INTRODUCTION

1. Have you felt any discomfort when communicating with members of other cultures? If so, can you identify the reasons (i.e., apart from those we have discussed)?

2. Based on your personal experience and on what you have learned about culture, think about how different nationalities that you are familiar with use gestures, personal space, facial expressions, touch and eye contact. Share your experience in groups of four.

3. How can your body language influence your credibility and help you win someone’s trust?

4. Now read the text and compare your answers with Dr. Collett’s findings and underline the key concepts.

Foreign bodies

Understanding the 'body language' of different nationalities - the way they use gestures, eye-contact and touching to communicate without words - is an important part of communicating across cultures. In his book Foreign Bodies, Oxford University research psychologist Dr. Peter Collett examines some of the differences among Europeans.

Gesture
Dr. Collett suggests that with regard to the way different European nations use gestures, they fall into three groups: 1) the Nordic nations - the Swedes, Finns, Norwegians and Danes use gestures very little; 2) nations such as the British, Germans, Dutch, Belgians and Russians use some gestures when they are excited, or want to communicate over long distances, or to insult each other; 3) the Italians, Greeks, French, Spanish and Portuguese use gestures a lot to emphasize what they are saying and to hold the other person's attention. 'Even when they are silent,' says Dr Collett, 'their hands are often busy sending messages through their manual semaphore.'

Personal space
What feels right for one nationality may feel uncomfortable for another. British zoologist Desmond Morris has identified three 'personal space' zones in Europe. In countries such as Spain, France, Italy and Greece, people stand close enough to touch each other easily. Morris calls this the 'elbow zone'. In East European countries such as Poland, Hungary and Romania, people stand a little more distant. Morris calls this the 'wrist zone' because they are close enough to touch wrists. In Britain, Holland, Belgium, Germany and the Scandinavian countries, people prefer to stand further away from each other and they do not generally touch. This he calls 'fingertips zone'.

Eye-contact
In countries where people stand close to each other, in Morris's elbow zone, eye-contact is more frequent and lasts longer. Mediterranean countries, says Dr. Collet, are 'high-look' cultures whereas north European countries are 'low-look' cultures. Children who grow up in a low-look culture learn that it is rude to look too long at another person. In a high-look culture, eye-contact, like physical contact and gestures, is a natural way of expressing your feelings and relating to other people. This explains why, for example, north Europeans visiting South European countries may feel uncomfortable at the way people look at them.

Do these observations agree with your own experience?
5. Watch the video sequence Gestures across cultures; then finish the sentences.

a) The essential feature of handshaking is that it is an ________________________________ act.

b) In Japan, if you want to signal that someone is crazy, or has a s_______ l______________, you have to____________________________________________________________________

c) When people mean “no” in most European countries, they typically ________________

while in the south, ______________________________________________________________

d) While a ring made by the index finger and the thumb is an “OK” gesture in Britain, in other parts of the world it may have a completely different meaning. For example, ________________________________

Territoriality and proxemics

Our primary identities are closely linked with our claimed territories. When our territories are invaded, we perceive this as a threat and experience emotional vulnerability. This “sacred space” satisfies our needs for security, trust, connection and stability. It often serves as a “hidden dimension” of intercultural misunderstanding and discomfort. The term proxemics was coined in 1963 by Edward T. Hall, cultural anthropologist, who emphasized the impact of proxemic behavior (the use of space) on interpersonal communication.

? How do you organize, use and indicate your personal space? Think about representatives of different cultures and how they behave with regard to their personal space. Are there any differences within cultures? Now read the text and compare your observations.

Social distances

The social distances and the size of our portable personal “space bubbles” depend on where we are, what message we are giving and to whom we are giving it. E. Hall has identified four social distances or zones: intimate, personal, social, and public.

Pay attention to how physically close someone is to you. The closer they are, the warmer they are thinking of you. They probably really like you or are very comfortable around/by you. It is worth noting, however, that personal space is culturally fluid: what is considered close in one country is far away in another.

1 INTIMATE ZONE (0 to 18 inches)

Only those who are emotionally close to us are allowed into this space – lovers, parents, spouses, children, close friends and relatives. The presence of the other person may at times be overwhelming because of the greatly stepped-up sensory input/exposure and involvement with another body. In the close phase, the distance of lovemaking, comforting, protecting but also wrestling, physical contact is present or highly probable. In this phase, vocalization plays a minor part as communication is carried mainly by other channels.

The physical discomfort Americans experience when foreigners are inside the intimate sphere is expressed as a distortion of vision. One subject said, ”These people get so close, you’re cross-eyed.”

Crowded subways and buses may bring strangers into what would ordinarily be classed as intimate spatial relations, but subway riders use various defensive devices. The basic tactic is to be as immobile as possible and, when part of the trunk touches another person, withdraw if possible.

However, the rules governing touching are not constant. Middle Eastern subjects in public places do not express the outraged reaction to being touched by strangers, often encountered in American subjects.
2 PERSONAL ZONE (18 to 48 inches)

This distance might be thought of as a small protective sphere that an organism maintains between itself and others. This is the distance we put between ourselves and others at office parties, social functions and friendly gatherings. At the close phase, one can hold or grasp another person. Where people stand in relation to each other signals their relationship or attitude. A wife can stay inside the circle of her husband’s close personal zone with impunity. For another woman this is a different story.

The far phase extends from a point that is just outside easy touching distance by one person to a point where two people can touch fingers if they extend both arms. Subjects of personal interest and involvement can be discussed at this distance.

3 SOCIAL ZONE (4-12 feet)

We stand at this distance from strangers and people we don’t know very well – or don’t like very much. Intimate detail in the face is not perceived, and nobody touches or expects to touch another person. Business and social discourse conducted at the far phase has a more formal character while people who work together tend to use close social distance. Desks in the offices of important people are large enough to hold visitors at the far phase and even in an office with standard-size desks, the chair opposite is 8 or 9 feet away from the man behind the desk. During conversations it is more important to maintain visual contact.

At the far phase, the voice level is louder, and it can usually be heard easily in an adjoining room. The far phase can be used to screen people from each other. It enables them to continue to work in the presence of another person without appearing to be rude. For example, if the receptionist in an office is less than 10 feet from another person, she will be virtually compelled to converse.

4 PUBLIC ZONE (Anything over 12 feet)

If we are talking to a large group, this is the distance at which we choose to stand. At this distance a careful choice of words and phrasing of sentences as well as grammatical or syntactic shifts occur, which are termed as the "formal style". 30 feet, or the far phase of this distance is the distance that is automatically set around important public figures. There are certain adjustments that must be made. Most actors know that at 30 or more feet the subtle shades of meaning conveyed by the normal voice are lost as are the details of facial expression and movement. Not only the voice but everything else must be exaggerated or amplified. Much of the nonverbal communication shifts to gestures and body stance.

1. Now think about how you would respond in the following situations and compare your responses with your partner’s. Could you describe the underlying feelings?

   In a crowded library, there is only one table where you can sit. A member of the opposite sex is sitting in the chair marked with an x.

   A. First, assume that x is a very attractive person whom you’d like to get to know but have never met. Where would you sit? Why?
   B. Now assume that x is an unattractive person you would not like to get to know. Where would you sit?
   C. Where would you sit if x is an instructor you have had for a course and liked very much?
   D. Where would you sit if x is an instructor you have had for a course and disliked very much? The instructor gave you an unfair grade.
2. The possessive reaction we have to space or to objects is not directly taught to us. We are unaware of our feelings of territoriality until "our space" or "our objects" are violated by another person. How would you react and feel in the following situations? Discuss your answers in groups.

A. In an uncrowded bus, you want to sit next to a person who has put some object on the seat that he/she must move when you attempt to sit down.
B. When there is only one person in a lift, you stand right next to that person.
C. In a class that has been meeting for several weeks, you sit in the seat where one particular person has sat every day.
D. In a library that is not crowded, you deliberately move someone's books and sit down while the person is away from the table.
E. In your home, you occupy someone else's "special" chair, desk, or room.

**Face to face**

3. It is generally accepted that certain basic expressions of human emotion are recognized around the world. The use and recognition of these expressions is genetically inherited rather than socially conditioned. Which do you think they are? How do they show in your face? Here are some of the letters to help you: H_ _ _ NESS, S_ _ NESS, F_ _ _, DIS_ _ _ T, S_ _ _ _ _ SE, A_ _ _ R. This theory, formulated by Darwin, was put to test by Californian psychologist Paul Eckman. Eckman’s work notably included isolated tribes not influenced by Western media and images.

? Do you show your emotions openly or do you consider yourself reserved? How do these emotions show in your face?

**IS BEAUTY ONLY SKIN DEEP?**

4. Read the following statements and decide whether they are false or true.

1. In the U.S., attractive people are mostly viewed with suspicion and perceived as less competent or intelligent than unattractive people.   T    F

2. In the U.S., an attractive person appears as more sensitive, likeable and interesting than an unattractive person.   T    F

3. The Japanese evaluate smiling faces as more intelligent than neutral faces.   T    F

4. The Japanese do not perceive smiling faces as being more attractive than neutral faces.   T    F

5. In some Asian cultures, influential people tend to maintain restrained facial expressions and postural rigidity.   T    F

6. The same holds for the U.S. culture.   T    F
Look at the following photographs. What emotions or attitudes do they express?

Which of them do you consider likeable? Why? Discuss your answers in pairs.

WHO IS WHO?
Which of them may be described as
a) stiff, combative, high-strung, distant, aloof
b) energetic, natural, likable, believable, enthusiastic
c) abrasive, chilly, intimidating, with a rapid-fire, coldly analytical speech
d) passionate, articulate, persuasive, a bridge-builder
e) evasive, non-responsive, defensive, anxious?

Match the photographs with the descriptions.

a) The lead singer of U2
b) The former CBS Evening News anchor man
c) The former professional baseball player and current hitting coach
d) The former American football player in the National Football League, the Super Bowl-winning head coach and the former color commentator for NFL telecasts.
e) The former U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush
BODY LANGUAGE AND PROXEMICS – LANGUAGE WORK I

1. Complete each of the following phrases with one of the expressions from the box in a singular or plural form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mouth</th>
<th>face (2x)</th>
<th>chest</th>
<th>cheek</th>
<th>leg</th>
<th>neck</th>
<th>skin</th>
<th>back</th>
<th>arm</th>
<th>finger</th>
<th>ear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to _____ difficulties</td>
<td>7 to pull someone’s ________</td>
<td>2 to _____ the new proposal</td>
<td>8 to be a pain in the ________</td>
<td>3 to have the ________ to do something</td>
<td>9 to be only ________ deep</td>
<td>4 to take something at a ________ value</td>
<td>10 to keep one’s ________ crossed</td>
<td>5 to put your money where your ________ is</td>
<td>11 to keep/hold somebody at ________’s length</td>
<td>12. to get it off your ________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now match the above expressions to their explanations. Make any necessary changes.

a) If you are ________________________, it means you are making a joke of someone by telling them something that is not true.

b) If someone ________________________, it means he or she supports it.

c) If someone tells you ________________________, he wants you to support your words with actions.

d) If you ________________________ for someone, you hope that something will happen the way he/she wants.

e) Someone who is ________________________ is annoying.

f) to ________________________ means to tell something that has been worrying you for a long time.

g) Someone who ________________________ behaves rudely or disrespectfully.

h) If something ________________________, it seems to be important or real when in fact it is not.

i) ________________________ means to have to deal with them.

j) ________________________ means to accept what someone says, without thinking that there may be a hidden meaning.

k) to ________________________ means to be very attentive; to listen closely.

l) If you ________________________, you avoid developing a relationship with them.

2. On the left are some adjectives often used to describe a particular part of the face or head. Complete the right-hand side.

1 high, lined _________ 6 cauliflower, pierced _________
2 rosy, hollow _________ 7 piercing, hazel _________
3 double, pointed _________ 8 thick, cherry _________
4 bushy, pencil-thin _________ 9 square, upper _________
5 snub, hook (Roman) _________

3. On the left are some definitions of parts of the face. Write what they are.

a) openings in the nose – N__________

b) the soft lower parts of the ears – L__________

c) flat parts on the side of the face above the cheekbones – T__________

d) the bony part that protects the brain – S__________

e) The moveable skin that covers the eyes – L__________

4. Which parts of your body do you use to do the following: pat, lick, hug, clap, tickle, pinch, kick, punch, stroke, crunch, poke?

5. When do you: tiptoe, pace up and down, stroll, shuffle, limp?
Eyes

1. Fill in the words based on their descriptions.
the round, coloured part of your eye that surrounds its central black part – I_________
the small black round area in the middle of your eye – P____________
a piece of skin that covers your eye when it is closed – E______________
the line of hair above your eye – E________________

2. When do you wink, roll your eyes, look askance, knit your brows?

3. Can you read someone’s eyes? What do they tell you about your partner? Discuss this in groups of four.

Normally the top eyelid rests midway between the pupil and the iris. If it is raised much above the pupil, this normally indicates extreme interest or surprise. However, if you see your partner’s eyelid drop below this midpoint, they are bored, uninterested or falling asleep! If the bottom eyelid rises slightly, this indicates that they are evaluating what you have said, often critically.

People who look to the sides a lot are nervous, lying, or distracted. However, this could well be a discomfort display or it could indicate submissiveness. Looking askance generally means the person is distrustful or unconvinced.

If someone looks down a lot, they are probably shy or timid. People also tend to look down when they are trying to hide something emotional or feeling unpleasant emotions.

Some cultures believe that looking someone in the eyes is a sign of disrespect, or it is only done with intimate friends or family, so this could explain why someone is avoiding eye contact with you.

Dilated pupils mean that the person is interested. Keep in mind, however, that many substances cause pupils to dilate, including alcohol, cocaine, amphetamines and others. If their eyes seem focused far away, that usually indicates that a person is in deep thought or not listening.

DIRECTION OF GAZE

Describe the following pictures. Which of them may reveal that your partner is making something up?

Try this with your partner. Ask them to remember an event, then to make up a situation. Compare the direction of their gaze.
Posture

? What is the difference between posture and bearing?
Divide the following expressions into two groups: those expressing or associating straightness and those expressing or associating curviness.
Stooped, upright, hunched, arched, stiff, stern, arched, slumped, rigid
STRAIGHT:
CURVED:
There are a few basic positions that your body may assume: standing, sitting, crouching, squatting, kneeling and lying. What do you usually do in these positions?

Your posture can make or break your ability to have presence. Get it right and it helps you to look energetic, adds to your voice quality and forges the image you want to project. Instead of being stiff and rigid, think of yourself of being as mobile as a cat.

If you want to feel more powerful, adopt a powerful posture. D. R. Carney and others found that when people stood or sat in powerful poses for one minute—those involving open limbs and expansive gestures—they not only felt more powerful but had increased levels of testosterone flooding their systems. Powerful poses take up more space, so spread your body and open up the arms or legs.

People form impressions of us in the first few seconds of a meeting. Yet many people have posture habits that undermine trust. The good news is that you can improve your posture habits.
1. **Stand tall.** Stand with your shoulders back and your stomach in. Visualise a string rising from the centre of your scalp like a candle wick, pulling you upwards. Stand straight (but not starchy) and move naturally.
2. **Watch your lower body.** One common posture problem is going back on one hip. You actually lean away from your audience and communicate, “I don’t want to be here”.
3. **Get in the “ready” position.** This means basically lean forward. When you communicate from the self-assured stance, your energy is directed forward, towards your listener.
4. **Move.** To make emotional contact with your listeners, we need to convey excitement and enthusiasm when we speak. Movement and free gestures add energy and variety to your message.

Haptics

? What is the usual purpose of touch? What are the diverse forms of touching?

Haptics is a branch of study that investigates the perceptions, functions and meanings of touch as a common tool in different cultures. It also denotes any form of nonverbal communication involving touch.

Discuss the rules and behaviours related to touch in your family, between you and your friends and across cultures. When and what sort of touch is appropriate? What other situations (e.g. in public) are likely to induce touching? What are the rules for hand-holding?

Now read the text and compare your answers.
Touch is used to fulfill five communicative functions: ritualistic interaction (e.g. shaking hands), expressing affect (kissing or kicking), playfulness (flirtatious stroking or poking), control function (grabbing one’s hand), task-related function (a nurse taking a patient’s pulse).

Different cultures have different expectations as to who should touch whom and when. For example, while Chinese view opposite-sex handshakes as acceptable, Malays and Arabs view this as taboo. Also, different cultures have different gender norms for embracing and handholding.

The friendly embrace between males is much more acceptable in many Latin American...
cultures than in Britain or the U.S. The friendly handholding pattern between two females in many Asian cultures is also accepted non-verbal practice.

The tendency of North Americans to remain outside the appropriate haptic zone of Arabs is usually viewed as “insincere” and “cold”. Conversely, most North Americans tend to perceive the Arabs’ need for close contact as “aggressive” and “belligerent”. However, it is important to remember that the touch behaviour in both the Arab and the Latin American cultures is usually confined to same-sex touching. Furthermore, while Latin Americans and southern Europeans view kissing and hugging as spontaneous expressions of their positive feelings, many Asian cultures do not approve of such overt display of affection. The French, for example, like to kiss acquaintances on both cheeks. In comparison, Britons practice “vacuum kisses” and not actual kisses.

(from Communicating Across Cultures by Stella Ting-Toomay)

BODY LANGUAGE AND PROXEMICS – LANGUAGE WORK II

1. Complete the sentences with a suitable verb.
   a) You should _____________ a distance of at least one meter from a person using a cash dispenser.
   b) I hate my aural space being ___________ in restaurants or on public transport when someone is speaking too loudly over their mobile phone.
   c) I don’t like people _______________ while I am talking to them.
   d) ___________, ____________, or ______________ without putting one’s hand over their mouth is considered bad manners.
   e) If you are looking down or aside while talking to someone, you may come ______________ (i.e., create an impression) as shifty.
   f) Your previous experience, a good track __________ or credentials might not help you if you show a lack of selfconfidence.

2. Put the words in brackets into the appropriate form by adding suffixes or prefixes.
   Your (vision) ______________ nervousness may (mine) ______________ your message. Many people mistakenly that one’s personal impact comes (prime) ______________ from an (appeal) ______________ face, (attract) ______________ physique or (style) ______________ clothes, but these are not the most important factors. Your speech has to be (passion) ______________ and (persuade) ______________ . While written communication goes to the (analyse) ______________ part of your brain, spoken communication goes straight to the emotional centre of the brain. Although some big (accomplish) ______________ or a title may buy you some (credible) ______________ , you still have to come across as (believe) ______________ to close a deal.

3. Do you consider the following situations acceptable?
   a) Giving a massage to a colleague of the opposite sex?
   b) Touching people when you talk to them or patting them on the back?
   c) Men helping women to take off and put on their coats?
   d) Men whistling at girls they find attractive?
   e) Kissing your child on the lips?

Which of the above
   a) could make someone feel awkward?
   b) is considered gentlemanly?
   c) is unhygienic?
   d) is sexist?
   e) could be misinterpreted?