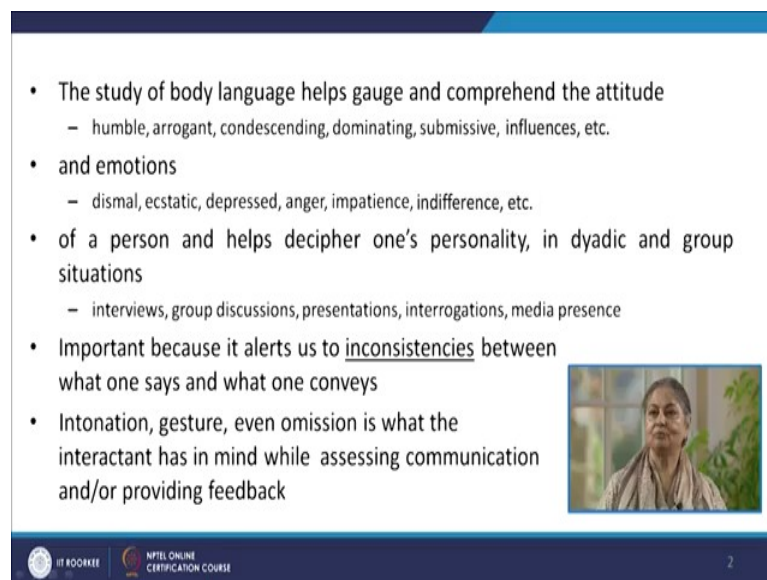


Body Language: Key to Professional Success
Prof. Rashmi Gaur
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Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee


Lecture - 01
Defining Body Language, Scope and Relevance

Good morning dear participants and welcome to the first module of our course on **Body Language**. As all of us are aware, body language is an integral part of our professional communication. A positive body language helps us in projecting ourselves in a more successful manner. In today's module, we would try to understand the basic definitions of body language, the scope and relevance.

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- The study of body language helps gauge and comprehend the attitude
 - humble, arrogant, condescending, dominating, submissive, influences, etc.
- and emotions
 - dismal, ecstatic, depressed, anger, impatience, indifference, etc.
- of a person and helps decipher one's personality, in dyadic and group situations
 - interviews, group discussions, presentations, interrogations, media presence
- Important because it alerts us to inconsistencies between what one says and what one conveys
- Intonation, gesture, even omission is what the interactant has in mind while assessing communication and/or providing feedback



The study of body language is important for us as it alerts us to the inconsistencies, which exists between what one says and also what one conveys. Because it is with the help of the micro and macro expressions of body language that we can comprehend the attitudes and emotions of people in dietetic as well as in interpersonal situations.

We can make out whether a particular individual is humble or arrogant or is being condescending or too demanding etcetera and at the same time, whether one is talking under certain depression or is in angry mode whether one is impatient or indifferent etcetera. So, these signals of body language help us to understand the true personality and the true intention of a person. We can say that the body language alerts us to the

possibilities of reading an individual in the same manner in which we can read a book and decipher its meaning. We can find out the inconsistencies, which exist between the verbally statements and the nonverbal communication with the basis of the intonations, gestures, voice control etcetera and therefore, we understand the truth and then we can also provide the necessary feedback accordingly.

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- Nonverbal cues include macro and micro expressions
- Micro expressions: Paul Ekman, *Telling Lies* (1985). Human faces often reveal sentiments which we want to deliberately conceal, tiny/fast
- Of and through touch, glance, eye contact, volume, vocal nuance, intonation, proximity, gestures, facial expression, dress, posture, smell, accessories ...
- In a fast paced world today, it has become more significant in the realms of business, media and others
- Our obsession with celebrity has enhanced our awareness about it:
 - Magazines carry endless stories on the body language of latest celebrities
 - One FBI agent has even analyzed Madonna's eyelids flutters to see if she was lying on NBC television when she denied her pregnancy (Cohen 2015)

The slide also features a small video inset on the right side showing a woman's face, and a footer with the NPTEL logo and the text 'NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE'.

Nonverbal aspects of communication have macro as well as micro expressions. Now, what exactly is the difference between the macro and micro expressions of body language? Macro expressions are those expressions and aspects of body language which are visible to us. For example, if I smile (this smile is visible), it is a macro expression.

On the other hand, micro expressions are those expressions which are very tiny almost fleeting expressions, but it is the truth which is communicated through micro expressions in particular. There have been several audio recordings when people have been asked to describe their colleagues for example, or a particular movie. It has been noticed that during these audio and also the video recordings, people were careful to use positive epithets to depict their colleagues. However, in the micro expressions one could read their association and their intentions towards the other people. For example, we could make out whether a person likes the colleague whom he or she has been asked to describe or not or what type of animosity or what level of friendship might exist between the two.

These, micro expressions may be very tiny for example, there may be a twitch in a muscle just below the eye or there may be a twitch of a muscle over here (hemifacial) or my smile may try to communicate something, but the eyes contradict that emotion.

Now, these micro expressions are significant aspect of body language much more significant than the macro ones. The phrase micro expressions was used for the first time by Paul Ekman in his book *Telling Lies* which had come out in 1985. These macro and micro expressions are basically communicated through our touch, glance, eye contact, volume those aspects which exactly are a part of our body and at the same time those aspects which are not necessarily or strictly speaking a part of our body. For example, the dress we wear the smell which we wear the accessories which we carry with us. But in today's highly competitive world we find that these aspects are also an extension of what we know in understand as body language. And therefore, we find that because of the growing presence of media, the growing competitiveness in the business world as well as in other professions a significant understanding of body language is must.


Media presence has also made our obsession with this particular field of a study, heightened. Particularly our obsession with celebrity has also enhanced our awareness of it. We find that magazines as well as video channels TV channels carry endless stories on the body language of celebrities. Body language of actress actresses political and social leaders are disseminated endlessly.

I would refer to a very interesting incident here where one FBI agent tried to analyze the eyelid fluttering of Madonna to see whether she was lying about her pregnancy on NBC television program. So, we can find that the enhanced media awareness as well as the continuous growth in the technology today has made this particular aspect of a study a significant one.

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Definitions

- Collins English Dictionary, Twelfth Edition, 2012, “The nonverbal imparting of information by means of conscious or subconscious bodily gestures, posture, etc.”
- Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fifth Edition, 2014, “Gestures, unconscious bodily movements, facial expressions, etc. which serve as nonverbal communication or as accompaniments to speech”
- Hedwig Lewis describes Body Language as the “communication of personal feelings, emotions, attitudes, and thoughts through body movements – gestures, postures, positions, and distance, either consciously or involuntarily, more often subconsciously, and accompanied or unaccompanied by the spoken language”
- (“The Characteristic of Body Language.” *Body Language: A Guide for Professionals*. SAGE 2012)



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If we look at the definitions of body language or the nonverbal aspects of communication, we find that different dictionaries have tried to define them in interesting manner. The Twelfth Edition of Collins English Dictionary, which was published in 2012 has defined it as the “nonverbal imparting of information by means of conscious or subconscious bodily gestures and postures etc”.


So, here we could find that this definition has concentrated on the communication of information through conscious as well as unconscious aspects of our micro and macro signals. These two aspects that is the conscious and unconscious ones we would discuss after a couple of minutes. Webster’s New World College Dictionary in it is Fifth Edition, which came out in 2012 defines it as “gestures unconscious bodily movements facial expressions etcetera, which service nonverbal communication or as accompaniments to a speech”. Hedwig Lewis has described body language as “the communication of personal feelings, emotions, attitudes and thoughts through body movements; gestures, postures, positions and distances either consciously or involuntarily, more often subconsciously and accompanied or unaccompanied by the spoken language”.

In all these definitions I think that the definition by Hedwig Lewis is by far more complete than the other dictionary definitions.

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Body Language/Non Verbal Communications

- Body Language can be used in addition to or independent of words:
 - Extroverts and introverts
- Reveals the truth
- Provides immediate feedback
- Can act in absence of words
- Significant uses in interpersonal and group interaction
- Mankind has always been aware of its significance

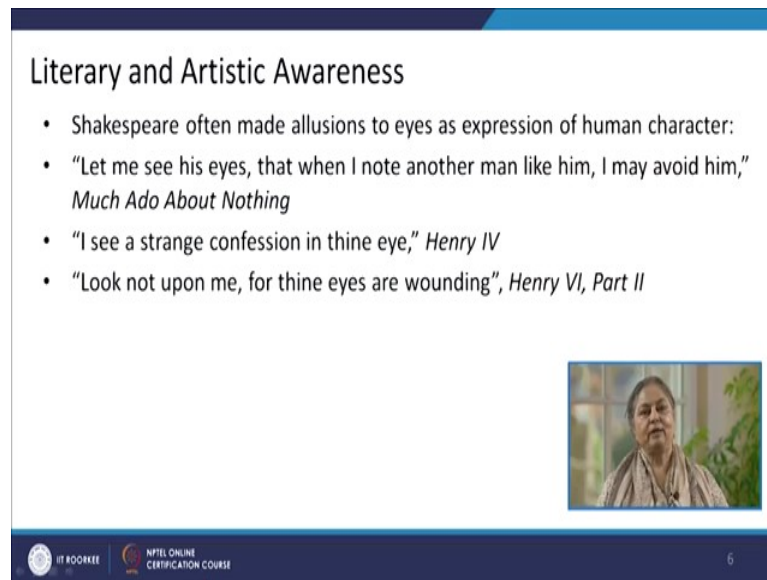


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Body language or nonverbal aspects of communication can be used either in addition to words or even independent of words. For example, in a crowded room we can try to attract the attention of a friend or a colleague by making certain gestures even though the voice is not audible. At the same time we find that when we look at the communication in its totality that is the words as well as the nonverbal aspects of communication we can imagine the totality of the situation. The complete picture emerges before us only when we combine the two. It also provides the immediate feedback, for example, we are talking to a person and then looking at the expressions of that individual we can make out how much has been internalized by that person or whether some more clarifications are required about a particular aspect.


These aspects make it very important in interpersonal and group interactions because more than half of what we try to say is communicated not through words, but through the nonverbal aspects of communication. Even though the codified studies of nonverbal aspects of communication is started much later we find that mankind has always been aware of its significance. In literature and in arts there have been in numerous references to it.


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Literary and Artistic Awareness

- Shakespeare often made allusions to eyes as expression of human character:
- “Let me see his eyes, that when I note another man like him, I may avoid him,” *Much Ado About Nothing*
- “I see a strange confession in thine eye,” *Henry IV*
- “Look not upon me, for thine eyes are wounding”, *Henry VI, Part II*



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The literary and artistic awareness can be traced as early as Shakespeare. Shakespeare has particularly alluded to the expression of eyes and he has often looked at eyes as an expression of human character. For example, in *Much Ado about Nothing* he says “Let me see his eyes, that when I note another man like him, I may avoid him” or in *Henry IV* he says “I see a strange confession in thine eye” or in *Henry VI, Part II*, he says “look not upon me, for thine eyes are wounding”. So, we can see that as early as the renaissance time people were aware of the significance of body language and what exactly was their role in communicating ideas, information and emotions to others.

In art also we find that various painters and artists have utilized richly the nonverbal aspects of communication.

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The Cardsharps


- Oil on canvas by Caravaggio, the famous Italian painter of the late 16th and early 17th century
- Drew on kinesics to paint libelous scenes from the low everyday life



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I particularly refer to this painting *The Cardsharps* by the famous Italian painter Caravaggio who had painted this particular canvas in late 16th or early 17th century and he has drawn on kinesics the body postures to paint a libelous scene from the low everyday life of his contemporary society.

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The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo

- A fresco painting, a part of the Sistine Chapel's ceiling, painted during 1508-12
- Iconic of humanity
- Fingers speak




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This particular fresco painting is an iconic painting by Michelangelo. It is a part of the Sistine Chapel's ceiling, which was painted during 1508-1512. It is an iconic representation of humanity where God himself is extending his hand to humanity and we

can look at the expression, which has been presented here with the way the fingers have started to talk to each other. So, simply by looking at the fingers we can try to make out the meaning which the artist wants to convey.

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- 19th Century Painting by Vishwanath Dhurandhar
- Scene at a Hindu wedding
- Each person has a distinct face, intricately detailed outfit, and dissimilar body language




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However the painting which is closest to my heart is a painting by one of my countrymen. This is a 19th century painting by Vishwanath Dhurandhar. In this particular painting he has presented before us- a scene at a Hindu wedding. We can look at it and find that each person has a distinct face, the outfit is also intricately detailed and the body language of each person who has been painted here is dissimilar. So, you would find that each character in this painting speaks a different language and we can make out the intentions, the sensitivities and the social standings simply by looking at the body language painted so cleverly by the artist here.

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- Continuous awareness
- Roman orators and rhetoricians – Cicero and Quintilian particularly – emphasized on harmony of speech, gesture and face and also recognized the significance of the tone of voice
- Elocution movement of 18th and 19th centuries – vocalizations and body movements
- Charles Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872)
 - Studied facial expressions in the context of evolutionary principles
 - Based on largely anecdotal data, yet many comments are still valid
- Codified Studies begin in the 20th century



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Even outside the domains of literature and fine arts we find that there has been a continuous professional awareness of body language. It has been used continuously by Roman orators and rhetoricians and I particularly referred to Cicero and Quintilian in particular who had emphasized on the harmony of a speech gesture and face and also recognize the significance of the tone of the voice.

It was particularly important in the contemporary rudimentary democratic situations. In the 18th and 19th centuries we find that the European elocution movement also emphasized on the body movements and vocalizations. The earliest academic study can be credited to Charles Darwin, whose work *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* was published in 1872. He studied facial expressions in the context of evolutionary principles. Even though his finding was based on largely anecdotal data, we find that most of the comments which Darwin had made in 1872 are still valid and they have got further validation on the basis of more recent scientific investigation.


However the codified academic study into the science of body language has started only in the 20th century. We find that it was in the 1940s rather late 1940s that at the University of Pennsylvania professor Ray Birdwhistell is started looking at the nonverbal aspects of communication. He was an anthropologist and very soon we find that several other people were drawn to this research. Several terms which we still use to study the field of body language, but invented by professor Ray Birdwhistell and his fellow

researchers. For example, (Refer Time: 14:33) Birdwhistell use the term kinesics in 1952.

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Beginnings of Codified Studies

- University of Pennsylvania in 1940's
- Anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell pioneered the original study of non-verbal communication. Used the term 'kinesics' (1952)
- George L. Trager used the term 'paralinguistics' in 1950s
- E.T.Hall used 'proxemics' (1959)
- Albert Mehrabian, UCLA
- They primarily studied NVCs to comprehend the structures of human interaction as a whole
- "Body language," the lay term for "nonverbal communication," was popularized in 1970 with the publication of *Body Language* by Julius Fast.



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George L Trager use the term 'paralinguistic's, somewhere around 1950s E T Hall used the word Proxemics in 1959. Professor Ray Birdwhistell was also joined by Albert Mehrabian was a faculty at UCLA and as I have read somewhere though I do not recall the exit reference, he was also perhaps a professionally trained ballet dancer. So, his insights into the art form also provided a study material to Professor Ray Birdwhistell.

Professor ray Birdwhistell and Albert Mehrabian is started to record people's reactions under lab control situations to find out the significance and the true nature of nonverbal aspects of communication, they primarily studied nonverbal aspects of communication which they termed as NVC in order to comprehend the structures of human interaction as a whole but very soon we find that this study started to have an overreaching influence over the contemporary fields of a study.

They had never use the word body language. In fact, in all their writings they have used consistently nonverbal aspects of communication or any of the terms which they had used earlier. However, 'body language' was a layman's term for 'nonverbal' aspects of communication which was popularized in 1970s with the publication of a book by Julius Fast. *Body language* was a title of this book and as sometimes happens the title becomes

catchier than the book, it also has happened with another book the title of which is *I'm Ok You're Ok*.

So, the same phenomena had happened with body language also we do not remember much about the book itself; however, the title has remained in our memory since then.

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Significance

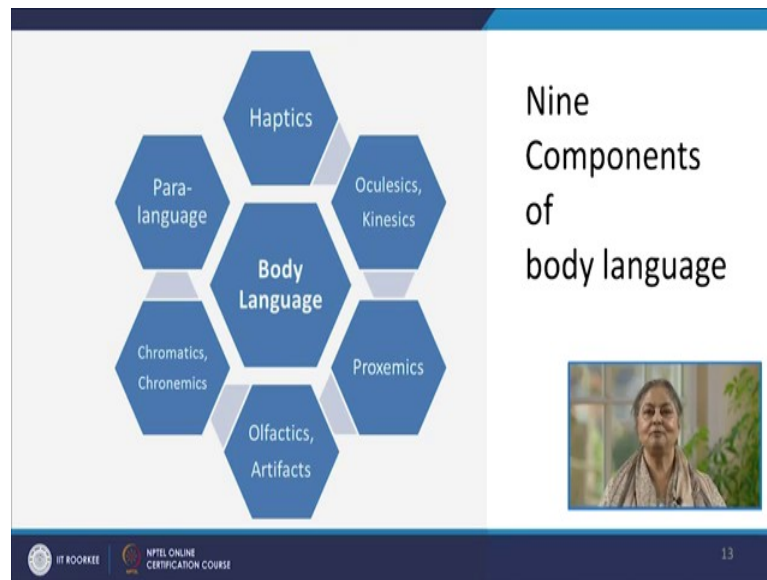
- These researchers noted and recorded almost a million non-verbal cues and signals.
- Albert Mehrabian suggested that the total impact of a message is a combination of:
 - Verbal Content 7%
 - Paralanguage 35% (tone of voice, inflection)
 - Body Language 58%
- Modified later

| Category | Percentage |
|---------------|------------|
| Verbal | 7% |
| Body Language | 55% |
| Tone | 38% |

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Now, what exactly is the significance of body language? These researchers, Professor Ray Birdwhistell and Mehrabian noted and recorded almost a million nonverbal cues and signals. Albert Mehrabian at one moment had suggested that the total impact of a message is a combination of verbal content paralanguage and body language. He had put verbal content at 7% paralanguage that is tone of the voice intonations inflections etcetera, at 35% and body language that is gestures postures eye contact etcetera at 58%. Even though he has later on modified it and said that it cannot be rigidly compartmentalized as it is. But the fact remains that in any face to face communication particularly the verbal content is the least important, what is more important is the body language, the kinesics aspects of it their facial features and the paralanguage.

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In this module I am listing 9 components of body language, which we are going to discuss in detail later on. So, let's look at them one by one.

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1. Proxemics

Different Kinds of Spaces

Analyzes the communicator's sense of physical distance with the recipient in terms of signals & codes

Intimate Personal Social

Public

Image: <https://www.slideshare.net/HarshParmar39/proxemics-and-chronemics>

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The first aspect of body language which we are going to study is Proxemics. Proxemics is a study which analyzes the communicators sense of physical distance with the recipient in terms of signals and codes; that means, how much distance we want to keep between the two of us, if it is a dyadic situation between us and the other people if it is an interpersonal group situation.

Now, at the same time we find that Proxemics does not only study the distance between the two or more interactants, it also looks at the arrangement of the space in different socio cultural patterns.

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2. Oculistics or study of Eye Movement

- Language of the eyes, Analyzes eyes behavior, movements and other eye-related non-verbal communication

ANGER FEAR JEALOUSY ANXIETY WORRY

Oculistics or Eye behavior

Image: <https://dahliasagacio.wordpress.com/2013/10/20/nonverbal-communication/>

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The second aspect which we shall study is known as **Oculistics** or the study of eye movement. Oculistics studies and analyzes the behavior of the eyes the language of the eyes the movements of the eyes and whether it is different in a right handed person and in a left handed person. So, these aspects are studied in Oculistics the different type of gazes and their interpretations in a professional world are important to understand for all of us.

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3. Haptics

Examples...



Language of touch/absence of touch
Analyzes communication done with human touch that conveys feelings and emotions



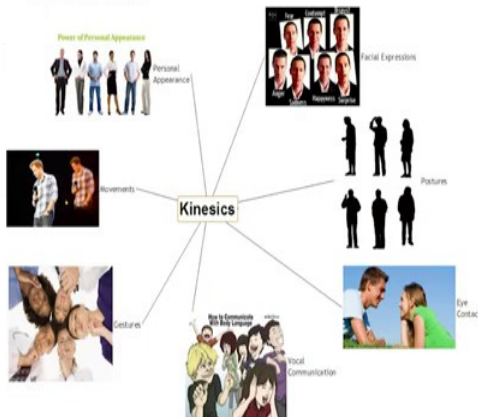
Image: <https://www.slideshare.net/ajiteshrivastava58/haptics-non-verbal-communication>

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The third aspect, which we shall look at is known as Haptics which is the language of touch or let us say it also studies the absence of touch in those situations, where it matters it analyzes communication which is done through human touch and how this touch communicates our feelings and emotions whether it is socially appropriate or not. In the visuals you can look at how the same touch can convey different attitudes and emotions to people.

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4. Kinesics



Personal Appearance

Movements

Gestures

Facial Expressions

Posture

Eye Contact

Social Communication

Analyses body gestures, postures, and movements of a communicator:

- Emblems
- Illustrators
- Affect Displays

Image: <https://www.thinglink.com/scene/528115086615642114>

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The fourth is Kinesics. Kinesics studies body gestures and postures in the movement of the people particularly. There are three aspects of Kinesics, which we shall study and these 3 aspects are known as Emblems, Illustrators and Affect Displays. Emblems looks at the codified meanings of fixed symbols. For example, the underwater swimmers coat has a particular codified meaning or for example, or traffic signal persons actions. So, or the language of the deaf and the dumb.

So, these are emblems and therefore, because it is a codified study of fixed symbols in their meanings we are not going to look at this aspect of kinesics. We would focus on the next two aspects that is illustrators and affect displays of kinesics. What exactly are illustrators?

These are those micro and macro signals which illustrate what we want to say. For example, if I want to say yes I would not speak it out with a deadpan face and say 'yes', I would rather say 'yes' or I would not say 'no' in a deadpan manner I would say 'no'. So, you would find that these expressions are illustrators no human being can speak without introducing some component of body language in one's communication.

It is true that those of us who are extroverts use body language in a much more relaxed manner our gestures and postures would be more expressive. On the other hand a person who is shy and introvert would be using less gestures, but it is very strange to look at a person using a speech without illustrating it with body language.

Affect displays are also a type of an illustrator. The only difference is that illustrators, illustrate the true intention of a person, but affect displays allow us to tell a lie.

Now there are certain social situations where a polite lie is perhaps expected. You might have visited a friend and you have being served a pudding or a piece of cake or some cookies, which are atrociously prepared. So, what do you say? "It's tasty" no, you would say "oh! It's so yummy it's so tasty" but you say it with a false smile in order to communicate your happiness and at the same time in order to appreciate the true sentiments over which it has been served to you.

So, sometimes you would find that these polite lies are the requirements of a society, these are affect displays. However, we cannot continuously use these affect displays to hide the true intention of our heart. Very soon within a couple of seconds, the true

intention comes out and therefore, affect displays can serve their purpose only for maybe a minute or two unless and until we are trained actors.

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5. Paralanguage

BODY LANGUAGE VS PARALANGUAGE

Paralanguage
The way in which you say words;
volume, pitch, speaking rate, voice quality

Paralanguage
Voice codes/ Silence
which provide nuances
in speech

Image: <https://www.difference.wiki/body-language-vs-paralanguage/>

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The fifth aspect of body language is known as paralanguage, it is everything which is related with our voice except the meaning of the words. We can pronounce the same word in order to convey different types of meanings. Those of us who are in teaching know how to use it very effectively, if there is a late comer in the class we may allow the late comer, but we would allow it with very effective paralanguage to convey what exactly we feel about that particular person. We can say ‘yes come in’ or ‘yes come in’ or ‘yes do come in’ (with different expressions). So, you would find that the anger, the irony is being expressed over this variation of tone with a variations of inflections. Sometimes it can be artificial, but most of the times it comes out naturally. Paralanguage is studies the voice codes and at the same time it also studies the silences in those places, where the words should have been spoken.

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6. Chronemics

Chronemics

What's Taking So Long?
Or
How Quickly Do We Want A Reply

Analyzes the role of time in communication:

- Individual
- Social
- Cultural

<https://thearticulateceo.typepad.com/a/6a0128763842f6970c0153910febb2970b-pi>

https://www.google.com/search?q=chronemics&source=images&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjU8j2093hAHUPIHAKHVNMB7UQ_AUIDg8&biw=1366&bih=637#imgsrc=fyf4_KnxkKrDhM

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The sixth aspect which we shall study is known as Chronemics, it analyzes the role of time and communication. We keep time in different ways we keep time as an individual, we keep time as a society we also have a cultural definition of time. So, these aspects of time would be studied in Chronemics.

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7. Chromatics

Nonverbal Communication

❖ Chromatics

❖ Use of color to communicate messages

Communication through colors, social aspects

Image: <https://www.slideshare.net/janethrines/chapter-7-im-project>

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Chromatics is a study of colors particularly the social aspects and we find that color is also used to communicate a particular type of message. So, these aspects we would study under chromatics.

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8. Olfactics

Olfactics

Smell
Positive and negative
Personal and Cultural

What would you prefer smelling ?



Image: https://www.slideshare.net/pratishtha_ram/non-verbal-communication-7463803

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Olfactics is based on our sense of a smell. A smell can be positive as well as a negative one. It can be a personal choice, but more often now we find that it has become a social and cultural choice. There are certain cultures in which it is almost compulsory to wear some type of a smell, there are certain cultures in which smells are particularly the smells we wear on our body are frowned upon. So, it is a personal statement, but more so, it is also a social and professional statement. So, we would study its significance under Olfactics.

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9. Artifacts

"The Apparel Oft Proclaims the Man," (Shakespeare)

Artifacts analyze communicator's sense of dressing, style of putting make-up, accessories on body etc. as a statement of personality and emotions



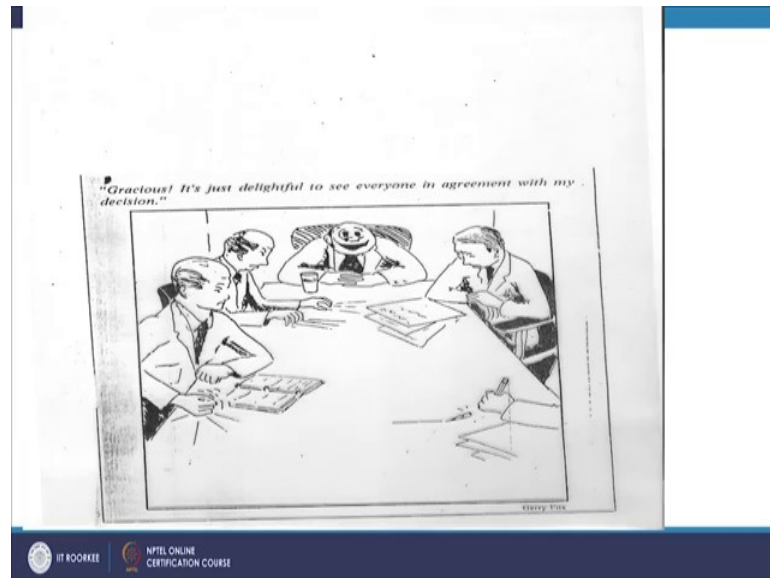
Image: <http://amitturanonverbalcommunication.blogspot.com/>

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The ninth aspect of body language which we shall study is about the Artifacts. Artifacts analyzed communicator's sense of dressing style of putting makeup accessories on body etcetera which become a statement of personality and emotions. This is not exactly a part of our body, but at the same time we study it is a part of body language because like our body gestures and postures etcetera, it is an extension of what we want to say.


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If we look at this particular slide, we would find that the meaning of body language becomes clear to us. Every single person who is attending this meeting except the supervisor or the boss is conveying a negative emotion, but this negativity has not been translated into the words. So, we can either ignore words, but then we would only have 50% of the communication. On the other hand, we find that the body language suggests something which is not being communicated through the silence.

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- "Nonverbal communication involves those nonverbal stimuli in a communication setting that are generated by both the source [speaker] and his or her use of the environment and that have potential message value for the source or receiver [listener]" (Samovar et al, quoted in Tidwell, 2018)
- Basically it is sending and receiving messages in a variety of ways with/without the use of verbal codes (words)
- It is both intentional and unintentional
- Most speakers / listeners are not conscious of this (Tidwell 2018)
- Two or three minutes' control
- Inter-cultural aspects



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So, nonverbal aspects of communication involve those nonverbal stimuli in a situation, where we not only look at the message which is being communicated through words, but we are also looking at what type of nonverbal aspects have been used by the source that is the sender as well as by the receiver or by the listener.


So, we would find that it can be intentional and it can also be unintentional though most of the time, it is unintentional. Most of the times we find that a speakers are not even conscious of their own body language. Sometimes when we want to use it with certain intention as we might do in our use of affect displays this particular aspect of kinesics we find that we can control it in a very limited manner, we cannot control it for more than 2 minutes or maximum 3 minutes. And that is why in most of the spoken competitions the time which we said is at least 3 minutes.

At the same time our body language is also a product of our society and culture. The inter-cultural aspects of body language are so important that if we ignore them it can lead to certain misgivings and misunderstandings. These aspects of cultural variations and differences would be a compulsory part of each of our discussion.

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Scope & Relevance of Body Language

- Highly competitive professions –
 - Body language renders a sense of analysis and interpretation regarding the intentions, attitudes, and orientations of the interactants in every field
 - Patient Counselling Sessions, Physiotherapists, Rehabilitation Centers, Nurses, Treating patients afflicted with diseases like Alzheimer and Dementia
 - Care Givers of children with special needs, School teachers
 - People working as Information Analysts
 - Criminologists, FBI interrogators and profilers, People working for police
 - Practicing lawyers, Professionals working with juvenile delinquents
- Its knowledge averts misinterpretations, conflicts and antagonism that often occur amongst people
- Managing our own Body Language enables us to have maximum effect in work situations, being interviewed for a job, a promotion, everyday dealings with colleagues



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We would find that in our highly competitive professions body language has become more and more important. As the nature and demands of different professions is growing, we find that our understanding of body language would help us in understanding the intentions and attitudes of the people and at the same time it would provide us a better orientation.

Whether it is related with patient counseling or physiotherapies or rehabilitation courses on nurses etcetera or whether it is the job of a caregiver of children with special needs or it is the job of a school teacher or people who are working as information analyst or criminologists or FBI of police interrogators etcetera or practicing lawyers managers or even, us, simple university teachers. So, you would find that an understanding of body language helps us in avoiding the misinterpretations and conflicts and antagonists in different situations.


We would be able to pass on our ideas with better confidence and with better effectiveness in any situation if we understand the significance of our own body language and at the same time we would emerge as a better listener also, because we would be looking at not only the meaning which is conveyed through words, but also the meaning which is conveyed through the nonverbal aspects of our communication.

So, in different work situations we would find that an understanding of our body language is very important.

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Contextualizing Body Language

- Individual Differences
- Cultural aspects
 - In Japan, listeners are taught to focus on a speaker's neck in order to avoid eye contact
 - In the U.S., listeners are encouraged to gaze into a speaker's eyes
 - China
 - Middle East
- Gender based stereotypes




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Whereas it is important to understand body language, we find that contextualizing our body language is equally important. The individual differences do exist. Our body language is not a duplicate of anyone else's body language normally and at the same time there are cultural differences also as we have referred to. For example, in Japan listeners particularly women are taught to focus on a speaker's neck in order to avoid eye contact. In China as well as in Middle East a one has to pay respect to the other person, the eye contact is normally avoided. On the other hand in the USA listeners are encouraged to have a direct eye contact and to gaze into the speakers eyes.

At the same time we would find that there are certain cultural stereotypes which are based on gender differences. In those cultures, when the gender equality is practically nonexistent we find that these stereotypes have a greater hold on people and in different situations a particularly in intercultural and interracial situations, these signals can often be misread. It is therefore, particularly important for us to focus on the cultural differences, the gender stereotypes and the use of body language and the necessity of contextualizing our body language.

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- Language – so is Body Language - is made up of
 - Words, Sentences, Paragraphs, or their equivalents
- Each gesture is like a single word and one word may have several meanings
 - For example, in English, the word 'dressing' has at least ten meanings including the act of putting on clothing, a sauce for food, stuffing for a fowl, an application for a wound, fertiliser and grooming for a horse. (Pease 21)
- A sentence corresponds to observation of clusters of gestures and/or postures etc., similarity of verbal and non-verbal clues
- Paragraph corresponds to contexts, even though basic non-verbal signs are almost universal
 - For example, when people are happy they smile; when they are sad or angry they frown or scowl



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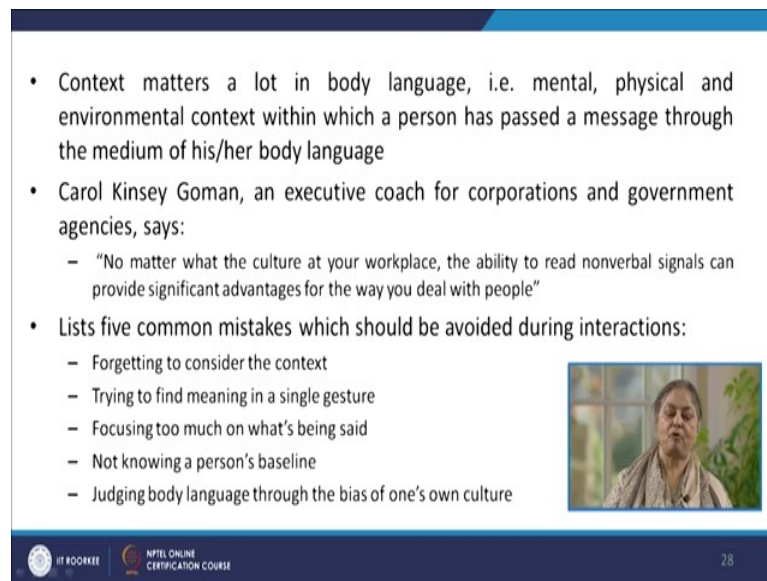
A language is made up of words, sentences and paragraphs. Body language is also made up of similarly words, sentences and paragraphs. Each gesture is like a single word and as we know a word may have different meaning. Here I have quoted an example, which have been used by Allan Pease. He has referred to an English word dressing which has at least ten different meanings including the act of putting on clothing, a sauce for food, stuffing for a fowl etcetera. Even a simple word like 'wood' may have different meanings and connotations. So, if we are using a single word the meaning does not become clear. In the same way we find a gesture is like a single word. A frown on our face is like a single word, which can have different meanings. If you put the same word in a sentence then it has a better clarity and a sentence in body language has an equivalence in a clusters of gestures and or postures.

For example, we may say wood and it may have some different meanings. In the same way, a single smile or a single frown may have different possible meanings. We put the word in a sentence. I need a piece of wood. So, the idea becomes clear we look at this smile, we look at the movement of a person we listen to the paralanguage and then it becomes a sentence to us. Then we put a sentence into a para and try to contextualize it- "I need a piece of wood it is so hot", "let us have some fire in the garden". So, now, it has become a properly worded paragraph which conveys a contextual meaning, which cannot be debated easily.


The paragraph has its equivalents in nonverbal aspects of communication with the introduction of cultural variations, gender stereotypes as well as certain time gaps. If we keep on looking at a person and look at the cultural differences, look at the gender stereotypes and learn to avoid them and also have a significant couple of minutes to watch the body language of a person it becomes an equivalent of a paragraph.

So, that is why we find that the need to contextualize body language is very important. It is tempting to decipher the body language of a person after listening to a talk after having gone through an article or a popular book, but let us not hurry into looking at a fixed meaning simply by looking at a particular idea or a particular gesture. For example, I may rub my nose, it is known as a difference of gesture as we would discuss later on, but right now maybe I am suffering from a bad cold and I have an itching. So, you would find that jumping into conclusion on the basis of a single isolated gesture is never helpful.

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- Context matters a lot in body language, i.e. mental, physical and environmental context within which a person has passed a message through the medium of his/her body language
- Carol Kinsey Goman, an executive coach for corporations and government agencies, says:
 - “No matter what the culture at your workplace, the ability to read nonverbal signals can provide significant advantages for the way you deal with people”
- Lists five common mistakes which should be avoided during interactions:
 - Forgetting to consider the context
 - Trying to find meaning in a single gesture
 - Focusing too much on what’s being said
 - Not knowing a person’s baseline
 - Judging body language through the bias of one’s own culture



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So, now we can see that contextualizing body language is important, if you overlook the context we run into the danger of misreadings and nonverbal aspects of communication.

The five common mistakes which have been referred to by Carol Goman can be listed over here, which we tend to make in interpreting body language of other people. We may forget to consider the context or associate the meaning with a single gesture, we focus too much on what is being said with the help of words we do not know what has been the

starting point of a person and we just the body language of another person through the bias of one's own culture.

So, in this lecture we have discussed the basic definitions of body language, the emergence of body language as a field of a study over the passage of time, its significance in the scope and different aspects of body language, which we would study. In our next lecture we would begin our discussion of these different aspects gradually.

Thank you.