

WE NEED TO LEAVE

Annex 2



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A brief history of body language.

Perhaps the greatest discovery is that all humans living today descend from a small group who lived about 50,000 years ago. This shows why we have so much similarity and why, in the context of body language, we can express ourselves similarly to each other from around the world depending on how we feel. This in turn means we now have developed a field called *body language* which allows us to decode non-verbal signals and cues that are communicated through gestures, posture, facial expression and eye movement. We can then interpret them in addition to what is said verbally. Just as the development of language was highly linked to the concept of trust and deception, so is the study of body language. It is ultimately about understanding others better especially when they are not readily verbalising their emotions or thoughts. Equally, it is also about learning how to hide your own emotions and attitudes or fake them to reach a particular objective when interacting with other people.

Body language are signals you can use to improve your communication with others, predict their behaviour and avoid being deceived. This non-verbal communication consists of three main disciplines: *Kinesics*, *Proxemics* and *Haptics*.

Kinesics is the scientific field for the interpretation of body language and facial expressions or in general any non-verbal behaviour shown by parts of the body or the whole body.

Proxemics is the scientific field that investigates personal space and territory. Personal space is about how a person feels and treats the immediate space around him and territory is about how a person claims a particular piece of space and aims to defend it against others.

Haptics is the study of how humans or animals communicate with each other using touch. For people, communication via touch includes handshakes, hugging, kissing, holding hands, patting on the shoulder and even high-fiving. Touching is one of the fundamental non-verbal communication mediums. Touch is critical for obtaining information about an environment through sensing surfaces, but also is vital for physical intimacy.

Body Language and Animal Behaviour

The field of body language is also close to ethology, the study of animal behaviour. The first model ethologist is Charles Darwin. Many non-verbal signals tend to be

instinctive, so the field shed light on why we and other close members of the animal kingdom behave in certain similar ways when confronted with certain stimuli. The field provides clues on instincts, behavioural conditioning, cognition and even psychology.

All primates can communicate with each other through facial expressions. Only humans and apes use gestures specifically directed at an individual that they intend to communicate with. As an example, when a chimp stretches his open hand, effectively performing the begging gestures, it could be asking for food or help in a fight. The researchers suggest that a *vocabulary of gestures* could have been the starting point in the evolution of human language since the gestures are disconnected from specific emotions and are easier to control. Gestures in comparison with facial expressions, which can easily give many clues about the emotional state of a person, are also easier to use deceptively. Hence, language could have started from use of gestures.

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Erasmus+, Action 2 Strategic Partnerships



Walking to appear large and threatening



Begging for food



Frustrated, hitting herself for not getting food after request

For more details, see body language guidelines at the link below:
<https://www.skillsconverged.com/FreeTrainingMaterials/BodyLanguage/OriginsofHumansandBodylanguage.aspx>