

## **A CONVERSATION ANALYSIS OF EFL TEACHERS' GESTURE IN LANGUAGE ELICITATION STAGE**

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*Using a Conversation Analytic (CA) method, this study explores English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' nonverbal gestures during the elicitation stage: when they elicit new words and language structures from students. In total, three hours of interactions between six EFL teachers and students during the elicitation stage in six classes are recorded and then analyzed. The teachers' gestures are categorized according to their functions, while the classroom speech exchange, in which the EFL teachers' gestures are identified, is examined. An analysis reveals that 1) EFL teachers' gestures serve many pedagogical and interactional functions: managing student behavior; regulating interaction, involving students, explaining language features, evaluating students' responses, and showing EFL teachers' expectations for students' language production; 2) functions of EFL teachers' gestures sequentially correspond to the students' responses placed on the immediate preceding turns; and 3) students not only listen to what the EFL teacher says but also interpret and later react, both verbally and nonverbally, to the teachers' gestures.*

**Key words:** *gesture, elicitation, conversation analysis, classroom interaction*

*Utilizando un método de conversación analítica (CA), este estudio explora los gestos no verbales de maestros de inglés como lengua extranjera (ILE) durante la etapa de incentivación de la producción oral, cuando se incentiva el uso de nuevas palabras y estructuras lingüísticas por parte de los estudiantes. En total, se registran y después se analizan tres horas de interacción entre seis profesores y estudiantes de ILE durante su producción oral en seis clases. Los gestos de los docentes se clasifican de acuerdo con sus funciones, mientras que se examina el intercambio de discurso del aula, en el que se identifican los gestos de los profesores. El análisis revela que 1) los gestos de los docentes sirven muchas funciones pedagógicas para la interacción como: manejar el comportamiento de los estudiantes, regular la interacción, involucrar a los estudiantes, explicar las características de la lengua, evaluar las respuestas de los estudiantes, y mostrar las expectativas de los docentes para la producción de la lengua de los estudiantes; 2) las funciones de los gestos de docentes corresponden secuencialmente a las respuestas de los estudiantes colocadas en las intervenciones inmediatamente precedentes; y 3) los estudiantes no sólo escuchan lo que dice el profesor, sino que también interpretan y luego reaccionan, de forma tanto verbal como no verbal, a los gestos de los maestros.*

**Palabras clave:** *gesto, elicitación, análisis de la conversación, interacción en el aula.*

## **1. Introduction**

Initially, speech was considered the only input produced to make language comprehensible for learners. Since Corder's (1967) exploration of input in verbal interaction (i.e., what is available to learners) and intake (i.e., what is actually internalized by learners), second language acquisition (SLA) researchers, inspired by interactionism, have examined participatory roles of co-participants (e.g., native speakers, EFL teachers, more-proficient EFL classmates, or other EFL classmates) who make speech input become comprehensible for EFL learners during the interaction (Gass, 1997; Gass & Varonis, 1985, 1994; Long 1983a, 1983b, 1983c; Long & Porter, 1985; Pica 1988, 1994; Pica, Young & Doughty, 1987).

Some SLA researchers explore types of interactional activities in which speech is the focus (e.g., group-work, pair-work, content- or language-centered activities, task-based instructions, etc.) that influence interactional patterns and complexity (Kasper, 1986; Seedhouse, 1999;

Tsui, 1987). Other researchers study causes resulting in comprehensible input and the process through which second language (L2) features are made comprehensible for language learners in the spoken interaction (Long 1983a, 1983b, 1983c; Pica 1988, 1994).

These studies all convincingly argue for the importance of spoken interaction in providing EFL learners with comprehensible input, an important resource for L2 learning. The data collected in these studies are speech or a sequence of verbalized turns (and nothing else) that EFL learners and their co-participants produce during the interaction. However, speech comes with other communicative codes such as paralanguage, vocal properties, or gesture that can perform the same function as speech. This function may facilitate L2 learning, teaching, and use in the language classroom.

The exact functions and relationship of gesture with speech remain under investigation. One research tool that helps researchers capture the features and functions of gesture is Conversation Analysis (CA), which shows how turns-at-talk (both verbal and gestural) are produced, delivered, and understood moment-by-moment by participants during the social interaction. As a result, this study pays particular attention to teachers' use of gesture during classroom social interaction for two reasons.

First, as Gregg (1984), Long (1983a, 1988), and Swain (1985) emphasize, language instruction does have an effect on SLA. What EFL teachers do in class, for instance, introducing and explaining L2 features, using a second language as a medium of instruction and classroom communication, or engaging students in class activities, facilitates the learning process. To analyze what EFL teachers do in class, verbally or gesturally, as parts of language instruction, allows us to see the relationship between teaching and learning, teacher talk and learner learning, and the participants' roles as speaker and listener in the pedagogical context.

The second reason is rather methodology-oriented. Considering speech as a mere resource of conversational data for interactionism-inspired research simply ignores other inseparable elements of talk such as gesture or other codes that accompany talk (Lazaraton, 2004). As a result, the findings will experience problems in reliability.

CA-inspired gesture studies in second language education and acquisition usually take into account the turn-taking system and an emic perspective (or a participant's perspective, see Pike (1967) for the detailed discussion). However, the number of survey studies on gesture in foreign or second language classrooms far outnumbers those using a natural observational method such as a CA method. This study seeks to redress this unbalance by adding to knowledge of gesture in the SLA classroom using a CA perspective. That is, how participants use gestures as a communicative code and how it is understood as such when displayed in turns-at-talk.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### **2.1. Defining and Classifying Gestures**

Several researchers in nonverbal communication define the term 'gesture' differently. Gullberg (2008: 277) defines gesture as "symbolic movements related to ongoing talk or to the speaker's expressive intention". Her definition suggests that movements must accompany an ongoing talk and be so meaningful and communicative that they reflect their speaker's intention.

Kendon (2004: 7) sees gesture as "visible action when it is used as an utterance or as a part of an utterance". Kendon's definition implies the visibly receptive mode of gesture. Similar to Gullberg's, Kendon's definition entails the accompaniment of gestures to speech. While it is widely admitted that gesture is a speaker's phenomenon (Schegloff, 1984), it involves other participants who interpret the gesture-attached meaning, understand the gesture, and respond accordingly. However, both definitions do not state which body parts communicate the speakers' intention.

McNeill (2005: 3) provides a definition of gesture which is the "spontaneous, unwitting, and regular accompaniments of speech that we see in our moving fingers, hands, and arms". His characterization of gesture, though excluding the meaningfulness, communicativeness, and interpretation of gestures, points out that gestures specifically include the movement of fingers, hands, and arms. In this study, the researcher terms gesture as a movement of fingers, hands, and arms that accompanies a

talk or is a part of a sequence of talk (this is explained in detail in the following section) and, at the same time, carries a communicative intent of the speaker.

It is important to point out that the terms ‘gesture’ and ‘nonverbal communication’ can be mistakenly interchangeable on several occasions; in fact, they represent a different scope of nonverbal codes. Knapp, Hall, and Horgan (2014) group gesture under ‘body movement and position’, one of the three categories of nonverbal communication. This category emphasizes how body parts are used to communicate the speakers’ thoughts, needs, intentions, and to regulate the interaction. In addition to gesture, ‘body movement and position’ include posture, touching behavior, facial expressions, eye behavior, and vocal behavior. In other words, nonverbal communication provides a theoretical umbrella under which gesture is grouped, while gesture itself is concerned with the movements of the arms, hands, and fingers.

While several criteria have been proposed to classify gesture, McNeill and Levy’s (1993) and McNeill’s (1992) classification has been widely mentioned. They classify gesture into four dimensions: iconicity, metaphoricality, deixis, and temporal highlighting, according to what the gesture signifies. Iconic gesture represents the picturable aspects of concrete objects and actions in the talk. Iconic gesture can be observed when speakers 1) use hands with bodily action to represent, for example, the action of driving a car, or 2) use hand and fingers to outline the physical form of an object to represent its shape and size. The former is known as kinegraphic gesture, the latter as pictographic gesture.

Metaphoric gesture is similar to iconic gesture in that it can either be kinegraphic or pictographic. However, the difference between the two is that metaphoric gesture represents images of the abstract idea referred to during the talk. Known as a pointing gesture, deictic gesture involves indexing a physical object within a visible range, or metaphoric ones (i.e., spatial and temporal deixis). Temporal highlighting (or beats) refers to the same form of gesture speakers keep using regardless of the words or objects with which beats associate. According to the functions of each dimension, McNeill (1992) considers beats rhythmic, while the first three types of gesture are considered representational.

The second classification of gesture was proposed by Kendon (1982), according to the co-presence between speech and gesture. The first of Kendon's categories, gesticulation, represents the co-existence of both language (or speech) and gesture during the talk. That is, gestures classified as gesticulation require the presence of speech. According to McNeill (2005), gesticulation is the most frequent type of gesture in naturally-occurring encounters.

Similar to gesticulation, speech-linked gesture, as the name implies, requires speech sequentially, not concurrently, to the gesture (McNeill, 2005). Speech-linked gesture also requires speech to relate to gesture in a specific linguistic role. A presence of one demands an absence of the other. That is, in turns-at-talk, there are syntactic components the speakers do not verbalize, but instead employ gesture, and vice versa. Kendon's third category is emblems, which are conventionalized signs. An example is the act of two fingers crossed. While using an emblem, speakers may, but do not have to, say the meaning of the emblem. The last of Kendon's categories is pantomime and sign language, which does not require the presence of speech.

In this section, the definitions of gesture are given, and the classifications of gesture are discussed. It is reasonable to claim that gesture studies have become an interdisciplinary field which invites different empirical investigations. Conversation Analysis is an area that explores gesture not only because it accompanies speech in naturally-occurring social interactions of everyday and ordinary situations, but also because gestures are social actions. The next section introduces gestures as social actions from a CA perspective.

## **2.2. Gestures: Function and Meaning in Turn-at-Talk**

Studies in social interaction involve an analysis of naturally-occurring face-to-face interaction which takes turn-taking systems in speech exchange as a unit of analysis (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984). In this study, the researcher implements an approach to the study of talk-in-interaction as systematically elaborated by conversation analysis researchers, with a focus on gesture in language classrooms.

Researchers in gesture have argued that gesture accompanies speech (Kendon, 2004; McNeill, 1992), implying the intimate interconnection of both systems. The co-occurrence of the two aspects suggests that, to interpret the meaning of gesture, one has to take into account the associated words, as Kendon (2004: 174) speculates, “gestural actions can only be given a precise interpretation when taken in conjunction with the words associated with them”.

It is indisputable that, as emphasized above, gesture accompanies speech. Nevertheless, this claim is not without a problem and therefore needs elaboration. As pointed out by Olsher (2004), gesture without accompanying talk can be found in a sequence of turns where it functions as a second pair part. An example below demonstrates his claim.

Example 1: Office talk (01/2014)

- A: Are you done with the performance report? (1)  
 B: [pointing to the report left on the table] (2)

In Example 1, B performs a gesture without talking on turn 2. This does not mean that we cannot interpret this gesture, and its action and meaning. In fact, we can do so by taking A’s turn as a sequential context which provides the contextual clue of how B’s gesture should be properly understood. A asks B a yes-no question about the performance report. A’s question functions as a first pair part which requires a conditionally relevant second pair part (see Schegloff and Sacks 1973 for the discussion about conditional relevance). Either a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response is relevantly expected by A. B’s gesture performs an action; it forms a reply. By pointing to the report left on the table, B means ‘yes’. Examples 2 and 3 below display how a participant initiates a talk with gesture.

Example 2: At lunch (12/2014)

- C: [pointing to the microwave which is fifteen feet away] (1)  
 D: Completely forgot about the food. (2)

Example 3: In a living room (08/2014)

- E: [patting the sofa] (1)  
 F: Sorry, can’t talk, I’ve got to go. (2)

In Example 2, C and D talk in a noisy dining room after D puts his food in a microwave. After talking for a while, C points to the microwave (line 1). C's gesture, which initiates a new piece of talk, functions as a reminder to D that his lunch is ready. The gesture also functions as a first-pair part that demands a second pair part. After interpreting C's gesture as such, D gives a relevant verbal response (line 2). In Example 3, the gesture which E performs functions as an invitation; it requires F to provide a response on turn 2, i.e., F has to either accept or refuse the invitation. Interpreting the gesture as an invitation, D verbally refuses it.

Examples 2 and 3 show how gestures without accompanying talk on the same turn can be analyzed. On several occasions, social interaction is performed completely without talk. Below is an example.

Example 4: Brown and Yule (1983: 128)

(domestic evening scene: husband and wife watching television)

- A: [indicating by pointing and tapping his ear that he can hear the telephone] (1)  
B: [pointing to the cat asleep on her lap] (2)  
A: [shrugging and getting up] (3)

Example 4 shows how each party analyzes the other's nonverbal codes and displays the analysis and resultant understanding to the other. By looking at the husband pointing and tapping his ear (turn 1), the wife understands her husband's request, i.e., the phone is ringing and he wants her to pick up the phone. By pointing to the cat asleep on her lap (turn 2), she wants him to know that she cannot honor his request and that there is a reason for that. By shrugging (turn 3), he reveals that he understands her refusal of his request; this is confirmed when he gets up.

Examples 1-4 reveal the function of gesture. As we can see, the gestures in these examples perform an interactional action. It can be a response (Example 1), an initiation that requests a response from the other participant (Examples 2 and 3), or both an initiation and a response at the same time in the same talk (Example 4). These gestures carry meaning; the speakers want the gestures to be understood by others.



So far, we have learned the functions and meanings of gesture in several occasions of social interaction. The meanings of gestures can be found in the utterances they accompany. When there is no accompanying utterance, the immediately preceding utterance or the following utterance by other participants helps us understand the meaning of the gestures, as directly understood by the other participants within the same interaction. The next section presents gestures in L2 classroom conversations.

### 2.3. Gestures in Second Language Classroom Conversations

“Look here, here, this is what ‘crash’ means”.  
[an EFL teacher is trying to explain what ‘crash’ means using her hands]  
(EFL teacher, 06/2014)

The above extract comes from a classroom talk where an EFL teacher tries to explain what ‘crash’ means by using a gesture. The word, ‘crash’, which is an actional word, requires her to use what McNeill and Levy (1993) and McNeill (1992) call a kinegraphic aspect of iconic gestures. This section is devoted to foreigner talk discourse in general and in particular EFL teachers’ gestures in classroom discourse.

When people talk, they not only utter but also gesture. Gestures are an unconscious action people cannot avoid in their social interaction. That explains why we observe speech-linked gestures or stand-alone gestures on many turns-at-talk. Interaction in language classrooms is no exception because knowledge and learning are brought about and facilitated by face-to-face talk (Mehan, 1979) where, frequently, EFL teachers initiate and manage the interaction. However, gestures in language classroom talk are quite different from those found in everyday encounters due to the two reasons elaborated below.

First, a physical context impacts why and how people talk (Heritage, 2004). In almost all classrooms, the purposes of talk are to construct knowledge, educate others, and manage the interaction which is dominantly a teacher-student(s) direction or a one-to-many direction. The goals of classroom talk are always planned and pedagogy-oriented. Because gestures accompany talk, it would be instructive to see how gestures are performed when the purpose of the accompanying talk is pedagogical.

Second, related to the pedagogical reason, the content or topics in language classrooms are devoted to language, language use, language skills, and language-related activities, which are undoubtedly different from those in everyday talk where 'metalinguage' or 'speaking about language' is rare. Therefore, gestures that accompany talk designed for language instruction may be unique. These two reasons explain why studies of gesture in language classrooms can shed light on our understanding of language, learning, teaching, and classroom interaction.

So far, research on gestures in English as a Foreign or Second Language (EF/SL) classrooms can be broadly divided into two main areas: 1) learners' acquisition of EF/SL gestures; 2) EF/SL teachers' use of gestures, and; 3) EF/SL learners' use of gestures. The first line or area investigates whether or not nonnative speakers and learners can acquire L2 gestures, either in formal or naturalistic settings and, if so, if it positively correlates to their L2 proficiency. Included in the first area is the investigation into nonnative speakers' and learners' perception and production of L2 gestures. Mohan and Helmer (1988) and Jungheim (2006) reveal that L2 participants could interpret L2 gestures correctly, but they performed more poorly than native speakers. Jungheim (1991) found that many other studies compared effects of explicit language instructions with those of implicit language instructions on L2 learners' ability to recognize gestures and found that those given explicit instructions recognized L2 gestures better.

The second line of research expresses interest in EF/SL teachers' use of gestures. Two main concerns research studies along this line attempt to address are as follows. First, to explore the function or purpose of EF/SL teachers' gestures; the function and purpose, as some studies found, can be pedagogy-related or non-pedagogy-related. Some studies explore the relationship between EF/SL teachers' gestures and the L2 features they accompany.

The second area is to explore the impacts of EF/SL teachers' gestures on learners' language learning. Some studies look at the cognitive effects of gestures on EFL learners, e.g., their memorization of words or information retrieval of new words, while some studies look at the affective side of EF/SL teachers' gestures. Allen (2000), Moskowitz (1976), Sime

(2006), and Ward and von Raffler-Engel (1980) report a positive correlation between EFL teachers' gestures, positive atmosphere, learners' preferences, and learners' positive evaluations of teachers. Additional variables include teaching stages and language activities in which EF/SL teachers' gestures are found. In this study, the focus is exclusively on the second area above, i.e., EF/SL teachers' use of gestures, when it occurs during the language elicitation stage.

### **3. Research Methods**

#### **3.1. Research Questions**

In order to gain more knowledge about the intersection between gesture, language, learning, teaching, and classroom interaction, this study aims to contribute to research in gesture in EF/SL classrooms and in particular EFL teachers' gestures during the language elicitation stage. By following a conversation analytic approach, this study expects to answer the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of EFL teachers' gestures during the language elicitation stage? Unquestionably, language classroom activities rely mainly on teacher talk, which is usually one-way communication, where teachers do almost all of the talk and initiate the interaction. This is true for the language elicitation stage where teacher-talking time overwhelmingly increases. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that teachers' gestures will be pedagogical, communicative, and facilitative of learning and language learning during that stage.

2. What are the characteristics of sequential organization in which EFL teachers' gestures are located during the language elicitation stage? Like speech, nonverbal turns-at-talk occur as a sequence. Sequence organization of classroom talk should be able to provide double contexts which reveal the meanings of teachers' gestures and learners' analysis and interpretation of the teachers' gestures. This study should be able to show not only the functions of the teachers' gestures, but also their sequential location in the classroom talk.

3. Are the students sensitive to EFL teachers' gestures during the language elicitation stage? Nonverbal communication is considered successful when nonverbal codes are properly understood by the intended participants. While this is not in doubt, the decoding process cannot take place if the participants are not sensitive and observant to the speaker's nonverbal codes. That is, for the teachers' use of gesture to be successful, the learners should be sensitive to their teacher's gestures and consider them communicative tools. This study aims to display learner sensitiveness to teachers' gesture moment-by-moment during the classroom talk.

### **3.2. Participants and Setting**

Overall there are three hours of recorded classroom interactions between six Thai EFL teachers and their students, who agreed to participate in this study. In each class, there were approximately thirty EFL high school students, aged 15-16, whose language proficiency was considered intermediate and intermediate-advanced. The students have learned EFL for approximately 8-10 years, mainly with Thai teachers. Their syntactic knowledge was moderately good, as many of them could not provide a complete-sentence response. Their language perceptive skills were considered more effective than their language producing skills. These mixed-ability classes met once a week, for two hours each. The lessons being taught were about topics such as, 'Ability', (the students learned about using 'can' and 'can't' in declarative and interrogative sentences), and actional verbs.

### **3.3. Data: What is Considered to be Data**

To gain insight into EFL teachers' gestures, as Kendon (2004) suggests, researchers need to take into account speech that gestures accompany. The data used in this study consist of both gestures and speech. That is, stand-alone gestures, speech-accompanying gestures, and a spate of classroom talk in which the two are located are considered data in this study. Three types of data and the analysis thereof are demonstrated below.

Example 5: (Class 8/2014)

Tr<sup>2</sup>: I enjoy biking. (1)  
x<sup>3</sup>[pedaling hand motion]

In Example 5, the teacher says, “I enjoy biking”, while just before saying this sentence, she starts a pedaling hand motion. Because the speech comes concurrently with the gesture, this counts as one turn (as numbered on the far right). In this example, both words and gestures are the proper data. This is not to suggest that stand-alone gestures should not be analyzed. As argued above, gestures do not always have accompanying speech. To help interpret stand-alone gestures, one needs to take into account a sequence of turns (or a spate of talk) in which this type of gesture is located, and to take a stand-alone gesture as a turn.

Example 6: (Class 8/2014)

- |                    |   |     |
|--------------------|---|-----|
| Tr:                | I can speak Thai.   | (1) |
|                    | x[pointing to herself]  |     |
| Tr:                | [making a large horizontal circle in front<br>of the chest with her hand] | (2) |
| Sts <sup>4</sup> : | We  | (3) |
| Tr:                | Yes, we can...  | (4) |
|                    | x[waving the hand vertically with the palm facing up]                     |     |
| Sts:               | We can speak Thai.  | (5) |
| Tr:                | [putting her open hand behind her ear]                                    | (6) |
| Sts:               | WE can speak Thai.  | (7) |
| Tr:                | Good. We can speak Thai.  | (8) |

In Example 6, turn 1 “I can speak Thai” is accompanied by a gesture where the EFL teacher points to herself. ‘Pointing to herself’ signifies ‘I’ as the subject of the sentence. However, two turns of hers (lines 2 and 5) are not speech-accompanying gestures. An analysis of the sequence of turns 3 and 6 suggests that both turns 2 and 5 represent the EFL teacher’s communicative intent and helps us understand what both gestures mean. These stand-alone gestures are also considered valuable data. At the moment, it can be concluded that two types of gesture are suitable data for the analysis: speech-accompanying gestures and stand-alone gestures that represent the speaker’s communicative intent uncovered in a sequence of talk.

### 3.4. Data Collection

Two video cameras were put in each class; one in the middle and the other at the back of the class; both faced the EFL teachers. To familiarize the

teachers and their students with the presence of the cameras and to ensure high naturalism, the cameras were placed in the classroom about one week prior to the data collection. Although the focus was on the language elicitation stage, which was usually allocated in the first hour of each class hour, the cameras remained on until the break.

## 4. Data Presentation

In the video-recordings, the EFL teachers used fingers and hands during the elicitation stage. This section presents functions of the EFL teachers' gestures which can be considered language-related, interactional management-related, pedagogy-related, and classroom management-related.

### 4.1. Language-Related Gestures

In classrooms, as in other kinds of social interaction, teachers use gestures as part of communication. However, in the language classroom, EFL teachers use gesture to accompany and elaborate language features and word meaning in a specific way. The extract below demonstrates how the teacher gesturally introduces the meaning of actional verbs and the spelling thereof.

#### Extract 1

- Tr: Have you been to the Floating Market? (1)  
Tr: Yes? [nodding]= (2)  
Sts: =[nodding] (3)  
Tr: You probably saw that many women row the boat.  
Row the boat. (4)  
x[the action of rowing a boat]  
Tr: Yes, R-O-W they can row the boat, I can row the boat. (5)  
Tr: Now I can tell you that many people can roll their tongue. (6)  
Tr: Do you know roll, do you know what it means R-O-L-L (7)  
Tr: This is called roll (8)  
x[making a vertical circle with an index finger]  
Tr: Now you heard row' and 'roll' yes row the boat and roll the tongue. The two words do not have the same spelling, OK? (9)

Tr: Roll the tongue, there are two Ls. (10)  
 x [using the index and middle finger]

In Extract 1, the EFL teacher presents two actional verbs (i.e., ‘row’ lines 4-5, and ‘roll’ lines 6-10) that sound similar. Although the EFL teacher only uses the two words in sentences (lines 4 and 6), many students might not know what the two words mean. As a result, the meanings of the two words are gesturally explained (line 4, and line 8). Line 4 and line 8 are turns on which the teacher’s speech is accompanied by gestures. Although the two words are gesturally explained, the teacher’s gestures accompanying the words are not the same in terms of types. ‘Row’, which is an actional verb, is kinegraphically presented, while ‘roll’, which means to turn something into a ‘round shape’, is pictographically explained.

After the meanings of the two words are verbally and gesturally given, the difference in spelling of the two words is emphasized (line 9) but ‘roll’ receives the EFL teacher’s attention. The spelling of ‘roll’ is gesturally introduced (line 10). The teacher emblemizes the number two when referring to two l’s. In this extract, we can see the teacher uses iconic gesture, both kinegraphic and pictographic, to present the meaning of words, while the teacher emblemizes the number of characters when talking about a word’s spelling. The extract below shows how another EFL teacher uses gestures to present a word’s spelling.

### Extract 2

Tr: I do exercises all the time. I can do many exercises (1)  
 Tr: Do you know what I can do? (2)  
 x[raising the eyebrows and nodding the head]  
 Sts: [nodding their heads] (3)  
 Tr: I can swim...And I can do a push-up. Yes, I can do a push-up (4)  
 Tr: This is a push-up (5)  
 x[doing a gesture that simulates a push-up].  
 St: Put up (6)  
 Tr: No ‘t’ it is P-U-S-H (7)  
 x[using a finger to make P-U-S-H letter shapes in the air]  
 Sts: Push (8)

In this extract, the words ‘push up’, are introduced in class. As in Extract 1, the EFL teacher in Extract 2 kinegraphically presents the word ‘push’ (line

5). Later, the teacher uses a gesture to help the students see the difference in spelling between, 'put' and 'push' after a student thinks that the teacher says 'put' (line 6). We can see that, in line 7, the teacher first corrects that student and, to make it easier for that student to envision the spelling, uses her index finger to make P, U, S, and H letter shapes in the air.

The two extracts reveal how gestures help EFL teachers explain word meaning and spelling. They also point out that the teachers' turns designed for these purposes consist of verbal explanations which are closely accompanied by gestures. This is a language-related purpose of gesture, while functions of gesture can be pedagogical, which is elaborated below.

## 4.2. Pedagogy-Related Gestures

In addition to gestural metalanguage presented in 4.1, EFL teachers use gestures to deal with their students' language production. That is, once the EFL students respond to the teacher's prompt, the teacher then gesturally evaluates the students' responses, gives feedback, or shows their expectations for the students' language production. An EFL teacher's follow-up or evaluation turns, which are gestural, are demonstrated below.

### Extract 3

- Tr: So now if you look at Ted. Ted can swim. Phil can swim. So you can say that (1)  
 x[waving the hands up and down with the palms facing up]
- Sts: ... (2)
- Tr: Ted and... (3)  
 x[waving the hands quickly up and down with the palms facing up]
- Sts: Ted and Phil swim. (4)
- Tr: [pointing to the board] (5)
- Sts: can swim. (6)
- Tr: OK, now, say the whole sentence. (7)  
 x[waving the hands quickly up and down with the palms facing up]
- Sts: Ted and Phil can swim. (8)
- Tr: Good (9)  
 x[showing a one thumb-up gesture]



Extract 3 displays how the EFL teacher uses hand and finger movements to deal with the students' responses. Although there are several gestural phenomena identified in the above extract, only two incidents of finger movements are identified as responsive gestures. On turn 3, the teacher designs an incomplete sentence (Ted and...), expecting the students to complete it with the phrase, 'Phil can swim'. However, the students' response is Ted and Phil swim (line 4), which is grammatically correct, but it is not what the teacher expects. As a result, a subsequent response in line 5, which is a deictic gesture, is designed; the teacher points to a phrase, 'can swim' written on the board. The pointing gesture implies that the teacher evaluates the students' answer, there is a negative feedback, and the answer should be replaced with the correct one to which the teacher is pointing.

Later, the students with the teacher's gestural help give a reply that the teacher expects (line 8); they use 'can' in a sentence. This is evident when the teacher responds with an emblematic gesture (line 9). This extract shows that the EFL teacher's gestures function as an evaluative response (line 5) and as a complimentary response (line 9). Another extract below shows how an EFL teacher's gestures can be used to serve the same purpose.

#### Extract 4

- Tr: Now you see that Alex can speak French. (1)
- Tr: Over here... You can see that Beth can speak French. (2)  
x[pointing to the other side of the board]
- Tr: Now you put these two sentences together. (3)  
x[moving both index fingers closer to each other]
- Sts: Alex and Beth can speak French. (4)
- Tr: Good but what else... (5)
- Tr: Alex can speak French and... (6)
- Sts: and <sup>5</sup> Beth can speak French (7)
- Sts: Alex can speak French, and Beth can speak French (8)
- Tr: Very good. Good. Think about what we learned fifteen minutes ago. I used one word in a sentence. Remember? (9)
- Sts: ...
- Tr: Alex can speak French. (10)
- Tr: Beth can speak French... (11)  
[consecutively holding fingers to represent each word]  
[quickly waving a hand up and down with the palm]

down at a couple of talking students]  
Tr: Beth can speak French, too. Yes, Beth can speak  
French, too. (12)

The lesson from which Extract 4 comes is about combining sentences. This extract shows how the EFL teacher uses a deictic gesture to draw the students' attention to a picture and a sentence located in the other side of the blackboard (line 2). Here, the gesture is used as a transitional and attention-drawing device which moves the students to the next point and secures their attention to what is being focused on in class. The next gesture use is located on turn 3, where the teacher requests the students to combine two sentences. On turn 3, she moves her two index fingers closer together to emphasize the word 'together'.

Although the students' response is correct (line 4) and the EFL teacher acknowledges the answer, the teacher immediately asks for another sentence structure; the structure she initially expects them to make (line 5). An incomplete-sentence turn (line 6) is then designed by the teacher to prompt the students' replies. The student responses (lines 7 and 8) are expected by the teacher, while there is another sentential structure the teacher requires them to make. This is evident when turn 9 is designed to hint to the students that one word is needed. This is unsuccessful however.

On turn 11, the EFL teacher uses another strategy which is designed to prompt the students to say the fifth word in the sentence, 'Beth can speak French too'. Each finger of the right hand is consecutively and briefly held with the fingers of the left hand as the teacher says the first four words in the sentence. The pinky is held for a longer period as a prompt to get the students to do a word-search to say the last word in the sentence, 'too'. However, this gestural prompt is unsuccessful (line 12).

In this section, we observe that the EFL teacher uses a corrective gesture (Extract 3 line 5), a complimentary gesture (Extract 3 line 9), a transitional or attention-drawing gesture (Extract 4 line 2), and a hint-giving gesture (Extract 4 line 11). We also see a gesture can be used as a part of instructions (Extract 4 line 3). The next section introduces how an EFL teacher uses gestures to manage classroom interaction.

### 4.3. Interactional Management-Related Gestures

The previous section displays how an EFL teacher in this study uses gesture to deal with students' responses, or language production, located on the preceding turn. At the same time, the gestures prompt certain responses from the students in terms of content and language features, or a 'what' response. While this section also deals with the gestures EFL teachers design to handle students' responses, it focuses on 'when and how' students should provide their upcoming responses. There are two groups of teachers' gestures that serve this function: 1) the gestures that demand the students' verbal contributions, and 2) the gestures that request students to give a reply in the way the teacher needs. These two groups are demonstrated below.

#### Extract 5

- Tr: bike...I can bike...cook...I can cook...sing...I can sing  
 speak German...I can speak German...dance (1)  
 x[waving the right hand up and down]
- Sts: I can dance. (2)
- Tr: dance [putting an open hand behind her ear] (3)
- Sts: I CAN DANCE (4)
- Tr: Good. Play guitar (5)  
 x[waving a hand vertically with the palm facing up]
- Sts: I can play guitar. (6)

In Extract 5, the EFL teacher drills the students on the use of 'can' in a sentence. To form some certain responsive behavior, the teacher demonstrates how to form a sentence using the given verbs (line 1). After giving four examples, the teacher gives the word 'dance' and this time expects the students to form a sentence. After saying 'dance', the teacher uses an invitational gesture to invite the whole class to form the sentence using the word 'dance'. However, a few students chorally respond (line 2). Giving the same word (i.e., dance) and using a gesture (line 3), the teacher expects everyone in the class to respond loudly, which they do (line 4). Another use of an invitational gesture is employed again on turn 5.

In this extract, the EFL teacher uses an invitational gesture to signal the students when to respond (i.e., being the next speaker on the next turn) and how to respond (i.e., responding as a whole class and doing so loudly).

The similar purpose of an EFL teacher's gestures can be observed in the three extracts below.

Extract 6

- Tr: Yes, we can. ... (1)  
 x[waving the hand up and down with the palm facing up]  
 Sts: We can speak Thai. (2)  
 Tr: [putting an open hand behind one ear] (3)  
 Sts: WE can speak Thai. (4)  
 Tr: Good. We can speak Thai. (5)

Similar to Extract 5, Extract 6 demonstrates how the EFL teacher uses an invitational gesture to request the whole class to complete the second half of the sentence (line 1), which the students do (line 2). However, their choral response is not loud enough, resulting in the teacher putting her open hand behind her ear. As correctly interpreted by the students, another response is provided later (line 4). In addition to requesting the whole class to respond, and more loudly, the gestures of the EFL teacher are designed to allow each individual to respond. Two extracts below observe this purpose.

Extract 7

- Tr: Tell me about what you can do that is unique.  
 Unique means it is different from your classmates.  
 Your skills and abilities (1)  
 ...(30 seconds)  
 Tr: If you want to tell us about it, raise your hand, right  
 hand please. (2)  
 (many students raise their hands)  
 Tr: OK...[extending the right hand with the palm facing  
 up toward a student] (3)  
 St1: Rap dance. (4)  
 Tr: Good, wanna show us now? (5)  
 St1: [shaking his head] (6)  
 Tr: Who else wants to share with us a unique skill or ability? (7)  
 (many students raise their hands)  
 Tr: Ah...[extending the right hand with the palm facing  
 up toward another student] (8)  
 St2: I can write with two hands. (9)

In Extract 7, the EFL teacher uses her hand to invite particular students, not the whole class, to talk. This is different to Extract 6 where the teacher invites the whole class to chorally and loudly provide an answer. The next extract shows another use of gesture for a similar purpose.

Extract 8

- Tr: I have heard that you love watching basketball.  
But can you play Basketball? Who can play basketball? (1)
- Sts: (many male students raise their hands) (2)
- Tr: Tell me the name of your favorite basketball player. (3)
- Sts: (unintelligible basketball players' name) (4)  
[many male students raise their hands]
- Tr: OK [making a repetitive pushing-down motion  
with both hands in (5)  
front of the body, palms down]
- Sts: (a few students keep mentioning the basketball  
players' names) (6)  
[many male students start to put their hands down]
- Tr: [extending the right hand with the palm facing up  
toward a student] (7)
- St1: LeBron (8)

We can see in Extract 8 that, after the EFL teacher asks a question about basketball on turns 1 and 3, many male students raise their hands (lines 2 and 4), reflecting the popularity of the topic and therefore a high level of student involvement. The students' gestural response on turn 2 can be interpreted as 'yes, I can', while turn 4 suggests that they want to provide an answer or talk next.

It is evident on turn 4 that, while many students raise their hands, many other students immediately start giving the answer. Therefore, the answers they give are unintelligible, which results sequentially in the EFL teacher's use of the gesture (line 5). The teacher's gesture is designed to reduce the degree of the students' unexpected participation. Interpreting correctly the teacher's gesture, many male students put their hands down while only a few still mention the name of their favorite basketball player (line 6). After that, the teacher gesturally invites a specific student to be the next speaker (line 7).

In this section, we see how gestures can be designed by EFL teachers to regulate classroom interaction and to demand certain features

of the students' responses. The next section presents another function of EFL gestures that are similar to the one presented here; but the next section focus on gestures designed to handle, not student's response and participation, but certain classroom behaviors.

#### **4.4. Classroom Management-Related Gestures**

We have seen that EFL teachers in this study use gestures for language-, interactional management-, and pedagogy-related purposes, and that gestures can be employed to deal with EFL students' misbehavior or uncooperative behavior. Two purposes under this category can be proposed: 1) gestures are targeted to those talking in class, and 2) gestures are designed to catch students' attention. These two purposes of gestures are demonstrated below.

##### Extract 9

- Tr: Very good. Good. Think about what we learned fifteen minutes ago. I used one word in a sentence. Remember? (1)
- Sts: ...
- Tr: Alex can speak French. (2)
- Tr: Beth can speak French. (3)  
[consecutively holding fingers to represent each word]  
[quickly waving a hand up and down with the pal  
down at a couple of talking students]
- Tr: Beth can speak French, too. Yes, Beth can speak French, too. (4)

A close analysis reveals that not only does the EFL teacher use her fingers and hands to assist the students in searching for a word (line 3), but also, after that, uses one hand to let the talking students know they are being watched. In everyday encounters, eye-gaze between the speaker and audience are periodically maintained and secured throughout the talk. Once speakers notice that their eye-gaze is not secured, several strategies can be employed. In Extract 9, the eye-gaze of the talking students is directed to each other, not the EFL teacher, who is the main speaker in class. As a result, the EFL teacher uses a waving hand to gain their eye-gaze. The gaze is secured before the teacher continues her talk on turn 4. Another use of a gesture for classroom-management purposes can be observed below.

Extract 10

- Tr: Now you can see from here that we don't say 'she cans',  
but she can. Yes, she can, I can, he can, they can,  
Joe can. Joe and Beth can. (1)  
x[tapping an index finger twice on a student's desk]
- Tr: They...can. She...can. Steve ...can. The student...can.  
She... (2)
- Sts: Can. (3)
- Tr: The students... (4)
- Sts: can. (5)
- Tr: Good. (6)

Normally, when teachers speak in class, their eye-contact with their students is constantly evaluated by the teachers because it indicates the degree of students' attention. In Extract 10, there is one student sitting on the front seat, who does not pay attention to the EFL teacher's explanation about an auxiliary verb 'can' (line 1). In other words, the student is not gazing at the teacher. In order to regain the student's gaze, the teacher taps her desktop. The action of tapping the desktop, considered a beating, rhythmic gesture, makes the student gaze at the teacher. The continuation of the teacher talk (turn 2) suggests that the eye-gaze is then properly secured.

## 5. Data Discussion

This study explores EFL teachers' gestures during the elicitation stage, or when EFL teachers introduce and elicit new words and language structures from students. The extracts presented above suggest that the teachers in this study use gestures in their classes, and for different purposes. There are four purposes of teachers' gestures identified and demonstrated in the sections above. It should be pointed out that the four different purposes of teachers' gestures have different types of organization: the subsection below elaborates this claim.

### 5.1. Sequential Organization of EFL Teachers' Gestures

The sections above reveal the purposes of EFL teachers' gestures, and whether or not the purpose is language-related, or pedagogy-related. This

section tries to place the EFL teachers' gestures into the sequence of talk in which they are found in order to give a clearer picture of gestures and their sequential relationship with preceding and following turns-at-talk.

There are three types of talk sequence in which EFL teachers' gestures are located. First, they are identified when they accompany the teachers' talk. This type of gesture is then facilitative of speech; where the gestures elaborate what the teachers believe is new for the students or what might be easier for the students to understand if accompanied by gestures. Examples can be found in Extract 1 lines 4, 8, and 10; Extract 2 lines 5 and 7; and Extract 4 line 3. The relationships between speech and gesture are found to be at a single-turn level by the same speaker, which is displayed below.

Tr: utterance (1)  
x[language-related gestures]  
Diagram 1: Speech-gesture relationship at a turn level

It can be concluded in Diagram 1 that this type of gesture is not as truly social or interactive as compared to other types of gesture below (as it does not really involve other participants) and is therefore not sequential.

The second type of EFL teachers' gesture results sequentially in students' contributions to the ongoing talk. That is, once the teachers produce the gestures in class, then the next turns belong to the students. This second type of gesture might be a turn-allocation strategy, which can be either verbal, gestural, or a combination of both; which Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974: 704) call a current-speaker-select-next. This type of gesture can be found in Extract 3 lines 1, 3, 5, and 7; Extract 5 line 1; Extract 6, line 1; Extract 7 lines 3 and 8; and Extract 8 line 7. A diagram below outlines this second type of gesture.

Tr: Utterance<sup>6</sup> (1)  
x[gestural turn-allocating technique]  
Sts: Utterance (2)  
Diagram 2: Speech-gesture relationship two turns by two speakers

The third type of EFL teachers' gesture results sequentially from the students' behavior. In other words, the teachers' gestures are conditionally designed to respond to the students' verbal or behavioral action. This is outlined below.



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St(s): Utterance/Behaviors	(1)
Tr: [corresponding gesture]	(2)

Diagram 3: Causal relationship between two turns by two speakers

Diagram 3 shows how one turn by the EFL students leads to the immediate next turn by the EFL teacher. This third type is well represented by what Sacks and Schegloff (1973) characterize as a first pair part and second pair part relationship. It should be noted that this type of gesture is not a sequential part of the main talk, but is periodically inserted into the main talk. The second speaker who is usually the EFL teacher does not have to put the ongoing talk on hold in order to design this second pair part. Examples can be found in Extract 4 line 11 (or Extract 9 line 3), and Extract 10 line 2.

## 5.2. EFL Students' Sensitiveness to Teachers' Use of Gestures

The statement that gestures communicate the speakers' communicative intentions emphasizes the fact that gestures are a speaker-phenomenon. However, it is the recipients who have to interpret gestures in order to understand the speaker's intent and therefore determine the success of the speaker's use of gesture. In other words, the recipients play an important role in completing the use of the gestures, without whom there is no use in designing the gestures. Of course, the recipients' interpretation of the speakers' intentions conveyed by the gestures is always subject to misunderstandings and misinterpretation. This study does not explore the success of gestural interpretation between participants, but how gestures are used and then observed by other participants.

How EFL teachers use gestures is presented under Section 4. This section instead aims to discuss how the teachers' gestures are observed by the students or, in other words, whether the students are sensitive to the teachers' use of gestures. For the teachers' gestures to be properly communicative, they have to be observed and interpreted by the students. For by-product researchers, EFL learners' sensitiveness to the teachers' gestures is impractical to observe and measure because some students may simply notice and not respond at all to the teachers' gestures.

However, students' sensitiveness to EFL teachers' gestures can theoretically be more probable to observe when the students both notice

and respond to the teacher's stand-alone gestures. Some evidence that convincingly shows that students are sensitive to their EFL teachers' gestures includes sequences in Extract 3 lines 5-6; Extract 4 lines 11-12 second gesture; Extract 5 lines 3-4; Extract 6 lines 3-4; Extract 7 lines 3-4 and 8-9; Extract 8 lines 5-6 and lines 7-8; Extract 9 lines 3-4 second gesture; and Extract 10 line 1-2. As evident in the sequences from these extracts, students are constantly sensitive to their teachers' gestures and take them as communicative tools.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study explores how EFL teachers use gestures during the language elicitation and introduction stage, which typically occurs at the beginning of the class. As demonstrated above, teachers' gestures serve four main purposes; 1) a language-related purpose (i.e., accompanying language features being explained); 2) a pedagogical purpose (i.e., involving students, evaluating students' responses, and showing the EFL teachers' expectations for students' language production); 3) an interactional purpose (i.e., regulating interaction), and; 4) a management purpose (i.e., managing students' behavior). The last purpose is not often mentioned in research on nonverbal classroom communication due to the fact that research studies focus on teachers' classroom management skills (which in many cases are neither gestural nor spontaneous).

In addition, functions of EFL teachers' gestures sequentially correspond to the students' responses placed on the immediately preceding turns. This is demonstrated in 5.1, especially the third, interactional, type of teachers' gesture which is designed spontaneously to deal with the students' behaviors and to catch their attention. This finding suggests that the EFL teachers are sensitive to what is going on in class and constantly evaluate the students' participation and attentiveness. One question this study and many others cannot answer is why EFL teachers choose a verbal mode over a nonverbal mode and vice versa for the management purpose in certain contexts. Two characteristics of teachers this study finds are 'withitness' and multitasking skills; meaning that a teacher can tap, teach and evaluate the attentiveness of their students at the same time. These characteristics involve several levels of interpersonal communication.

Students not only listen to what the EFL teacher says but also interpret and later react, both verbally and nonverbally, to the teacher's gestures. This finding is elaborated in detail under 5.2. Not only the EFL teachers but also the students are sensitive to each other, to the visual stimuli each creates, and to the classroom dynamics. This emphasizes that there are constant interaction and communication, which are not always speech and words, between participants in the classroom. As a result, studies on input and second language interaction have to include other-than-speech in their analysis.

This study, following a CA perspective, reveals how EFL teachers use gestures during the elicitation stage in their classroom. CA provides a research tool that allows researchers to capture the features and functions of gesture produced, delivered, and understood moment-by-moment by participants during the social interaction. The findings suggest that, with the implementation of a CA method, teachers are observed to make L2 features more comprehensible, seek mutual understanding from the students, and engage the students in the classroom talk. These purposes all contribute to L2 learning, use, and, positively, acquisition. Further studies could investigate the connection between types of words and teachers' gestures, between eye-gaze and teachers' gestures, and between vocal properties and teachers' gestures in order to more clearly explore the relationship between language, teaching, and gestural codes.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> A square bracket in a dialog describes gestures.
- <sup>2</sup> Tr stands for the EFL teachers that participated in this study.
- <sup>3</sup> x is added underneath the place in the sentence where the gesture begins.

<sup>4</sup> Sts stands for students in this study.

<sup>5</sup> This symbol indicates the two turns overlap.

<sup>6</sup> In this diagram, this verbal turn of the EFL teacher is optional.

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