



Cultural Different in Terms of Gestures in Various Countries

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Abstract: In this article provides some misunderstandings with gestures which people come across in common life. In the modern life, going abroad is common for everyone. When speakers talk, they gesture. Gesture can play a role in communication and thought at many timespans. In this case people need to understand and speak in other countries' language when people talk as they use automatically different gestures for describing their emotions. However, if you use incorrect gestures, you may come across failure to communicate effectively although you know very well other countries' language.

Keywords: gestures, miscommunication, mutual understanding, unique knowledge, non-verbal communication, connotations, interpersonal skills, finger summoning.

Culture is the ideas, customs and social behavior of a particular people or society. We know that there are so many various cultures in the world, and they differ from each other. Success or failure of intercultural context depends on the extent to which each person understands the other's culture. The ability to use nonverbal signals correctly is of particular importance for mutual understanding. In this article, we focus on the avoiding misunderstanding when people use nonverbal communication and you will learn how to use gestures effectively in the context of interpersonal skills, and what some common gestures to avoid in cross-cultural communication are. Gestures can have different connotation in different cultures, some of which can be considered rude disrespect to disrespectful or aggressive to avoid this miscommunication, it is important to be aware. This article provides all connotates gestures and common mistakes which people are doing recently.

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 gesture (Feyereisen and de Lannoy, 1991), and gesture is fundamental to communication. Indeed, babies gesture before they produce their first words (Bates, 1976). Congenitally blind speakers who have never seen gesture even gesture to blind listeners. Our hands help us talk, think, and remember, sometimes revealing unique knowledge that cannot yet be verbalized (Goldin-Meadow et al., 1993). Everybody gestures, but despite its ubiquity, gesture is often seen as secondary to spoken language, receiving less attention in language research. Gesture is often reduced to a subcategory of non-verbal communication. However, non-verbal does not mean non-language, and theoretical approaches of gesture suggest that speech and gesture arise from the same representational system. In this view, rich conceptual representations contain both imagistic and symbolic information that give rise to gesture and speech, respectively. Both these modalities have communicative functions and originate from the same communicative intention. Gesture does not only contribute essential information to a message but also actively facilitates the cognitive formation of messages and supports learning and memory.

While learning other languages, we also need to know their culture. Because, there are so many different cultures in our life. Understanding culture is like having a context that allows you to give the right meaning to each new word you learn. The more you know about the sociocultural



background, the easier it is to get involved and learn new words, expressions and ways of speaking. Culture is essential to learning a language well enough to communicate with natives. In fact, most universities and even high schools invest in exchange programs to allow students to learn languages in the right environments. You may know thousands of words in your target language, but you may be surprised at the result of trying to communicate with a native speaker for the first time. Misunderstandings are very common and can lead to awkward situations. For example, imagine you have a company that is about to receive a Chinese delegation for dinner before signing an important contract. Your business has a “sit where you like” policy, so that’s what you offer your guest. Big mistake! In Chinese culture, hierarchy is important, so the head of the group would expect to sit at the head of the table and next to the most senior member of your team. If not, they would probably feel offended and humiliated and your business offer might fail before it has even begun! In this case, you may come across failure as a result gestures in your country are not similar with other places. Thereafter, you may be embarrassed when you realize you were wrong. So, if you want to avoiding of this kind of situation, please, read to the end of the article.

To use gestures effectively in the context of interpersonal skills, you need to consider three aspects: purpose, clarity, and appropriateness. First, you need to have a clear purpose for using a gesture, such as emphasizing a point, showing agreement, or asking a question. Second, you need to make sure that your gesture is clear and consistent with your verbal message, and that it does not distract or confuse your audience. Third, you need to ensure that your gesture is appropriate for the culture, situation, and context, and that it does not violate any social or professional norms or etiquette.

To practice gestures and improve your interpersonal skills, you need to be mindful, confident, and flexible. You need to be mindful of your own gestures and their impact on your communication, and to monitor and adjust them as needed. You need to be confident in your gestures and their alignment with your verbal message, and to use them with conviction and enthusiasm. You need to be flexible in your gestures and their adaptation to different cultures, situations, and contexts, and to respect and appreciate the diversity and richness of nonverbal communication.

Let’s learn common gestures which we should aware of their all meanings in different states.

1. Finger Summoning.



Avoid using this gesture in: The Philippines, Singapore, and Japan.

Want to call someone? Then, beware to do finger summoning in the Philippines. The same gesture is specifically used for calling dogs and considered very offensive. And in the land of Singapore and Japan, that same gesture indicates death.



2. The OK.

Avoid using this gesture in: Turkey, Brazil, Venezuela, and France. We might find the A-OK gesture as a gesture for “OK” or “excellent”. But in places like Turkey, Brazil and Venezuela, the gesture is a vulgar slang that can offend anybody you are flashing it to.



3. Fingers Crossed.

Avoid using this gesture in: Vietnam

As per the Vietnamese, crossing your index and middle fingers won't bring you good luck in Vietnam. This human gesture symbolizes a part of the female anatomy and could get really offending when flashed to somebody.



4. Victory Sign.

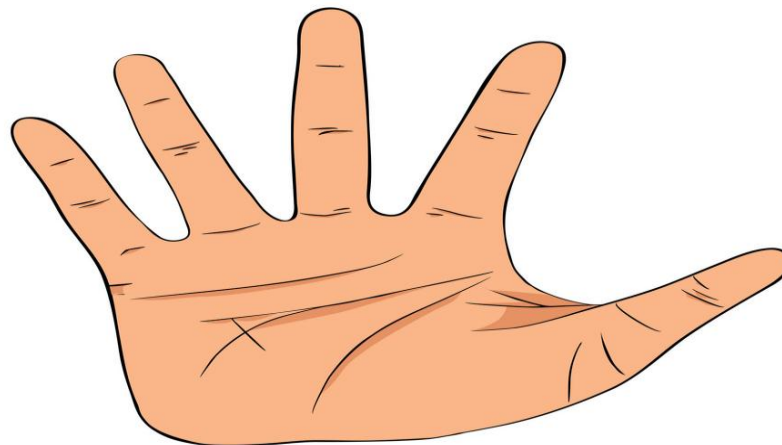
Avoid using this gesture in: United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland, and New Zealand

The Victory Sign made famous by Winston Churchill, may mean what you mean but in countries like United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland, and New Zealand land you in trouble especially if your palm is facing inward. The same gesture is equivalent of giving someone a middle finger.



5. The open hand.

This rude hand gesture is so widespread in Greece, that the government even considered banning it. It resembles a 'talk to the hand' gesture in that it's simply an open palm extended toward the receiver. To make it doubly offensive, a person can smack one palm against the back of another and extend both hands. It originates from the Byzantine Empire when criminals were hauled across town on donkeys to be humiliated. Citizens would collect cinders and smear them across the wrongdoer's face to amplify their shame. The Greek word for cinder happens to be moutzos – hence the name.

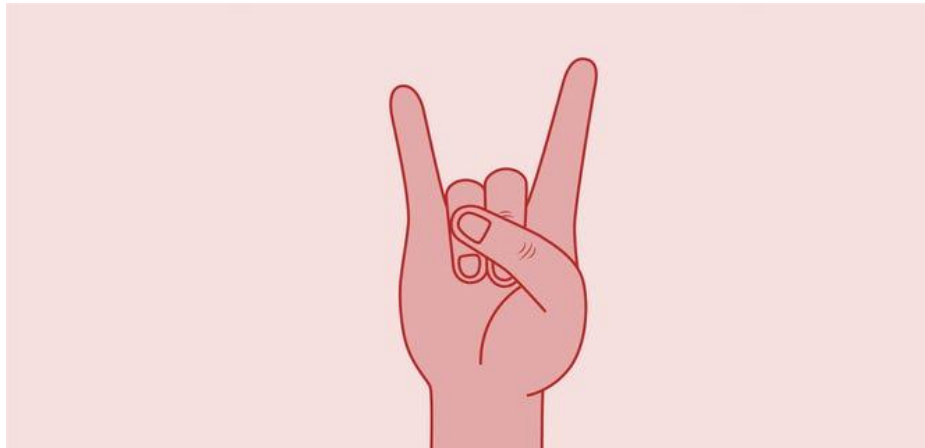


6. You might throw up the devil's horns at a rock show, but in some countries you're telling someone their wife is cheating on them.

Heavy metal fans are familiar with the so-called "sign of the horns" or "devil horns," made by extending the index finger and pinky.

But in many European and South American countries, including Italy, Spain, Greece, Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia, the gesture has a more obscene meaning.

There, it's used to mock cuckolds — husbands whose wives are unfaithful. The connection is obvious to people from those countries: the word for "cuckold" in Italian, Spanish, and Greek is the same word for "horned."



So, we should learn all of them which have different meanings in the world. Yes, using gestures help to listener and speaker equal. Gesture provides a unique window into a speaker's mind and provides a direct link between cognition and communication. Minimally, we could learn some multi-meaning gestures in this article. If you know common connotations of gestures, you will have no difficulty when you go abroad or communicate with other nations in communication in your life.

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