



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

Capstone Project

By

Sharmagh Mardi

Class of 2018

Department of English and Communications

American University of Armenia

May 18, 2018



Introduction



- Nonverbal communication is an important factor during the process of transmitting and receiving a message
- The usage and the interpretation of body language on TV advertisement can be slightly different from culture to culture
- In general, men and women can use and perceive some types of body language differently

Central Research Questions



- Do Armenian men and women perceive body language in advertising differently or not?
- 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



Surveys/Focus groups

- The surveys were conducted among Armenian males(49) and females (77) of different ages (16-22)
- Three type of focus groups (one all-male group, one all-female group, and one mixed group) were conducted among Armenian males (7) and females (8) of different ages (16-22)
- The participants were asked to watch three different advertisements (2 international and 1 local) and answer the open-ended and close-ended questions

Methodology



Interviews

- The survey answers were discussed with professionals in the fields of Neuroscience, Psychology, Cultural Studies and Advertising
- The neuroscientist (Danilova, R.) was asked to connect the answers with the human brain, and the psychologist made connections between the answers and human psychology
- The psychologist (Arakelyan, T.) made connections between the answers and human psychology
- The professional in Cultural studies (Hilson, M.) gave some explanation related to cultural beliefs of Armenian men and women
- The Advertising professional (Sargsyan, E.) interpreted the answers in terms of consumer behavior and explained if Armenian advertising professionals pay attention to body language while making advertisements

Data Analysis

Maybelline New York - "Make It Happen"

[Click here to watch the advertisement](#)



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

Data Analysis

Maybelline New York - "Make It Happen"

- Armenian women have an advantage in perceiving the secondary message of the advertisement
- 81% of the female participants chose that Maybelline makeup makes women stronger and confident
- But only 55% of the male participants chose that Maybelline makeup makes women stronger and confident
- 3% of the female participants and 8% of the male participants chose that Maybelline makeup makes women look beautiful for men
- 16 % of the female participants and 37% of the male participants chose that both answers are right
- The majority of members (both genders) of the three focus groups chose that Maybelline makeup makes women stronger and confident

Data Analysis

Maybelline New York - "Make It Happen"

- Women perceive the secondary message of this advertisement because they identify themselves with the models in this advertisement (Arakelyan, T., 2018)
- As for men, the usage of makeup by women is connected to the idea of being attractive for men, which is connected to Evolutionary Psychology. According to it, a beautiful woman is associated with greater attractiveness, which is aimed at being chosen by males (Arakelyan, T., 2018)
- Both genders are good at reading body language with the presence of "strong women signifiers" (kickboxing, walking with confidence, eye contact, etc.)
- The more information the human brain has, the better predictions/conclusions it is able to draw (Danilova, R., 2018)

Data Analysis

Maybelline New York - "Make It Happen"

[Click here to watch the video](#)



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

Data Analysis

Maybelline New York - "Make It Happen"

- 70% of the female participants and 48% of the male participants chose that Maybelline makeup makes women stronger and confident
- 11% of the female participants and 30% percent of the male participants chose that Maybelline makeup makes women look beautiful for men
- Compared to the first video, here, the number of individuals who chose that Maybelline makeup makes women look beautiful for men increased (4 times)
- Both genders have difficulties in reading body language relying only on facial expression

Data Analysis

Maybelline New York - "Make It Happen"

- 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
- 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 connected to the cultural viewpoint of Armenian males who consider females as "the beautiful sex (Sargsyan, E., 2018)
- 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 (Sargsyan, E., 2018)

Data Analysis

Acba-Credit Agricole bank - "Ամեն բան լավ է լինելու"
("Everything is going to be okay")

[Click here to watch the video](#)



Question 1: Based on the body language of the driver, he seems...

Question 2: What type of message does the body language of the main character convey while he is in the taxi?

Data Analysis

Acba-Credit Agricole bank - "Ամեն բան լավ է լինելու"
("Everything is going to be okay")



Question 1: Based on the body language of the driver, he seems...

Data Analysis

Acba-Credit Agricole bank - "Ամեն բան լավ է լինելու"
("Everything is going to be okay")

- 57% of the females and 49% of the males chose that the driver was angry/upset
- 43% of the females and 44% of the males chose that the driver was lecturing/advising (many people from both genders got it wrong)
- In this advertisement, it is mainly possible to see the hand gestures of the driver rather than his face. Many of the female and male participants of the surveys/focus groups failed to understand and interpret the body language of the driver because the main source of getting information about one's emotions is the face (Danilova, R., 2018)
- Talking with hand movement is a normal part of Armenian men's daily conversation. Knowing this, the participants of the survey/focus groups were at risk of choosing the wrong option (Hilson, M., 2018)

Data Analysis

Acba-Credit Agricole bank - "Ամեն բան լավ է լինելու"
("Everything is going to be okay")



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

Data Analysis

Acba-Credit Agricole bank - "Ամեն բան լավ է լինելու"
("Everything is going to be okay")

- All of the keywords (confused, nostalgic, uncomfortable, worried) related to the man's body language were mentioned by the participants of survey/focus groups
- This result can be related to the format of the question. The participants were not limited to choose one of the given answers. However, they had a chance to write some keywords which describe the body language of the main character (Danilova, R., 2018)

Data Analysis

Acba-Credit Agricole bank - "Ամեն բան լավ է լինելու"
("Everything is going to be okay")

- This phenomenon can be connected to the system called mirror neuron
- 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 "mirrored" the action of the performer, as it was performed by the observer himself/herself (participants) (Danilova, R., 2018)



Data Analysis

D'Decor Ad Blinds - Setting The Mood Is Everything

[Click here to watch the advertisement](#)



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

Data Analysis

D'Decor Ad Blinds - Setting The Mood Is Everything



- 69% of the females and 74% of the males chose that the woman was dominant in the advertisement
- 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.)
- The participants of the focus groups highlighted that the woman wore black, while the man was in white

Data Analysis

D'Decor Ad Blinds - Setting The Mood Is Everything

- Gender inequality exists in Armenia, and men are considered to be the dominant sex. Men are the ones who often wear black, while women often wear other colors
- The general appearance, including clothes of the man in this advertisement, is similar to the look of head waiters (Hilson, M., 2018)



Data Analysis

D'Decor Ad Blinds - Setting The Mood Is Everything

- Some of the participants (both genders) mentioned that the woman closed the curtains and smiled with arrogance which implied that the woman was teaching the man the right way of doing it
- This statement is connected to the cultural standards that exist in Armenia
- Heterogeneous nations smile more, because they strive to create a social bond, while homogeneous nations (e.g., Armenia) smile when they want to show they are superior to one another (Khazan, O., 2017)
- Women must give their approval to other members of their family (husband, children, etc.) when it comes to buying a specific home product (Sargsyan, E., 2018)

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
- The reason that females have a slight advantage in perceiving body language can be connected to the Evolutionary Psychology
- The main functions of women were cooking, taking care of home and kids, while the main function of men was hunting (Arakelyan, T., 2018)
- 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 (Arakelyan, T., 2018)
- The role of Oxytocin is also related to the slight advantage that women have (Danilova, R., 2018)
- The role of Oxytocin starts during the process of childbirth, which continues after it and creates trust between a mother and her child (Danilova, R., 2018)

The use of body language in Armenian advertising industry

- In Armenian advertising industry, one of the most successful ways to sell a specific product/service is the use of celebrities (Sargsyan, E., 2018)
- The research process of finding proper advertisements with the usage of body language also shows the lack of body language in local Armenian advertisements
- However, the role of body language in Armenian advertising industry still needs further research

Conclusion

- Both genders in Armenia did not limit themselves with 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
- 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
- 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

- **Up-to-date sources:** There were some interesting/important outdated sources. 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
- **A restricted number of advertisements:** In the case of more than three advertisements, there is a possibility 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
- **Eye tracking:** 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
- **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

Reference List

- Cummings, K. (2011). *Nonverbal Communication and First Impressions*. (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation). Retrieved from <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/>
- Hecker, S., & Stewart, D. W. (1988). *Nonverbal Communication in Advertising*. Massachusetts: D.C Heath and Company.
- Khazan, O. (2017, May 3). Why Americans Smile So Much. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/05/why-americans-smile-so-much/524967/>
- Krüger, S., Sokolov, A. N., Enck, P., Krägeloh-Mann, I., & Pavlova, M. A. (2013, November 22). Emotion through Locomotion: Gender Impact. *PLoS ONE*, 8(11), e81716. <http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0081716>
- Pease, A., & Pease, B. (2004). *THE DEFINITIVE BOOK OF BODY LANGUAGE*. Buderim: Pease International.
- Rajmohan, V., & Mohandas, E. (2007, Jan-Mar). Mirror neuron system. *Indian J Psychiatry*. <http://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.31522>

Reference List

- Sheehan, K. B. (2014). Gender and Advertising. *Controversies in Contemporary Advertising* (Second ed.). University of Oregon. Retrieved from link [https://books.google.am/books?hl=en&lr=&id=cjoXBAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA89&dq=Gender and Advertising&ots=-AWGNuP1gi&sig=VcjZy13PnOH6ebkKoKwxa3O93iM&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Gender%20and%20Advertising&f=false](https://books.google.am/books?hl=en&lr=&id=cjoXBAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA89&dq=Gender+and+Advertising&ots=-AWGNuP1gi&sig=VcjZy13PnOH6ebkKoKwxa3O93iM&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Gender%20and%20Advertising&f=false).
- Sokolov, A. A., Krüger, S., Enck, P., Krägeloh-Mann, I., & Pavlova, M. A. (2011, February 2). Gender Affects Body Language Reading. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2, 16. <http://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2011.00016>
- Wells, L. J. (2016, December 12). Identification of Emotional Facial Expressions: Effects of Expression, Intensity, and Sex on Eye Gaze. *PLoS ONE*. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0168307>
- Wilkinson, K. M., & Mitchell, T. (2014, April 23). Eye Tracking Research to Answer Questions about Augmentative and Alternative Communication Assessment and Intervention. *Augment Altern Commun*. <http://doi.org/10.3109/07434618.2014.904435>

THANK YOU!

