

Chapter 8

What Are the Different Ways to Communicate Nonverbally Across Cultures?



Chapter Outline

- The Importance of Nonverbal Communication
 - What Is Nonverbal Communication?
 - Actions or Words?
 - One Code, Many Interpretations
 - Verbal and Nonverbal Similarities
- Forms of Nonverbal Communication
 - Artifacts and Clothing
 - Paralanguage
 - Facial Expressions
 - Gestures
 - Haptics
- Boundary Regulations
 - Regulating Interpersonal Boundaries
 - Environmental Boundaries
 - Psychological Boundaries
 - Regulating Time
- Intercultural Toolkit: Recaps and Checkpoints

Yoshihiko Kadokawa was a department store executive in Japan. Over time, he noticed that the friendliest clerks were making the biggest sales. In a country that limits overt display of facial emotions, he decided to capitalize on this observation. He quit his job and now charges up to \$1,000 to host his "Let's Smile Op-

eration" seminars. For 2 to 3 hours, Japanese executives learn how to smile and be pleasant-looking. The practice of actually widening their mouths to smile is gradually replacing the need for individuals in Japan to "hide" their emotions.

—"Smiley Face."

People Magazine, 1999

As you can see in the example above, nonverbal communication is both a conscious and an unconscious aspect of our everyday life. We can communicate with people without speaking one word. Oftentimes, we don't even realize it! Have you ever walked down the street and a total stranger greeted you with a warm hello or smile or both? Well, if there were a camera nearby, you would find that you were smiling at the stranger without

any awareness of it. We take for granted the importance of our facial expressions, not realizing the impact a smile can make during a conversation, a sales pitch, or an argument.

Nonverbal messages serve many functions in intercultural situations. If our verbal messages tell us the literal and content meaning of words, then nonverbal messages carry strong identity and relational meaning. For example, nonverbal communication has been called a relationship code because nonverbal cues are often the primary means of signaling a relationship with others. We use nonverbal cues to relate messages that may be too embarrassing or direct to disclose out loud. The use of verbal messages involves human intention, but nonverbal messages can be intentional or unintentional. For example, a popular pair of blue jeans on the market today is a brand called Mavi. Mavi is a company based in France. If you wear these jeans in places that speak Swahili (Tanzania and Kenya), many people may look at you in horror. The name of your jeans in Swahili means "cow dung."

Nonverbal communication occurs with or without verbal messages. Nonverbal messages provide the context for how the accompanying verbal message should be interpreted and understood. They can either create confusion or clarify communication. But more often than not, nonverbal messages can create intercultural friction and miscommunication because (1) the same nonverbal signal can mean different things to different people in different cultures, (2) multiple nonverbal cues are sent, and (3) there are many display rule variations to consider, such as personality, gender, relational distance, socioeconomic status, and situation.

This chapter is organized in four sections. We first discuss the nature of nonverbal communication. We then address different forms of nonverbal communication with many lively intercultural examples. Third, we discuss an important area of nonverbal communication: boundary regulation of space and time. We conclude with a set of recaps and checkpoints to facilitate better understanding of nonverbal intercultural communication.

The Importance of Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is a powerful form of human expression. It is everywhere. Nonverbal messages are often the primary means of signaling our emotions, our attitudes, and the nature of our relationships with others. Suppose Anup said to Carita, "Oh, I really wanted to come over and say hi, but you looked really busy!" Anup saw that Carita was surrounded by her books, on her cell phone, and talking to another friend. Nonverbal messages can oftentimes express what verbal messages cannot express and are assumed to be more truthful than verbal messages. Many nonverbal experts estimate that

in every encounter, about 65 percent is inferred through nonverbal channels. Nonverbal messages signify who we are, based on what we wear, how we speak, and how we present ourselves.

How important are nonverbal cues? One example is the significant changes that have taken place in U.S. airports since September 11, 2001. Airport screeners are now trained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to look for deception clues during routine questioning. For an airport screener to make a quick assessment of whether an individual is lying, she is looking for questionable behavior, which includes darting eyes, hand tremors, and an inconsistent story resulting from rapid questions, suspicious behavior in reactions, and obvious body language. By training airport screeners about nonverbal behaviors, the FBI believes that a suspicious passenger who is lying may be detected.

What Is Nonverbal Communication?

Nonverbal communication is defined as communicating without words through multiple communication channels. **Multiple channels** refer to how the meaning of nonverbal messages can be simultaneously signaled and interpreted through various media, such as facial expressions, body gestures, spatial relationships, and the environment in which people are communicating. In essence, nonverbal communication transcends spoken or written words (Hickson, Stacks, & Moore, 2004). Our culture shapes the display rules of when, where, with whom, and how different emotions should be expressed or suppressed. Nonverbal display rules are learned within a culture. Cultural value tendencies, in conjunction with many relational and situational factors, influence cross-cultural nonverbal behaviors. A former French student, Victoria, said, "When I was younger [and] with my sister, we used to turn off the sound of some soap operas, making up the dialogue ourselves. We always based it on the body language and the facial expressions; it was so funny!"

Nonverbal cues are the markers of our identities. The way we dress, the way we talk, our nonverbal gestures—these tell something about who we are and how we want to be viewed. We rely on nonverbal cues as "name badges" to identify what groups we belong to and what groups we are *not* a part of. All of these cues are interpreted through the mediation of stereotypes. Our accent, posture, and hand gestures further give our group membership away. For example, many Latina who were born in the United States are used to people assuming that they do not speak English fluently, if they speak it at all. Elisa, who worked in a clothing store, remembers a customer who refused to return an item at her cash register because "she would not understand this complex transaction." Elisa remembers her furious anger at this customer's prejudiced attitude and presumption.

It takes a lot of astute observation and deep understanding of a culture to decode nonverbal cues or messages accurately. Think about an interaction you have had recently. Just imagine the difficulty interpreting a five-minute conversation between an Italian friend and a Nigerian friend. Many misunderstandings occur when trying to infer meaning behind nonverbal codes, especially with someone who is from a different culture than yourself. Nonverbal communication is a powerful communication system. It is, in a nutshell, the heartbeat of a culture. Language may be the key to the heart of a culture, but it is nonverbal communication that embodies the rich meaning of a culture.

Actions or Words?

Nonverbal communication is fascinating: We become curious about how some cultures think about and interpret their world. Nonverbal communication includes any cue, such as behaviors, objects, and attributes that communicate a message during an interaction. Most important, nonverbal communication always has some form of social meaning even though no words are spoken.

Nonverbal messages can be used without words, can provide the backdrop to interpret the verbal message, and can create miscommunication. But most of the time, nonverbal messages can create intercultural confusion. There are no set nonverbal rules to follow. There is not one *universal* nonverbal language that we can speak. Instead, nonverbal communication is ambiguous, but at the same time, it is more believable than words.

Many global cities offer dance festivals, featuring modern and traditional dances from across the world. You can watch hula, salsa, and Balinese, to name a few. Each dance group offers us such a unique way of expression, with intricate and complicated moves. Each dance has hand gestures that represent or complement the verbal message. Gestures for love and various types of water and fish are all accompanied by codes. However, all of these codes are communicated without the use of words. If you are not familiar with the code, interpreting the meaning will be almost impossible and will allow plenty of room for inaccurate judgments.

One Code, Many Interpretations

People send a variety of nonverbal cues during each interaction. This creates an interpretive ambiguity. The same nonverbal cue can mean different things to different people in different cultures. One example of a situation in which this may happen is giving the OK sign (i.e., thumb and index finger shaped into an "O" with the other fingers out straight), which means all right or OK in the United States, an insult in Brazil, and money in Japan. Misunderstandings occur

because of the intention and variety of such cues (see Snapshot 8.2 for a variety of nonverbal hand gestures).

Many nonverbal communication situations carry a variety of messages and meanings. If a friend gives you a "high five" after you make a basket (as in basketball) in the United States, your friend is congratulating you on your good form. This nonverbal code is purposeful, and the meaning is intended to congratulate you. During an intercultural encounter, conflict and confusion nevertheless occur for two simple reasons. First of all, the same nonverbal signal can mean different things to different people in different cultures (e.g., waving your fingers can mean hello, come here, or I have a question in the United States, the Philippines, and Italy). Second, a variety of hand signals can also carry the same meaning.

Verbal and Nonverbal Similarities

Nonverbal cues can be used independently or together with a verbal message. When used with verbal messages, they relate to verbal messages in five different ways. Nonverbal cues can repeat, contradict, substitute, complement, and accent verbal messages (Knapp & Hall, 1992). We will briefly use some examples to illustrate these concepts.

Nonverbal communication can simply *repeat* the verbal message. If you are going to get your hair cut, oftentimes the barber or stylist will ask you how much hair you want to be cut. You will most likely tell him or her the number of inches followed by a confirmation with your fingers. In this example, a nonverbal gesture repeats the verbal message.

Nonverbal communication can *contradict* the verbal message. You can contradict a message, or you can enhance it. Whenever Vicky tells a lie, she always plays with her hands and avoids eye contact. Unfortunately, her friends are able to see through her immediately. Contradicting a verbal message is a form of leakage or hiding how we really feel. Adults rely more heavily on nonverbal cues for indications of feelings and verbal cues for information about other people's beliefs or intentions.

Nonverbal communication can *substitute* for the verbal message. If you are driving to any border patrol, officers will use hand gestures to tell if you need to stop or continue driving. Smiling at someone at a party signals that you want to start a conversation. The nonverbal message is clear, and no verbal message is needed to clarify the meaning.

Nonverbal communication can *complement* the verbal message. Patting a teammate on the back and saying "What an awesome job" complements the words that are spoken. The look in our teachers' eyes when they tell us they are disappointed in us for doing something inappropriate accompanies the verbal message and underscores their disappointment.

Nonverbal communication may *accent*, or emphasize, parts of a verbal message. If you like to bold some words on a paper or use italics, these are accents. Slamming your hand down on the table during a meeting and saying "Pay attention!" accents the importance of being quiet.

We learn how to use nonverbal communication very early on. Although many similarities in communication function across groups, mindful individuals can learn that different cues are appropriate in different settings and with different groups.

Forms of Nonverbal Communication

To fully understand the significance of nonverbal communication for our communication behavior, we need to examine the variety of nonverbal behaviors used by people in our daily life across cultures. There are seven different forms of nonverbal communication: physical appearance, paralanguage (vocal cues), facial expressions, kinesics (body movement), haptics (touch), oculosics (eye contact), and proxemics (space). We will now illustrate each and note their diverse nonverbal functions.

Artifacts and Clothing

Our physical appearance affects our daily interactions with others. Physical appearance includes body type, height, weight, hair, and skin color. Along with our appearance, we wear clothing, and we also generally display artifacts. **Artifacts** are ornaments or adornments we use to communicate just by wearing the actual item. Both artifacts and clothing serve as markers of our identity. Jewelry, shoes, glasses, gloves, nail polish, tattoos, tongue, facial, and body piercings, and face painting communicate our age, group membership, socioeconomic status and class, personality, and gender. We rely on nonverbal cues as a form of comparing ourselves with other groups (Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1996). They can reflect both cultural trends and unique personalities. Famous celebrities, such as Harrison Ford and Ed Bradley (the news commentator on *60 Minutes*), are now spotted wearing earrings on a regular basis.

Nonverbal cues can provide clues for us to determine the specific time in history. You may remember that leg warmers or Van's were trends in the 1980s, but baggy jeans were very fashionable in the 1990s. Tattoos and body piercings (e.g., eyebrows, lip, navel) have been used at various times in history. Traditional Polynesian cultures (e.g., Samoa, Tonga, Maori of New Zealand) have used tattoos and piercings as indicators of class, status, and roles. Trendy now, these traditional tattoos and piercings are common and adopted to express individual

difference. These cues serve as identity markers of the individual and also the practices of the larger culture. For example, pop singer Christina Aguilera has bragged about having 20 different piercings with more to come. At the same time, traditional tattoos (e.g., in Hawaii) have been used to take pride in the rich history that “represents” past ancestors. We (the authors) polled our students informally in two classes (approximately 140 students) and found that the female students had more tattoos than the male students.

Artifacts can also place a person in a particular status or class. Visit any hospital, and you can tell a doctor from a nurse. The doctor typically wears a white uniform; nurses wear scrubs. Uniforms in Japan are worn to differentiate among entertainers, students, workers, and supervisors. A funny thing about artifacts: We make so many judgments about what a person decides to wear. Jessica Ling, for example, a former international student in the United States, was shocked when she went back home to work in Malaysia. She noticed the pressure for more women to keep up with the latest designer trends. Although she lives paycheck to paycheck, she is a consumer of designer labels—a Prada watch, a Tiffany ring, a Chanel bag, Jimmy Choo shoes—to keep up with fashion. The status issue surrounding nonverbal display accessories is common throughout big cities in Asia.

Adornment features, such as clothing, jewelry, cosmetics, and accessories, in different cultures also reflect complex personal identities. Based on our stereotypic knowledge of a particular group, we look for validation of our expectations via nonverbal cues and surface adornment features. Traditional face painting techniques are surface adornment features that are thought to be the foundation of modern cosmetics. In our world today, the cosmetics industry makes a lot of money marketing traditional styles worn in specific cultures. For example, Indian women traditionally henna their hands on special occasions, such as marriage, birth, and death. But recent pop stars, such as Madonna and Demi Moore, use henna as an enhancement to their looks.

One last aspect of artifacts and clothing is impression management. As we become an international community, the need to look global (or, actually, Hollywood *Western*) has some interesting implications. As the winds of globalization sweep through, beauty is not only a trend in the United States. For example, we can find aspects of selling and marketing plastic surgery around the world. According to Schuman (2001), some Korean women have increasingly widened their eyes in a relentless drive to attain the Western image of beauty. More recently, some young Korean women are also getting leg jobs (just as some American women are getting breast implants, false buttocks, face lifts, and Botox injections). The Korean plastic surgeon will operate on part of the calf muscles of the young woman to slim down her legs to look like Western models. In addition, surgeons increasingly

perform leg operations in China to elongate the legs of Chinese men and women so that they can compete globally and stand as tall as their Western counterparts.

According to Sciolino (2000), the cool thing to do in Tehran, Iran, is to get a nose job. This may seem shocking in a place where women are required to cover their hair and conceal the shape of their bodies. But some Iranian women are not content with their noses. This was demonstrated on the cover of *Zahran* (August 2003), a feminist magazine in Iran that showed a woman with a new nose superimposed on her face. The monthly magazine devoted eight pages to the subject of “Young Women and Men and the Hot Market in Nose Jobs.” Body alterations definitely serve the nonverbal function of intentional identity management. If used successfully, they can enhance an individual’s self-esteem and appearance. However, if used haphazardly or if the operation fails, they can also strip away an individual’s remaining self-confidence or distinctive personality. One would do well to proceed with caution when thinking of body alteration techniques or operations to enhance one’s face or body image. At the same time, if a safe operation can help someone’s self-image, others may learn to accept that person’s choice or decision and give any needed support.

Paralanguage

Beyond artifacts, another form of nonverbal communication that gives away our cultural, ethnic, and gender identity is paralanguage. **Paralanguage** is the sounds and tones we use in conversation and the speech behavior that accompanies the message. Simply put, it is *how* something is said, not *what* is said. The nonword sounds and characteristics of speech are called paralinguistic features. Aspects of paralinguistic features include a variety of voice qualities, such as the following:

- *Accent*: how your words are pronounced together
- *Pitch range*: your range from high to low
- *Pitch intensity*: how high or low your voice carries
- *Volume*: how loudly or softly you speak
- *Articulation*: if your mouth, tongue, and teeth coordinate to speak precisely or to slur your words
- *Pace*: the rate of how quickly or slowly you speak

Each of these characteristics may be represented on a continuum. For example, U.S. Americans often interpret and mimic the sounds of Chinese speakers as “whiny” and “loud and screaming,” typically associating their sounds with old kung fu movies. In contrast, Arabs oftentimes

evaluate the speaking style in the United States as nonexpressive, cold, distant, and harsh. Whatever the perspective, members of different cultures use their own cultural nonverbal standards as guidelines for proper or improper ways of speaking and evaluating others.

Through the use of paralanguage, we encode a sense of self via different nonverbal features and behaviors. People who perceive others tend to use their own standards to judge others through nonverbal markers. Some of these markers can be intentionally sent, but others can be unintentional. For example, if you raise your voice, the interpretation is that you are angry. However, some ethnic or cultural groups raise their voices because it indicates sincerity or authenticity. For example, some African Americans tend to have emotionally expressive voices and are passionate about their conversation points. This is commonly mistaken for anger. This is also true in other cultural groups. Manal, a college sophomore, recalls that the Arabic norm is to speak in a loud voice, repeat points, and pound on the table for emphasis. In her house, both the men and the women speak in a loud voice that might be misinterpreted as a display of anger. If someone who does not understand Arabic (or Farsi) observes a conversation between two Middle Easterners, he might think that the two people talking sincerely about something are actually mad at each other. Manal says, "My step-father is constantly thinking that my mother and grandmother are arguing about something, but they are actually carrying on a normal conversation."

Paralanguage can change the meaning of a sentence simply by accenting different words. These three statements have different meanings depending on the way you say them:

Are you for real?

Are *you* for real?

Are you for *real*?

Or, try the statement "Oh, really!" by varying the sounds with a classmate. In hearing or conversing in a foreign language, we often cannot pick up subtle vocal changes that may help us understand that either playfulness or sarcasm is intended by the speaker. If you don't pick up the nuances of playfulness or humor in the voice, for example, misunderstandings will affect your relationship with the speaker. You can unintentionally offend, frustrate, or hurt someone without realizing how powerful your voice sounds. Additionally, your vocal message may be misunderstood and inappropriately judged.

Facial Expressions

We assume the feelings and attitudes of strangers from the nonverbal messages we receive during an interaction. One important form of

nonverbal communication that conveys feelings and attitudes is kinesics. **Kinesics** is the study of posture, body movement, gestures, and facial expressions (see Snapshot 8.1). Kinesics comes from the Greek word *kinesis*, meaning "movement." The face is capable of producing about 250,000 expressions. Nonverbal researchers generally agree that there is relative universality in the decoding of basic facial expressions. It appears that there is consistency across cultures in our ability to recognize at least seven emotions in an individual's facial expressions. We can refer to these recognizable facial emotions by the acronym **SADFISH**: Sadness, Anger, Disgust, Fear, Interest, Surprise, and Happiness (Richmond & McCrosky, 2000). People are able to recognize not only the emotion but also the intensity of emotion and often the secondary emotion being experienced. Take a look at the following photos.

Snapshot 8.1



Can you identify the emotions represented by each facial expression?

On a general level, different cultural groups have interpreted these various facial expressions with a high degree of accuracy. However, the ability to recognize specific emotions on the SADFISH list may vary from one specific culture to the next. For example, studies indicate that

students in the United States are better at identifying anger, disgust, fear, and sadness than are Japanese students (Matsumoto & Juang, 2003). The reason is that Japanese students learn at a very young age to suppress their emotions because this display can be threatening to others and also create disharmony in their everyday relationships. As you can see, identifying facial expressions through a photograph is actually quite difficult. What is more interesting is that children, when asked, have a harder time expressing these emotions randomly. The special difficulty in interpreting the two facial emotions of disgust and anger only fuels the problem of having the "correct" answer of what the expression looks like. Part of this problem has to do with cultural display rules.

Moreover, there are cultural differences in the display rules we use for expressing emotions. **Cultural display rules** are the procedures we learn for managing the way we express our emotions (Ekman & Friesen, 1975). The rules tell us when it is or is not acceptable to express our emotions. For example, in individualistic cultures, it is acceptable to express anger or disgust alone or in the presence of others. In collectivistic cultures, anger and disgust are not expressed in public, especially in front of individuals with higher status. For example, in Indonesia, people will be quiet and hide their feelings if they are angry with their boss, but those in Australia (individualistic) will openly express their anger toward their boss.

Cultural display rules have progressed through the invention of the Internet. As we progress with our advanced technology, sending messages via e-mail or text has resulted in a more efficient way to communicate, affecting how we express emotions. If you have been to South Korea or Japan, you will know that cell phones are used as a keyboard. Many people are no longer talking on the cell phone but instead are typing in text messages. The use of icons during IM (instant messaging) and in text messages became popular because of the great need to replace long sentences, words, and expressions of our feelings with a quick keyboard symbol. Universal icon expressions have become a significant way to converse without face-to-face interaction. These give senders everywhere the ability to talk with others without having to explain in detail the weight of their feelings. For example, do you recognize any of these emoticons: :-o, 8-O, :-|, :-/, :-||, :-* ? Take a guess and check out Jeopardy Box 8.1. Witmer and Katzman (1997) found that women are more likely to use icons in their e-mail messages than men. And what is the most popular icon? The smile: :)!

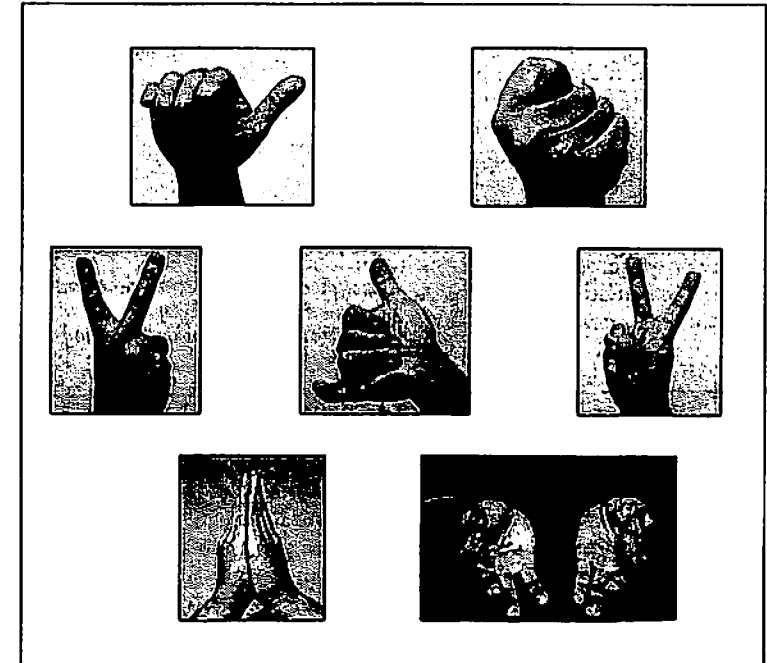
Despite the popularity, frequency, and success of icons, there are some clear disadvantages to text messaging and icons in general. First, many people who use icons and text messages on a daily basis can talk about an exact time and place in which they were misunderstood or their words were taken the wrong way after an IM session or an e-mail. Reading an emoticon in a message cannot replace the depth of feelings

Jeopardy Box 8.1 Commonly Used Worldwide Emoticons

:-) = Happy	:-/ = Skeptical	;-) = Happy with wink
:-) = Happy with tears	:-@ = Scream	:- = Indifferent
:-o = Surprised	:-O = Very surprised	8-O = Shocked
:(= Sad	:-C = Very sad	:-) = Snobby
:-[= Angry	:- = Very angry	;-) = Raised eyebrow
:-D = Laughing	:-* = Kiss	8-) = Glasses
-O = Yawn	%-) = Confused	[:] = Robot

a person has to convey or the difficulty expressing how she or he truly feels. Second, joking around and sarcasm are difficult to interpret. Many people complain that they spend much time putting out the flame of a potential conflict because a sentence was misrepresented. This conversation takes us back to paralanguage and misunderstandings due to sarcasm, joking, or tone of voice.

Snapshot 8.2



How many intercultural gestures can you decode?

Gestures

Gestures are culturally specific and significant forms of nonverbal communication (see Snapshot 8.2). In fact, they are much more elaborate and more frequently used in Italian culture than in U.S. culture. The four basic categories of hand gestures and body movements (Ekman & Friesen, 1975) have been categorized as *emblems*, *illustrators*, *regulators*, and *adaptors*.

Emblems are gestures that substitute for words and phrases. The nonverbal gesture replaces the need to speak. For example, when you shrug your shoulders to say "I don't know," this is an emblem. An emblem for Filipinos is using the lips to point to an object, a direction, or a person. Emblems are usually gestures or movements that are displayed with clear intent and are recognized by members of your ingroup. Greeting rituals, gestures to call someone over, peace or insult gestures, and head movements indicating "yes" or "no" are emblems. Every culture has a large variety of emblems with specific meanings and rules of their displays (see Snapshot 8.3). However, emblems can contribute to intercultural misunderstandings or conflicts. For example, emblems may hold contradictory meanings in different cultures. A "fist" among African Americans signified "Black Power" in the 1970s. But a fist can also trigger a fighting stance. Putting your thumb and index finger together and making a circle with your other three fingers straight can mean "okay." But in some cultures, this means the number zero (see Snapshot 8.4).

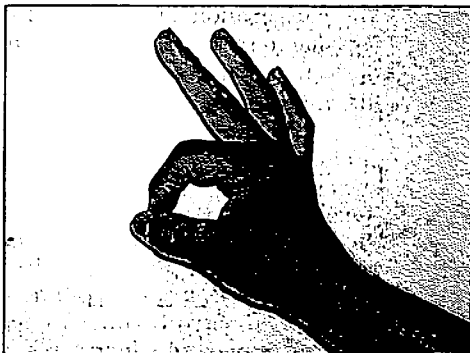
Joe Whitecotten, an anthropologist, tells a colorful nonverbal story that highlights potential misunderstandings. Check out Double Take

Snapshot 8.3



A Chinese "shame on you" nonverbal gesture.

Snapshot 8.4



This United States "OK" gesture can mean "money" to the Japanese, a sexual insult in Brazil and Greece, a vulgar gesture in Russia, or "zero" in France.

Double Take 8.1

I spent a lot of time in Italy. As a huge football fan, I can only imagine the confusion that would happen if the Italians were watching U.S. college football between the University of Oklahoma (OU) and University of Texas at Austin.

The OU fans always hold up their index finger (which means "We are Number 1!"), and the Texas fans respond with a sign holding up the index finger and the little finger simultaneously (which means "Hook 'em, Horns," referring to their mascot, the Longhorn).

To the Italian, these gestures would have very different meanings. The index finger means "Up yours," like the middle finger in American culture, and the simultaneous index finger and little finger signify "You are a cuckold." This is one of the worst insults you can give to an Italian male, because it means that his wife (or girlfriend) has cheated on him because he is sexually inadequate.

—Joe, College Instructor

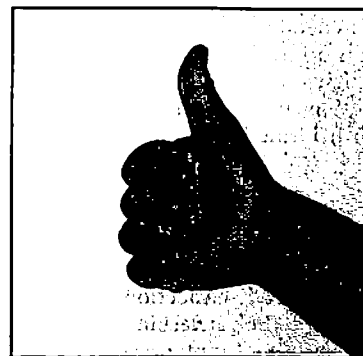
8.1. This fun story is an example of emblems that are culture specific and the basis for potential misunderstanding (see also Snapshot 8.5).

Illustrators are nonverbal hand gestures that we use along with the spoken message—they literally illustrate the verbal message. When you are describing a shape, such as a triangle, you are likely to make angles with your fingers. If you talk with your hands and use mostly hand gestures, then you are a person who enjoys expressive illustrators. Egyptians and Italians generally use broad, full arm gestures to illustrate points when they are speaking, more so than the reserved British and Asians. We are so used to making these movements that it

is very difficult to reverse them or make inappropriate gestures. Many people wonder why Asian groups don't use more illustrators. The answer is that Asians prefer to focus more on the interaction process and consider the use of too many hand gestures to be distracting, rude, and even undisciplined.

Regulators are nonverbal behaviors we use in conversation to control, maintain, or "regulate" the pace and flow of the conversation. When we are listening to someone, we acknowledge the speaker by nodding our head and adjusting or maintaining eye contact, and we make paralinguistic sounds (e.g., "mm-hmm," "really," "no kidding!"). Next to emblems, regulators are considered to be culturally

Snapshot 8.5



This United States "thumbs-up" gesture can be interpreted as a very offensive gesture throughout the Arab world.

specific nonverbal behaviors. These are also the most rule-governed kinesic behaviors. Regulators act as the nonverbal traffic signal to control the dynamics of a conversation. For example, in the United States, when we interrupt a speaker with "Really?" we are in agreement, we are assisting them with their story, or we are showing them that we are paying attention to their story. If we are in Japan, saying "Really?" while a person is talking is considered to be rude and inappropriate.

We learn regulators at a very young age. We use them at lower levels of consciousness. Depending on what region you are visiting, vocal segregates, such as "Sure, you're right" in the U.S. South and "Nay nay" among Korean elders, can be classified as nonverbal regulators. These words mean "I am hearing you," but the literal translation in English of the latter is "no" to those who do not speak Korean.

Adaptors are habits or gestures that fulfill some kind of psychological or physical need. Some adaptors are learned within a culture (e.g., covering the mouth when we sneeze, or covering the mouth when we laugh aloud). Others are more automatic (e.g., scratching an itch on your head, picking your nose until you are satisfied). Most adaptors are not intended to communicate a message. However, some of these habits can be considered rude in the context of another culture. For example, in a meeting, when you are listening with your arms folded across your chest, some people may assume that you do not want to talk with others, but you may actually feel cold. In the library, you may notice that while studying, some people consistently play with a pen or pencil with their fingers. You may think they are nervous, but they are merely concentrating.

Haptics

The nonverbal function of **haptics** examines the perceptions and meanings of touch behavior. Different cultures encode and construe touch behavior to be either appropriate or inappropriate. Past research indicates that touch behavior is used to fulfill five communicative functions: as a greeting ritual, to express affection, to be playful, to have controlling behavior, and to have task-related functions (Andersen, 1999).

Different cultures have different rules about touch. For example, same-sex touch and handholding in Malaysia, China, Sudan, Japan, Nepal, and Saudi Arabia is considered to be acceptable and part of daily life. However, contact among the opposite sex is considered to be taboo. This is better known as "PDA" or the public display of affection. In the United States, same-sex handholding pertains to the gay/lesbian/bisexual community. However, opposite-sex handholding is an appropriate PDA in the United States. Latino/as from Latin American cultural regions tend to engage in more frequent touch behaviors than do U.S. Americans and Canadians. But it is important to remember that

the touch behaviors in both the Arab and the Latin American cultures are usually confined to same-sex touching, not opposite-sex touch.

There are also differences among a high-, moderate-, and low-contact cultures (Ting-Toomey, 1999). French, Russians, Latin Americans, and Italians are members of high-contact cultures. **High-contact cultures** often look each other in the eye directly, face each other, touch and/or kiss each other, and speak in rather loud voices. East Asians and Asian Americans, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Indians, are members of low-contact cultures. **Low-contact cultures** often engage in little if any touching, preferring indirect eye gazes and speaking in a lower tone. The United States, Canada, and Australia are **moderate-contact cultures**, which is a blend of both. Research (Remland, 2000; Remland, Jones, & Brinkman, 1995) also reveals that southern Europeans touch more than northern Europeans. After observing a thousand couples at many train stations in different countries, nonverbal researchers found that the highest frequency of touching—from the most frequent to the least frequent touch cultures—occurs in descending order as follows: Greece, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Germany, Belgium, England, Austria, and the Netherlands. The researchers also pointed out that much of the intercultural haptics or touch research depends heavily on gender, age, context, duration of the relationship, and personality factors.

In addition, in real life, high-contact cultures can also bother a low-contact culture to a great extent. Let's check out Melissa's story and her semester abroad in Double Take 8.2.

Double Take 8.2

When I lived in Spain, I had to get used to [the people's] constant PDA. They would do this continuously, especially on the metro. In Spain, you cannot bring home friends, boyfriends, etc. Usually, only family is allowed [at home]. Maybe that is why many Spaniards take advantage of their alone time in public and make out. But this is where "psychological space" comes into play. I definitely did a lot of that [psychological space] in Spain. I would just pretend it [the making out] wasn't happening, even though it would be right in front of my face! But one thing I noticed in Spain, which was weird, I didn't observe the parents being very high contact with their children.

—M. Diaz, College Student

Let's also briefly examine nonverbal situational appropriateness. The "buttock pat" is an excellent example of a situational touch cue. This is used in the United States, frequently in male sports. The pat is a sign of encouragement, team bonding, and congratulations for a job well done and has spread to European sports. But in Germany, Austria, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, the buttock slap is given as a sign of an insult (Morris, 1994). Outside the sports context, the fear of touch

among U.S. males is high. Therefore, knowing the appropriate context, individual likes and dislikes, and appropriate relationship is vital in intercultural nonverbal communication.

Boundary Regulations

How do you deal with space? For example, when you enter a classroom for the very first time, is there a "place" that is your target space? Do you park yourself on the seat, put your bag down, and remember where you sit from that time on? When the class meets again, do you sit in the identical seat? How do you feel if someone else is sitting in your seat?

Space and time are boundary regulation issues. As human beings, we are territorial animals (see Snapshot 8.6). We claim and mark our territory. When someone or something invades our territory, we become much more sensitive to the invasion. It is a feeling of vulnerability and a threatening experience. Marking our territory has more to do with psychological ownership than physical ownership. This is the feeling we have of owning a particular spot. If our territory becomes a precious commodity, we react without taking a moment to think about our behavior and our actions, because we feel violated. Friends and colleagues in San Francisco will complain when someone "parks in their spot." Although parking is free, finding a space is sometimes impossible, so the violation feels even stronger if one's psychologically owned spot is invaded.

Everyday, ordinary behavior includes some aspect of marking our space. If you hang out in coffee shops, you will probably put your stuff down at the table to "claim" the seat. If someone sits in your seat when you go to get your coffee, a conflict may occur. This is a violation, breaking the unspoken rules of territory. In an interesting article about a famous restaurant called Elaine's in New York, this very famous bar was described as having a seating chart and tables associated with Elaine's favorite people. The assigned spots were not to be changed under any circumstances . . . unless by Elaine herself. In the next sec-

Snapshot 8.6



Different doorways or gates regulate inner and outer space.

tion, we discuss four broad themes of space issues: interpersonal boundaries, environmental boundaries, psychological boundaries, and temporal regulation.

Regulating Interpersonal Boundaries

Before you begin this section, take Quick Poll 8.1 to determine your interpersonal space orientation.

Quick Poll 8.1

On the following continuums, place a check mark where you would place yourself spatially when communicating with

Strangers:	_____
Acquaintances:	_____
Teachers:	_____
Classmates:	_____
Parents:	_____
Siblings:	_____
Same-Sex Friends:	_____
Opposite-Sex Friends:	_____
Romantic Partners:	_____

Edward T. Hall was one of the first anthropologists to write extensively about how we "mark" and define our territory. This is the study of proxemics. **Proxemics** is the study of space between persons, physical contact, and the inner anxiety we have when people violate our space. In the United States, according to Hall, we have four spatial zones: intimate, personal, social, and public (Hall, 1959, 1966). The *intimate* zone is 0 to 18 inches. This space is reserved for those who are closest to us, such as family, an emotional situation, and our close friends. The *personal* zone is from 18 to 48 inches, reserved for closer friends, some acquaintances, and colleagues. *Social* zones occur in a larger event, such as a party, at 48 inches to 12 feet. Finally, the *public* zone is any distance that is 12 feet or more. Any violation of these zones can result in feelings of anxiety.

What constitutes appropriate personal distance for one cultural group can be perceived as crowding by another group. The average conversational distance of personal space for European Americans is approximately 20 inches. The average personal space of many Latin American and Caribbean cultures is 14 to 15 inches. In Saudi Arabia, the ideal conversational distance is only 9 to 10 inches. Personal space

serves as a hidden dimension of intercultural misunderstanding and discomfort.

Personal space is a subconscious protective territory that we carry around with us and deem sacred, nonviolable, and nonnegotiable. Although members of all cultures engage in the claiming of space for themselves, the experience of space and violation varies across cultures and gender groups. Many of our U.S. students agree: In a movie theater with plenty of open seats, most male friends will leave an empty seat between them. But females will watch the movie together, sitting right next to each other. Let's check out a fun, nonverbal space story in Double Take 8.3.

Double Take 8.3

When I was in the airport in Tel Aviv, Israel, there was no such thing as an orderly line or an open space in the shuttles. People were practically enmeshed in one another, [and] you would be staring at the back of someone's head or armpit. This was actually quite humorous for me. As soon as I learned how people squeezed themselves in front of a counter, I did the same.

It was interesting for me to watch my stepfather's transformation. In the beginning of our trip, he was incredibly disturbed by the lack

of space between strangers. But by the end of our trip, he was the one rushing up to the counters, and he would not even flinch when an Israeli man would practically have his nose inside my stepfather's back (he is very tall). If my stepfather had kept to Hall's regulations for space depending on the relationship, he would not have lasted as long as he did in a country that redefines those regulations.

—Laleh, College Student

Boundary regulations in different cultures are large in variety, and they may also vary within a family. Melissa, a Mexican American, describes her experience growing up in a traditional Mexican family in Double Take 8.4.

Double Take 8.4

I have always been very close with all of my aunts, cousins, grandmas, parents, and siblings. We have always shared our great affection for one another with plenty of kisses and hugs. But with my parents, I am definitely more intimate with my mother. I have noticed that in a lot of Mexican families, the father is the guardian, the role model, and the au-

thority figure. [The parents] usually keep a little distance between themselves and their children (daughters in particular). My dad is a lot less affectionate than my mom. But my mother and my two sisters and I are very affectionate with one another—we touch, hug, and kiss all the time.

—Melissa, College Student

Environmental Boundaries

In addition to our interpersonal space, we also have boundaries related to our environment. Environmental boundaries are defined as the claimed sense of space and emotional attachment we share with others in our community. Concepts of territory and identity are interconnected because we usually invest time, effort, emotion, and self-worth in places that we claim as our primary territories. Our home territory or immediate environment asserts a strong influence on our everyday lives.

Lewin (1936) addressed the significance of how the environment influences our behavior with the following formula: $B = f(P, E)$ in which $B = \text{behavior}$, $P = \text{person}$, and $E = \text{environment}$. This means that our behavior is defined by the persons interacting as well as the environment in which the communication takes place. For example, middle-class neighborhoods in Canada and the United States are very different from the middle-class neighborhoods in many Latin American and Asian cultures, and these environments influence how people in those cultures behave.

In the United States, a home in a typical middle-class neighborhood is physically separated from the community by a fence, a gate, a yard, a lawn, or some combination of these. Homes often symbolize an individual identity related closely with the owner. Environmental boundaries within the home are exercised through the use of separate bedrooms, private bathrooms, and many locks. In contrast, the middle-class neighborhood in Mexico is designed so that houses are integrated with a central plaza, possibly containing a community center and a church. Homes do not have many locks and many family members share bedrooms and bathrooms. U.S. middle-class homes appear to reflect individualistic qualities, and Mexican middle-class homes appear to promote collectivism and group-based interaction.

Cultural groups have different expectations concerning the specific functions of different rooms in the house. For example, in cultures such as China, Korea, and Japan, the proper way to entertain guests is in a formal restaurant, because the home is "not worthy" of entertaining guests. In contrast, many Arabs, like U.S. Americans and Canadians, do not mind entertaining guests in their homes. Many Arab homes reserve a specific formal room to entertain guests, and the guests may not see any other part of the house until trust is established in the relationship. Many U.S. American hosts showcase the house with a grand tour. This informal tour happens within the first minutes of arrival, before settling in. In many Arab homes, separate quarters are also reserved for male and female activities. This is also true in many traditional Korean homes.

In other related room functions, traditional Japanese and Korean homes do not make clear distinctions among the living room, dining

room, and bedroom. Thus, when close friends are invited over, it is critical for them to remove their shoes before entering the multipurpose space, the floor of which is covered with straw mats used for sitting and sleeping. This practice is also common among homes in Hawaii. Removing your shoes and slippers before entering an apartment, condo, or home is a norm. Countries such as Japan and Indonesia have clear distinctions between the bathroom and the toilet. The bathroom is used strictly for bathing. From this cultural perspective, to mix up bathing (a cleaning function) and toileting (a dirtying function) is against their code of civility and personal hygiene (see Snapshot 8.7).

Many individualistic cultures encourage a home environment that is unique to the owner, but many collectivistic cultures encourage communal-type home settings. These cultural norms have been gained from early childhood, where we learned instinctively how to deal with space and boundary issues through social roles, furniture setting, and proper interaction rules to be performed in each room. We turn now to psychological space and privacy regulation issues.

Psychological Boundaries

If you have ever lived or visited densely populated countries, you have probably dealt with psychological space or intrapersonal space. Crowded conditions make it almost impossible for people in many Asian countries (e.g., China, India, Indonesia, and Japan) to experience privacy as it is known in the United States (i.e., being alone in a room). *Intrapersonal space* refers to the need for information privacy or psychological silence between the self and others. Let's do Quick Poll 8.2 and explore your need for privacy.

Even though privacy regulation is a major concern in many Western social environments, the issue may not be perceived as critical in collectivistic-oriented cultures. In fact, even the concept of privacy is construed as offensive in many collectivistic cultures (see Snapshot 8.8). For example, the Chinese words that closely correspond to the concept of privacy are those for *secretive* and *selfishness*. These words imply that many Chinese feel that relational interdependence comes before the need for personal privacy in everyday interactions.

Snapshot 8.7



A Japanese bathroom: The Japanese prefer to separate clearly the bathing function from the toileting function.

Quick Poll 8.2

Use your gut-level reaction and circle "yes" or "no" to the following privacy violation scenes. Do you usually get irritated or stressed out when someone . . .

Enters your room without knocking:	YES	NO
Parks in your favorite spot:	YES	NO
Stands close to you in an elevator:	YES	NO
Sits too close to you in a movie:	YES	NO
Sits in your favorite spot in the classroom:	YES	NO
Walks on your lawn:	YES	NO
Peeps at your e-mails:	YES	NO
Interrupts you:	YES	NO
Stands too close to you:	YES	NO
Touches your arm in conversations:	YES	NO

Another aspect of psychological space is creating the mood or atmosphere of a room. Many people will invest money on the practice and art of feng shui. **Feng shui** literally means "air" and "water" in Chinese. Used for thousands of years, feng shui is the philosophy of combining elements to attain good energy within a room, a building, or an area. For example, many feng shui experts believe that if your bed directly faces a door, all of your good energy and luck will flow out of the room. This basic example is one of many used to design harmony within a house or room. Currently, there are feng shui designers, architects, and counselors in the United States and worldwide. Creating this form of psychological space promotes a more harmonious living condition. There are even feng shui magazines online, for example, <http://www.wofs.com/>. The practice offers advice, such as "Do not overdecorate your toilets (e.g., with flowers, paintings, antiques, golden taps and showerheads) because you may inadvertently activate the bad energies there."

Snapshot 8.8



A Korean office space.

If cultural groups do not emphasize categories for "privacy" and "solitude" to guide everyday interactions, then such categories may not be a critical part of the everyday social reality. Language, in conjunction with multiple nonverbal cues, directs our perceptions and attitudes toward the functions of space and time. Psychological and physi-

cal boundaries protect our levels of comfort and safety. Space is a powerful way to mark and define our ingroup and outgroup boundaries in this regard.

Regulating Time

Let's do the Know Thyself 8.1 assessment on time orientation. Are you a monochronic-time person, a polychronic-time person, or a bichronemic-time individual? Please read on.

Know Thyself 8.1 Assessing Your Monochronic Time and Polychronic Time Tendencies

Instructions: Recall how you generally feel and act in various situations. Let your first inclination be your guide and circle the number in the scale that best reflects your overall impression of yourself. The following scale is used for each item:

- 4 = YES! = *strongly agree—IT'S ME!*
 3 = yes = *moderately agree—it's kind of like me*
 2 = no = *moderately disagree—it's kind of not me*
 1 = NO! = *strongly disagree—IT'S NOT ME!*

	YES!	yes	no	NO!
1. Time is not necessarily under our control.	4	3	2	1
2. It's very important for me to stick to a schedule.	4	3	2	1
3. I'm very relaxed about time.	4	3	2	1
4. Meeting deadlines is very important to me.	4	3	2	1
5. Unexpected things happen all the time—just flow with it.	4	3	2	1
6. I get irritated when people are not on time.	4	3	2	1
7. It's OK to be late when you're having a wonderful conversation with someone.	4	3	2	1
8. I like to be very punctual for all my appointments.	4	3	2	1
9. I'm more concerned with the relationship in front of me than clock time.	4	3	2	1
10. I keep an appointment book with me all the time.	4	3	2	1

Scoring: Add up the scores on all the even-numbered items and you will find your monochronic-time preference score. *Monochronic-Time Preference score:* _____
 Add up the scores on all the odd-numbered items and you will find your polychronic-time preference score. *Polychronic-Time Preference score:* _____

Interpretation: Scores on each time dimension can range from 5 to 20; the higher the score, the more monochronic and/or polychronic time tendencies you

Know Thyself 8.1 Assessing Your Monochronic Time and Polychronic Time Tendencies (continued)

have. If the scores are similar on both time dimensions, you are a bichronemic-time communicator.

Reflection Probes: Take a moment to think of the following questions: Do you like your monochronic and/or polychronic time tendencies? Why or why not? Where do you learn your sense of time or clock rhythms? How do you think you can deal effectively with people who have a very different time preference from you?

Temporal regulation is defined as the attitudes we have about time. The study of time is known as the study of chronemics. **Chronemics** concerns how people in different cultures structure, interpret, and understand the time dimension.

We are in a constant struggle with time. The faster we go, the faster we want to go. The faster we go, the more impatient we become. Modern appliances take advantage of our need for time by producing faster results. Do you have no time to make dinner? Modern appliances can speed-chill a bottle of wine and roast a whole chicken in four minutes. E-mails are faster than sending letters. The efficiency of receiving e-mails results in an urgency to reply. Our life stages (birth, development, aging) are closely tied in with the sense of time. Our religious or spiritual beliefs, in terms of where the universe begins and ends and where life begins and ends, are two time-related worldview considerations.

Cultural patterns of time designate when and how we should start the day; when we should eat, take a break, work, play, sleep, and die; and if and how we will reincarnate.

We are all affected by the norms and values of time from our own culture. More often than not, we don't realize this until a norm or value has been violated in some way. Nevertheless, we are unconsciously aware of cultural values and norms. For example, if you are doing business in Spain and you are not familiar with the working hours there, you will be completely thrown off by the pattern of the day. In Barcelona, people often start work at 10:00 a.m., have lunch at 3:00 p.m., get back to work at 5:00 p.m., and then work until 8:00 p.m.

In 2000, French workers averaged fewer hours per week than workers in most developed nations (C. Smith, 2003). Many workers in France complain that the country's 35-hour workweek, adopted in January 2000, makes it too hard to work. What other countries do you think work the shortest hours per week and the longest hours per week? Take a guess and check out Jeopardy Box 8.2.

As you can see, workers in South Korea average a 47-hour workweek. But in the future, the workweek will be cut to 40 hours. This

Jeopardy Box 8.2 Per-Week Work Hours for Ten Countries

Country	Work Hours per Week
1. South Korea	55.1
2. Turkey	54.1
3. Argentina	53.5
4. Taiwan	53.4
5. Vietnam	53.3
6. U.S. and China	42.4
7. Canada	42.2
8. Britain	41.9
9. Italy	40.5
10. France	40.3

Source: Baker, M. (2001).

includes employees of government corporations, banks, and all large corporations. By July 2006, the reduced-hour regulations will make their way to all small firms.

Hall (1983) distinguished between two patterns of time that govern different cultures: the *monochronic-time schedule (MT)* and the *polychronic-time schedule (PT)*. (See Table 8.1). According to Hall and Hall (1987), MT and PT are polar opposites. People in MT cultures pay close attention to clock time and do one thing at a time. In MT cultures, people use time in a linear way, employing segments to break up time into scheduled and divided allotments so a person can concentrate on one thing at a time. The schedule is given top priority. The United States, Germany, and Switzerland are classic examples of MT-time cultures. Students attending college or a university belong to an MT culture as well. For example, Shawna is monochronic: "I live by a very strict schedule and hate to deviate from it. This is only because I am most productive if I have a schedule."

People in PT cultures pay attention to relational time (involvement with people) and place more emphasis on completing human transactions than on holding to schedules. For example, two polychronic Gua-

Table 8.1 Characteristics of Monochronic and Polychronic Time

Monochronic Time	Polychronic Time
Clock Time	Situational Time
Appointment Time	Flextime
Segmented Activities	Simultaneous Activities
Task-Oriented	Relationship-Oriented
Future-Focused	Past/Present-Focused
Tangible Outcome Perspective	Historical Perspective

temalans conversing on a street corner would likely opt to be late for their next appointment rather than abruptly terminate the conversation before it came to a natural conclusion. For Hall and Hall (1987), Arab, African, Latin American, Asian, and Mediterranean cultures are representative of PT patterns. One example of a place with PT cultural patterns is Africa. Pennington (1990) said that for many Africans, time creates group harmony and participation among the members. Group connectedness can be seen in the dances and drumming. Time for traditional Africans is viewed as organic rather than mechanical.

When PT and MT people interact, disagreements and misunderstandings often occur, for example, in planning a vacation. An MT traveling companion will feel comfortable if the tickets were purchased, if a hotel or hostel room was confirmed, if a daily schedule was planned, and so on. The PT person will respond by waiting to do these things just prior to departure. As Shawna says, "This drives me crazy. I hate waiting until the last minute to do things, and he hates to do too many things in advance. We plan trips around the e-fares, so that means sometimes we don't even know where we are going until a few days before we leave."

To be flexible, we must work toward living with both types of time orientation. This adds a lot of spontaneity to life. Gray, a Pottery Barn employee, offers his take on time in Double Take 8.5.

Double Take 8.5

If my friends or family ever needed anything, I would set aside my schedule and be there for them. Since I am so monochronic, when I do get off schedule I can get back on schedule. I am monochronic only when it has to do with things that need to be done, but when it comes to my friends and relationships, I am much more polychronic. I think that relationships are the most important part of my life, and I don't let time constraints get in the way, unless it has to do with school. It is hard to live a polychronic life

when you are in school because there are so many deadlines and things that need to get done. When you are in the "real world," I think that it may be more important to act [in ways that are] both monochronic and polychronic—there's a schedule to stick to and there's a need for flexibility. I think that it would be best if you were able to live somewhere in between the extremes of MT and PT. Then you would have the best of both worlds.

—Gray, College Student

Studies indicate that members of individualistic cultures tend to follow the MT pattern, whereas members of collectivistic cultures tend to follow the PT pattern (Hall, 1983). Members of individualistic cultures tend to view time as something that can be controlled and arranged. Members of collectivistic cultures tend to view time as

experientially based (i.e., living and experiencing time fully rather than mechanically monitoring clock time).

Now let's do Quick Poll 8.3.

Quick Poll 8.3	
Your MT friend is waiting for you at a restaurant. What will you say if you are	
5–10 minutes late?	_____
10–15 minutes late?	_____
15–30 minutes late?	_____
30–45 minutes late?	_____
45–60 minutes late?	_____

According to most people's answers, Hall (1959) made distinctions for arriving late in the U.S. in accordance with chunks of time within 5 minutes. Therefore, in the above question, if you are 5 to 10 minutes late, you are in the "mumble something" time, and you offer a small statement. "Slight apology" time is 10 to 15 minutes late, and therefore you are required to apologize. "Mildly insulting or serious apology" time is 15 to 30 minutes late, so you are expected to offer a persuasive reason for your tardiness. The last two, "rude" time (30 to 45 minutes) and "downright insulting" time (45 to 60 minutes), are both unacceptable. Time is omnipresent. Chronemic cues allow us to manage our intercultural interactions and facilitate clearer understandings regarding this form of nonverbal communication. Studying chronemics gives us a better understanding of the rhythmic dance of time.

In sum, it is so easy to draw conclusions about people without even understanding their culture. When someone from a different culture does not look you in the eye, it is easy to jump to the conclusion that he or she disrespects you, is shy, or is not interested. However, some cultural groups believe that looking someone in the eye is disrespectful. Before drawing any conclusions from watching people's actions, engage in a conversation and find meaning behind the gestures. Nonverbal cues communicate status, power, ingroup and outgroup differences, and unique identities. In attempting to understand within-culture and across-culture nonverbal variations, look to interpersonal sensitivity, respect, and open-minded attitudes as good first steps in gaining nonverbal entrance to a culture.

Intercultural Toolkit: Recaps and Checkpoints

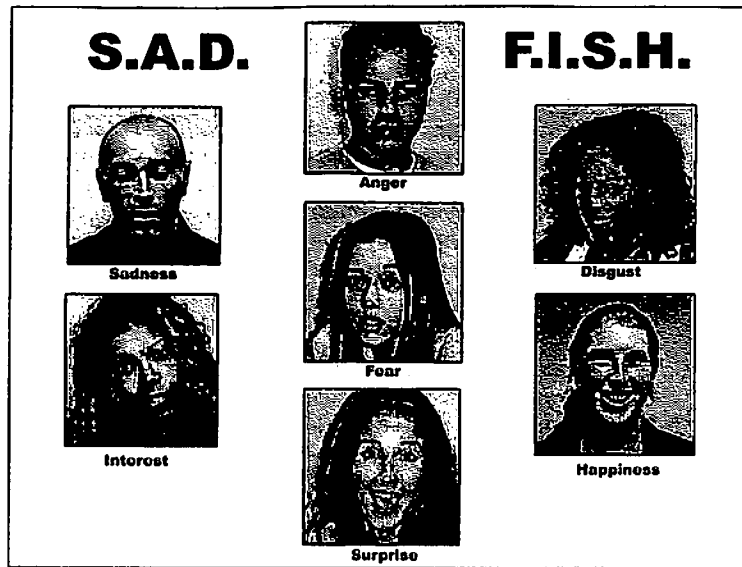
In this chapter, we have discussed the importance of many forms of nonverbal communication across cultures. More specifically, we have

explored artifacts and clothing, paralanguage, facial expressions, various nonverbal hand gestures, haptics or touch, and cross-cultural regulation of space and time (see the answers to Snapshot 8.1 and 8.2 in Snapshots 8.9 and 8.10). Each form of nonverbal communication reflects our larger cultural values and also expresses our unique personalities and identities. More important, the situation in which the nonverbal behavior takes place is quite critical in adding meaning to our accurate interpretation.

To be a flexible nonverbal communicator across cultures, you should be mindful of your own nonverbal behaviors and signals. You also need to be cautious in interpreting the unfamiliar gestures and nonverbal signals in a new culture. We present you with a set of nonverbal checkpoints to consider in communicating across cultures:

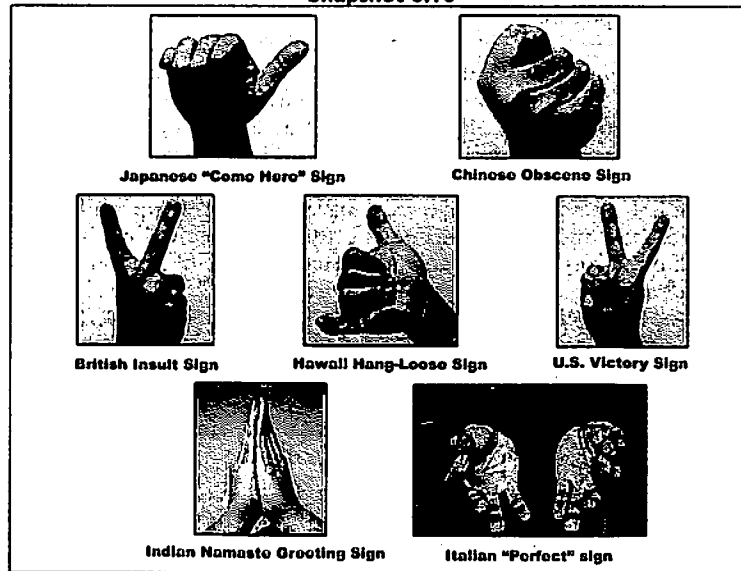
- Be flexible when you observe and identify nonverbal display rules. Your observation and initial reaction may not match the rules across cultural groups. Flexibility allows you to be patient when you observe and match identities, status, distance, expectations, and appropriate nonverbal behaviors in various situations.
- Go deep: different meanings and expectations of nonverbal norms and rules are more than what one sees; there is typically a deeper-than-surface explanation. This may help you move toward an alternative explanation and move toward a clearer picture.
- Remember that what someone says is not as important as how he says it. It is important to be aware of one's actions when expressing feelings in words. Sometimes a person can portray a more serious and unaccepting physical presence than the intended meaning. If you do not feel comfortable adapting nonverbally to the intercultural stranger, check yourself and your environment. Realize that the functions and interpretations of any nonverbal cues are tied closely to identity, emotional expression, conversational management, impression formation, and boundary regulation issues.
- As a flexible nonverbal communicator, express emotions and attitudes that correspond to your comfort level but, at the same time, be adaptive and sensitive to the appropriate nonverbal display rules in a particular culture.
- Because nonverbal behavior is oftentimes so ambiguous and situation-dependent, learn to be less judgmental and more tentative in interpreting others' unfamiliar nonverbal signals.

Snapshot 8.9



Did you correctly identify the emotions represented by each facial expression?

Snapshot 8.10



How many intercultural gestures could you decode? ♦

Chapter 9

What Causes Us to Hold Biases Against Outgroups?

