

GESTURES

The gestural modality is the most complex. Gesture refers to the movement of the body, especially the hands or the face, to express a message.

Sign language is a good example of a language based in part on gestures. But, gestures are found in everyday language. For example, in drama (as in plays), actors must recite scripted lines which are made more powerful according to their gestures.

Dancers rely on gestures as well. In fact, dance is simply a sequence of bodily movements and gestures (some pre-planned and others spontaneous).

Gestures are as important to speech and visualizations as color is to print. That is, gestures exist by themselves as non-verbal forms of language/communication and as part of another modality.

For example, in speech, gestures of the hand, the face, and other parts of the body are used to emphasis points and to focus attention on spoken text.

Gestures also exist in technology. In fact, if you have a mobile device, it is almost impossible not to use the devices of late without using a series of gestures to control and access these devices.

Gestures help to communicate with others. For example, pointing a finger to show direction or location.

Gestures help to emphasis ideas or to create the mood. For example, pointing to your eye and saying emphatically, "I see what you are saying" creates a sense of sarcasm or insult depending on the tone of the speaker.

Body language itself is telling in relation to many different facets of voluntary and involuntary communication.

ROMANTIC GESTURES

The gestures associated with love are fairly universal (hugs, kisses, etc.). However, the gestures of interest for another person romantically are more complex. These are made complex by the idea that some gestures are voluntary (controlled) while others are involuntary (uncontrolled).

Voluntary Language of Affection (for example);

+repetitive looking or staring at the other person

+parading behavior (where you make yourself seen or move into close proximity to the other person)

+priming (or straightening/adjusting clothing or combing hair with the hand)

+smiling

- +facing the person
- +(when in close proximity) touching the person lightly (often females)

Involuntary Language of Affection:

- +dilation of the eyes and increased blood flow to the extremities
- +blushing
- +mirroring of physical position
- +stroking of the hair (often moving it to the side to show the neck)
- +Mimicking of motions and other gestures of the other person
- +Head tilting during conversation

OFFENSIVE GESTURES

Gestures can also be affectionate, but they can also be offensive (especially in other cultures).

In the culture of the United States, farting, burping, giving the middle finger of the hand, and other gestures can be offensive. However, in the culture of other countries, even the most mundane or inoffensive gesture can be greatly offensive. For example, the common headshake (up and down for yes, and side to side for no) is reversed in some European cultures (such as in Greece or Bulgaria). The conventional "Thumbs Up" which means "Great" or "Good" in the Americas, means something entirely different in Australia, where it means something extremely vulgar (such as "up yours" or "sit on this"). Finally, never cross your arms in Finland and some areas around Scandinavia; crossing the arms is apparently a huge sign of arrogance (a gesture essentially saying, "in your face").