

THE ROLE OF BODY LANGUAGE AND GESTURE IN LISTENING AND SPEAKING

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14233212>

Abstract: Do you ever focus speakers' action? They act with their hands when they speak something. Now I am going to give my views about this topic.

Keywords: body language, gesture, posture, problem-solving, facial emotions, Paul Ekman and Albert Mehrabian's views.

Our body movements and hand gestures can convey emotions that we may not even be consciously aware of. Even if we only use subtle movements, someone who is using active listening skills can understand these additions to our verbal message. Body language often plays a significant role in communication and can be as important as the words we say. It can involve eye contact, head movement, posture, gestures, and facial expressions, all of which can add meaning to our verbal communication. Non-human primates also frequently use body language to communicate. Today, body language may not always play a role in communication, as many of our interactions tend to happen online through text only. However, body language will likely continue to be a crucial element of communication as long as people continue to have face-to-face interactions. If you struggle to communicate effectively or have trouble understanding various body language cues, working with a therapist in person or online may be helpful.¹

Body language can be defined as a form of non-verbal communication that typically includes actions and mannerisms, such as the following:

- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Posture
- Head movement
- Eye contact

These can be universal to all humans, and people may perform them consciously or subconsciously to convey their thoughts and feelings. Experts say body language usually constitutes about half of what we are trying to communicate. For example, a person may not always need to verbally say "no" to communicate that something is wrong or that they disagree with what a person is saying. Instead, they can shake their head from side to side to share the same sentiment. Moreover, if a student slouches in their chair in class and doesn't make eye contact with their teacher, this may signal that they are bored.

¹ <https://www.betterhelp.com/advice/body-language/the-role-of-body-language-in-communication/>

Body language can also enhance and complement our verbal communication skills. For instance, if someone in a store is asking for directions on where to find a product, and an employee merely says, "over there," this information may be too vague to be helpful to the customer.²

When people talk, they gesture. Gesture is a fundamental component of language that contributes meaningful and unique information to a spoken message and reflects the speaker's underlying knowledge and experiences. Theoretical perspectives of speech and gesture propose that they share a common conceptual origin and have a tightly integrated relationship, overlapping in time, meaning, and function to enrich the communicative context. We review a robust literature from the field of psychology documenting the benefits of gesture for communication for both speakers and listeners, as well as its important cognitive functions for organizing spoken language, and facilitating problem-solving, learning, and memory. Despite this evidence, gesture has been relatively understudied in populations with neurogenic communication disorders. While few studies have examined the rehabilitative potential of gesture in these populations, others have ignored gesture entirely or even discouraged its use. We review the literature characterizing gesture production and its role in intervention for people with aphasia, as well as describe the much sparser literature on gesture in cognitive communication disorders including right hemisphere damage, traumatic brain injury, and Alzheimer's disease. The neuroanatomical and behavioral profiles of these patient populations provide a unique opportunity to test theories of the relationship of speech and gesture and advance our understanding of their neural correlates. This review highlights several gaps in the field of communication disorders which may serve as a bridge for applying the psychological literature of gesture to the study of language disorders. Such future work would benefit from considering theoretical perspectives of gesture and using more rigorous and quantitative empirical methods in its approaches. We discuss implications for leveraging gesture to explore its untapped potential in understanding and rehabilitating neurogenic communication disorders.³

When people talk, they move their hands. Spontaneous hand movements produced in rhythm with speech are called *co-speech gestures* and naturally accompany all spoken language. People from all known cultures and linguistic backgrounds gesture⁴ and gesture is fundamental to communication. Indeed, babies gesture before they produce their first words.⁵

A gesture is a movement of part of the body, especially a hand or the head, to express an idea or meaning. Gestures can be used to communicate non-verbally and convey emotions, intentions, or messages without the use of words. They are an important aspect of human communication and can vary widely between different cultures.⁶

As we know watching movies are useful when we learn language. In every students this is already happened maybe, when you watch a movie you face to face with unknown words. In that time you know what is meaning with her/his gesture and postures or facial emotions.

² <https://www.betterhelp.com/advice/body-language/the-role-of-body-language-in-communication/>

³ <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/human-neuroscience/articles/10.3389/fnhum.2020.00323/full>

⁴ Feyereisen, P., and de Lannoy, J.-D. (1991). *Gestures and Speech: Psychological Investigations*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

⁵ Bates, E. (1976). *Language and Context: The Acquisition of Pragmatics*. New York, NY: Academic Press.

⁶ Paul Ekman and Albert Mehrabian.

In conclusion, gestures play a vital role in human communication and listening, enriching spoken language by conveying meaning and emotion beyond words. They serve as an integral component of interaction, aiding in understanding and facilitating learning, particularly in diverse cultural contexts. The literature underscores the cognitive benefits of gestures in organizing thoughts, problem-solving, and memory enhancement. However, there remains a significant gap in understanding their application in neurogenic communication disorders, where gesture could hold rehabilitative potential. As evidenced by the influence of gestural cues in language acquisition, such as in the context of watching films, further research can bridge the gap between psychology and communication disorders, paving the way for innovative approaches in enhancing communication and learning through gesture.

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