bantam,2004), 155–59.
- In terms of seated posture, leaning back is usually decoded as a sign ofinformality and indifference, straddling a chair as a sign of dominance (but also some insecurity because the person is protecting the vulnerable front part

of his or her body), and leaning forward as a signal of interest and attentiveness.

Eye Contact

- When someone is avoiding eye contact, don't immediately assume they are not listening or are hiding something, especially if you are conveying complex or surprising information. Since looking away also signals cognitive activity, they may be processing information, and you may need to pause and ask if they need a second to think or if they need you to repeat or explain anything more.
- A "sideways glance," which entails keeping the head and face pointed straight ahead while focusing the eyes to the left or right, has multiple contradictory meanings ranging from interest, to uncertainty, to hostility. When the sideways glance is paired with a slightly raised eyebrow or smile, it is sign of interest. When combined with a furrowed brow it generally conveys uncertainty. But add a frown to that mix and it can signal hostility.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 179.

Facial Expressions

- Be aware of discrepancies between facial expressions and other nonverbal gestures and verbal communication. Since facial expressions are often subconscious, they may be an indicator of incongruency within a speaker's message, and you may need to follow up with questions or consider contextual clues to increase your understanding.

Haptics

- Consider the status and power dynamics involved in a touch. In general, people who have or feel they have more social power in a situation typically engage in more touching behaviors with those with less social power. So you may decode a touch from a supervisor differently from the touch of an acquaintance.

Vocalics

- People often decode personality traits from a person's vocal quality. In general, a person's vocal signature is a result of the physiology of his or her neck, head, and mouth. Therefore a nasal voice or a deep voice may not have any relevant meaning within an interaction. Try not to focus on something you find unpleasant or pleasant about someone's voice; focus on the content rather than the vocal quality.

Proxemics

- The size of a person's "territory" often speaks to that person's status. At universities, deans may have suites, department chairs may have large offices with multiple sitting areas, lower-ranked professors may have "cozier" offices stuffed with books and file cabinets, and adjunct instructors may have a shared office or desk or no office space at all.
- Since infringements on others' territory can arouse angry reactions and even lead to violence (think of the countless stories of neighbors fighting over a fence or tree), be sensitive to territorial markers. In secondary and public territories, look for informal markers such as drinks, books,

or jackets and be respectful of them when possible.Personal Presentation and Environment

- Be aware of the physical attractiveness bias, which leads people to sometimes mistakenly equate attractiveness with goodness.Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 75. A person's attractive or unattractive physical presentation can lead to irrelevant decoding that is distracting from other more meaningful nonverbal cues.

Detecting Deception

Although people rely on nonverbal communication more than verbal to determine whether or not a person is being deceptive, there is no set profile of deceptive behaviors that you can use to create your own nonverbally based lie detector. Research finds that people generally perceive themselves as good detectors of deception, but when tested people only accurately detect deception at levels a little higher than what we would by random chance. Given that deception is so widespread and common, it is estimated that we actually only detect about half the lies that we are told, meaning we all operate on false information without even being aware of it. Although this may be disappointing to those of you reading who like to think of yourselves as human lie detectors, there are some forces working against our deception detecting abilities. One such force is
the truth bias, which leads us to believe that a person is telling the truth, especially if we know and like that person. Conversely, people who have interpersonal trust issues and people in occupations like law enforcement may also have a lie bias, meaning they assume people are lying to them more often than not.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 293.

It is believed that deceptive nonverbal behaviors result from

nonverbal leakage, which refers to nonverbal behaviors that occur as we try to control the cognitive and physical changes that happen during states of cognitive and physical arousal.Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 52. Anxiety is a form of arousal that leads to bodily reactions like those we experience when we perceive danger or become excited for some other reason. Some of these reactions are visible, such as increased movements, and some are audible, such as changes in voice pitch, volume, or rate. Other reactions, such as changes in the electrical conductivity of the skin, increased breathing, and increased heart rate, are not always detectable. Polygraph machines, or lie detectors, work on the principle that the presence of signs of arousal is a reliable indicator of deception in situations where other factors that would also evoke such signals are absent.

So the nonverbal behaviors that we associate with deception don't actually stem from the deception but the attempts to control the leakage that results from the cognitive and physiological changes. These signals appear and increase because we are conflicted about the act of deception, since we are conditioned to believe that being honest is better than lying, we are afraid of getting caught and punished, and we are motivated to succeed with the act of deception—in essence, to get away with it. Leakage also occurs because of the increased cognitive demands associated with deception. Our cognitive activity increases when we have to decide whether to engage in deception or not, which often involves some internal debate. If we decide to engage in deception, we then have to compose a fabrication or execute some other manipulation strategy that we think is believable. To make things more complicated, we usually tailor our manipulation strategy to the person to whom we are speaking. In short, lying isn't easy, as it requires us to go against social norms and deviate from our comfortable and familiar communication scripts that we rely on for so much of our interaction. Of course, skilled and experienced deceivers

develop new scripts that can also become familiar and comfortable and allow them to engage in deception without arousing as much anxiety or triggering the physical reactions to it.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 288.

There are certain nonverbal cues that have been associated with deception, but the problem is that these cues are also associated with other behaviors, which could lead you to assume someone is being deceptive when they are actually nervous, guilty, or excited. In general, people who are more expressive are better deceivers and people who are typically anxious are not good liars. Also, people who are better self-monitors are better deceivers, because they are aware of verbal and nonverbal signals that may "give them away" and may be better able to control or account for them. Research also shows that people get better at lying as they get older, because they learn more about the intricacies of communication signals and they also get more time to practice.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 281. Studies have found that actors, politicians, lawyers, and salespeople are also better liars, because they are generally higher self-monitors and have learned how to suppress internal feelings and monitor their external behaviors.

"Getting Competent"

Deception and Communication Competence

The research on deception and nonverbal communication indicates that heightened arousal and increased cognitive demands contribute to the presence of nonverbal behaviors that can be associated with deception. Remember, however, that these nonverbal behaviors are not solely related to deception and also manifest as a result of other emotional or

cognitive states. Additionally, when people are falsely accused of deception, the signs that they exhibit as a result of the stress of being falsely accused are very similar to the signals exhibited by people who are actually engaging in deception.

There are common misconceptions about what behaviors are associated with deception. Behaviors mistakenly linked to deception include longer response times, slower speech rates, decreased eye contact, increased body movements, excessive swallowing, and less smiling. None of these have consistently been associated with deception.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 296. As we've learned, people also tend to give more weight to nonverbal than verbal cues when evaluating the truthfulness of a person or her or his message. This predisposition can lead us to focus on nonverbal cues while overlooking verbal signals of deception. A large study found that people were better able to detect deception by sound alone than they were when exposed to both auditory and visual cues.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 297. Aside from nonverbal cues, also listen for inconsistencies in or contradictions between statements, which can also be used to tell when others are being deceptive. The following are some nonverbal signals that have been associated with deception in research studies, but be cautious about viewing these as absolutes since individual and contextual differences should also be considered.

Gestures. One of the most powerful associations between nonverbal behaviors and deception is the presence of adaptors. Self-touches like wringing hands and object-adaptors like playing with a pencil or messing with clothing have been shown to correlate to deception. Some highly experienced deceivers, however, can control the presence of adaptors.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication:

Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 284.

Eye contact. Deceivers tend to use more eye contact when lying to friends, perhaps to try to increase feelings of immediacy or warmth, and less eye contact when lying to strangers. A review of many studies of deception indicates that increased eye blinking is associated with deception, probably because of heightened arousal and cognitive activity.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 282–83.

Facial expressions. People can intentionally use facial expressions to try to deceive, and there are five primary ways that this may occur. People may show feelings that they do not actually have, show a higher intensity of feelings than they actually have, try to show no feelings, try to show less feeling than they actually have, or mask one feeling with another.

Vocalics. One of the most common nonverbal signs of deception is speech errors. As you'll recall, verbal fillers and other speech disfluencies are studied as part of vocalics; examples include false starts, stutters, and fillers. Studies also show that an increase in verbal pitch is associated with deception and is likely caused by heightened arousal and tension.

Chronemics. Speech turns are often thought to correspond to deception, but there is no consensus among researchers as to the exact relationship. Most studies reveal that deceivers talk less, especially in response to direct questions.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 283.

1. Studies show that people engage in deception much more than they care to admit. Do you consider yourself a good deceiver? Why or why not? Which, if any, of the

nonverbal cues discussed do you think help you deceive others or give you away?

2. For each of the following scenarios, note (1) what behaviors may indicate deception, (2) alternative explanations for the behaviors (aside from deception), and (3) questions you could ask to get more information before making a judgment.

Scenario 1. A politician is questioned by a reporter about allegations that she used taxpayer money to fund personal vacations. She looks straight at the reporter, crosses one leg over the other, and says, "I've worked for the people of this community for ten years and no one has ever questioned my ethics until now." As she speaks, she points her index finger at the politician and uses a stern and clear tone of voice.

Scenario 2. You ask your roommate if you can borrow his car to go pick up a friend from the train station about ten miles away. He says, "Um, well...I had already made plans to go to dinner with Cal and he drove last time so it's kind of my turn to drive this time. I mean, is there someone else you could ask or someone else who could get her? You know I don't mind sharing things with you, and I would totally let you, you know, if I didn't have this thing to do. Sorry." As he says, "Sorry," he raises both of his hands, with his palms facing toward you, and shrugs.

Scenario 3. A professor asks a student to explain why he didn't cite sources for several passages in his paper that came from various websites. The student scratches his head and says, "What do you mean? Those were my ideas. I did look at several websites, but I didn't directly quote anything so I didn't think I needed to put the citations in parentheses." As he says this, he rubs the back of his neck and then scratches his face and only makes minimal eye contact with the professor.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- To improve your competence encoding nonverbal messages, increase your awareness of the messages you are sending and receiving and the contexts in which your communication is taking place. Since nonverbal communication is multichannel, it is important to be aware that nonverbal cues can complement, enhance, or contradict each other. Also realize that the norms and expectations for sending nonverbal messages, especially touch and personal space, vary widely between relational and professional contexts.
- To improve your competence decoding nonverbal messages, look for multiple nonverbal cues, avoid putting too much weight on any one cue, and evaluate nonverbal messages in relation to the context and your previous experiences with the other person. Although we put more weight on nonverbal communication than verbal when trying to detect deception, there is no set guide that can allow us to tell whether or not another person is being deceptive.

EXERCISES

- Getting integrated: As was indicated earlier, research shows that instruction in nonverbal communication can lead people to make gains in their nonverbal communication competence. List some nonverbal skills that you think are important in each of the following contexts: academic, professional, personal, and civic.
- Using concepts from this section, analyze your own nonverbal encoding competence. What are your strengths and weaknesses? Do the same for your nonverbal decoding competence
- To understand how chronemics relates to nonverbal communication norms, answer the following questions: In what situations is it important to be early? In what situations can you arrive late? How long would you wait on someone you were meeting for a group project for a class? A date? A job interview?

4.4 Nonverbal Communication in Context

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Discuss the role of nonverbal communication in relational contexts.
- Discuss the role of nonverbal communication in professional contexts.
- Provide examples of cultural differences in nonverbal communication.

- Provide examples of gender differences in nonverbal communication.

Nonverbal communication receives less attention than verbal communication as a part of our everyday lives. Learning more about nonverbal communication and becoming more aware of our own and others' use of nonverbal cues can help us be better relational partners and better professionals. In addition, learning about cultural differences in nonverbal communication is important for people traveling abroad but also due to our increasingly multinational business world and the expanding diversity and increased frequency of intercultural communication within our own borders.

Nonverbal Communication in Relational Contexts

A central, if not primary, function of nonverbal communication is the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Further, people who are skilled at encoding nonverbal messages have various interpersonal advantages, including being more popular, having larger social networks consisting of both acquaintances and close friends, and being less likely to be lonely or socially anxious.Ronald E. Riggio, "Social Interaction Skills and Nonverbal Behavior," in Applications of Nonverbal Behavior Theories and Research, ed. Robert S. Feldman (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992), 15.

Nonverbal communication increases our expressivity, and people generally find attractive and want to pay more attention to things that are expressive. This increases our chances of initiating interpersonal relationships. Relationships then form as a result of some initial exchanges of verbal and nonverbal information through mutual self-disclosure. As the depth of self-

disclosure increases, messages become more meaningful if they are accompanied by congruent nonverbal cues. Impressions formed at this stage of interaction help determine whether or not a relationship will progress. As relationships progress from basic information exchange and the establishment of early interpersonal bonds to more substantial emotional connections, nonverbal communication plays a more central role. As we've learned, nonverbal communication conveys much emotional meaning, so the ability to effectively encode and decode appropriate nonverbal messages sent through facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and touch leads to high-quality interactions that are rewarding for the communicators involved.

Nonverbal communication helps maintain relationships once they have moved beyond the initial stages by helping us communicate emotions and seek and provide social and emotional support. In terms of communicating emotions, competent communicators know when it is appropriate to express emotions and when more self-regulation is needed. They also know how to adjust their emotional expressions to fit various contexts and individuals, which is useful in preventing emotional imbalances within a relationship. Emotional imbalances occur when one relational partner expresses too much emotion in a way that becomes a burden for the other person. Ideally, each person in a relationship is able to express his or her emotions in a way that isn't too taxing for the other person. Occasionally, one relational partner may be going through an extended period of emotional distress, which can become very difficult for other people in his or her life. Since people with nonverbal communication competence are already more likely to have larger social support networks, it is likely that they will be able to spread around their emotional communication, specifically related to negative emotions, in ways that do not burden others. Unfortunately, since people with less nonverbal skill are likely to have smaller social networks, they may end up targeting one or two people for their emotional

communication, which could lead the other people to withdraw from the relationship.

Expressing the need for support is also an important part of relational maintenance. People who lack nonverbal encoding skills may send unclear or subtle cues requesting support that are not picked up on by others, which can lead to increased feelings of loneliness. Skilled encoders of nonverbal messages, on the other hand, are able to appropriately communicate the need for support in recognizable ways. As relationships progress in terms of closeness and intimacy, nonverbal signals become a shorthand form of communicating, as information can be conveyed with a particular look, gesture, tone of voice, or posture. Family members, romantic couples, close friends, and close colleagues can bond over their familiarity with each other's nonverbal behaviors, which creates a shared relational reality that is unique to the relationship.

Nonverbal Communication in Professional Contexts

Surveys of current professionals and managers have found that most report that nonverbal skills are important to their jobs.Peter J. DePaulo, "Applications of Nonverbal Behavior Research in Marketing and Management," Applications of Nonverbal Behavior Theories and Research, ed. Robert S. Feldman (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992), 63. Although important, there is rarely any training or instruction related to nonverbal communication, and a consistent issue that has been reported by employees has been difficulty with mixed messages coming from managers. Interpreting contradictory verbal and nonverbal messages is challenging in any context and can have negative effects on job satisfaction and productivity. As a supervisor who gives positive and negative feedback regularly and/or in periodic performance evaluations, it is important to be able to match nonverbal signals with the content of the message. For example, appropriate nonverbal cues can convey the seriousness of a customer or coworker complaint, help ease the delivery of

constructive criticism, or reinforce positive feedback. Professionals also need to be aware of how context, status, and power intersect with specific channels of nonverbal communication. For example, even casual touching of supervisees, mentees, or employees may be considered condescending or inappropriate in certain situations. A well-deserved pat on the back is different from an unnecessary hand on the shoulder to say hello at the start of a business meeting.

In professional contexts, managers and mentors with nonverbal decoding skills can exhibit sensitivity to others' nonverbal behavior and better relate to employees and mentees. In general, interpreting emotions from nonverbal cues can have interpersonal and professional benefits. One study found that salespeople who were skilled at recognizing emotions through nonverbal cues sold more products and earned higher salaries.Kristin Byron, Sophia Terranova, and Stephen Nowicki Jr., "Nonverbal Emotion Recognition and Salespersons: Linking Ability to Perceived and Actual Success," Journal of Applied Social Psychology 37, no. 11 (2007): 2600–2619. Aside from bringing financial rewards, nonverbal communication also helps create supportive climates. Bosses, supervisors, and service providers like therapists can help create rapport and a positive climate by consciously mirroring the nonverbal communication of their employees or clients. In addition, mirroring the nonverbal communication of others during a job interview, during a sales pitch, or during a performance evaluation can help put the other person at ease and establish rapport. Much of the mirroring we do is natural, so trying to overcompensate may actually be detrimental, but engaging in self-monitoring and making small adjustments could be beneficial.Peter J. DePaulo, "Applications of Nonverbal Behavior Research in Marketing and Management," in Applications of Nonverbal Behavior Theories and Research, ed. Robert S. Feldman (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992), 71–73.

You can also use nonverbal communication to bring positive

attention to yourself. Being able to nonverbally encode turn-taking cues can allow people to contribute to conversations at relevant times, and getting an idea or a piece of information or feedback in at the right time can help bring attention to your professional competence. Being able to encode an appropriate amount of professionalism and enthusiasm during a job interview can also aid in desired impression formation since people make judgments about others' personalities based on their nonverbal cues. A person who comes across as too enthusiastic may be seen as pushy or fake, and a person who comes across as too relaxed may be seen as unprofessional and unmotivated.

Nonverbal Communication and Culture

As with other aspects of communication, norms for nonverbal communication vary from country to country and also among cultures within a particular country. We've already learned that some nonverbal communication behaviors appear to be somewhat innate because they are universally recognized. Two such universal signals are the "eyebrow flash" of recognition when we see someone we know and the open hand and the palm up gesture that signals a person would like something or needs help.Judith N. Martin and Thomas K.

Nakayama, Intercultural Communication in Contexts, 5th ed. (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 271. Smiling is also a universal nonverbal behavior, but the triggers that lead a person to smile vary from culture to culture. The expansion of media, particularly from the United States and other Western countries around the world, is leading to more nonverbal similarities among cultures, but the biggest cultural differences in nonverbal communication occur within the categories of eye contact, touch, and personal space.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 112–13. Next, we will overview some interesting and instructive differences within several channels of nonverbal communication that we have

discussed so far. As you read, remember that these are not absolute, in that nonverbal communication like other forms of communication is influenced by context and varies among individuals within a particular cultural group as well.

Kinesics

Cultural variations in the way we gesture, use head movements, and use eye contact fall under the nonverbal category of kinesics.

Gestures

Remember that emblems are gestures that correspond to a word and an agreed- on meaning. When we use our fingers to count, we are using emblematic gestures, but even our way of counting varies among cultures.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 108. I could fairly accurately separate British people and US Americans from French, Greek, and German people based on a simple and common gesture. Let's try this exercise: First, display with your hand the number five. Second, keeping the five displayed, change it to a two. If you are from the United States or Britain you are probably holding up your index finder and your middle finger. If you are from another European country you are probably holding up your thumb and index finger. While Americans and Brits start counting on their index finger and end with five on their thumb, other Europeans start counting on their thumb and end with five on their pinky finger.

How you use your hands can also get you into trouble if you're unaware of cultural differences.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 110–11. For example, the "thumbs up" gesture, as we just learned, can mean "one" in mainland Europe, but it also means "up yours" in Greece (when thrust forward) and is recognized as a signal for hitchhiking or "good," "good job / way to go," or "OK"

in many other cultures. Two hands up with the palms out can signal “ten” in many Western countries and is recognized as a signal for “I’m telling the truth” or “I surrender” in many cultures. The same gesture, however, means “up yours twice” in Greece. So using that familiar gesture to say you surrender might actually end up escalating rather than ending a conflict if used in Greece.

You can take a cross-cultural awareness quiz to learn some more interesting cultural variations in gestures at the following link:http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/quiz/gestures.php.

Head Movements

Bowing is a nonverbal greeting ritual that is more common in Asian cultures than Western cultures, but the head nod, which is a common form of acknowledgement in many cultures, is actually an abbreviated bow. Japan is considered a noncontact culture, which refers to cultural groups in which people stand farther apart while talking, make less eye contact, and touch less during regular interactions. Because of this, bowing is the preferred nonverbal greeting over handshaking. Bows vary based on status, with higher status people bowing the least. For example, in order to indicate the status of another person, a Japanese businessperson may bow deeply. An interesting ritual associated with the bow is the exchange of business cards when greeting someone in Japan. This exchange allows each person to view the other’s occupation and title, which provides useful information about the other’s status and determines who should bow more. Since bowing gives each person a good view of the other person’s shoes, it is very important to have clean shoes that are in good condition, since they play an important part of initial impression formation.

Eye Contact

In some cultures, avoiding eye contact is considered a sign of respect. Such eye contact aversion, however, could be seen as a

sign that the other person is being deceptive, is bored, or is being rude. Some Native American nations teach that people should avoid eye contact with elders, teachers, and other people with status. This can create issues in classrooms when teachers are unaware of this norm and may consider a Native American student's lack of eye contact as a sign of insubordination or lack of engagement, which could lead to false impressions that the student is a troublemaker or less intelligent.

Haptics

As we've learned, touch behaviors are important during initial interactions, and cultural differences in these nonverbal practices can lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding. Shaking hands as a typical touch greeting, for example, varies among cultures.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 114. It is customary for British, Australian, German, and US American colleagues to shake hands when seeing each other for the first time and then to shake again when departing company. In the United States, the colleagues do not normally shake hands again if they see each other again later in the day, but European colleagues may shake hands with each other several times a day. Once a certain level of familiarity and closeness is reached, US American colleagues will likely not even shake hands daily unless engaging in some more formal interaction, but many European colleagues will continue to shake each time they see each other. Some French businesspeople have been known to spend up to thirty minutes a day shaking hands. The squeezes and up-and-down shakes used during handshakes are often called "pumps," and the number of pumps used in a handshake also varies among cultures. Although the Germans and French shake hands more often throughout the day, they typically only give one or two pumps and then hold the shake for a couple seconds before letting go. Brits tend to give three to five pumps, and US Americans tend to give five to seven pumps. This can be humorous to watch at a multinational business event, but it also

affects the initial impressions people make of each other. A US American may think that a German is being unfriendly or distant because of his or her single hand pump, while a German may think that a US American is overdoing it with seven.

Contact cultures are cultural groups in which people stand closer together, engage in more eye contact, touch more frequently, and speak more loudly. Italians are especially known for their vibrant nonverbal communication in terms of gestures, volume, eye contact, and touching, which not surprisingly places them in the contact culture category. Italians use hand motions and touching to regulate the flow of conversations, and when non-Italians don't know how to mirror an Italian's nonverbals they may not get to contribute much to the conversation, which likely feeds into the stereotype of Italians as domineering in conversations or overexpressive. For example, Italians speak with their hands raised as a way to signal that they are holding the floor for their conversational turn. If their conversational partner starts to raise his or her hands, the Italian might gently touch the other person and keep on talking. Conversational partners often interpret this as a sign of affection or of the Italian's passion for what he or she is saying. In fact, it is a touch intended to keep the partner from raising his or her hands, which would signal that the Italian's conversational turn is over and the other person now has the floor. It has been suggested that in order to get a conversational turn, you must physically grab their hands in midair and pull them down. While this would seem very invasive and rude to northern Europeans and US Americans, it is a nonverbal norm in Italian culture and may be the only way to get to contribute to a conversation.Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, The Definitive Book of Body Language (New York, NY: Bantam, 2004), 115.

Vocalics

The volume at which we speak is influenced by specific contexts and is more generally influenced by our culture. In European

countries like France, England, Sweden, and Germany, it is not uncommon to find restaurants that have small tables very close together. In many cases, two people dining together may be sitting at a table that is actually touching the table of another pair of diners. Most US Americans would consider this a violation of personal space, and Europeans often perceive US Americans to be rude in such contexts because they do not control the volume of their conversations more. Since personal space is usually more plentiful in the United States, Americans are used to speaking at a level that is considered loud to many cultures that are used to less personal space. I have personally experienced both sides of this while traveling abroad. One time, my friends and I were asked to leave a restaurant in Sweden because another table complained that we were being loud. Another time, at a restaurant in Argentina, I was disturbed, as were the others dining around me, by a "loud" table of Americans seated on the other side of the dining area. In this case, even though we were also Americans, we were bothered by the lack of cultural awareness being exhibited by the other Americans at the restaurant. These examples show how proxemics and vocalics can combine to make for troubling, but hopefully informative, nonverbal intercultural encounters.

Proxemics

Cultural norms for personal space vary much more than some other nonverbal communication channels such as facial expressions, which have more universal similarity and recognizability. We've already learned that contact and noncontact cultures differ in their preferences for touch and interpersonal distance. Countries in South America and southern Europe exhibit characteristics of contact cultures, while countries in northern Europe and Southeast Asia exhibit noncontact cultural characteristics. Because of the different comfort levels with personal space, a Guatemalan and a Canadian might come away with differing impressions of each other because of proxemic differences. The Guatemalan may feel the Canadian is

standoffish, and the Canadian may feel the Guatemalan is pushy or aggressive.

Chronemics

The United States and many northern and western European countries have
a monochronicorientation to time, meaning time is seen as a commodity that can be budgeted, saved, spent, and wasted. Events are to be scheduled in advance and have set beginning and ending times. Countries like Spain and Mexico have
a polychronic orientation to time. Appointments may be scheduled at overlapping times, making an “orderly” schedule impossible. People may also miss appointments or deadlines without offering an apology, which would be considered very rude by a person with a monochronic orientation to time. People from cultures with a monochronic orientation to time are frustrated when people from polychromic cultures cancel appointments or close businesses for family obligations. Conversely, people from polychromic cultures feel that US Americans, for example, follow their schedules at the expense of personal relationships.Judith N. Martin and Thomas K. Nakayama,Intercultural Communication in Contexts, 5th ed. (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 278.

Nonverbal Communication and Gender

Gender and communication scholar Kathryn Dindia contests the notion that men and women are from different planets and instead uses another analogy. She says men are from South Dakota and women are from North Dakota. Although the states border each other and are similar in many ways, state pride and in-group identifications lead the people of South Dakota to perceive themselves to be different from the people of North Dakota and vice versa. But if we expand our perspective and take the position of someone from California or Illinois, North Dakotans and South Dakotans are pretty much alike.Peter A.

Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 106. This comparison is intended to point out that in our daily lives we do experience men and women to be fairly different, but when we look at the differences between men and women compared to the differences between humans and other creatures, men and women are much more similar than different. For example, in terms of nonverbal communication, men and women all over the world make similar facial expressions and can recognize those facial expressions in one another. We use similar eye contact patterns, gestures, and, within cultural groups, have similar notions of the use of time and space. As I will reiterate throughout this book, it's important to understand how gender influences communication, but it's also important to remember that in terms of communication, men and women are about 99 percent similar and 1 percent different.

Kinesics

Although men and women are mostly similar in terms of nonverbal communication, we can gain a better understanding of the role that gender plays in influencing our social realities by exploring some of the channel-specific differences.Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions(Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 118–21. Within the category of kinesics, we will discuss some gender differences in how men and women use gestures, posture, eye contact, and facial expressions.

Gestures

- Women use more gestures in regular conversation than do men, but men tend to use larger gestures than women when they do use them.
- Men are, however, more likely to use physical adaptors like restless foot and hand movements, probably because girls

are socialized to avoid such movements because they are not “ladylike.”

Posture

- Men are more likely to lean in during an interaction than are women.
- Women are more likely to have a face-to-face body orientation whileinteracting than are men.Women’s tendency to use a face-to-face body orientation influences the general conclusion that women are better at sending and receiving nonverbal messages than men. Women’s more direct visual engagement during interactions allows them to take in more nonverbal cues, which allows them to better reflect on and more accurately learn from experience what particular nonverbal cues mean in what contexts.Eye Contact
- In general, women make more eye contact than men. As we learned, women use face-to-face body orientations in conversations more often than men, which likely facilitates more sustained eye contact.
- Overall, women tend to do more looking and get looked at more than men. Facial Expressions
- Women reveal emotion through facial expressions more frequently and more accurately than men.
- Men are more likely than women to exhibit angry facial expressions. Men are often socialized to believe it is important to hide their emotions. This isespecially evident in the case of smiling, with women smiling more than men.

This also contributes to the stereotype of the more emotionally

aware and nurturing woman, since people tend to like and view as warmer others who show positive emotion. Gender socialization plays a role in facial displays as girls are typically rewarded for emotional displays, especially positive ones, and boys are rewarded when they conceal emotions—for instance, when they are told to “suck it up,” “take it like a man,” or “show sportsmanship” by not gloating or celebrating openly.

Haptics

- Although it is often assumed that men touch women more than women touch men, this hasn’t been a consistent research finding. In fact, differences in touch in cross-gender interactions are very small.
- Women do engage in more touching when interacting with same-gender conversational partners than do men.
- In general, men tend to read more sexual intent into touch than do women, who often underinterpret sexual intent.Peter A.
  Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions(Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 125.There is a touch taboo for men in the United States. In fact, research supports the claim that men’s aversion to same-gender touching is higher in the United States than in other cultures, which shows that this taboo is culturally relative. For example, seeing two adult men holding hands in public in Saudi Arabia would signal that the men are close friends and equals, but it wouldn’t signal that they are sexually attracted to each other.Judith N. Martin and Thomas K.

Nakayama, Intercultural Communication in Contexts, 5th ed. (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 274. The touch taboo also extends to cross-gender interactions in certain contexts. It’s important to be aware of the potential interpretations of touch,

especially as they relate to sexual and aggressive interpretations.

Vocalics

- Women are socialized to use more vocal variety, which adds to the stereotype that women are more expressive than men.
- In terms of pitch, women tend more than men to end their sentences with an upward inflection of pitch, which implies a lack of certainty, even when there isn't.A biological difference between men and women involves vocal pitch, with men's voices being lower pitched and women's being higher. Varying degrees of importance and social meaning are then placed on these biological differences, which lead some men and women to consciously or unconsciously exaggerate the difference. Men may speak in a lower register than they would naturally and women may speak in more soft, breathy tones to accentuate the pitch differences. These ways of speaking often start as a conscious choice after adolescence to better fit into socially and culturally proscribed gender performances, but they can become so engrained that people spend the rest of their lives speaking in a voice that is a modified version of their natural tone.Proxemics
- Men are implicitly socialized to take up as much space as possible, and women are explicitly socialized to take up less space.
- In terms of interpersonal distance, research shows that women interact in closer proximity to one another than do men.

- Men do not respond as well as women in situations involving crowding. High-density environments evoke more negative feelings from men, which can even lead to physical violence in very crowded settings.
- Men are generally larger than women, which is a biological difference that gains social and cultural meaning when certain behaviors and norms are associated with it. For example, women are told to sit in a “ladylike” way, which usually means to cross and/or close their legs and keep their limbs close to their body. Men, on the other hand, sprawl out in casual, professional, and formal situations without their use of space being reprimanded or even noticed in many cases.

If you’ll recall our earlier discussion of personal space, we identified two subzones within the personal zone that extends from 1.5 to 4 feet from our body. Men seem to be more comfortable with casual and social interactions that are in the outer subzone, which is 2.5 to 4 feet away, meaning men prefer to interact at an arm’s length from another person. This also plays into the stereotypes of women as more intimate and nurturing and men as more distant and less intimate.

Self-Presentation

- Men and women present themselves differently, with women, in general, accentuating their physical attractiveness more and men accentuating signs of their status and wealth more.
- Men and women may engage in self-presentation that exaggerates existing biological differences between male and female bodies.Most people want to present themselves in ways that accentuate their attractiveness, at

least in some situations where impression management is important to fulfill certain instrumental, relational, or identity needs. Gender socialization over many years has influenced how we present ourselves in terms of attractiveness. Research shows that women's physical attractiveness is more important to men than men's physical attractiveness is to women. Women do take physical attractiveness into account, but a man's social status and wealth has been shown to be more important.Saylor URL: http://www.saylor.org/books Saylor.org 320

Men and women also exaggerate biological and socially based sex and gender differences on their own. In terms of biology, men and women's bodies are generally different, which contributes to the nonverbal area related to personal appearance. Many men and women choose clothing that accentuates these bodily differences. For example, women may accentuate their curves with specific clothing choices and men may accentuate their size—for example, by wearing a suit with shoulder padding to enhance the appearance of broad shoulders. These choices vary in terms of the level of consciousness at which they are made. Men are also hairier than women, and although it isn't always the case and grooming varies by culture, many women shave their legs and remove body hair while men may grow beards or go to great lengths to reverse baldness to accentuate these differences. Of course, the more recent trend of "manscaping" now has some men trimming or removing body hair from their chests, arms, and/or legs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A central function of nonverbal communication is the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Nonverbal communication helps initiate relationships through impression management and self-disclosure and then helps maintain relationships as it aids in emotional expressions that request and give emotional support.
- Professionals indicate that nonverbal communication is an important part of their jobs. Organizational leaders can use nonverbal decoding skills to tell when employees are under stress and in need of support and can then use encoding skills to exhibit nonverbal sensitivity. Nonverbal signals can aid in impression management in professional settings, such as in encoding an appropriate amount of enthusiasm and professionalism.
- Although some of our nonverbal signals appear to be more innate and culturally universal, many others vary considerably among cultures, especially in terms of the use of space (proxemics), eye contact (oculesics), and touch (haptics). Rather than learning a list of rules for cultural variations in nonverbal cues, it is better to develop more general knowledge about how nonverbal norms vary based on cultural values and to view this knowledge as tools that can be adapted for use in many different cultural contexts.
- In terms of gender, most of the nonverbal differences between men and women are exaggerations of biological differences onto which we have imposed certain meanings and values. Men and women's nonverbal communication, as with other aspects of

communication, is much more similar than different. Research has consistently found, however, that women gesture, make eye contact, touch and stand close to same-gender conversational partners, and use positive facial expressions more than men.

EXERCISES

- Identify some nonverbal behaviors that would signal a positive interaction on a first date and on a job interview. Then identify some nonverbal behaviors that would signal a negative interaction in each of those contexts.
- Discuss an experience where you have had some kind of miscommunication or misunderstanding because of cultural or gender differences in encoding and decoding nonverbal messages. What did you learn in this chapter that could help you in similar future interactions?

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