

The Effective Role of Sign Language in Communication

Instructor. Salima Abdul-Zahra Nait
College of Education/University of Al-Qadissiya

Abstract

Undeniably, language is the most important means of communication and it can be simply defined as a sign system , specially the customary sign system of humankind. Communication can be of varied forms; each form is valuable. It takes place not only by words (verbal communication) but also through other channels especially for deaf people and who have a hearing impairment. This includes the available sensory modes (hearing, sight, etc) to cover facial expressions, gestures and body language , features referred to as non-verbal communication. This research focuses on this form.

As a teacher, the researcher concentrates on how these channels of communication help the teacher to explain his/her ideas, material and convey his/her thoughts, requirements and experiences in a better way that the students understand them correctly. In return, they enable him/her grasp the student's facial expressions and body movements. This, of course, requires knowledge of sign language which includes information of body language. This is included in the theoretical part of the paper. The practical part includes a questionnaire including 30 situations given to twenty five first year students in the English Department/College of Education/Al-Qadissiya University in 2011. After getting the answers, the researcher has given the students another questionnaire including 15 situations chosen from the previous questionnaire but these situations are acted this time by the researcher in front of the students. The analysis of their responses has shown a big difference between the participants' responses in the first and the second questionnaire, for the students have got high scores when the researcher has used sign and body language in explaining the given situations.

1.Language, Sign and Communication

An explanation of the relationship between communication, sign and language may be the suitable starting point for this research.

Human being cannot survive in isolation and as a member of a society, he/she is dependent on others . One needs sharing others' facts, ideas, opinions, thoughts, and information; so it is necessary to communicate with them through speech, writing, gestures and symbols. From the first moments, "the infant is crying or making gestural signs to ask for food and certainly is gesturing to communicate its desire to be picked up or held... the infants whether they can hear or not use meaningful movements and gestures for months before they begin to use the parental language." (Stokoe,1999:10) and all of us can notice that practically if there is a child in the family. Besides, to communicate with others, one should follow the rules of a precise code (others' language), so precise that it allows him/her make use of it with different phonetic-grammatical variations using certain signs to send messages correctly.

Crystal (2003:85) suggests that communication is a fundamental notion in the study of behaviour, which acts as a frame of reference for linguistic and phonetic studies. Communication refers to the transmission and reception of information (a message) between a source and receiver using a signaling system. This definition clarifies that communication can

be performed by using a language which is the main means of communication, and by using different indefinite signs. Daniel Chandlers in his book *The Transmission Model of Communication* explains that communication is a process by which meaning is assigned and conveyed in an attempt to create shared understanding. He explains that communication is a process whereby information is enclosed in a package and is channeled and imparted by a sender to a receiver via some medium. The receiver then decodes the message and gives the sender a feedback. So all forms of communication require a sender, a message, and an intended recipient. There are auditory means such as speech, song, and tone of voice and there are nonverbal means such as sign language, body language or through media, i.e., pictures, graphics and sound, and writing. Chandlers (2008:185) makes it clear that it is interesting to notice that the words that one is using are not the determining part of a good communication. The "how you can say it" has major effect on the receiver; the important role of sign language is clear in this situation. For example, two persons are saying the same joke, one of them could make the audience die out of laughing due to his/her good body language and tone of voice. However, the other person says the exact words could make the audience only stare at one another.

Generally, the process of communication is said to be complete when the receiver understands the message and gives the feedback or response. When one talks to others or writes to them, communication takes place between them, for such communication, language is essential. Communication with the help of words is known as verbal communication. It is made through words either spoken or written. Communication through spoken words is called oral communication. In a written communication, a message is transmitted through written words in form of letters, notices, reports, manuals, magazines, handbooks, etc. However, Sebeok (1991:57) assures that one should not think of communication as based solely on language for "our habit of thinking of communication as consisting exclusively of language has delayed the study of communication."

Actually, when one meets a friend and shakes hands with him/her, this also conveys some meaning (friendship). This is called non-verbal communication which can be visual, aural, or gestural(Communication,2009:127) . Some messages are conveyed when one looks into some pictures, graphs, symbols, diagrams, etc. These are different forms of visual communication, for example, the traffic policeman showing the stop sign or a teacher showing a chart of different animals, bells, whistles, horns, etc. are instruments through which one can also communicate messages. The bell used in schools to inform students and teachers about the beginning or end of periods ; the siren used in factories to inform the change of work-shift of the workers; these are all examples of aural communication. Communication through the use of various parts of human body, or through body language, is termed as gestural communication. Saluting our national flag, motionless position during the singing of national anthem waving of hands, nodding of head, showing anger on face, etc. are examples of gestural communication.

There are different uses of nonverbal communication. Stokoe (1999:87) explains some of these uses:1.replacing speech, communication can be alone without speaking, for example, pointing with hands and head, 2.gestures with fingers, hands, and arms 3.tilting of head and 4.movement of any combination of the (90) muscles in the face. Nonverbal signals are used a great deal in conversation for requesting, offering and managing control of who is speaking.

Nonverbal communication extends beyond bodily actions to anything that sends messages. This includes (dress, style, tidiness, personal, adornment, from jewellery to

watches and budgets, office and desk space at work, including size and type of computer, chair, etc.(Kerswill,2007:113)

Before passing on to the material at hand, let us explain how the dress may send certain messages. Elam (1980) in his book *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* suggests that "people are often 'read' according to how they dress". This is natural because many people can be recognized from their clothes and the way they dress, for example, Kurdish people in the north of our country, Iraq, can be easily distinguished from our people in the southern part by their dress. Of course, they can be 'read' and recognized in this way because one has knowledge of the dress and their code in our culture.

It is interesting to mention that our parents or grandfathers may recognize certain people from what they wear on their heads (عقال, ?iqal) whether they are from the western part or the southern part of Iraq.

There are many ways that one can reveal him/herself nonverbally .In this respect, Crystal (2003:275) illustrates three areas of nonverbal communication:

- 1-Body language (kinesthetic communication) using facial expressions, body movements, gestures and posture.
- 2-Physical environment (proxemic communication) using available space, distance from or proximity to other people, and territorial control. It should be noted that there are four zones of interpersonal space: 1-intimate distance is the space around us that one reserves for lovers, children, and close family members and friends.2-personal zone which begins about an arm's length away; this distance is used in conversations with friends, to chat with associates, and in group discussions. 3-social distance which is reserved for strangers, newly formed groups, and new acquaintances. 4-public distance which is used for speeches, lectures, and theatre.
- 3-Personal attributes such as: a)physical appearance (art factual communication) including all options that communicators use to modify their appearance. b)vocal cues (auditory communication). c)touch (tactile communication).

Lyons' idea about the nonverbal component is that it is more closely associated with the social and expressive function of language excluding vocal reflexes as sneezing, yawning, coughing and snoring; usually they are physiologically determined. However, they may be deliberately produced for the purpose of communication when, for example, we cough to warn a person that he might be overhead by someone approaching (Lyons,1977:103)

During her navigation of the websites and specifically at (www.acq.Osd.mil), the researcher finds that nonverbal communication can involve conscious or subliminal messages. The senders and receivers of conscious nonverbal communication are aware that they are sending and receiving a message and the meaning intended by the sender. The receiver of a hug, for example, generally realizes that the message is a sign of friendship. However, subliminal messages are communicated to the subconscious mind of the receiver. The receivers are not consciously aware of the message. However, these messages are important, for instance a)the police and military uniforms subliminally communicate the authority of those wearing them. b)well-dressed people project success credibility while poor dress may transmit

messages of failure and lack of credibility. c) subliminal messages are often more powerful than conscious messages; the advertising world is replete with examples of the value of this kind, for instance, young beautiful people are often seen in advertisements to communicate the subconscious message that the advertised product is associated with youth and beauty. d)companies pay large sums of money to have their products appear in movies,

because the mere association of the product with the movies transmits subliminal messages that will influence viewers. It is interesting to mention that conscious and subliminal messages can be transmitted voluntarily or involuntarily. Involuntary nonverbal communication represents unplanned physical responses; therefore, it tends to be particularly revealing and more honest than verbal communication or even conscious nonverbal communication. Voluntary nonverbal communication can also be controlled by a knowledgeable person. For example, knowing that people telling falsehoods often blink their eyes, a person can take special care not to blink when telling a falsehood. A person who knows that a hug indicates friendship can consciously hug his/her worst enemy as a trick. (Nonverbal Communication, 2010:20)

To sum up, human beings begin the process of communication since their birth. They can convey their needs by speech or writing and this is known as verbal communication or by signs or body movements and this is called nonverbal communication which can be visual, aural or gestural. Nonverbal communication involves conscious and subliminal messages which can be transmitted voluntarily or involuntarily. Thus, there are various ways in which one is communicating and exchanging messages, such as sign language and body language in addition to the verbal devices.

2.Nature of Semiotics

Many linguists such as Selden (1985:345) explain that language is a system of signs and the science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable, it is part of social psychology called "semiology" or "semiotics". Deely (1990:27) notes that language has a privileged role in semiotics; it is inconceivable to try to explain semiotics without referring to communication factors and functions.

It is clear from the above definitions the strong relationship between language, communication and semiotics.

Sebeok (1991:60) defines semiotics as "the science of signs and semiotic analysis which is used in studies of sign processes in such fields as communication, cognition, linguistics, anthropology, marketing, medicine and cellular biology". He has called the messages which are made of signs and conveyed through sign system as codes and the more one shares the same codes in a communication exchange, the closer our meanings will be.

Similarly, Crystal (2003:275) argues that semiotics refers to the study of sign and symbol systems in general. He assures that the study of semiotics has come to be applied to the analysis of patterned human communication in all its sensory modes, i.e., hearing, sight, taste, touch and smell.

Eco (1979:59) explains that the basic assertion which links semiotics to linguistics is that all sign processes can be analysed in the sense in which linguistics can. The task of semiotics is to isolate different systems of signification ruled by specific norms. Semiotics covers the entire field of culture (social life), for one may assume that any cultural manifestation can be viewed as a communication. Elam (1980:1) shows also the connection between semiotics and culture in his definition of semiotics. He defines it as "the study of the way in which meaning is produced in society, it is concerned with the process of signification and communication." In theatre, for instance, everything presented to the audience in a theatrical context is a sign. Traffic light indicate certain signs and we know what they mean because we are familiar with the traffic code.

The researcher finds that all the previous definitions shed light on the fact that semiotics is the field of research that studies signs as an essential part of cultural life and communication but what is a sign?

Eco (1986:15) and Hopes (1991:141) clarify that a sign is anything that stands for something else, i.e., a sign stands for an object or concept. Hudson (2000:1) suggests that in ordinary language a sign is "a notice placed for the public to see" but in a linguistic usage it means "an intersection or relationship of form and meaning where form is something concrete including writing, sound, and gestures, and meaning is something mental or cognitive. A sign may be also a word." He also defines communication as "the use of signs". In communication, one presents the form of signs to others and so invokes their meanings.

The contributions of the three founders of semiotics cannot be overemphasized: Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Saurdes Peirce, and Roland Barthes. According to Saussure, language is a system of signs that express ideas, and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signals, etc. Saussure is a linguist and although he admits that signs can be other than words, his work privileges language as the most important sign language (Deely,1990:27). Saussure explains that a sign consists of two entities that cannot be separated from each other (a signifier and a signified).The signifier represents its 'form' , whereas the signified represents the idea that the sign expresses; it is the content, the meaning of the object, what we experience, think and feel when we interact with the artefact. The relationship between the two entities is conventional (cited in Erkki,2003:3-4) .The signifier according to O'Grady et al (1997:629) is that part of sign that stimulates at least one sense organ of the receiver of a message. It can also be a picture, a photograph, a sign language or gesture. The signified refers to both the real world object it represents and its conceptual content.

According to Peirce, a sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respects or capacities. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of

that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed. Peirce's understanding of the sign is 'triadic'. He separates two triads. The first is sign-interpretant-object; sign is something one perceives and which represents something else. Peirce's second triad is icon, index, and symbol. Hopes (1991:239) and Hudson (2000:3) explain that icon resembles its conceptual object; it may share certain properties which that object possesses such as images and diagrams (graphs); the sign of winding lined at the side of a highway; it is iconic characteristic. Index is a real thing or fact which is a sign of its object by virtue of being connected with it as a matter of fact. Moreover, they explain that index is a sign whose form has characteristics which are only associated in nature with its meaning for instance, the sign of a skull and crossed bones which means 'poison'. Hopes (1991:239) confirms that an index is physically connected with its object as an indication that something exists or has occurred such as a foot print means someone has just walked by or smoke means there is a fire. O'Grady et al (1997:630) refer to a specific kind of indexical sign called "a symptomatic sign" or "symptom". It conveys the internal state or emotions of the sender and thus it represents the sender in an indexical manner for example, the fact that our body temperature rises when we are ill is a spontaneous reflection of our internal state. When someone steps on our foot ,we cry out; this cry is a spontaneous reflection of our internal state and since these signs are spontaneous, one does not consider them to be deliberately selected by the sender for the purposes of (one does not choose to cry out in pain).

Concerning symbol, the relationship between the sign and its conceptual object is entirely arbitrary; the national flag is a symbol (cited in Erkki,2003:4).

Barthes thinks that many messages are sent in life which consist of different signs. These messages basically from making a phone call, waving our hand or the clothes one wears, are based on codes which are culturally defined systems of relationships. The

distinction between denotation and connotation is the guiding idea of Barthes' semiotic theory. Barthes claims that denotation is the literal, actual meaning of a sign, what the product is, i.e., a chair, a telephone, etc.. Connotation is how one does it, the choice of words or media. Partly as a result of the work of Roland Barthes, semiotics became a popular approach to cultural studies in the late 1960's. He analysed advertisement and media and showed seemingly familiar things signify all kinds of ideas about the world. The product designers develop guidelines and tools for designing and analyzing products based on the concepts icon, index and symbol. The most common object for semiotic analysis is a 'text' which usually refers to a recorded message (a book, a picture, TV-program, film or a product)(ibid.:5). Interestingly, Berger (1984:190) points out "the notion that film, TV programs and other cultural phenomena are like languages in many respects is semiological analysis."

The researcher finds that Barthes's explanation of sign is the most comprehensive one, for he links his semiotic theory with cultural studies which deal with man's life, consequently it is more realistic.

Signs can also be classified according to its structure into graded and disgraded signs. Graded signs convey their meaning by changes in degrees, for example, the hands of most clocks move in a graded manner as does the needle of an automobile speed meter. The gradually increasing fear in the facial expressions is also a graded sign. Discrete signs are distinguished from each other by categorical (stepwise) difference. There is no gradual transition from one sign to the next. Traffic lights are discrete signs; there is no gradual shifting from green to yellow to red (O'Grady et al,1997:631).

Nazarova (1996:23) discusses how punctuation marks are signs. For example, a full stop denotes the end of a sentence, a semi-colon links separate ideas within a sentence, etc. There is also the semiotic function of the three English articles (a/an (classifying), the (identifying) and [zero] generalizing). They are used to indicate single; she explains that the articles are signs by means of which we can continuously shift, organize and re-organize the deictic orientation of speech in different ways. The careful production of collocations ; the creative use of idioms in

the right situation will signal that the speaker is well-educated and linguistically cultured and vice-versa.

The bottom line of all is that a sign can be classified according to its major property: if it resembles its referent, it is iconic, if it is linked to its referent in some casual way or represents it partially in some non-arbitrary way, it is indexical (and symptomatic if it spontaneously expresses some internal state); and if its relationship to its referent is arbitrary, it is symbolic, for example the colours used in traffic signals; they bear no inherent connection with the messages they help to communicate.

Having finished with what a sign is and what its kinds, let us deal with the uses of sign language:

There is always a concentration on the fact that language is naturally acquired by speech yet this is not the only way that a first language can be acquired for the deaf children; it can be acquired by sign language. Aitchison (1999:174) assures that there are two general categories of language involving the use of signs: primary and alternate sign language. Primary sign language is the first language of the deaf people who do not use spoken language with each other and who have a hearing impairment. There are American sign language, British sign language, and French sign language and others. These languages do not share identical signs and are not mutually intelligible, for instance British sign language is very different from American language but has more in common with French sign language

for historical reasons. Alternate sign language is "a system of hand signals developed by speakers for limited communication in a specific context where speech cannot be used." . For example, in some religious orders where there are rules of silence, restricted alternate sign language is used e.g., by monks in a monastery. Similarly among some Australian Aboriginal groups, there are periods (times of bereavement) when speech is avoided and sign languages are used instead, less elaborate versions are to be formed in some special working circumstances like the sign language used among book makers or traders in commodity exchanges in Britain. There are also some other reasons behind using sign language:

- 1)when using sign language in addition to one's spoken language (along with his/her body language and facial expression), communication is whole.
- 2)being a bilingual, trilingual or more, it improves one's language.
- 3)one can sign with his/her mouthful.
- 4)scuba divers can communicate underwater. 5)fire fighters can talk in the dark smoke.
- 5)one can talk through windows of buildings in the long or short distance.
- 6)drivers can talk briefly in any lanes while driving.
- 7)one can be sure that nobody can overhear through doors.
- 8)the referee uses limited but defined set of signs to communicate his decisions to the spectators.

A sign language is a language which instead of being acoustically conveyed sound patterns, it uses visually transmitted sign patterns (manual communication, body language and lip patterns) to convey meaning, simultaneously combining hand shapes, orientation and movement of hands, arms or body, and facial expressions to fluidly express speaker's thought (Madell,1998:15).

As a natural language functioning in the visual mode, sign language is designed for the eyes not the ears. So deaf people, people of hard hearing and normal people may prefer communicating through sign language opposed to writing or lip reading. In any sign language, signers use four key aspects of visual information which are called articulatory parameters in terms of shapes, orientation, location and movement. The signer starts with the shape of the hand to form a sign. The place of articulation is important in relation to the head and upper body of the signer. The hand may be oriented in a number of ways such as flat hand. The difference between faster and slower movement in signing also has an effect on meaning.

3.Nonverbal Communication : Body Language

Humans are blessed with the ability to create a wide variety of gestures and expressions from the top of the head to the tips of the toes and this is what is called body language.

A lot has been written about body language and how it can be used to persuade and influence other people. It is "a cluster of physical movements and gestures that convey all forms of emotions." (Patil,2009:1). Information about other people's behaviour is often provided by "nonverbal cues" relating to other's facial expressions, eye contact, and body posture; such nonverbal cues are usually termed as body language.

Body language is a form of nonverbal communication. Humans send and interpret such signals sometimes unconsciously. It may provide cues as to the attitude or state of mind of a person. Body language is "the unspoken or non-verbal mode of communication that we use in every single aspect of our interaction with another person. It is like a mirror that tells us what the other person thinks and feels in response to our words or actions" (Edwards,2008:12).

Will Edwards(2008) in his book *The Deepest Desire of your Heart* explains that we use body language everyday in our lives to get our messages across, to achieve positive feedback in our lives and to get whatever we want. He shows that one uses this language all the time, but one may not be aware of it. Moreover, this language does not involve the face but the whole body as well. With this language one is able to interpret other people's inner emotions even if he/she is not directly expressing it. Consequently , a person is able to modify his/her behaviour to fit the situation. Body language may indicate aggression, attentiveness, boredom, relaxed state, pleasure, amusement, besides many other cues which will be focused on through the coming pages.

The science of body language is a fairly modern study dating primarily from around 60 years ago, although body language itself is as old as humans. Before verbal communication, cave-dwellers relied on their bodies to communicate. Their simple brains informed their faces, torsos and limbs. They instinctively knew that fear, surprise, love, hunger, and annoyance were different attitudes requiring different gestures. Speech is mainly used to convey information, body language has been around. Before the 20th century, the first known written work exclusively addressing body languages is John Bulwer's *chirologia: the Natural Language of the Hand*, published in 1644; by the 19th century, directors and teachers of drama were instructing their actors and students how to convey emotion and attitude through movement and gestures. Interestingly, a study made by professor Albert Mehrabian shows that 7 percent of the messages (received and responded to during face-to-face communication) conveyed through words, 38 percent is revealed through vocal quality, and 55 percent comes through gestures, expression, and posture. There are more than 600 muscles in the human body and the most important part of the body is the face. It contains about 90 muscles; 30 of which are there purely to express emotion. (*Defining Body Language*,2009:12)

Gesture is a typical component of spoken language. Yule (2006:172) notes that although both signs and gestures involve the use of hands, they are rather different. Sign is like speech and is used instead of speaking, whereas gestures are mostly used while speaking. Moreover, gestures accompany spoken language to varying degrees and in varying ways, from the violent gesticulations that they add little to the meaning of an utterance but may indicate a great deal about emotional states and involvement through the thoughtful scratching of one's cheek or chin (for example to signal sustained interest) to fully conventionalized movements that may accompany or even stand for speech (such as the thumbs up gesture meaning 'ok'). (*Verschueren*,1999:100)

Gestures, the movement of arms and hands, are different from other body language in that they tend to have a far greater association with speech and language. While the rest of the body indicates more general emotional state, gestures can have specific linguistic content and can indicate something being referred to (*Gesture types*,2009:1).

According to Yule (2006:174) there are three types of gestures:

- 1)Iconics: They are gestures that seem to be a reflection of the meaning of what is said, as when we trace a square in the air with a finger while saying "I'm looking for a small box." It may add meaning to what is said.
- 2)Deictics: The term "deictic" means 'pointing' and there are gestures which are often used to point to things or people while talking. Deictics can be used in the current context; when one uses a hand to indicate a table (with a cake on it) and ask someone "Would you like some cake?" he/she can later use the same gesture and the same table (with cake no longer

on it) and says "That cake was delicious." In this case, the gesture and the speech combine to accomplish successful reference.

- 3)Beats: They are short quick movements of the hand or fingers. These gestures accompany the rhythm of talk and are often used to emphasize parts of what is being said. As with other gestures, these hand movements accompany speech, but are not typically used as a way of speaking.

In addition to the three kinds that Yule has referred to, there are other types:

- 4)Emblems: they are specific gestures with specific meaning that are consciously used and consciously understood. They are used as substitutes for words and are closer to sign language than everyday body language.

- 5)Metaphoric gestures: when using metaphoric gestures, a concept is being explained. Gestures are in three-dimensional space and are used to shape an idea being explained, either with specific shapes such as finger pinches and physical shaping, or more general waving of hands that symbolizes the complexity of what is being explained.

- 6)Regulators: They are used to control turn-taking in conversation, for example, in the way that as a person completes what they are saying.

- 7)Affect displays: Gestures can also be used to display emotion, from tightening of a fist to the many forms of self touching and holding the self. Covering or rubbing eyes, ears or mouth can say 'I do not want to see/hear/say this'. Holding hands or the whole body can indicate anxiety as the person literally holds himself.(Gesture types,2009:2)

Under the title "Defining Body Language" at www.answers.com, there is a discussion of other kinds of gestures:

- 8)Signature gesture: It is the gesture that defines what you are; it is the common gesture that one performs in a particular way. For example, Diana, princess of Wales's most vividly remembered signature gesture's was the head lowered, eyes looking upward, now known as the Shy Di look. Examples of signature gesture can be seen in a person's 1)posture 2)smile 3)hand clap 4)pointing finger 5)clothes tugging.

- 9)Fake gestures: They are the gestures which are designed to camouflage, conceal, and fool. They deliberately point a person in one direction to make him/her believe something that is not so. Some of the gestures that are commonly faked are: smiling, frowning, sighing, crying and holding one's body as if in pain.

- 10)Unintentional gestures: They imply that one bears no intention of moving from where he/she is, for example, folded arms, lips pressed together, a hand or finger in front of the mouth, and crossed legs, so putting one's finger over the mouth and the scissord legs indicate she/he is holding back.

- 11)Displacement gestures: One may engage in gestures that have no relation to his/her immediate goals. This behaviour is mostly self-directed and serve to release excess energy and gain a feeling of comfort, even if only temporary for example, fiddling with object, stroking one's chin, running one's fingers through his/her hair, eating, and smoking. Some smokers light up a cigarette, take a puff or two, and then put it out or leave it in the ashtray. These people may not actually want the cigarette, but need a gesture to their mind of something else.

- 12)Universal gestures such as smiling, blushing, and crying. These gestures stem from human biological make-up. Concerning smiling, from the earliest days in an infant's life, his/her facial muscles can form the upward turn of the lips. Sure, each person has his own unique way of smiling. It is interesting to state that the Japanese smile in embarrassment as well as pleasure. Blushing is everywhere when embarrassment taken over. Crying is a universal

sign of sadness. Shrugging is a gesture that people use when they need to protect themselves in some way. The shrug can indicate indifference, disdain, unknowing and embarrassment.

The researcher is convinced that being able to read other's signals is a stepping stone to effective communication for everyone. By observing how people move and gesture, one gets a glimpse into their characters, emotions and feelings. Successful people know how their moderate and carefully chosen gestures reflect their sense of what they want and how their movements or their use of the parts of the body have an impact more than the words they say. Actors, for example, know the technique of creating a character. They may ask themselves: how would the character walk, sit, and stand? and what gestures would be required for conveying a particular mood or emotion?

Physical expressions reveal many things about the person using them, for example, gestures can emphasize a point or relay a message, posture can reveal boredom or great interest, and touch can convey encouragement or caution. These body language signals indicate many meanings. Actually every part of the body from the hair, the eye, the lips to the toes can be used to be a gesture or a sign of certain meaning for instance, dropping eye glasses onto the lower bridge of the nose and peering over them causes negative reactions to others. When one is slowly and deliberately taking off glasses and carefully cleaning the lens, this person wants to pause and think before raising opposition or asking for clarification: The gesture of pinching bridge of the nose, usually accompanied with closed eyes, communicates great thought and concern specially when one is listening to soft music or emotional song. Nose-rubbing is a sign of doubt whereas rubbing around ears performed while waiting an answer, commonly coupled with "well, I don't know".

(Patil,2009:6)

During the researcher's navigation of the websites concerning body language, she finds that Carole Martin (2003) has given some important advice to those who have an interview because the interviewer or the audience may make some conclusions before one even says anything. When one looks good, he/she feels good; his/her clothes and accessories should be conservative and neutral. Nonverbal communication may convey a stronger message than verbal communication. So when one stands, he/she should make him/herself as tall as possible; shoulders back and head held high. Eye contact and smiles can indicate a confident attitude. Consistent eye contact can indicate that a person is thinking positively of what the speaker is saying or it can mean that the other person does not trust the speaker enough to 'take his eyes off' the speaker. Lack of eye contact may indicate negativity. The handshake sends strong tactile message. One's voice and the volume of his/her speech convey a strong impression of his/her character. One should use a firm voice to demonstrate his/her confidence. (Martin,2003:4)

Out of the researcher's experience, she finds that the remarks of Edward(2008:6-13) about body language have been proved, for many body movements may indicate many signals such as anger, interest, nervousness, pride, doubt, etc. Lowered eyebrows, for instance, may indicate deception or a desire that eye signals are harder to see. They may indicate annoyance; raised eyebrows indicate happiness or surprise. They also signal a question. Mouth is involved in the expression of many different emotions, from happiness to sadness, from fear to disgust. In emotions, the lips play a major role in creating visible shapes with back up from the teeth and tongue. Yawning is a process of taking a deep gulp of air; it indicates a person who is tired or bored; a short and deep sigh can indicate sadness, frustration or boredom. Slow speakers may be deep thinkers who are careful about finding the right words. The mouth is

also used for eating, and the way people eat can tell many things about them. A well-mannered person opens his/her mouth the minimum to put in a moderate amount of food and keeps it closed whilst chewing each mouthful. As with eating, drinking may be done politely, sipping smaller amounts and swallowing noiselessly although in some cultures it may be done with loud glugging and this is a desirable expression of pleasure for them. In polite society, exposing the inside of your mouth is rude, so the hand is used to cover a yawn or to conceal the mouth when it will betray emotions that may be undesirable. Smiling without opening the mouth, and particularly with lips firmly pressed together may indicate embarrassment. There are many variants on laughter and we all laugh differently. It may be used to gain attention. Emotions may be detected from nonverbal signs, for instance, signs of anger occurs when achievement of goals are frustrated such as neck or face is red or flushed, baring of teeth, snarling and clenched fists. There are many bodily changes caused by fear, anxiety, and nervousness like a cold sweat, pale face, dry mouth, not looking at the other person, damp eyes, trembling lip, varying speech tone, voice tremors, sweating, gasping and holding breath. Sadness is expressed by certain drooping of the body, trembling lip, flat speech tone, and tears. When a person is seeking to trick or deceive you, there are different body signals he/she may use, so he may send signals of tension which may include sweating and sudden movements. There are also indications of pride; people often show how proud they are of their material possession (for example, a car) by leaning against it or by touching it. One can see the sparkle in their eyes and sense the thrill in their voice. Learning body language does not stop here. Experience is the key factor. It will sharpen one's body language skills to greater heights and consistency.

Eventually, it should be noted that people from different cultures can interpret body language in different ways, for body language is culture dependent. Chandlers (2008:187) assures that even though one may appreciate the difference between cultures and nationalities, one may sometimes find himself confused, scared or even repelled by displays of body language that are different from what he/she is used to because people in one culture act differently and this does not suggest that one is right and the other is wrong; this is due to cultural differences. An acceptable gesture in one country may land you in jail in another. Different regional traditions, cultures or gender may alter the intended meaning of message content. For example, in the United States eye contact is encouraged as an indicator of honesty and interest; people in some other societies believe that they should look down when talking to another person to indicate respect; for them, direct eye contact might be considered offensive and disrespectful. In India, gestures are often influenced by religion; there are specific actions marked as Indian. For example, if someone unknowingly stamps on another's feet or belongings, he/she immediately touches first his/her chest and then the forehead as a mark of respect. Muslims wish each other by bowing their heads down and raising a cupped palm to forehead. They bow in prayer facing east; by performing these gestures, people are demonstrating their respect for the culture, its traditions and values (Patil, 2009:3). Simultaneous physical signals often reinforce each other and reduce the ambiguity surrounding the message for example, agreement is often exhibited with the physical displays of excessive smiling with frequent nodding of the head. Thus, the non-verbal communication cues can play an important role such as complementing. They may add to or complement a verbal message. A teacher who pats a student on the back in addition to giving praise can increase the impact of the message. So understanding the messages sent by the gestures or body movements of others enables anyone to behave or communicate correctly. Sometimes

one can assess a person from his/her hair style, clothes his/her way of standing, sitting, smiling, walking or even the way he/she looks before speaking a word with that person.

4.The Questionnaire and its Results

In the light of the pervious survey of the signs and the messages that can be sent through the facial expressions and movements of the parts of the body, the researcher has made a questionnaire given to twenty- five students randomly chosen from the first year at the English Department/College of Education/Al-Qadissiya University in 2011. It is important to mention that since the participants are chosen randomly, factors such as age and sex are not taken into consideration. In the questionnaire, the researcher has given the students thirty situations which indicate different messages with two choices; one of them is correct. She has asked the students to ask about the meaning of any word they may not know. After collecting the responses, the researcher has re-given the students another questionnaire including fifteen situations only chosen from the previous questionnaire but this time she has acted each situation in front of them without any word and she has asked them to choose the answer that they consider suitable for this situation as they see the facial expressions or the movements the researcher makes. The researcher has chosen fifteen situations to avoid guessing element that the students may depend on . The items of the questionnaire, as it is shown at the end of the paper, include samples of the body language signals that convey certain messages.

The questionnaire aims at finding out practically whether the sign and body language have an effective role in helping the teacher to explain her ideas and making communication easier or not, taking into consideration that the language taught in this department is a foreign language. After surveying the participants' responses, the researcher has got the following findings:

- 1)Concerning the first questionnaire, the students generally have got low scores regarding the thirty situations. The findings of the fifteen situations in the first questionnaire(which are used later in the second questionnaire but with acting) are shown in the following table:

Number of the informants		The score out of 15
1	% 4	15
2	% 8	14
3	% 12	13
2	% 8	12
2	% 8	11
6	% 24	10
2	% 8	9
3	% 12	8
3	% 12	7
1	% 4	6

Table(1):The scores of the first questionnaire

- 2) Concerning the second questionnaire with acting, the researcher has got the following findings:
 - a. Twelve informants (48%) have chosen the right messages for all the situations.
 - b. Nine of the informants (36%) have chosen fourteen correct answers out of fifteen.
 - c. Four of them (16%) have chosen thirteen correct answers out of fifteen.

The following table shows the findings:

Number the informants		The score out of 15
12	48 %	15
9	36 %	14
4	16 %	13

Table(2):The scores of the second questionnaire

It is clear from the above findings that the students have got low scores in the first questionnaire .They have not understood the messages sent by the given situations. On the contrary, they have got high scores when the researcher has depended only on her facial expressions and the movements of her body to clarify the situations without saying a word. Evidently, it is proved practically the important role of sign and body language in teaching and explaining many messages one may wish to send.

Findings

The study has arrived at the following findings(theoretical and practical results):

- 1.Semiotics which is the scientific study of sign system is of two kinds: verbal communication through spoken words or written texts and nonverbal communication through facial expressions, gestures and signs known as sign language and body movements which are called body language.
- 2.It has been concluded that many aspects of communication such as language, gestures, body movements, posture, clothes, etc. are systems of signals. Sign in any form can be either iconic, index, or symbol depending on its relationship with what it refers to.
- 3.Gesture which is the main component of body language in communication is of 12 kinds and all these kinds convey different messages.
- 4.Body language is the literal translation of this statement 'Actions speak louder than words'. Successful teachers are those who understand as possible as they could the signals displayed by the different parts of the body so that they could deal with their communicators easier and straightforward. This is what has been assured by a questionnaire given to 25 first year students in the English Department/College of Education/Al-Qadissiya University.
- 5.After analyzing and comparing the participants' answers for the situations with and without being acted, the researcher finds out that their correct answers are much more when the situations are acted, for twelve informants (48%) have selected the suitable choices for ALL the situations given in the questionnaire in which the researcher acts them in front of the students. Nine of the students (36%) have chosen fourteen correct answers out of fifteen, and four of them (16%) have selected thirteen correct choices out of fifteen situations. Generally, their ability to select the suitable answers is not that good comparing with theirs when the researcher explains the situations by using her facial expressions and body language. It is commonly acknowledged that a good teacher should be an actor.

Bibliography

- Aitchison,J(1999).Linguistics. London: Cox & Wyman Ltd.
 Berger,A.(1984).Signs in Contemporary Culture. New York: Longman.
 Chandlers,D.(2008).The Transmission Model of Communication.(2009).
 URL(<http://www.nios.ac.in/secbuscor/cc1z.pdf>).
 Crystal,D.(2003).The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language.

- Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Deely,J.(1990).Basics of Semiotics. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Defining Body Language.(2009).www.answers.com/product-dat/example/11/
- Eco,U.(1979).A Theory of Semiotics. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- .(1986).Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language. Bloomington:
Indiana University Press.
- Edwards,W.(2008).The Deepest Desire of your Heart. New York: White Dove
Books.
- Elam,K.(1980).The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama. London: Routledge.
- Erkki,H.(2003). Visual Communication and Semiotics.
URL([http://www.infoamerica.org/documents pdf/Jacobson](http://www.infoamerica.org/documents/pdf/Jacobson)).
- Hopes,J.(1991).Peirce on Signs. Chapel Hill NC: The University of North
Carolina Press.
- Hudson,G.(2000).Essential Introductory Linguistics. London: Cornwall Press.
- Kerswill,P.(2007). Language Variation and Change. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lyons,J.(1977).Language and Linguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Madell,S.(1998).Warlpiri Sign Language and Auslan. Published M.A. Thesis, Macquarie
University, Sydney, Australia.
- Martin,C.(2003).Sign Language. URL(<http://interview.monser.com>.)
- Nazarova,T.(1996).Linguistic and Literary Semiotics. Moscow :Moscow State U.P.
- Nonverbal Communication.(2010).www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/cpf/docs/contract-pricing-
guide/vol5-ch-5.pdf.
- O'Grady,W , M.Dobrovolsky and F.Katamba.(1997).Contemporary Linguistics. London:
Coopp clark pitman Ltd.
- Patil,R.(2008).BodyLanguage. URL([http://www.lifepositive.com/Mind/psychology/
body language asp](http://www.lifepositive.com/Mind/psychology/body language asp)).
- Sebeok,Th.(1991).A Sign is Just a Sign. Bloomington: IUP.
- Selden,R.(1985).A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory.
Brighton: Harvester.
- Stokoe,W.(1999). Models, Sign and Universal Rules. Washington: Washington Gallaudet
UP.
- Verschueren,J.(1999).Understanding Pragmatics. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Yule,G.(2006). The Study of Language. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

1. Questionnaire

The following situations indicate certain messages. Choose (a) or (b):

1. Mrs. Lujane, your teacher, has low voice tone.
a. Her lecture is boring b. Her lecture is interesting
2. Mrs. Lujane, with red face, shouts "come out".
a. She is angry b. She is happy
3. Mr. Sami, your teacher, is 50 years old; he wears sport dress.
a. He is active b. He is tired
4. Mrs. Lujane wears nice hijab.
a. She is Christian b. She is Muslim
5. Mr. Ali nods his head when I answer the question.
a. My answer is correct b. My answer is wrong
6. Mrs. Lujane is walking slowly and her shoulders are shrugged.
a. She is glad b. She is tired

7. When I met Sami, his teeth were chattering.
a. He was sad b. He was extremely frightened
8. I offered a piece of cake to my little son, he began licking his lips.
a. This indicates desire for food b. He does not like that food
9. When your teacher gets impatient and irritated, she starts to.
a. clap her hands b. chew the inside of her cheek or mouth
10. Mr. Ali stands with his hands on hips; he is.
a. dominant teacher b. weak teacher
11. When you answer the question, your teacher uses her eyes to start and hold the gaze for a long period. This is a sign of her.
a. approval b. disapproval
12. Samir is tapping his forehead, saying "ohh".
a. It signals regret b. It signals happiness
13. The corners of Samir's mouth are turned down today.
a. He is sad b. He is chewing
14. Mrs. Lujane is rubbing her temples.
a. She has headache b. She is greeting you
15. Your friend is uncomfortable and he avoids making eye contact.
a. He is tired b. He is lying
16. You give your teacher an answer; he raises his thumb up.
a. This signals approval b. This signals disapproval
17. While you are clarifying a matter for your friend, he turns his head away.
a. This indicates a desire to communicate b. This is insulting
18. You are slowly rubbing your forehead as you're answering the exam items.
a. You're thinking deeply b. You're afraid
19. Samir was very embarrassed because he:
a. was looking down and away from others b. opened his mouth
20. Your teacher's face shows lack of interest and appear black because she is
a. bored or tired b. embarrassed
21. Your teacher is explaining a new drill and one of his students is looking away and sometimes drawing something in his paper,
a. he shows readiness to listen b. he is careless
22. Yawning indicates that your student is:
a. feeling hot b. tired or bored
23. Sweating is a sign of:
a. being sad b. being embarrassed
24. Mrs. Lujane entered the class with lowered eyebrows; she is
a. pleased b. annoyed
25. Muna sat alone with trembling lips:
a. she is trying to cry b. she wants to smile
26. Suha begins touching both cheeks with the flat of her hands when I tell her the news.
a. This indicates surprise or horror b. This indicates confidence
27. Samir was sitting and biting his nails.
a. he was nervous or worried b. this indicates confidence
28. In an interview, Samir sat on the edge of the seat.
a. He is confident and comfortable b. He is scared
29. My students are listening to me and they are still.

a. This indicates confusion b. This indicates attention and respect

30. Mr. Ali is grinding his teeth.

a. He is cold b. He is angry

2.Questionnaire with Acting

1.Mr. Ali nods his head when I answer the question

a. my answer is correct b. my answer is wrong

2. Mrs. Lujane is walking slowly and her shoulders are shrugged

a. she is glad b. she is tired

3. When your teacher gets impatient and irritated, she starts to

a. clap her hands b. chew the inside of her cheek or mouth

4. Samir is tapping his forehead, saying "ohh".

a. It signals regret b. It signals happiness

5. Mrs. Jane is rubbing her temples.

a. she has headache b. she is greeting you

6. Your friend looks uncomfortable and he avoids making eye contact.

a. He is tired b. He is lying

7. You give your teacher an answer; he raises his thumb up.

a. This signals approval b. This indicates disapproval

8. Mrs. Lujane entered the class with lowered eyebrows; she is

a. pleased b. annoyed

9. Yawing indicates that your students is:

a. feeling hot b. tired or bored

10. You are slowly rubbing your forehead as you're answering the exam items:

a. You're thinking deeply b. You're afraid

11. Mr. Ali is grinding his teeth.

a. He is cold b. He is angry

12. In an interview, Samir sat on the edge of the seat.

a. He is scared b. He is confident and comfortable

13. Samir was sitting and biting his nails.

a. he was nervous and worried b. This indicates confidence

14. Muna begins touching both cheeks with the flat of her hands when I tell her the news:

a. This indicates surprise or horror b. This indicates confidence

15. While you're clarifying a matter for your friend, he turns his head away:

a. This indicates a desire to communicate b. This is insulting

الخلاصة :

لا يمكن ان ننكر بان اللغة هي أهم وسيلة للتواصل ويمكن تعريفها بأنها نظام إشارة وخاصة نظام الإشارة المعتاد للبشر. التواصل يمكن ان يكون على نوعين: تواصل فعلي عن طريق الكلمات وتواصل غير فعلي عبر قنوات أخرى وخاصة للصم والذي يعانون من عوق سمعي. تلك القنوات تضم تعابير الوجه والإشارات ولغة الجسد. كتدريسية،الباحثة ركزت على النوع الثاني وكيف إن هذه القنوات تساعد التدريسي في توضيح أفكاره ومادته وتوصيل تجاربه إلى طلبته بأحسن وجه وبالمقابل فإن هذه القنوات تمكنه أيضا من فهم التعابير والحركات الجسدية للطلاب وهذا يتطلب معرفة لغة الإشارة التي تضم معلومات عن لغة الجسد. القسم النظري للبحث تضمن هذه المعلومات إما القسم العملي فلقد ضمّ استبيان من ٣٠ موقف أعطي إلى ٢٥ طالب من المرحلة الأولى/قسم اللغة الأنكليزية/كلية التربية/جامعة القادسية في عام ٢٠١١. وبعد الحصول على الإجابات أعطت الباحثة استبيان آخر يضم ١٥ موقف مختار من الاستبيان السابق ولكن هذه المرة قامت الباحثة بتمثيل هذه المواقف أمام الطلبة. اظهر تحليل الإجابات الفرق الكبير بين إجابات المشاركين في الاستبيان الأول وإجاباتهم في الاستبيان الثاني حيث أنهم حصلوا على درجات عالية عندما استخدمت الباحثة لغة الإشارة والجسد في توضيح المواقف المعطاة.