DO ARMENIAN MEN AND WOMEN PERCEIVE BODY LANGUAGE IN ADVERTISING
DIFFERENTLY?

by

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Presented to the
Department of English & Communications
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

American University of Armenia
Yerevan, Armenia

May 18, 2018

Abstract

Research has shown differences in the body language perception among males and females. The main purpose of this capstone project was to find out whether Armenian males and females perceive body language in advertisement differently or not. During this capstone project, the participants (77 females and 49 males from 16-22) from surveys and 15 participants (8 females and 7 males from 17-22) from three types of focus groups (one all-male group, one all-female group, and one mixed group) were shown 3 advertisements (2 international and 1 local) which carried body language. According to this project, there is only a slight difference in the body language perception among Armenian males and females, which is not enough to conclude that they perceive body language differently. However, professionals from the spheres of Neuroscience, Psychology, Cultural studies, and Advertising suggested some of the possible reasons related to some similarities and differences in the perception of body language by Armenian men and women. Moreover, based on the results of the surveys/focus groups, it becomes obvious that in order to perceive and interpret body language in advertisements, both genders in Armenia paid attention not only to the body language of a specific person but also to other signifiers that helped them to answer the questions related to body language.

Introduction

Have you ever imagined that nonverbal communication is can guide the process of communication? It is an important factor during the process of transmitting and receiving a message; it is not just the word that is capable of conveying a meaningful message, but the body itself can carry a message and provide a ground for effective communication. However, men and women can use and perceive some types of body language differently. Thus, in communication,

it is not only essential to understand why the sender uses a specific type of body language, but also find out the ways it is perceived by the receiver because s/he can interpret the same body language from different perspectives.

Starting from earlier times, body language has had a role in advertising - in this case, TV advertising - and it is widely used in it in terms of conveying a particular type of message and influencing customers' decision-making process. Though different cultures produce a lot of advertisements in order to sell a specific product/service, it is worth mentioning that besides using different techniques to achieve their goal, the usage and the interpretation of body language can be slightly different from culture to culture as well. A vivid example of this is the different advertisements for the travel website Trivago, airing in different countries throughout the world. The spokespeople of these advertisements are men and women from different cultures with a slight difference in representation of their body language and facial expressions. In these advertisements, it is possible to notice some differences in body language when it comes to smiling, hand gestures, walking, body postures, etc.

Indeed, there is a lot of research done in the study of body language and its perception by men and women. However, as far as Armenia is concerned, there is not enough information, research, and statistics that can give a comprehensive idea related to the interpretation of body language by different genders, its reasons and the connection between advertisements and body language perception or even to show the ways Armenian people in general, regardless of their gender, perceive body language. In order to figure out the perception of body language by men and women and the reasons behind it, it is important to learn fundamental things about body language, its importance, the connection of body language perception with the human brain, with advertising, with psychology and with cultural values, traditions, etc. Moreover, for a complete

research on this topic, it is necessary to select specific advertisements that carry a particular type of body language performed by men and women separately or together.

Thus, it is interesting and educative to start a case study in Armenia and find out some differences/similarities in the perception of body language by Armenian men and women and try to find possible answers that can explain the perceptual differences/similarities in body language. That is to say, the results of the case study related to the body language perception by Armenian men and women serve as a ground to start more scientific studies and experiments to find out some answers/explanations related to the perception of body language.

Literature Review

The process of message transmission and perception occurs differently by genders because of biological, hormonal and cultural differences. Women are able to receive information quicker and perceive nonverbal cues effectively due to the complex connections between the left and right hemispheres in the brain (Cummings, 2011). Women are capable of making quick judgments about a person's intentions as the frontal cortex of their brain is highly developed and is responsible for decision-making. In addition, the frontal lobes are responsible for multitasking (Sheehan, 2014). In contrast, men do not have a complex connection between the left and right hemispheres in the brain. Thus, they use only one side of their brain during a particular time (Cummings, 2011). In the case of men's processing, the focus is not in the frontal lobes, but is distributed in the brain (Sheehan, 2014).

The role of different types of nonverbal communication in advertising is not a new phenomenon. In advertising, nonverbal communication has the same weight and relevance as

verbal communication. In spite of its importance, there is not enough research in this field (Hecker & Stewart, 1988). The previous statement implies the necessity of further research. Furthermore, it is claimed that body language is perceived differently by individuals (Hecker & Stewart, 1988). It is also claimed that men and women perceive some types of body language differently (Sokolov, Krüger, Enck, Krägeloh-Mann & Pavlova 2011, Cummings, 2011).

Compared to men, women are more perceptive when it comes to body language (Pease & Pease, 2004). This can actually be compared with the different interpretations that men and women have regarding the overall meaning of a particular advertisement. This is related to the fact that men perceive primary information of a specific advertisement and they make decisions more quickly. On the other hand, during the process of perceiving the message of advertisements, women also consider music, visuals, voice-over and text. Actually, this approach makes women perceive the advertisement gradually through considering interrelated factors. If an advertisement carries visuals, music, etc., the primary message is not the only information or message that an advertisement strives to send (Sheehan, 2014). Being aware of the basics of how men and women interpret an advertisement as a whole enables to understand the relationship between men/women and advertising and find out the factors that they consider important in those advertisements.

A body language that is used differently by men and women is smiling. Smiling can be either natural or sincere; if people smile only with their mouth, it is a sign of a fake smile, while smiling with eye wrinkles implies sincere smiling (Pease & Pease, 2004). As far as smiling is concerned, men and women do not just use it differently, but they use it in controversial ways. In other words, in general, men smile only when they feel comfortable and when they strive to make a close connection, while women smile to cover up uncomfortable situations (Cummings,

2011). The second type of body language that is different in men and women is eye gazing. Women look more at a person that they like while they are speaking, but men look more at a person that they like while they are listening. Actually, men can misread prolonged eye contact, considering it as a hint of attraction.

As far as emotions are concerned, emotions on women's face are easier to read and a justification for this is the cultural belief that considers men tougher (Cummings, 2011). Furthermore, an experiment related to emotions has been conducted to figure out whether the perception of body language is gender-dependent or not. It becomes obvious that there is a difference concerning the accuracy of emotion-carrying body language perception in terms of gender differences. In other words, men perceive body language that carries happy emotions, while women have an advantage in perceiving body language that carries neutral and angry emotions (Sokolov et al., 2011). Interestingly, it becomes obvious that men are tougher when it comes to showing body language and emotions, and in case of perceiving body language, men have an advantage in perceiving happy emotions. In contrast, women show their facial emotions easily and they perceive angry and neutral emotions accurately.

Another similar experiment shows that gender effects in body language perception are based on emotional content and opposite gender actor. As a result of this experiment, it becomes obvious that males have an advantage in perceiving happy locomotion expressed by females, while females surpass males in recognition of angry locomotion portrayed by males (Krüger et al., 2013). Another type of body language is head nodding. Actually, this body language is considered a universal sign of "yes." However, some nations, such as the Japanese, use head nodding in order to keep the speaker talking. In fact, this differentiation can also be noticed in men and women (Pease & Pease, 2004). That is to say, men use head nodding as a sign of

agreement, while women use to show that they are listening. Finally, women are used to having smaller personal space and men are used to initiating touch because it is believed that men are more dominating (Cummings, 2011). In addition, it is stated that often body language in advertisements implies that women are submissive, while men are dominating (Sheehan, 2014).

There is another study related to emotions that shows that the sex of the performer and the gender of the observer can have an influence on how men and women perceive emotional facial expressions (eyes and mouth) in terms of speed and accuracy. This experiment shows that both sexes recognized female facial expressions accurately; however, females have the greater accuracy and speed in perceiving female facial expressions. In other words, this experiment gives a hint that it is not only important to consider the gender of the person who is watching the advertising, but also the sex of an individual who is performing in the advertising. Indeed, this experiment is related specifically to body language that carries emotions, but it is also possible to apply this to any type of body language, even if it does not carry emotions.

Previous research, presented above, is a background for further study. The sources provide connected and complementary information in the field of body language. It is important to know the basics/types of body language used by men/women and their perception. Furthermore, it is necessary to understand the connection between body language perception and its motives/reasons (cultural, biological, etc.). With the help of the knowledge provided above, it becomes possible to understand important things in this field and figure out the ways/methods/types of body language that can be integrated into further research.

Central Research Questions

There are different studies that prove that a specific gender can influence the way individuals perceive body language differently. Thus, the main goal of this research project was to investigate the perception of body language in advertising by Armenian men and women. This project implies a case study in Armenia, which will answer the following research questions:

- Do Armenian men and women perceive body language in advertising differently or not, and if yes, what are the differences?
- What neurological, psychological and cultural factors might be contributing to the different responses Armenian men and women have when interpreting body language in advertisements?

Methodology

The research questions of this project were answered through personal research that includes survey, focus groups and interviews.

Surveys

In order to find answers to the first research question, it was necessary to conduct a survey (through Google Forms) among Armenian men (49) and women (77) of different ages (mainly from 16-22). The survey was in English and in Armenian and it was conducted in January 2018, and did not include information such as the first and last name of the participants,

their email address and so on. The participants were not asked to provide information related to their gender and age, so, they got a chance to give sincere answers. As a tool that carries body language, TV advertisements were used in the survey. Those advertisements were muted because it was a helpful way to make the participants concentrate on the body language. The participants were asked to watch those three different advertisements (2 international and 1 local). If they watched those advertisements before and knew the implications, they were asked to answer the questions based on their impressions watching them muted and express their perception regardless of the fact that they knew the meaning of the used body language in those advertisements. After this step, they were asked to select one or two of the options related to their perception or add another option on their own that was not on the list. After this step, they needed to write one or two sentences in order to explain why they perceived it in a specific way.

The first international advertisement presented in the survey is produced by Maybelline New York. It is called "Make It Happen" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8ysN7AKAnE). In the advertisement, there are models who are involved in different activities (sports, lecturing, skateboarding, photography, etc.). They walk with confidence, but at the same time, they are very beautiful. This is highlighted through the makeup that they are using. Besides walking with confidence, there are also other signifiers of strong women. For example, their facial expressions (eyes) convey the message of being confident as well. The overall purpose of this commercial is that it strives to convey the message that their beauty products can make women become firstly beautiful and then confident and strong. This is well shown in different parts of the advertisement, but one of the important parts is when one of the models is presented before and after putting makeup on her face and it is said: "Put on your strong face" when the model puts makeup on her face. So, it is important to mention that when watching this advertisement

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without sound, this can be perceived differently as the postures of the models can be perceived both as a sign of beauty and of confidence. So, the primary message here is to promote beauty products and then show how it can make women strong. Due to the fact that men are used to perceiving the primary message of the advertisement, this advertisement is helpful to figure out whether Armenian men and women will perceive this differently or not. Moreover, different perceptions of this advertisement related to women's posture can be related to some cultural beliefs that Armenian men and women have in terms of women's rights and how this can affect consumers' behavior.

The second advertisement is a local one produced by Acba-Credit Agricole bank (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HILqtCEdRfM). This advertisement is called "Ամեն բան լավ է լինելու" ("Everything Is Going To Be Okay"). The whole advertisement strives to awaken hope in people and convey the message that everything is in our hands and everything will be okay. The main character of the advertisement is a man who is going to leave Armenia for life. However, when he is in the taxi, he remembers some scenes from his life, which makes him change his decision and stay in Armenia (regardless of the fact that the taxi driver was angry/upset because of the situation in Armenia).

It is worth mentioning that the body language of the main character carries different types of meanings. Moreover, the body language of the taxi driver can be interpreted differently by people while watching the advertisement muted. Through the body language in this advertisement, it was possible to figure out whether Armenian men and women perceive the body language of men differently or not and if yes, which gender has an advantage in perceiving body language portrayed by men. In fact, it is proved that women have an advantage in interpreting the body language of men, which carries neutral or angry emotions. Thus, this

advertising is a good source of understanding which gender in Armenia perceives men's body language accurately.

The third advertisement included in the survey is called "Setting The Mood Is Everything". This advertisement is produced by D'Decor (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55k2kyNAbRc). In this advertisement, there is a man and a woman who meet in a well-furnished home. In this advertisement, a man and a woman perform together and have specific postures and facial expressions. This is to say, during the whole advertisement, in general, they communicate with the help of their body language (smiling, eye contact, etc.) In the last part of the advertisement, the woman takes the remote controller in order to close the curtain and create a romantic mood. She states, "Setting The Mood Is Everything." The overall meaning of the advertisement is that the D'Decor's range of blinds give an opportunity to control the amount of light that a person wants to let in.

Here, in spite of the fact that there are some scenes (especially the ending, when both genders smile to each other) which seem to imply that the man and the woman are equal, the body language of the woman is somehow vague; it seems like she is the dominating character, while the male character has an inferior role. Thus, the controversies in this advertisement are a good source to figure out the perception of Armenian men and women in terms of both genders' posture and facial expressions related to their dominating or inferior roles. That is to say, survey-takers were asked to state who they think is dominant in this advertisement and explain their answer. Indeed, this advertisement helped to find out some answers related to Neuroscience, Psychology, Culture and Advertising.

These three advertisements were selected intentionally. It is obvious that they are different from each other; however, each of them gives an opportunity to gather information related to body language perception from different perspectives.

Focus Groups

Besides surveys, multiple focus groups (consisted of 5 individuals from 17-22); one all-male group, one all-female group, and one mixed group were conducted. The participants of the focus groups were students from AUA (aged from 17 to 22). These focus groups were conducted in order to see if the gender composition of the groups influences the perception or not. This was a good way of collecting the qualitative data and connecting it to the quantitative data.

Interviews

After having the answers of the participants, it became possible to go deeper into this project and investigate the second research question. In order to know the reasons behind the perception of body language by the participants, the survey answers were discussed with professionals in the fields of Neuroscience, Psychology, Cultural Studies and Advertising. During face-to-face interviews, each of the professionals explained the given answers through connecting them with their professions. For example, the neuroscientist was asked to connect the answers with the human brain, and the psychologist made connections between the answers and human psychology. Furthermore, the professional in Cultural studies gave some explanation related to cultural beliefs of Armenian men and women; he specified which cultural beliefs exist in Armenia that can make Armenian men and women perceive body language differently or similarly. Finally, the Advertising professional interpreted the answers in terms of consumer

behavior and explained if Armenian advertising professionals pay attention to body language while making advertisements. She also was asked whether a specific type of body language can have a positive or negative influence on both of the genders in terms of buying a specific product/using a specific service or not.

Data Analysis (Survey, Focus groups, Interviews)

The Data Analysis section presents the results of the surveys and focus groups related to every advertisement individually and the explanation of the results by professionals.

1. Maybelline New York - "Make It Happen"

In case of the Maybelline's advertisement, 63 females (81% of the female participants) and 27 males (55% of the male participants) chose that Maybelline makeup makes women stronger and confident. In order to justify their responses, the survey takers mentioned some important "strong women signifiers", such as the confident postures of the models, their eyes, the presence of sports, etc. In addition, 2 females (3% of the female participants) and 4 males (8% of the male participants) chose that Maybelline makeup makes women look beautiful for men. Finally, 12 females (16 % of the female participants) and 18 males (37% of the male participants) chose that both answers are right.
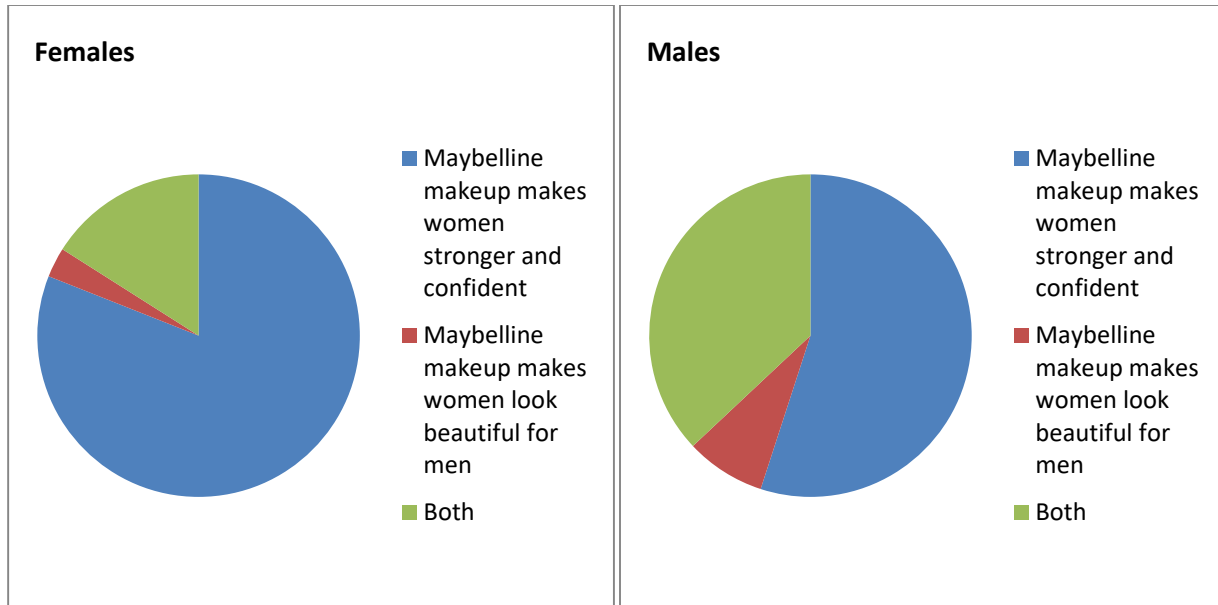
Figure 1: Different answers by genders to the question - What is the overall message of the Maybelline's advertisement?

The results of the case study in Armenia correspond to the findings of Chapter 7 (Gender and Advertising) of the book "Controversies in Contemporary Advertising" written by Kim Bartel Sheehan. The book suggests that in general, women are good at perceiving the secondary message of the advertisement, which is that Maybelline makeup makes women stronger and confident. Moreover, in this advertising, females are reflected as strong individuals. Indeed, this depiction contradicts the statement by the book "Controversies in Contemporary Advertising." According to it, unlike men, women have submissive roles in advertisements.

The results of the focus groups related to the Maybelline's advertisement show that both genders succeeded in perceiving the message of the advertisement in the first video and in interpreting the message of the model's body language in the second video. For the first advertisement, the majority of members (both genders) of the three focus groups (one all-male

group, one all-female group, and one mixed group) concluded that Maybelline make up makes women stronger and confident.

Similar to the survey takers, the members of this focus group started to provide their own justifications related to this choice. They mentioned that the models in this advertisement had serious facial expressions and they did not smile throughout the advertisement, which is considered one of the "strong women signifiers" as well. The choice was the same in the case of the second video which was a scene from the first advertisement. The members of the focus groups highlighted, for example, the head posture of the model. In other words, they paid attention to the transition of the model's face from down to up, which was a sign of becoming confident. It is worth mentioning that in the case of the focus groups, in general, there were no variations in the responses of males and females.

Interestingly, a lot of participants applied the same thorough analysis/approach while interpreting the message of the model's body language. Firstly, this was possible to figure out with the help of the open-ended questions that were included in the survey. Secondly, through focus groups, it became possible to gather more qualitative data/ information related to the perception of body language by Armenian men and women.

Based on the survey/focus group results, it becomes obvious that Armenian women have an advantage in perceiving the secondary message of the advertisement. The psychologist, named Tatevik Arakelyan, said that in this advertisement, women are presented confident and strong, as they are positively involved in different areas of life: art, business, sports and maternity. She explained that in this case, women tend to perceive the secondary message of the advertisement because that they identify themselves with the models in this advertisement, who

send the message of confidence, strength and active life through their body language. So, it can be concluded that the sex of the performing person and sex of the observer are connected to each other when it comes to the perception of body language. This hypothesis is also suggested by the scholarly article called "Identification of Emotional Facial Expressions: Effects of Expression, Intensity, and Sex on Eye Gaze. One of the hypotheses that this article suggests is that the sex of the performer and the gender of the observer can have an influence on the way men and women perceive facial expressions in terms of different speed and accuracy. So, the participants were asked to identify facial expressions (anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise) from male and female faces. This experiment figured out that females and males perceive female facial expressions more effectively than male expressions. However, females had an advantage in perceiving female facial expressions.

Moreover, nowadays, Armenian women are self-sufficient, and they have more access to financial and psychological freedom (independence). Actually, this fact can also lead them to identify themselves with the models in this advertisement and perceive the body language of the models more accurately. However, as far as men are concerned, the usage of makeup by women is connected to the idea of being attractive for men. "This perspective is tightly connected to Evolutionary Psychology, according to which a beautiful woman is associated with greater attractiveness, which is aimed at being chosen by males," said Tatevik Arakelyan.

Compared to the first video (advertisement), which is full of "strong women signifiers" (kickboxing, walking with confidence, etc.), the main source of information in the second video is the facial expressions of the model (eyes, head posture, etc.) Here, the number of individuals who chose that Maybelline makeup makes women stronger and confident, decreased (54 females; 70 percent of the female participants and 24 males; 48% of the male participants). At

the same time, the number of individuals who chose that Maybelline makeup makes women look beautiful for men, increased (9 females; 11% of the female participants and 15 males; 30% percent of the male participants).
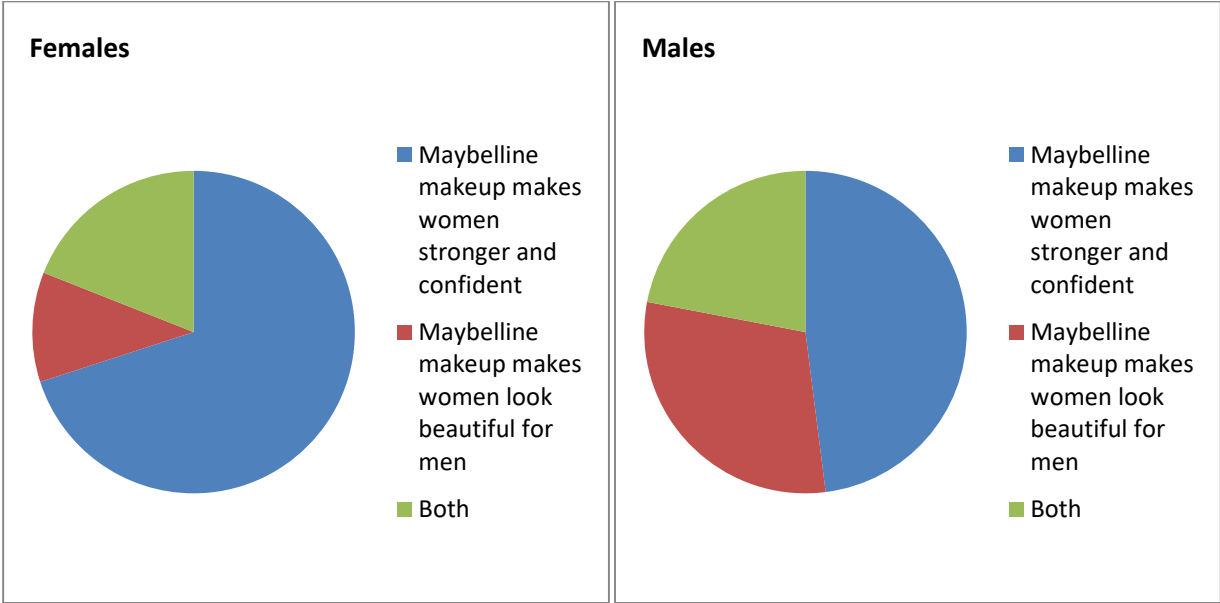

Figure 2: Different answers by genders to the question - What is the message of the transition from the scene where the model is portrayed without makeup to the scene when she is depicted with makeup?

Figure 3: The transition from the scenes.

At first glance, the difference in the responses for the first and the second videos seems vague, as the second video is a scene from the first one. However, analyzing the responses of the participants from the perspective of neuroscience, it becomes obvious that both genders are good at reading body language with the presence of "strong women signifiers"(kickboxing, walking with confidence, eye contact, etc.) while they have difficulties in reading body language relying only on facial expression. One of the members of Society for Neuroscience, Rubina Danilova, explained this phenomenon by stating, "The more information the human brain has, the better predictions/conclusions it is able to draw." That is to say, the brain of the participants (regardless of their gender) became more flexible in the case of the first video because they have different sources of information; thus, they answer the question more accurately.

Indeed, this result became more reliable when the members of the focus groups continued to analyze the advertisement through the same method. So, in general, the survey takers and the members of the focus groups mentioned several important key factors that allowed them to interpret the advertisement correctly. That is to say, the participants justified their choices by highlighting, for example, the presence of sports in the life of the models (e.g., kickboxing), the absence of men in most of the scenes which refers to being strong and confident rather than beautiful. They also suggested the concept of "serving" man. This concept refers to a man in the advertisement who was buying food for a woman. Tatevik Arakelyan also emphasized that in this advertisement, men are portrayed in a "serving" form, which is powerful enough to make the participants connect this advertisement to strength and confidence rather than women being beautiful for men. Now, with the help of the survey/focus groups, it is possible to conclude that in the case of this advertisement, both genders in Armenia pay attention not only to the body

language/facial expressions, but also consider other important factors while they perceive and interpret the message of a specific body language.

It also becomes obvious that males have an advantage in changing their answer in the case of the second video and choosing that Maybelline makeup makes women look beautiful for men. This result can be closely connected to the cultural viewpoint of Armenian males who consider females as "the beautiful sex." An advertising professional, Emma Sargsyan, one of the professors (Advertising, Public Relations) at the American University of Armenia, mentioned that in the second video, the emphasis is on the model's face which is more related to being beautiful than to being strong. Thus, through presenting only the model's face and not giving other sources of information as it is in the first video, males concluded that the facial expressions (e.g., eyes) of the model imply the concept of beauty rather than confidence and strength. That is to say, the model's face is more connected to beauty rather than their actions in the whole advertisement.

2. Acba-Credit Agricole bank's advertisement called "Ամեն բան լավ է լինելու" ("Everything is going to be okay")

In the case of the Acba-Credit Agricole bank's advertisement, 44 females (57% of the female participants) and 24 males (49% of the male participants) managed to perceive the body language of the driver who was angry/upset correctly.
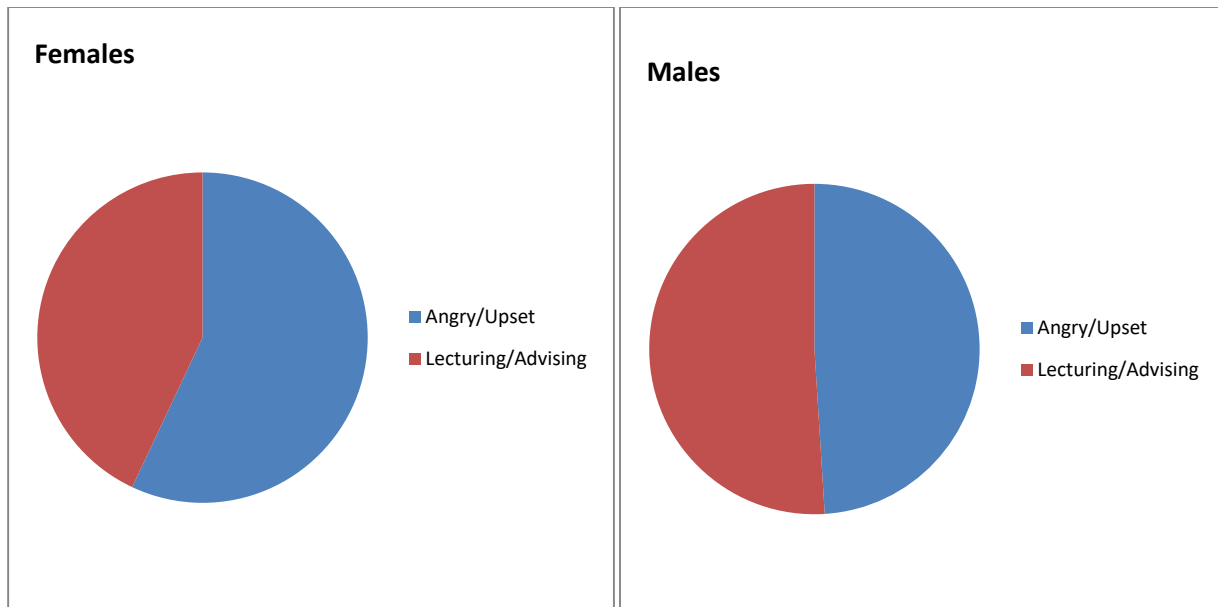
Figure 4: Different answers by genders to the question - Is the driver angry/upset or is he lecturing/advising?

The fact that females have an advantage in perceiving negative body language performed by a male is also suggested by the article called Emotion through Locomotion: Gender Impact. It discusses the importance of emotional content and the gender of the opposite actor in recognition of body language. Based on the results of this experiment, it becomes obvious that males have an advantage in recognition of happy movement expressed by females, while females surpass males in recognition of angry movement portrayed by males. Furthermore, the survey/focus group results provide a new hypothesis as well. Interestingly, many people from both genders got it wrong (females 33; 43% and males 25; 44%) by choosing that the driver was lecturing/advising. Related to this result, Rubina Danilova put the emphasis on the absence of the driver's face. She says, "The main source of getting information about one's emotions is the face." However, in the advertisement, it is mainly possible to see the hand gestures of the driver rather than his face. In other words, this is one of the most important reasons that many of the female and male

participants failed to understand and interpret the body language of the driver. This result again proves the fact that both genders rely on the facial expressions when it comes to emotion recognition, and they have difficulties in perceiving emotions based on the hand gestures of the driver.

The fact that many females and males gave a wrong answer to this question is also tightly connected to the Armenian culture. In Armenia, taxi drivers have a specific type of behavior; they are either angry or they give advice to people. Knowing the typical behavior of Armenian taxi drivers, the participants of the survey/focus groups were under the risk of considering both answers as logical and relevant. Thus, many of the participants failed to choose the right answer. One of the Professors at the American University of Armenia, Mica Hilson, believes that another cultural factor related to the driver's body language is that Armenian men used to talk with hand gestures even though they are not angry. So, talking with hand movement is a normal part of Armenian men's daily conversation. This cultural usage of body language could be the reason of selecting the wrong option, according to which the driver was advising/lecturing.

Like the first advertisement, the overall image of the focus group results for the second advertisement was similar to the results of the survey. It is worth mentioning that in general, the members of the focus groups had difficulties in terms of understanding the body language of the driver as well. In all focus groups, the participants mentioned that often, Armenian taxi drivers are angry/upset, however, at the same time they enjoy the process of giving advice to their customers. So, this contradiction resulted in many false answers related to the body language of the driver. However, it is important to consider the results of the focus groups, which suggested the hypothesis that women are relatively good at perceiving negative body language.

In the case of the second question related to the advertisement of Acba-Credit Agricole bank, both genders perceive the body language of the main character accurately. All of the keywords (confused, nostalgic, uncomfortable, worried) related to the man's body language were mentioned by the participants of survey/focus groups. Here, it is important to find out what is the reason behind this result, according to which both genders did a better job in terms of describing the emotions of the main character. Rubina Danilova highlighted that this result could be related to the format of the question. This means that the participants were not limited to choose one of the given answers. However, they had a chance to write some keywords that describe the body language of the main character. Danilova connected this phenomenon to the system called mirror neuron. According to NCBI, "Mirror neuron system is a group of specialized neurons that "mirrors" the actions and behavior of others." (Rajmohan, V., & Mohandas, E., 2007) It is worth mentioning that a mirror neuron fires both when humans act and observe the same action performed by another person (see below).

Figure 5: An example of how Mirror Neurons work.

Danilova explained that in this case, when the participants had a chance to write their own answer and describe the main emotions of the main character in the advertisement, those neurons "mirror" the action of the performer, as it was performed by the observer himself/herself

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(participants). In other words, the vast majority of the participants mentioned the right answers, as they experience the same emotion by themselves through mirror neuron system. Moreover, unlike the example of the driver's body language (hand gestures), it is possible to see the face of the performer and perceive/interpret the emotions of the main character accurately.

D'Decor Ad Blinds - Setting The Mood Is Everything

In the case of the D'Decor's advertisement, 53 females (69% of the female participants) and 36 males (74% of the male participants) chose that the woman was dominant in the advertisement. The survey takers justified their answers through mentioning some important details; for example, they stated that the man rushes to catch the woman's gaze (multiple times), the woman made the final decision as she took the remote controller, the body language of the woman was smooth and flowing, etc. In addition, 20 females (26% of the female participants) and 8 males (16% of the male participants) chose that both genders are equal in the advertisement, and only 4 females (5% of the female participants) and 5 males (10% of the male participants) considered that the man was dominant in the advertisement.
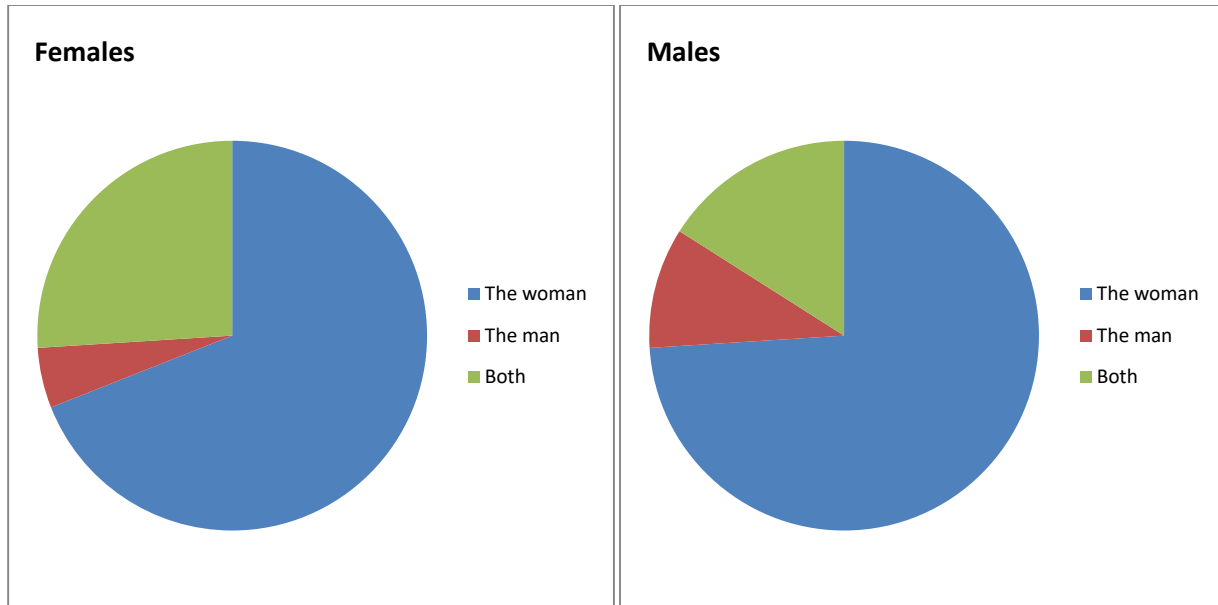
Figure 6: Different answers by genders to the question - Who is dominant? The man or the woman?

Again, the results of the three focus groups correspond to the results of the surveys. However, with the help of the focus groups, it became possible to gather more information/explanations related to this advertisement. The majority of the focus groups' members analyzed the advertisement thoroughly and answered that the woman was dominant in this advertisement based on various factors. Some of them emphasized an important detail in the advertisement, which was not stated by the survey takers. They highlighted that the woman wore black, while the man was in white. At first glance, this information does not seem relevant to the perception of body language. However, after considering the color choice of Armenian males and females when it comes to clothes, this information becomes one of the key answers of body language perception in this advertisement. In other words, gender inequality exists in Armenia, and men are considered the dominant sex. In addition, in Armenian culture, men are the ones who often wear black, while women often wear other colors. So, it is possible to draw the

conclusion that this approach is based on the cultural standards and beliefs of Armenian males and females that are set by themselves. Related to the colors of performers' clothes, Hilson mentioned that the general appearance, including clothes of the man in this advertisement, is similar to the look of headwaiters. Based on this fact, it is possible that the participants unconsciously or consciously considered that the man in this advertisement was a waiter (or he looked like a waiter) and responded that the woman was dominant. One of the survey takers mentioned the same thing, "The woman is more dominant because the way man behaves reminds more a waiter or a servant. Instead of going for greeting/hugging/kissing or asking how she was he waited in front of the table like the worker in a restaurant/hotel." In addition, it is also worth mentioning that with the help of the focus groups/survey related to the D'Decor's advertisement, the fact that both males and females tend to pay attention to other factors as well whenever they perceive and interpret body language, becomes more obvious. For example, when the participants answered that the woman was dominant in the advertisement, they justified their answer with the help of the man's body language (poor, nervous, etc.).

Indeed, this is an interesting finding, which suggests that to interpret someone's body language, both males and females did not limit themselves to the body language of the person, which they had to interpret, but they also considered other's body language in order to give an answer. Related to this finding, Danilova mentioned that when someone is in a desert, and there are no other people through whom s/he can show his/her dominance, it is harder to interpret the body language. So, the presence of the other individuals who can be subjected to one's dominance (or seem to be subjected to) made people draw conclusion related to the body language of a specific person. The same is here; without the presence of the nervous body

language of the man, the majority of both genders would not consider the woman as the dominant character in this advertisement.

However, considering and emphasizing other factors related to the man and giving the answer that the woman was dominant in the advertisement, it is worth mentioning that some of the participants (both genders) mentioned keywords related to the woman's actions and body language, which they considered as proofs for her dominance. They mentioned that the woman closed the curtains and smiled with arrogance, which implied that she was teaching the man the right way of doing it. This opinion directly refers to cultural standards. In other words, heterogeneous nations smile more, because they strive to create a social bond, while homogeneous nations smile when they want to show they are superior to one another. It is not a secret that Armenia is one of the representatives of homogeneous countries and smiling can be considered to be a sign of arrogance, superiority, etc. (Khazan, O.,2017). Moreover, a lot of participants also mentioned the body gestures and facial expressions (e.g., posture, manners, etc.) of the woman, which made them choose that the woman was dominant.

The fact that the majority of females and males responded that the woman was dominant in the advertisement Sargsyan explained from a different perspective that can be one of the possible reasons for the result mentioned above. She emphasized the role of women when it comes to buying a home product. That is to say, here, the participants realized that this advertisement is related to home products from different things (e.g., spoons). Taking this factor into consideration made them interpret this advertisement based on the Armenian lifestyle, according to which, in general, women must give their approval to other members of their family (husband, children, etc.) when it comes to buying a specific home product. Thus, this factor is

one of the reasons that both females and males considered the woman as the dominant character in this advertisement.

Males Versus Females

The results of the survey/focus groups are not enough to conclude that Armenian women perceive body language more accurately. However, it gives a sign that there is a possibility that Armenian women have an advantage in perceiving body language. Arakelyan said, "This suggestion lies within the framework of evolutionary psychology." This means that in ancient times, the main functions of women were cooking, taking care of home and kids, while the main function of men was hunting. Indeed, this functional distribution made women emotionally attentive, expressive, and diplomatic. Due to the fact that women were bearer and nurturer, they were able to understand different types of body language in order to understand the needs of their children. Moreover, based on their partner's body language, they also used to understand whether their hunt was successful or not.

According to Danilova, another hypothesis that can explain why women perceive body language better than men refers to the hormone called Oxytocin, which is connected to trust. The level of Oxytocin is higher in females. Thus, compared to men, women trust easily, while men try to analyze a specific thing over and over again, which can result in the wrong answer. Moreover, the role of Oxytocin is crucial during the process of childbirth, which continues after it and creates trust between a mother and her child. That is to say, females start to understand the needs, facial expressions and body language of their children. However, males do not have this mechanism, until they start to communicate with their children. Connecting this hypothesis to my capstone project, it is possible to say that regardless of the fact that the survey takers

(females) were not mothers, they still produce higher levels of Oxytocin. This enables them to trust whatever they see and have a slight advantage in perceiving body language.

The use of body language in Armenian advertising industry

The book called "Nonverbal Communication in Advertising," which is written by Sidney Hecker and David W. Stewart, claims that nonverbal communication in advertising is just as important as verbal content. Taking into account this and the results of the present study provided above, it becomes obvious that body language has a huge contribution to advertising industry as people (both genders) analyze body language thoroughly. Thus, they analyze a specific advertisement deeply as well. So, it is necessary to figure out whether Armenian advertising industry pays attention to the usage of body language in advertisements or not and whether they consider to use some types of body language that can have a positive influence (even though they perceive and interpret the same body language differently) on both of the genders in terms of buying a specific product/service or not. Sargsyan mentioned that whenever something succeeds in Armenia, people continue to use the same technique/method in order to reach their goal. This statement is relevant in the case of Armenia when it comes to advertising. That is to say, in Armenian advertising industry, one of the most successful ways to sell a specific product/service is the use of celebrities. Sargsyan personally thinks that in general, Armenia does not pay enough attention to the use of body language in advertisements, but they sell their product/service with the help of the opinion leaders (celebrities) as they have authority and fame in Armenian society. The research process of finding proper advertisements with the usage of body language also shows the lack of body language in local Armenian advertisements,

while it was easy to find international advertisements full of body language, which was not the case for local advertisements. In the case of the local advertisement called "Ամեն բան լավ է լինելու" ("Everything is going to be okay"), the driver's hand gestures are ambiguous, and it is hard to catch the message. However, the role of body language in Armenian advertising industry still needs further research.

Conclusion

To conclude, the hypothesis of this capstone project was to find out whether Armenian males and females perceive body language differently or not, and if yes, what some differences/similarities are. According to the results of the surveys and focus groups, it becomes obvious that Armenian men and women pay attention to different factors in order to perceive and interpret one's body language. They do not limit themselves to the body language of a specific person, but they analyzed different factors (activities, clothes, other person's body gestures, etc.) that can lead them to understand the body language of a specific person. Based on the sources that were used for this project, it was expected to find out a lot of differences in body language perception by men and women. According to the results of this project, Armenian females perceive body language slightly better than males. Because of this slight variation in the responses given by males and females, it cannot be concluded that Armenian women perceive body language more accurately than Armenian men do. It is worth mentioning that there can be a lot of reasons that can explain why there is not a huge variation in the perception of body language by different genders in the case of Armenia. One of the possible reasons for this question is the lack of training in body language perception among Armenian people. As it was mentioned above, it can be concluded from this capstone project that Armenia does not put an

emphasis on the importance of body language in advertisements, which was also seen in the body language performance of the driver. Thus, as advertisements do not use intended body language frequently in order to send a specific message, people are not used to analyzing body language thoroughly. However, this capstone project points out some possible variations in body language perception by Armenian men and women, which can be considered during other research projects related to body language perception by different genders.

Limitations

During the process of writing a capstone project, the writer may experience a lot of difficulties and challenges that can interfere with the smooth writing process. This capstone project was not an exception, and there were four major limitations that I experienced during my capstone project.

One of the most important requirements of the capstone project was to use up-to-date sources and write the capstone based on them because of their validity in these days. As far as my topic is concerned, there are some interesting and important studies related to body language, its perception by men and women, and advertising which were done many years ago. This means that there was a possibility that those outdated sources were not relevant to today's reality as people could change their body language and its perception throughout time.

The next limitation refers to the restricted number of advertisements that were used in this project. It would be better to have more than three advertisements, which would make the research more reliable. In case of more than three advertisements, there is a possibility that the participants would not fill in the survey, as it would require more time and I would not have a

chance to collect enough responses due to time constraint. Here, it was more important to have

many survey takers rather than more advertisements.

Another limitation is the concept of eye tracking. This refers to the scientific process of

measuring eye movement and positions. It is worth mentioning that sometimes people give

insincere responses during surveys, focus groups, etc. However, through this technique, the

research could be more reliable because it would give an opportunity to understand what grabbed

the eye of the viewer and understand the process of their thinking, while they were watching the

advertisements. In other words, according to NCBI, eye tracking enables researchers to

understand for how long and how many times a specific visual image was viewed by individuals

(ncbi.nlm.nih.gov).

And the last limitation of this project refers to the neuroscientific experiments. Through

new technologies, it would be possible to see the brain activity of both males and females, while

they were watching the advertisements and find some similar and different activities in the males

and females' brains. In this case, again, the research would be more scientific, justified and

credible.

Regardless of the limitations related to this Capstone Project, it is worth mentioning that

this can become an avenue for future studies related to the topic of body language perception by

men and women. In other words, the factors/resources mentioned above will give an opportunity

to researchers to build upon the findings of my research and start a new case study. If I

experienced limitations during my research, other researchers still have a chance to restrict the

number of limitations and bring the research to a more scientific platform relying on my

research. In case of having more time, money, and resources, I might perform a research with the

help of more practical and scientific means. This means that I would do neuroscientific experiments related to the human brain, as well as eye tracking in order to get more reliable results. Furthermore, having more time would help to collect more survey responses and work with more than three focus groups.

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Appendix:

Survey questions (English version)

    1. Age:

    2. Sex:

        a. Female

        b. Male

    3. Nationality:

    4. Based on the body language of the models, the overall advertisement conveys that

        a. Maybelline makeup makes women look beautiful for men

        b. Maybelline makeup makes women stronger and more confident

        c. Both

    5. Please explain your previous choice (1-2 sentences).

    6. The transition from the scene where the model is portrayed without makeup to the scene when she is depicted with makeup, conveys that

        a. Maybelline makeup makes women look beautiful for men

        b. Maybelline makeup makes women stronger and more confident

        c. Both

    7. Please explain your previous choice (1-2 sentences).

    8. Based on the body language of the driver, he seems

        a. Angry/Upset

        b. Lecturing/Advising

9. What type of message does the body language of the main character convey while he is in the taxi?

10. Based on the body language of the performers in this advertisement, who do you think is dominant there?

 a. The man

 b. The woman

 c. Both

11. Please explain your previous choice (1-2 sentences).

Հարցաշար (հայերեն տարբերակ)

1. Տարիք

2. Սեռ

 ա. Իգական

 բ. Արական

3. Ազգություն

4. Հիմնվելով մոդելների ժեստերի լեզվին՝ կարող ենք ասել, որ

 ա. Maybelline շպարի պարագաներն օգնում են կանանց ավելի գեղեցիկ տեսք ունենալ արական սեռի ներկայացուցիչների համար

 բ. Maybelline շպարի պարագաները կանանց դարձնում են ավելի ուժեղ ու ինքնավստահ

 գ. Երկու տարբերակներն էլ ճիշտ են

5. 1-2 նախադասությամբ հիմնավորեք Ձեր նախորդ պատասխանը:

6. Տեսարանի փոփոխություն, որտեղ մոդելը պատկերված է առանց շպարի, իսկ այն տեսարանում, որտեղ մոդելը շպարված է, այդ կերպարով նա փորձում է հաղորդել, որ…

 ա. Maybelline շպարի պարագաներն օգնում են կանանց ավելի գեղեցիկ տեսք ունենալ արական սեռի ներկայացուցիչների համար

բ. Maybelline շպարի պարագաները կանանց դարձնում են ավելի ուժեղ ու ինքնավստահ

գ. Երկու տարբերակներն էլ ճիշտ են

7. 1-2 նախադասությամբ հիմնավորեք Ձեր նախորդ պատասխանը:

8. Վարորդի ժեստերից կարելի է ենթադրել, որ նա

ա. Բարկացած/տխուր է

բ. Խրատում է

9. Ի՞նչ հաղորդագրություն է փոխանցում հիմնական կերպարի ժեստերի լեզուն, երբ նա տաքսիի մեջ է:

10. Հիմնվելով տղամարդու և կնոջ ժեստերի լեզվին՝ այս գովազդում ո՞վ է դոմինանտ:

ա. Տղամարդը

բ. Կինը

գ. Երկու սեռերն էլ հավասար են

11. 1-2 նախադասությամբ հիմնավորեք Ձեր նախորդ պատասխանը: