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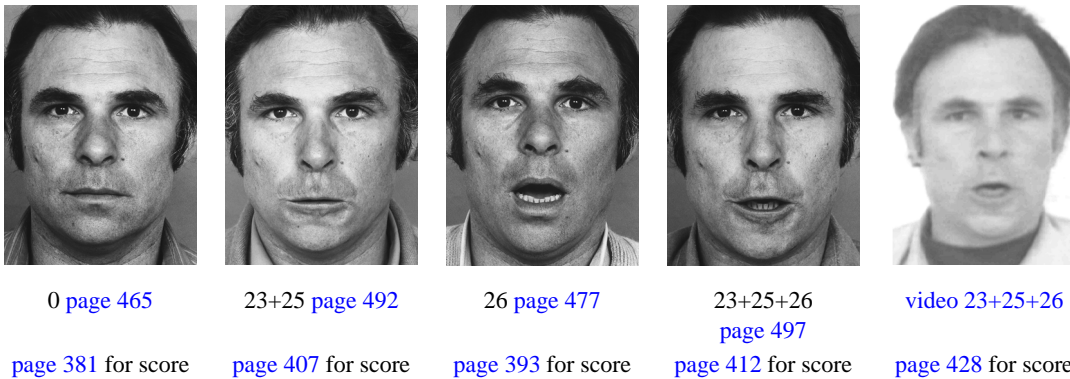
## Action Unit Combination – 23+25+26

### A. Appearance changes due to AU Combination 23+25+26

The appearance changes associated with each AU are preserved in this combination, but are somewhat attenuated by their joint action.

1. Tightens the lips, making the lips appear more narrow.
2. Causes the lips to roll inwards and almost disappear from view, or to protrude to a limited extent.
3. Produces small wrinkles in the skin above and below the lips, and muscle bulges below the lower lip. The dropping of the jaw by 26, somewhat stretches this skin and diminishes the evidence of the appearance change due to 23 alone.
4. Parts the lips.
5. Separates the teeth without the mouth being pulled down. The usual appearance of a relaxed jaw-drop due to 26 is counteracted by 23, so the mouth appears tight not relaxed.
6. Note that the lower gum can be revealed in 23+25+26, but that sign alone is not sufficient basis for scoring 16 in this combination.

Compare the images of 23+25 and 26 with 23+25+26. Inspect the video of 23+26.



### B. How to do AU Combination 23+25+26

Follow the instructions for AU 26 on and AU 23, repeated below. First, do 26 by relaxing your jaw to open it so that there is space between your teeth, which should part your lips sufficiently to score the 25. Then tighten your lips with 23.

**AU 23** (repeated from [page 237](#)): This movement is not easy to make. Tighten your lips. Make them thin and tense. Be careful not to press them together (AU 24). Concentrate just on your lips. If you have difficulty, try tightening your lips and pressing them, then release the press holding the tightening action. You may have done or seen this movement when using the phrase “Zip your lip.”

**AU 26** (repeated from [page 104](#)): To perform AU 26, relax your mouth and let your jaw fall open; do not pull or force your jaw open, just relax the muscle that clamps your teeth together and let your jaw fall open so that your teeth are separated. You have made AU 26. If you are doing this correctly, there is no muscular tension in your lips, and no stretching of your lips. Once your jaw closing muscle is relaxed enough to permit the jaw to drop wide enough, your lips should part, scored 25+26. It is easier to detect a 26 if the lips part than if they remain closed. How soon the lips part with a drop of the jaw varies in different people, and as indicated above, some people need no jaw drop to part their lips. Examine whether your jaw needs to drop in order to part your lips, and if so, how far it must drop. Notice also how far you can drop your jaw merely by relaxing, not pulling it open. You should find that this jaw drop is limited; beyond this limited extent, AU

27 is scored because a muscle must act to pull the jaw open further. Most people can drop their jaw with AU 26 so that the tongue or index finger can fit between the teeth, but not much more, when their head is in a normal upright position. Notice what happens at the corners of your lips as the mouth and lips move from being closed, to the relaxed drop of the jaw of AU 26, and beyond as you pull your mouth open. Relax your jaw to perform an AU 26, then nod your head up and down – the relaxed jaw drop is greater when the head is back than when it is forward.

### C. Intensity Scoring for AU Combination 23+25+26

The criteria for AU 23 alone and AUs 25 and 26 alone are unchanged in the combination 23+25+26, and are repeated below.

#### AU 23A

The appearance changes for AU 23 are sufficiently present to indicate AU 23, but are insufficient to score 23B (e.g., *slight* tightening of the lips alone).

#### AU 23B

1. The lips appear *slightly* tightened, and,
2. The red parts are narrowed *slightly* and the narrowing is not due just to 12, 17, 20, 24, or 28.

If you did not see the movement, then the additional criteria must be present:

3. *Slight* wrinkles or bulges in skin above or below at least one lip, or,
4. *Marked* change on either criteria 1 or 2 for 23B and *slight* change on the other.

#### AU 23C

The lip tightening and narrowing described for 23B are both *marked*, but the evidence is less than the criteria for 23D.

#### AU 23D

The lip tightening and narrowing described for 23B are both *severe*, but the evidence is less than the criteria for 23E.

#### AU 23E

The lip tightening and narrowing described for 23B are both in the *maximum* range.

If the criteria for 23 are present on one lip, but totally absent on the other lip, score as T23 or B23. You can score 23 as occurring on only one side of the face, but you cannot score unilateral 23 on a single lip.

#### AU 25A

When the jaw is shut, the appearance changes for AU 25 are sufficiently present to indicate AU 25, but are insufficient to score 25B (e.g., a clear opening between the lips that is less than 2 millimeters, but you can see no teeth).

When the jaw is lowered by AU 26 or 27, score 25A when actions that act to move the lips together have reduced the lip separation at least *severely* from the separation produced by the jaw opening itself.

In either case, if you are uncertain that the lips are parted, do not score 25A.

**AU 25B**

There are two alternative criteria for scoring 25B when the jaw is shut:

1. Teeth show - you can see teeth without doubt. The sight of but one part of one tooth is sufficient, but you must be certain that you see a tooth.  
or
2. Space between lips – must be at least 2 millimeters (the thickness of 2 quarters, an American coin) between the lips.

When the jaw is lowered, use the intensity score of B to indicate that lip uniting actions are reducing the lip separation at least *slightly* from what they would otherwise be, given the extent of jaw lowering.

**AU 25C**

If the teeth remain together, i.e., no jaw drop can be detected, the increased lip separation from the criteria for 25B likely comes from another lip separating action or actions and must be a *marked* or *pronounced* departure from the B criteria. For example, you might score a 25C if there is a moderate action of AU 10 or AU 16 (or other lip parting action) or a small action of both 10 and 16 that parts the lips at least *markedly* more than the criteria for 25B, but less evidence than the criteria for 25D.

If the jaw is lowered by AU 26 or 27 to separate the lips, and the separation is not increased more than a *trace* by other lip separating actions or decreased more than a *trace* by lip constricting actions, score 25C. The intensity score of C for AU 25 represents the lip separation controlled virtually entirely by the jaw lowering, the lips otherwise remaining relaxed or minimally affected by other muscles pulling them open or constricting them, regardless of the absolute distance between the lips. Use the relative position of the upper lip to the upper teeth and the lower lip to the lower teeth as a guide to whether the lip separation is more or less than the jaw lowering alone produces. If other muscles act to constrict the lips, consider scoring B or A; if they act to separate the lips, consider scoring D or E.

**AU 25D**

When there is no jaw lowering and the lips part due to other lip separating actions, the lip separation must be *severely* greater than the criteria for 25B to assign a D intensity code to AU 25. Thus, when the teeth are together, lip parting actions other than jaw lowering, such as AU 10 and/or 16, must be pulling the lips apart at least *severely* beyond the B criteria, but less evidence than the criteria for 25E.

When the jaw is lowered, assign a D intensity score to AU 25 when these same lip lowering and raising actions are separating the lips at least *slightly* more than they would be from the jaw lowering alone, but not more than the criteria for the E intensity score. A *slight* departure from the opening caused by the jaw lowering might result from a lip lowering action, a lip raising action, or both.

**AU 25E**

Like the other intensities of AU 25, the E intensity is not intended to reflect the absolute maximum possible separation of the lips, but rather the maximum possible separation given the degree of jaw lowering, if any. When the teeth remain together, score an E intensity when lip parting actions, such as AUs 10 and 16, separate the lips at least *extremely* or near *maximum* by both lowering the lower lip and raising the upper lip, so that the lips are separated about as much as possible.

**AU 26A**

The intensity scoring for AU 26 reflects the difference between the teeth being together versus the most the jaw can be lowered merely by relaxing the muscle that closes the jaw (not the degree to which the jaw can be stretched open, which is a greater absolute opening).

In 26A, the appearance changes for AU 26 are sufficiently present to indicate AU 26, but are insufficient to score 26B (e.g., you see the jaw drop *slightly* by relaxation).

#### **AU 26B**

1. *Marked* and unambiguous dropping of the mandible by relaxation. If you score 26B or greater without a 25 (i.e., the lips do not part), look carefully for signs of AU 17 and/or 24.

If you do not see the movement:

2. You must see space between at least some of the upper and lower teeth, or a space between the teeth must be unambiguously inferred from the lips, a finger, or other object held between the teeth.

#### **AU 26C**

The lowering of the jaw by relaxation is about midway between teeth together and as far as the jaw can drop from relaxation of the muscle that closes the jaw, i.e., the lowering is in at least the *pronounced* range, but the evidence is less than the criteria for 26D. In 26C, if the lip parting permits, you can see space between all of the upper and lower teeth. For scores of 26C and above, you generally scoring 25 as well, unless there is some other action uniting the lips and causing them to remain closed.

#### **AU 26D**

The lowering of the jaw by relaxation is at least *severe*, about as much as the tongue can stick through, but the evidence is less than the criteria for 26E.

#### **AU 26E**

The lowering of the jaw by relaxation is in the *maximum* range, and is a gap of not much more than one finger.