

Nonverbal Communication

How does an understanding of nonverbal communication in a cross cultural context help us to be more competent communicators?

Today's Agenda

1. Define nonverbal communication: principles & how it relates to verbal communication.
2. Cultural diversity & the role of culture in our perceptions of nonverbal communication
3. Types of nonverbal behaviors: codes or categories

The body never lies.

--Leonard Mlodinow

Nonverbal Communication

All behaviors, attributes and objects of humans (other than the words themselves) that communicate messages through shared meaning.

Culture

The distinctive ideas, customs, social behavior, products or way of life of a particular nation, society, people or period.



Nonverbal Communication

Compared to VERBAL language,

- Continuous
- Ambiguous
- Uses multiple channels
- More often used to convey relational messages



Nonverbal Communication and CONTEXT

NVC **relies** on context to be understood/interpreted.

Meaning is directly tied to **culture**.

Context helps us reduce **uncertainty** and ambiguity.



Nonverbal communication plays an important role in our culturally diverse society.

The meaning of gestures can create genuine problems in everyday communication as well as have more serious implications on the world stage.



NONVERBAL CODES

Distinct, organized cues that consist of both symbols and rules for how those symbols are used.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

- Gender, height, weight, body shape, clothing
 - First impressions
- Status, group identity, individuality, values



KINESICS: BODY

- Gestures
- Posture
- Movement
- Facial expression
- Eye behavior



More codes...

HAPTICS: TOUCH

- Amount of touching
- Types of touching
 - Culturally based
- Gender differences

VOCALICS: VOICE

- Rate
- Pitch
 - Intensity
- Gender & Cultural influences

More codes...

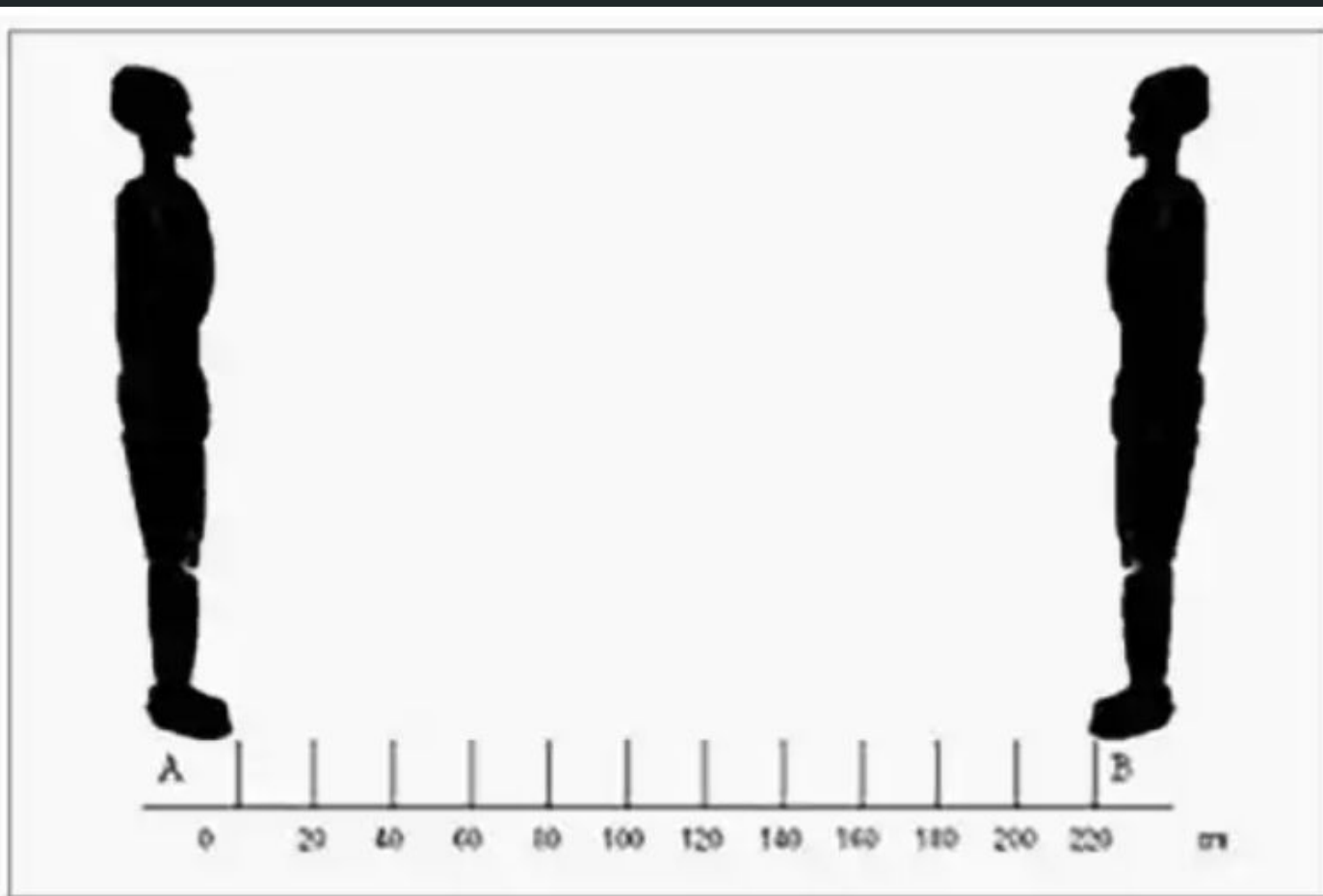
CHRONEMICS: TIME

- Denotes power/status
 - Monochronic vs. Polychronic cultures

PROXEMICS: SPACE

- Office & seating arrangements
- Artifacts or objects
- Intimate, personal, social, and public space

“Would you like gravy?”



The image that researchers showed subjects. Courtesy of the Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology

Challenges to Cross Cultural Understanding

The inability to communicate nonverbally with other cultural backgrounds can limit how well people coordinate their activities.

Cultural differences impact how we send and receive messages appropriately.

Be mindful of our own nonverbal/verbal consistency.

Respect differences and try to be aware of possible meanings or interpretations.

Thank you!

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