The Role of Kinesic Gestures in English and Arabic: A Contrastive Study

by

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ABSTRACT

The present study has sought to define nonverbal communication and then to demonstrate its importance in both the American and Arabic cultures comparatively. It aimed at delineating points of divergence and convergence between both cultures in this respect. The procedure adopted here has been a theoretical comparison and contrast between both cultures in an attempt to ascertain that nonverbal communication is a virtually universal and reliable means of interaction. The empirical part of the study was made to validate the theoretical part whereby the findings have been, to a large extent, congruent with the theoretical background of the topic as a whole.

Throughout the study, major emphasis has been placed upon facial expressions because of the vitally important role of the face in interpersonal communication. Among the findings arrived at, the study has come up with the main result that to describe the functions of nonverbal communication systems is one thing and to rate their potential to achieve specific communicative objectives is quite another. The study has finally set up some general remarks and guidelines that are deemed to be of use and importance to those interested in the field of theoretical linguistics in general and in nonverbal communication in particular.