

Social Perception

Non-verbal communication

- Much communication takes place non-verbally
 - Gestures, posture, eye contact, movement, facial expressions
- Non-verbal communication is (relatively) irrepressible by the person expressing it
- We pay attention to non-verbal communication and it can affect our thinking, emotion, and behaviour

Facial Expressions

- Six basic emotions that humans can express from an early age:
 - Happiness (raising and lowering of mouth corners)
 - Sadness (lowering of mouth corners, raise inner portion of brows)
 - Anger (brows lowered, lips pressed firmly, eyes bulging)
 - Fear (brows raised, eyes open, mouth opens slightly)
 - Surprise (brows arch, eyes open wide to expose more white, jaw drops slightly)
 - Disgust (upper lip is raised, nose bridge is wrinkled, cheeks raised)
 - Contempt? (lip pulled up and back on one side)
- Basic emotional expression is generally thought to be universal, although there may be subtle differences that are culturally based

Facial Expressions

- Although basic emotions are generally universal, there are some differences in how we attend facial expressions
 - Attending to the mouth in more emotionally expressive cultures
 - Attending to the eyes in less emotionally expressive cultures
- We are also likely to rely on contextual cues when interpreting emotions, particularly when they are ambivalent
- Eyes Test revealed deficits in processing of facial expressions in some individuals

Eye Contact

- We interpret people's eye contact as an indication of their inner experience
 - Avoiding eye contact = unfriendly, dislike, shy
 - Holding gaze = liking, friendship
 - Staring = anger, hostility

Body language

- Touching, rubbing, scratching one part of the body with another is perceived as nervousness
- Emblems – body movements that carry specific meaning in a particular culture
 - Thumbs up
 - Yes and no
- Emotional movement demo

Body language

- Perception of body language is affected by gender (Kret & De Gelder, 2012)
 - Most research seems to show that women are better at identifying emotions, but males more likely to respond to threatening emotions
 - Males are particularly sensitive to threatening emotions by *other males*

Non-verbal behaviour

- Word, Zanna, & Cooper (1974)
- Classic study showing that non-verbal behaviour is different in interracial interactions, and that these behaviours are causally linked to performance
- White participants made more speech errors, spent less time talking, and were less friendly when interviewing Black compared to White confederates

TABLE 1
 MEAN INTERVIEWER BEHAVIOR AS A FUNCTION OF RACE OF
 JOB APPLICANT; EXPERIMENT 1

Behavior	Relia- bility	Blacks	Whites	<i>t</i> ^b	<i>p</i>
Total immediacy ^a	—	— .11	.38	2.79	< .02
Distance	.90	62.29 inches	58.43 inches	2.36	< .05
Forward lean	.68	—8.76 degrees	—6.12 degrees	1.09	n.s.
Eye contact	.80	62.71%	61.46%	<1	n.s.
Shoulder orientation	.60	22.46 degrees	23.08 degrees	<1	n.s.
Related behaviors					
Interview length	—	9.42 min.	12.77 min.	3.22	< .01
Speech error rate	.88	3.54 errors/min.	2.37 errors/min.	2.43	< .05

Non-verbal behaviour

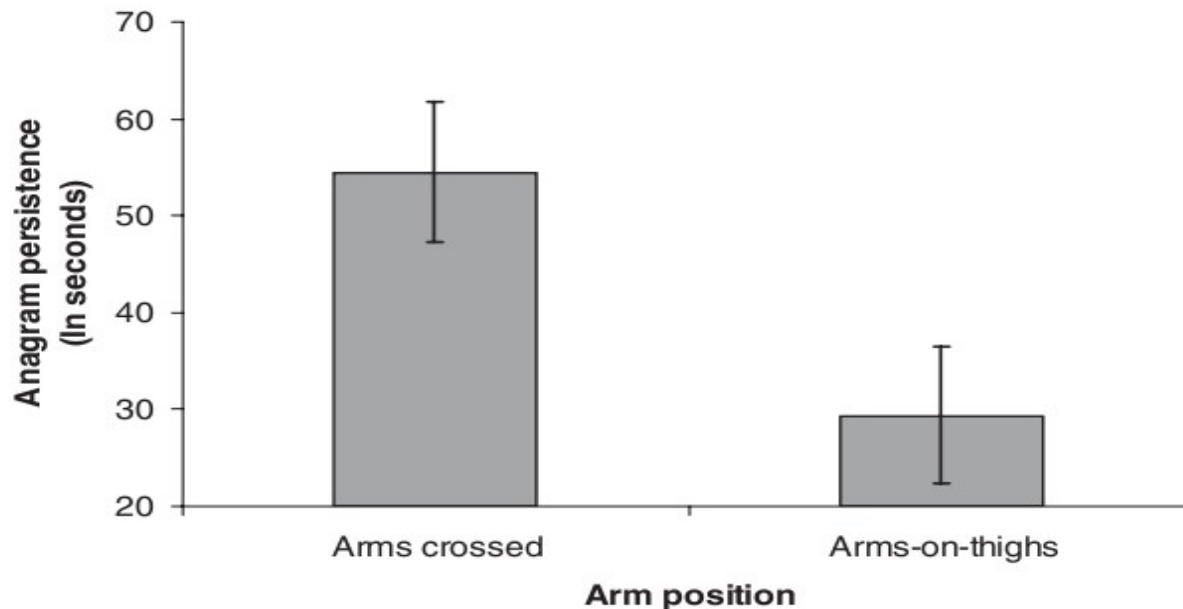
- In a second study, an interviewer acted in a friendly or unfriendly way (from the results of the first study), and measured the performance of White participants

TABLE 2
MEAN APPLICANT RESPONSES UNDER TWO CONDITIONS OF
INTERVIEWER IMMEDIACY; EXPERIMENT 2

Response	Relia- bility	Nonimmediate	Immediate	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Applicant performance					
Rated performance	.66	1.44	2.22	7.96	< .01
Rated demeanor	.86	1.62	3.02	16.46	< .001
Immediacy behaviors					
Distance	—	72.73 inches	56.93 inches	9.19	< .01
Speech error rate	.74	5.01	3.33	3.40	< .10
		errors/min.	errors/min.		

Non-verbal behaviour

- Believe it or not, our own non-verbal communication influences *our own* emotions and behaviour
 - Proprioceptive cues
 - Effort and arms crossing (Friedman & Elliot, 2008)



Deception

- We lie all the time, for many different reasons
- There are numerous verbal and non-verbal cues that reliably predict deception (up to 80% correct, Leach et al, 2009)
 - But we don't tend to use them!
- People are just slightly better than chance level at detecting deception (54%; Bond & DePaulo, 2006)
 - We are better at detecting truth (~60%) than detecting lies (<50%)
- Generally we:
 - Assume people are truthful
 - Do not talk about deception
 - Generalize other's truthfulness to all situations

Deception

- Visual cues:
 - Decreased movement, eye contact, smiling, fidgeting
- Verbal cues:
 - Stuttering, pitch of voice, delay in responding, starting and stopping sentences
- Content cues:
 - More negative, less personal, less complex

Deception

- Lie detection training is a big business
- Although individuals working in law enforcement have slightly better ability to detect deception, they also have greater overconfidence in their abilities (Kassin et al, 2007)
- The correlation between accuracy and confidence is $r=0.04$ (DePaulo et al, 1997)

Deception

- There are some individual differences that account for some of the variation in lie detection ability
 - Low social anxiety (DePaulo & Tang, 1994)
 - Dysphoria (Lane & DePaulo, 1999)
 - Left-handedness ($r = 0.16$, Porter et al, 2002)

Deception

- How reliable is deception detection?
 - Do people who score high on these measures *consistently* score high?
 - Does the type of lie matter? (life events, emotions, crime)
 - Does deception or detection of deception vary with age?

Attribution

- The process of identifying the causes of behaviour determining stable dispositions
- In other words:
 - “Why did someone act the way they did? Which situational or personality factors were involved?”

Attribution

- Theory of correspondent inference (Jones & Harris, 1967) – How we infer stable personality traits based on people's behaviour
- We often make the assumption that behaviour generally corresponds to a person's personality
 - But we often act in ways that are not consistent with our personality, due to external factors
- Theory of correspondent inference suggests that we limit which behavioural information we focus on
 - Deliberate (behaviour the person has control over)
 - Noncommon effects (results of behaviour that can be explained by a single cause; when you have lots of reasons for doing something, it tells us little about your personality)
 - Low social desirability (out of the ordinary)

Attribution

- Deliberate - Someone in the psychology program is taking a statistics course and an elective
 - Which course tells you the most about the person's personality?
- Non-common – Someone goes to Florida for spring break, and someone else goes to Timmins
 - Which behaviour tells us more about the person?
- Social desirability – Someone goes to a movie and then volunteers changing bedpans at a seniors home
 - Which behaviour tells us more about the person's personality?

Attribution

- Theory of causal attributions (Kelley, 1973) – How we determine whether behaviour is due to internal or external causes
- Three pieces of information are important:
 - Consensus – Do other people act the same way in this situation?
 - Consistency – Does the person act the same way on multiple occasions?
 - Distinctiveness – Does the person act the same way in different situations?

Attribution

- We assume internal causes when consensus is low, distinctiveness is low, and consistency is high
- We assume external causes when consensus, distinctiveness, and consistency are all high
- We assume a combination of external and internal causes when other combinations exist, particularly when consensus is low, distinctiveness is high, and consistency is high

Attribution

- When estimating personal responsibility, we take into account internal/external causes, as well as stability and whether the behaviour is controllable
- Discounting – less importance place on a potential cause when there are other potential causes
- Augmenting – greater importance to a potential cause when there are factors that make the behaviour less likely

Attribution

- We potentially make several errors when attributing behaviour
- Correspondence bias (fundamental attribution error, Jones & Harris, 1967; Ross, 1977)
 - Over-estimate the role of internal factors in other people's behaviour
 - Compared to dispositional factors, it is simply harder to recognize situational factors affecting other's behaviour
 - Anchoring (initial assumption is dispositional)

Attribution

- Individuals from individualistic cultures have a greater tendency to use the correspondence bias when making attributions, compared to those from collectivist cultures
- We apply the correspondence bias to groups as well as individuals

Attribution

- Actor-Observer effect
 - We attribute our own behaviour to external factors, but other's behaviour to internal factors
 - We have less access to the internal processes of others
- Self-serving bias
 - Attribute positive outcomes to our internal traits, but attribute negative outcomes to external factors
 - Great use of this bias in Western compared to Asian cultures

Attribution

- Defensive attribution
 - We do not want to feel like a negative event could happen to us, so we assume there is something wrong or bad about the person
 - Especially powerful when the perpetrator and victim is similar to us (Shaver, 1970; Grubb & Harrower, 2009)
 - Victim-blaming and the Just World bias
 - What is the consequence of this bias in the real world?

Attribution

- Correspondence bias leads us to make some errors, but there is some evidence that these errors are adaptive
 - It makes us feel good to think that our successes are due to our own merits
 - Less use of this bias in individuals with depression (Forgas, 1998)

Impression formation

- The process by which we form impression of others
- Implicit personality theories – assumptions (schemas) about which personality traits fit together
- Helpful and kind ---> Honest
- Cold and manipulating ---> Ambitious
- Attractiveness ---> Any number of good qualities

Impression formation

- Implicit theories of personality differ by culture
- The “artistic temperament” expected in western culture is not recognized in China
- In China, a group of traits is recognized to go together: worldly, socially skilled, devoted to the family, reserved
- Among people from the Nguni language group of South Africa, “Agreeableness” is considered to be a much more rich and complex personality factor than in Western culture; “Openness” is assumed to be a more social factor (Valchev et al, 2011)

Impression formation

- When forming an impression of someone, people tend to average all the information (positive and negative) available
- Initially we focus on exemplars (concrete evidence of behaviour), and later on abstractions (mental summaries of past behaviour)
- Spontaneous trait transference (Skowronski, 1998)
 - Political attack ads
 - Gossip

Impression formation

- The context of the social situation affects which information we attend to
- What information are you going to look for in each situation?
 - Meeting a potential partner for the first time
 - Going to a new dentist
 - Paying online with a credit card
 - Meeting a new coworker

- "Once upon a time a man whose ax was missing suspected his neighbor's son. The boy walked like a thief, looked like a thief, and spoke like a thief. But the man found his ax while digging in the valley, and the next time he saw his neighbor's son, the boy walked, looked, and spoke like any other child."
 - Lao-tzu (604-531 B.C.E.)

Impression management

- We want to look good, particularly the first time we interact with someone
- Impression management is the effort that we put into creating positive impressions on others
- Two basic approaches:
 - Self-enhancement
 - Other-enhancement
 - Defensive self-presentation

Impression management

- Self-enhancement tactics include
 - Dress, grooming, positive descriptions of abilities, outright deception
- Defensive self-presentation used when the impression the person is trying to create is threatened
 - Justifying, making excuses, removing information from view
- Have you ever used these tactics on Facebook (Rosenburg, 2009) or online dating?

Impression management

- Other enhancement used to induce positive feelings in other people, so that they like you more
 - Flattery, showing agreement, doing favours, showing interest, non-verbal cues that show liking
- When used too obviously, too often, or ineffectively, can lead to the opposite impression (he's a suck up, she's selfish, etc)

Impression management

- Impression management is particularly notable when dealing with attractive potential romantic partners
 - Women eat less (particularly when their femininity is challenged; Mori et al, 1987) and try to appear faithful (Dosmukhambetova and Manstead, 2011)
 - Men are more likely to act against social norms and are more creative (at least when they cannot be proven to be wrong; Griskevicius et al. 2006)

Impression management

- Much impression management takes place non-verbally (Bruder, Dosmukhambetova, Nerb, & Manstead, 2012)
- Male participants were shown a picture of the research assistant who would be scoring their data (this was not true), then three different 2-minute movies (horror, neutral, and babies)
 - IVs were attractiveness of the RA image and type of movie
 - DV was facial expressions of emotion
- Participants smiled more in the baby film and frowned less in the horror film when they were shown the picture of the more attractive RA (especially when the males had more open views of sexual relationships)