

This chapter from a recent interpersonal communication text begins with the same point we made at the start of the last chapter: In actual communicating, you can't really separate the verbal and the nonverbal. As Ted Grove puts it, in real life, "There are no separate chapters." Grove also emphasizes that another distinction we use for thinking and talking about communication is difficult to apply in practice—the distinction between the expression or production of cues ("exhaling") and the reception or experience of cues ("inhaling"). But this distinction can help organize some of what we know about nonverbal communicating into an understandable whole.

Grove uses the 'expressive functions' heading to talk about kinds or types of nonverbal communicating, including "vocalics"—the rate, pitch, volume, and tone variations in the human voice—and "kinesics," or body movement. He also distinguishes among kinds of cues by the function they perform—illustrating, adapting, displaying emotions, etc. He concludes this section with a discussion of five characteristics of nonverbal cues which helps explain how they work.

Then he shifts perspective from the "exhaling" side to "inhaling" and talks about how nonverbal communicating gets interpreted. For example, we draw conclusions from nonverbal cues about how responsive a person is and about what the power balance is between us and them. We also use nonverbal cues to give us insights into how the other person is feeling. Grove talks about how "nonverbal leakage" works in communication, and how we interpret nonverbal cues to detect when someone is lying. He concludes the chapter by emphasizing that no nonverbal cue "means" anything by itself, because each has to be interpreted in relation to the context in which it's experienced.

This reading provides a general overview of the nonverbal cues that affect conversations the most. The other selections in this chapter focus more on specifics.

Nonverbal Elements of Interaction

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... In ongoing dyadic interaction, verbal and nonverbal behavior occur together and influence one another. There are no separate chapters. Nonverbal and verbal behavior are *produced* concurrently as part of the holistic larger pattern of individuals' behavior and are *experienced* as integrated patterns by the actor and observer alike.

Similar to the verbal elements, nonverbal behavior forms part of both the *expressive* and *interpretive* domains of dyadic interaction. As such, nonverbal elements con-

tribute in a powerful way to the course of interaction episodes and, thereby, to the texture of conversations and the definition of relationships. However, in many fundamental respects, the nonverbal codes differ greatly from the verbal. . . .

Expressive Functions of Nonverbal Behavior

The Domains of Nonverbal Behavior

Similar to the verbal dimension, nonverbal behavior is a primary element of dyadic interaction. Nonverbal interactional behavior has been classified into 1) *vocalics* and 2) *kinesics*. Other nonverbal categories, having an important but somewhat less direct connection with interaction are physical appearance or *person-objects*, use of time or *chronemics*, and physical objects and their arrangements or *artifacts*.

Vocalics refers to the sound of our voice in the production of utterances and other nonlinguistic vocalizations like yawns, throat-clearing, and vocalized pauses (Traeger 1958). Vocalic factors include voice quality, rate of speech, pitch, loudness, duration of phonation, latency of reply, hesitations, dialects, regionalisms, and others. Many of these vocalic variables combine to produce what is popularly known as "inflection."

Kinesics (Birdwhistell 1955; 1970) refers to movement and can be extended to a broad range of behaviors that rely on movement for their effects. These include *postural-gestural* behavior, *face displays*, *gaze*, *proxemics*, and *haptics*. Postural-gestural behavior generally includes position and movement of the head, limbs, hands, torso, hips, as well as overall posture, postural shifts, and orientation of head and shoulders with respect to the conversational partner.

Face displays refers to all of those expressions, both large and subtle, which we produce by manipulating the network of facial musculature as we interact, including the so-called "impassive" expression where the face is very still. To the reader, the term "display" may suggest a self-conscious manipulation of these expressions to create a kind of window dressing. But, as we shall see, that is not necessarily the case. Facial displays frequently occur quite automatically in connection with the experiencing and expression of various feelings and emotions.

Gaze refers to the way we use our eyes during conversation: where we look, how frequently we maintain eye contact or mutual gaze with the other person, the duration of our gaze, and conditions associated with changes in gaze behavior. Gaze has been examined in infants and young children and mother/infant interactions as well as in adult conversational settings (Argyle and Cook 1976; Cappella 1981).

Proxemics has to do with the use of space and the physical distance between interactants (Burgoon and Jones 1976; Patterson 1968). It has been observed that the distance between people varies as a function of their immediate engagement level in the conversation, their relationship, and a number of situational factors.

Haptics refers to the study of touching behavior and has been found to function in concert with specific contexts to elicit a wide variety of meaning in the interacting parties. Twelve distinctly different meanings of touch have been identified and include support, appreciation, inclusion, sexual interest or intent, affection, playful affection, playful aggression, compliance, attention-getting, announcing a response, greetings, and departure (Jones and Yarbrough 1985).

Another well-known set of distinctions classifies nonverbal behavior on the basis of the kind of meanings it functions to create—what it *does* in the interaction (Ekman and Friesen 1969). The five categories in this scheme are illustrators, regulators, emblems, adaptors, and affect displays. Illustrators are those gestures that support or complement the meaning of the utterance. For example, one uses an illustrator when one points while saying, "...then you take a left. . . ." Regulators refer to the way we use the whole body, even the head, eyes, and voice, to regulate the flow of our interaction. For example, when we touch someone to get their attention, turn toward someone as we interrupt, or back away as we terminate a conversation, we are using regulators.

Emblems consist mainly of head, shoulder, arm, and hand signals that have precise, usually quite specific meanings, such as waving "good-bye," shrugging "I don't know," and nodding "yes." Emblems differ from the rest of interactive nonverbal behavior in that, like language symbols, they have a specific denotative value—a relatively stable designated meaning, regardless of context. More on this, later.

A fourth category in this functional classification scheme is adaptors. Adaptors bear little consistent relationship to the content of conversation; however, occasionally they have been observed being used to emphasize some point. Some adaptors are widely used. Examples are rubbing the back of one's neck while pondering a verbal response and touching one's chin or forehead during interaction. Other adaptors are idiosyncratic behaviors, perhaps habituated by the individual as nervous habits and eventually incorporated into their interactive behavior. Television talk-show host Johnny Carson has offered a virtual encyclopedia of adaptors with his stylized, jerky, roosterlike head movements, tie-touching, pencil play, and other behaviors.

Finally, affect displays refers to nonverbal expression of emotions, utilizing primarily facial expressions (Ekman and Friesen 1975). Studying facial affect displays in several cultures, investigators have identified some universally observed patterns of facial movements during expression of the emotions of happiness, fear, surprise, sadness, anger, and disgust. While public facial displays of each of these emotions may vary across cultures, private expressions of each are quite similar. Four display rules that seem to govern when particular emotions are publicly displayed within specific cultures have been identified (Ekman and Friesen 1971).

One display rule is to *intensify*—make the emotional involvement bigger than it really is. For example, facial displays of pleasure as we greet invited guests in our own culture suggest the "intensify" rule. "We're just sooo happy you could come!" In contrast, we seem to *de-intensify* our public disappointment or sadness upon being passed over for some sought-after honor or prize and, in some situations, de-intensify our joy when we gain the honor. Some situations and some publicly visible roles prescribe that individuals *neutralize* their facial affect displays for certain emotions. For example, the behavior of judges in the courtroom and of referees at athletic contests rarely include expressions of glee at the outcomes of the trials and games over which they preside, even though privately they must be happier over some outcomes than others. Finally, some situations seem to call for suppressing displays of a particular emotion by *masking* it with a different one. Losers of Miss America "talent" contests smile brightly while the winner cries and, in the presence of a girlfriend or comrades, teenage American boys and "macho" men have been observed to mask fear with anger.

While many emotions are expressed as *full* facial displays, those rules sometimes influence the way emotions are displayed on the face. For example, de-intensification as well as inept attempts to neutralize sometimes lead to *partial* facial involvement. As

a small boy I recall swinging furiously and futilely, trying to hit another in the stomach, while my much larger adversary calmly held me at bay at arm's length with one hand on the top of my head. To my humiliation, the teacher who broke up the "fight" ineptly neutralized her amusement, resulting in a partial facial display. In similar fashion, inept attempts at masking may lead to facial *blends*, a merging of the suppressed and the superimposed emotions. For example, part of the face may reflect surprise, while another part reveals the anger one is actually feeling.

Five Characteristics of Nonverbal Codes

① Contrasting nonverbal behavior with our linguistic interactive behavior will illustrate several fundamental properties of how the nonverbal codes function. First, unlike verbal behavior, we engage in nonverbal action constantly throughout a conversation, when we are not talking as well as when we are talking. We wrinkle the nose, scratch, turn our head toward or away from the other person, nod, stop nodding, and the like. Therefore, each party to a conversation is *unceasingly engaged in nonverbal behavior*, regardless of whether one is talking or is listening to the utterances of the other person.

② Second, except for some noninteractive aspect like physical appearance and artifacts, one's nonverbal behaviors are produced more thoughtlessly and, therefore, are largely *out of the behavior's awareness*, relative to the more consciously selected verbal behavior. This characteristic has a number of important implications for observing the partner's nonverbal behavior, discussed in a later section.

There is some indication that we are even less aware of some of our nonverbal behaviors than of others. We tend to be more aware of our face and head than of what we are doing with the rest of our body. For example, we are able to produce "social smiles" at appropriate times in the interaction. Moreover, generally low self-awareness seems to be even lower with respect to the lower regions of the body, being lower in the legs and extremities (feet and hands) than in the head and arms.

③ A third difference is that while our words bear an arbitrary relationship to what they are supposed to represent, with a few exceptions (like emblems) individual nonverbal behaviors do not have arbitrarily assigned denotative meanings. They are *iconic* (Burgoon 1985) representations of meaning and do not possess the designated character of spoken words. For example, the spoken word "chair" is a designated set of sounds and could be replaced by "spurk" or any other equally arbitrary set of sounds, as long as members of our language community all agreed upon that usage. The meaning is *outside of* the actual behavior. On the other hand, if I motion to a chair as you enter the room, the gesture I make literally models the action it represents.

④ Fourth, while the meanings elicited by spoken words and language utterances are dependent, to some extent, on the context in which they are uttered, the meaning of nonverbal behavior is *more exclusively a function of contextual factors* just because they do lack conventional definition. Even the variety of meanings associated with the simple act of touching or being touched are heavily dependent on the context, including the verbal and other nonverbal behaviors as well as relational and situational factors (Jones and Yarbrough 1985).

Regardless of the different connotations elicited in different listeners, the word "father" refers to a fixed biological relationship; that designated core of meaning is relatively stable irrespective of connotation or context. But a particular nonverbal act lacks such linguistically conferred stability—lacks a core of consistent meaning. The same behaviors are used in connection with quite different, sometimes opposite, mean-

ings, and those meanings are rooted in the context where the behavior occurs. For example, given a slight shift in context, my pointing toward the door could convey, "Godspeed!" or, "Get out of my office!" With the exception of emblems, each little movement does not have a meaning of its own. For that and other reasons, scholars have little faith in the *body-language* view of nonverbal behavior (Burgoon and Saine 1978). This contextual feature of nonverbal behavior will be elaborated in the next section interpreting nonverbal behavior.

- ③ Fifth, specific nonverbal behaviors are always produced as one part of a larger pattern along with other nonverbal behaviors; that is, they are *integrated*. That means we tend to produce nonverbal behaviors in concurrent sets and coordinated *sequences* rather than as single isolated behaviors. For example, typical smiling behavior may involve, in addition to an upturned mouth, crinkling the skin at the temples, cheek movements, and the like. Laughing may be accompanied by total bodily involvement including postural changes and momentary withdrawal of eye contact. Although the words in our utterances also follow combinational patterns prescribed by rules of syntax, we are able to select and utter any given single word or verbal expression in isolation from all others. We can select language segments to include in our utterances. But we would have a hard time segmenting our muscles to produce only a "lip smile." Try as we might, our cheek, nose, jaw and chin muscles, perhaps our eyes, would join in. All of these ways in which nonverbal behavior differs from verbal behavior have important consequences for interpreting the nonverbal behavior of one's interactional partner.

The Interpretive Functions of Nonverbal Behavior

As indicated in the introductory discussion of this chapter, nonverbal behavior may be viewed both in terms of its expressive role and its interpretive role in dyadic interaction. The immediately preceding material introduced nonverbal functioning from the perspective of the actor. Here, we shift gears to interpretive processes by exploring those important topics from the perspective of the observer. These explorations are organized into sections on strong nonverbal messages, nonverbal leakage, clues to deception, and the contextual interpretation of nonverbal behavior.

Strong Nonverbal Messages

Our interpretations of nonverbal behavior are certainly a crucial part of the interpersonal communication process. Based on an analysis of results from twenty-four studies comparing verbal and nonverbal behavior, Philpott found verbal interaction was associated with only 31 percent of elicited meaning, while nonverbal interaction, alone and coupled with verbal, accounted for the remaining 69 percent (Burgoon 1985). While the linguistic aspect of others' utterances can provide us with very precise information and distinctions not available through observation of nonverbal behavior alone, the latter seems to outstrip the contributions of verbal behavior with respect to a number of interpretive functions. Three of these include responsiveness, dominance relations, and expression of feeling.

Responsiveness Interpretations "Responsiveness interpretations" refer to our sense of how engaged the partner is in our interaction—to what extent the other is lis-

tening to and *involved* in the give-and-take of our exchange. How do you know whether someone is listening carefully to what you are saying—listening at the very peak of their effort? There are several clues provided by your *own* listening function. For example, when your conversational partner asks a targeted question, one which required careful attention to your previous remarks, you know they have been listening attentively. Or if the partner paraphrases what you just said or asks you to elaborate on or repeat something you ineptly expressed, you know he or she has been attentive at some level. Certainly, numerous “yeah’s,” “I see’s,” and other verbal prompts and acknowledgments (or lack of them) add to one’s sense of how well the other is listening. But more often and with great accuracy, we interpret how well someone is listening from our observation of their nonverbal behavior.

Behaviors called *backchanneling* (Duncan 1975) are indicative that one is continuing to listen. These may include head nods, eye contact, vocalic cues, leaning in, sitting close, standing close, direct shoulder and head orientation, alert body posture, and the like. People vary somewhat in their propensity to provide such backchannels when listening and to need them when talking. An acquaintance required constant and direct eye contact in all circumstances, whether talking or listening. Once, it was my misfortune to be in the backseat of his car as he chatted constantly, shooting frequent glances at me as we careened along at high speeds over narrow winding country roads. Despite my increasingly desperate “uh-huh’s,” “right’s,” and “yeah’s,” he seemed to need, above all else, the sign of responsiveness that only my eye contact could provide.

Unlike my friend, most of us are content to observe whatever nonverbal signs of responsiveness the situation permits. These interpretations of another’s responsiveness pertain not only to the other’s listening, but to whether the other is interested in continued interaction or even starting a conversation in the first place. We rarely need to talk about these things, because we usually can observe the partner’s eye gaze, head orientation, body posture and movement, and vocalics, and draw our own fairly accurate conclusions at a given moment.

Interpretations of Dominance Relations “Dominance relations” refers to the power relationship between the partner and oneself. . . . One tends to convey a sense of being a subordinate, a peer, or one of superior status by eye behavior, postural attitude, use of space, and the like. For example, while speaking we tend to gaze most at partners with moderate positional power, somewhat less toward high-power partners, and least toward low-power partners (Knapp 1978).

One’s nonverbal behavior may be *deference-demanding*, *deferential*, or *neutral* with respect to dominance relations (Dovidio and Ellyson 1982). Observing a conversation from afar, one obtains a pretty accurate idea of how the interacting parties perceive their own dominance pattern. For example, individuals who perceive themselves as lower status or subordinate to the interaction partner tend to maintain more tense musculature and more erect, less relaxed postural attitudes. This feature has been recognized for thousands of years in the military services and ritualized in the command of “attention!” and its historical precursors, directed at lower ranking individuals and groups.

Gaze behavior also conveys different power impressions. Both large amounts of gaze while speaking and small amounts of gaze while listening convey the impression of high power (Dovidio and Ellyson 1982). With these and many more signs of dominance relations available, it is rarely necessary to be told, “I feel we are equals,” or, “I am your boss,” or even, “I feel that I am not in control here.” Careful observation of

the other's nonverbal behavior in a few seconds of interaction usually tells you all you need to know about deference and other trappings of dominance relations in a given dyad.

Interpretations of Feelings Our judgments concerning the immediate feelings of the other party usually rely more on our observation of nonverbal behavior than on what the other is saying. We arrive at these judgments through observation of facial affect displays, postural cues, and the like. Words need to be decoded into symbolic meaning denoted in our language system. But, as discussed earlier, nonverbal signals do not require such processing. Our reactions to combinations of gestures, bodily posture, tones of voice, and facial expressions provide instantaneous clues to the feeling states of the partner (Burgoon 1985). As one begins to tell us how they feel about something, we most frequently have a pretty good idea of their emotional state, even before the utterance has been completed. Additional bases for the nonverbal contribution to our capacity to interpret one another's feelings are examined in the subsequent discussion of "nonverbal leakage."

Summary

Judee Burgoon (1985) characterizes the difference between how we use the verbal and nonverbal codes as follows. We place more importance on verbal cues for factual, abstract, and persuasive meanings, but place more importance on nonverbal cues for relational, attributional, emotional, and attitudinal meanings. In general, we are influenced more by our partner's language behavior with respect to *objective, denotative information*, and more by his or her nonverbal behavior with respect to *relational, connotative information*. In large part, that division of labor reflects the different limitations of the nonverbal and verbal codes.

Nonverbal Leakage

The spontaneous, out-of-awareness way in which nonverbal behavior is produced also provides a *direct* indicator of the other's feelings. This is in contrast to our interpretation of verbal behavior, which is dependent on the other's awareness of and willingness to verbally express his or her emotional states. Through such *nonverbal leakage*, subtle feelings may be accurately perceived and much faster than it takes to utter a short sentence (Ekman and Friesen 1969). Although we do talk about our feelings more than, for example, our dominance relations, by the time we say, "I'm happy" or, "I'm angry," those words are often unnecessary. The other often knows just how happy or angry we are through observation of our nonverbal behavior. Although the emotional states of some people are more guarded or impassive than others, at some level we all wear our spleens, as well as our hearts, on our sleeves.

Nonverbal leakage is presented through those nonverbal signs which are outside of the awareness of the behavior and which may contain information about the internal state (thoughts, feelings, attitudes) of the one who exhibits the behavior. The professor who frequently misses or is late for student appointments but who is unceasingly punctual for meetings with the Dean of the College may be "leaking" his or her orientation about dominance relations and what he or she feels is appropriate behavior there. "Yeah, I'm listening" may be uttered in a tone of voice and with facial affect that suggests the opposite would be a more accurate statement.

This leakage exerts a strong influence on how we view the interacting partner. When what the other says is clearly discrepant with what he or she does and how he or she says it, the nonverbal interpretation is the more credible of the two interpreta-

tions. On those occasions when what the partner *says* seems disparate with what the partner *does* with body and voice, the observer trusts his or her nonverbal behavior interpretation over the verbal. However, as the correspondence between verbal and nonverbal behavior increases toward the point of no discrepancy, we give more and more weight to the verbal implications (Burgoon 1985).

Sometimes someone intentionally displays discrepant verbal/nonverbal behavior to achieve some effect. For example, old friends meeting after a long separation have been observed directing the most unflattering remarks at one another ("you old so-and-so") with voices and facial expressions that leave no doubt they are indeed good friends. In the other direction, coupling verbal expressions of positive evaluation with nonverbal behavior that suggests negative feeling is such a frequent occurrence that we have a special term for it—"sarcasm."

In instances where we observe discontinuity between verbal and nonverbal behavior, it is not certain why we place greater trust in our interpretations of the nonverbal. It may be we sense the difficulties we all have in monitoring our own nonverbal behavior and, therefore, find the nonverbal behavior of others more credible than their words. Perhaps, without even thinking about it in any orderly fashion, we register that nonverbal behavior is more automatic and out-of-awareness than one's language utterances and is, therefore, less subject to control.

Clues to Deception

Clues to deception are a special kind of nonverbal leakage. These are instances where observed discrepancies between utterance and nonverbal behavior or other observations suggest the speaker may be actively attempting to conceal or misrepresent something during interaction. Again these are instances where the words say one thing, but the nonverbal behavior does not seem to "fit." Some features that have been found to occasionally accompany deceitful utterances include shortened response latency to questions and increases in adaptor gestures and in foot, hand, and leg movement, and decreases in eye contact, in physical directness in head and shoulders, and in illustrator gestures (Knapp and others 1987).

Most investigators believe that the most reliable cues to deception exist in those nonverbal behaviors over which we have the least self-conscious control and which are therefore most subject to leakage. John Hocking and Dale Leathers' (1980) ideas have guided several recent efforts to isolate reliable clues to deceptive intent during interaction. They suggest that deceivers who are motivated to avoid detection 1) *suppress controllable behaviors* stereotypical of liars in an attempt to avoid appearing like liars, 2) while at the same time *increasing less controllable behaviors* that are also indicative of anxiety during lying. Controllable behaviors might include various head, foot, leg, and hand-to-face movements, and gaze avoidance. Liars have been observed exhibiting increased vocal nervousness and dysfluencies, shorter response latencies (pre-reply pauses), shorter hesitation pauses (within-turn pauses), and briefer answers than truth-tellers (Cody and O'Hair 1983). In addition, during falsification individuals have been observed to decrease the stereotyped and controllable liar behaviors such as postural shifts. Among other effects, such adjustments result in an abnormally still body during interaction.

It is likely that individuals who rely almost exclusively for their interpretations on the partner's utterances place themselves at a disadvantage in a few of their important encounters. At the same time, the reader needs to be aware that none of the above are infallible indicators of intentional deceit, for reasons discussed in the next section.

Contextual Interpretation of Nonverbal Behavior

Notwithstanding the immediately preceding discussions of leakage and clues to deception, *contextual* interpretations of another's nonverbal behavior are more likely to be valid than single-cue "body language" interpretations. Observers' judgments of what behaviors represent are more likely to be accurate when observers take into account the total context in which the behavior occurs and when those judgments are based on observation of whole sets or sequences of nonverbal behaviors. Stated another way, our judgments are likely to be wrong when they are based on interpretation of a single behavior in isolation from its context.

With few exceptions (like *emblems*), individual nonverbal acts do not have conventional assigned meanings. They are produced in combination with other nonverbal and verbal behaviors in holistic patterns. Some important contextual features include what has been and is being said in the interactional episode, the setting of the interaction, why it is taking place, the relationship between the parties, and how the partner usually behaves. Several reasons compel this emphasis on the wisdom of contextual interpretations of nonverbal behavior.

1. *First*, the same behavior supports very different interpretations in different contexts. For example, arm-stretching could be indicative of relaxation, of dominance, of boredom or even represent a nervous adaptor, given specific situations. There is ample evidence that the one-meaning-for-every-behavior fallacy is likely to mislead our attempts to interpret accurately. For example, among other things decreased eye gaze can represent dislike or submissiveness or rejection, and complete withdrawal of gaze can be associated with extreme anxiety. Heightened gaze can reflect liking or can intensify either the positive or the negative values of uttered sentiments (Bowers and others 1985). Steady eye gaze during a plea for help calls for a very different interpretation than a steady gaze accompanied by "Stop it!" As indicated earlier, the simple act of touching the other person can represent a very large number of different meanings (Jones and Yarbrough 1985), all rooted in the specific interactional context in which the touching occurred.

A class of senior law students once sought support for the *body language* fallacy from a guest who had been invited to speak on nonverbal signs of deception in deposition-taking and witness-stand behavior. These future attorneys were understandably interested in learning about behaviors that could "tip off" a witness's deceptive utterances, and they were particularly interested in eye gaze behavior. But they learned that withdrawal of eye gaze is also frequently associated with stressful moments. Testifying in a legal proceeding would be very stressful for most people. Undoubtedly, observation of nonverbal leakage may provide information that enhances interactional effectiveness, but there are no shortcuts across the terrain of contextual interpretation.

2. *Second*, reasonably accurate interpretations must be based on several behaviors, because any single behavior occurs within a framework of many other behaviors. For example, the presence of any one of the behaviors associated with active listening does not automatically mean the partner is responsive to your comments. At one time or another all of us have faked attention by maintaining eye contact and throwing in an occasional head nod.

By the same reasoning, absence of a specific sign of responsivity does not necessarily indicate poor listening. The grade school student who is

admonished to "sit up and listen" may actually have been listening very carefully. Some of us slouch our way through school. Because a friend stands farther away while talking to you does not mean he/she likes you any less at the moment. But, if the same friend simultaneously talks impersonally with lower-than-normal eye contact while facing less directly than usual and unexpectedly ends the conversation without explanation, one is probably justified in concluding that all is not well.

3. *Third*, even if you interpret the behavior correctly, you may be wrong in your inference about the implications of that interpretation, until you fully understand the context. For example, laughter ranks among the most unequivocal nonverbal behaviors one will ever observe; it usually means the laugher thinks something is funny. Yet, one still must infer the source of the laugher's amusement. On one occasion, a professor made what he thought was a witty remark before turning to the blackboard. Sensing something was amiss when the anticipated chuckle gave way to a roar, he turned to face the class, clearly puzzled. A sympathetic student pointed out the professor's V-neck sweater was on backwards.

Sometimes information required for accurate inferences is simply not available at the time the nonverbal behavior occurs. A graduate student and mother of two small children was taking an independent study from her professor/adviser. During one of their meetings, she was markedly more responsive and cheerful than usual. She smiled frequently, was more animated, and her voice conveyed pleasure and excitement throughout. At the end of the meeting the professor asked if she thought the material covered held promise for her dissertation topic. She replied she would "think about that later when I calm down." Just before the meeting, she had received a check for over a year of delinquent child support. When a behavior is viewed in isolation from the context in which it occurred, one's interpretations are more likely to be inaccurate. Sometimes one simply does not know enough about the context.

Summary

Some nonverbal elements of interaction are described, first from the point of view of expressive behavior, then from the perspective of one who is interpreting the nonverbal expressions of the interactional partner. Several common classification schemes are used to describe the domain of nonverbal interactional behavior, and five interrelated characteristics of nonverbal behavior are discussed. During interaction nonverbal behaviors 1) are unceasingly produces, 2) are produced relatively out-of-awareness, 3) are nonarbitrary, 4) have contextually determined meanings, and 5) are produced in integrated sets.

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Review Questions

1. Explain the difference between the terms *expressive* and *interpretive* as used here.
2. Define the following jargon terms from this chapter: *vocalics*, *kinesics*, *proxemics*, *haptics*, *illustrators*, *regulators*, *emblems*, *adaptors*, *affect displays*, *iconic cues*, *dominance relations*, *nonverbal leakage*.
3. What's the difference between "arbitrary" communication cues (Chapter 3) and "iconic" cues (this reading)?
4. What's the significance of Grove's point that nonverbal cues tend to be produced in "sets" or "sequences"?
5. Grove says that you can't rely on specific nonverbal cues to tell whether a person is lying. How come?