there appear to be very strong arguments in favour of concentrating in the classroom on stress, especially where the difficulties of intonation strike the teacher as being particularly intractable.

_ Gestures in the Language Classroom _

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DIALECT COMEDIANS and experienced second-language teachers have always known the importance of gesture in communication. A language teacher who teaches Italian with his hands folded on the desk is as difficult to imagine as a Danny Kaye imitating a Frenchman without pursing his lips and lifting one eyebrow. In recent years, perhaps as a result of research in kinesics 1 and of the increasing use of 'natural' contexts (such as dialogues, for example) in language teaching, more and more teachers want to introduce the gestures of the speakers of the target language along with the linguistic patterns being taught. Such teachers feel that it is more interesting for the student, and thus more effective pedagogically for the teacher, when the student who is learning a how-do-you-do greeting can be shown the appropriate handshake, handclasp, armclasp, etc., that usually accompanies such a greeting in the culture of the language being taught.

Yet systematic descriptions of gestural habits are rare; contrastive studies of two gesture-systems are difficult to find and only recently have some textbooks (notably in Spanish) begun to include bits of such information. At present, for teachers of English as a second language, the best source of gestural information is the language teacher who is able to observe behaviour in the two cultures, that of the native language and that of the target language. In this respect the overseas language-teacher who is a native of the target culture is often in an advantageous position; very likely he is already an observer of the customs of his students, and if not, it takes little effort to become such an observer. Once he has begun to note gestural habits his major

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1The study of gestures, body movements, stances, etc., is called kinesics. _Approaches to Semiotics_, edited by Sebeok, Hayes, and Bateson, and published by Mouton, The Hague, in 1964, gives summaries and discussions of work in this field and provides a bibliography.
task becomes one of comparison, as he contrasts local habits with his own or those of his compatriots, if any are available. The teacher who is not a native speaker of the language he teaches must rely on his observation of native speakers, in person, if available, or through the media of the stage or film.\(^1\)

The kinds of gestures which are easiest to observe and which are frequently the easiest to incorporate into language teaching we might call the social gestures. These are the gestures used commonly in fixed social contexts such as greetings, leave-takings, getting attention, commands, etc. Although there is often variation in the individual performance of such gestures, there is also a significant configuration, an essential characteristic of the movement, which most 'performers' within a culture will use. Thus an Englishman or an American who is indicating that he wants a subordinate (a child or a student in class, for example) in his culture to move in a particular direction will likely extend his index finger to indicate the direction. He may extend his arm fully or not; he may extend one or more other fingers as well; he may move his hand back and forth, etc., but the essential feature of the gesture remains the extended index finger. Similarly a common American and English gesture for warning someone (a mother saying 'Don't do it!' to her child, for example) consists of extending the index finger from a fist, and then moving the hand back and forth with the index finger pointing towards the person being warned. The arm may be raised to different heights, the motion back and forth may be slow or fast, etc., but the essential elements of the gesture are the raised index finger and the movement toward and away from the person being addressed. (We should note that in a number of other cultures it is common for such a warning gesture to be made with the index finger moving from side to side, not pointing at the person being warned; in fact, the pointing of a finger at someone may be considered an extreme insult.)

Among the kinds of social gestures most significant for second-language teachers are those which are the same in form but different in meaning in the two cultures. These might be called the ambiguous gestures. For example, a Colombian who wants someone to approach him often signals with a hand movement in which all the fingers of one hand, cupped, point downward as they move rapidly back and forth. Speakers of English have a similar gesture (though the hand may not be cupped and the fingers may be held more loosely) but for them the gesture means

\(^1\)Although film gestures are frequently exaggerated, and occasionally idiosyncratic, they remain one of the best sources of gesture. 'Live' television, of course, is even better.
goodbye or go away, quite the opposite of the Colombian gesture. Again, in Colombia, a speaker of English would have to know that when he indicates height he must choose between different gestures depending on whether he is referring to a human being or an animal. If he keeps the palm of his hand parallel to the floor, as he would in his own culture when indicating the height of a child, for example, he will very likely be greeted by laughter; in Colombia this gesture is reserved for the description of animals. In order to describe human beings he should keep the palm of his hand at right angles to the floor. Substitutions of one gesture for the other often create not only humorous but embarrassing moments. In both of the examples above, speakers from two different cultures have the same gesture, physically, but its meaning differs sharply. The inclusion of such information in the language classroom is surely as important as work on linguistic patterns, if not more so.

A second category of social gestures which the language teacher should consider includes those which are common in the culture of the target language but unfamiliar in the native culture. For example, students of English should be aware that in a number of English-speaking cultures there is a gesture for indicating close friendship, in which the middle finger of one hand is crossed over the index finger of the same hand as the hand is held up. In some cultures this gesture is not used at all, while in others it has quite a different meaning. Similarly the American gesture for hitch-hiking, for stopping a car, in which the thumb is extended from a fist is not common in other cultures; South Americans, for example, usually extend their arms and all the fingers of one hand to stop a car. And in some countries the American gesture would be ambiguous, as there a waving, extended thumb means pass on, do not stop. The gesture for all is well, or O.K., a circle formed by the thumb and index finger of one raised hand, is common in English-speaking countries; it exists elsewhere, of course, but in some places it has a different meaning, while in others it is unknown. The method of attracting the attention of waiters and waitresses in the U.S. and Great Britain often needs comment. In contrast to the table-tapping, glass-knocking, hissing, etc., that can be observed in other cultures, the unfortunate patrons of a restaurant in the U.S., for example, must rely on head and eye movements. Any sharp or hissing noises may result in an insulted waiter and the likelihood of a long wait for service.

A specific comparison of Colombian and American gestures may be found in *Colombian and North American Gestures*, E. J. Cervenka and R. L. Saltz, published by the Centro Colombo-Americano, Bogota, Colombia (1962).
In addition, the language-teacher should consider those social gestures of the native culture which are not used or which have different meanings in the culture of the target language. The speaker of Spanish from South America must know that his gesture for indicating that a place is crowded, in which one or both hands form a teardrop shape, is not used in most English-speaking countries and that in some it has a crude connotation. Similarly, those who customarily purse their lips and then move them to the right or left to call attention to a person or thing in the direction indicated must know that this gesture, unknown in most English-speaking countries, might be interpreted as a nervous tic or as a vulgar invitation to a kiss. The Japanese student who touches his nose with his finger to indicate that he is not really sure that the teacher has called on him to recite should be informed that in the U.S., for example, such a gesture might well astonish his teacher.

There are many gestures and movements which it might not be useful to describe. Often the gestures which indicate temporary attitudes, such as anger and joy, exhibit such variation from individual to individual within a culture that careful description might not turn out to be pedagogically useful. However, even with such gestures there are often general statements which would be worth making: whether body position and stance are particularly significant in indicating attitude, as they are in southeast Asia, for example; how significant hand and arm waving might be when they accompany emotional utterances, etc.

By observing the kinds of gestures mentioned above, language-teachers can gather a great deal of useful information. Some may ask, however, how such information can be integrated into classroom activities.

The teacher's discretion, of course, must dictate the choice of material: the culture, the level of the class, the age of the students, the social background of the students, etc., all will be important factors. But once the teacher has decided what to include, he might consider two methods of presenting the material. First, the most important kinds of gestures (that is, the ambiguous ones and the ones used in everyday activities) should be introduced in the contexts in which they normally occur. The teacher should provide the model, of course, and the students can be expected to use the appropriate gesture at the right spot in the dialogue. Gestures of this type, particularly those used for greetings, leave-takings, indicating directions, getting attention, etc., should be introduced in elementary classes, where it is likely that vocabulary and dialogues relevant to such situations are being presented. In addition, such habits as stance and speaker distance might profitably be demonstrated at this level. For example, when two
Russian or two South American or two Italian speakers are conversing they will stand much closer together than would two Americans or Englishmen. The speaker of Spanish who knows this will understand if the Englishman he is speaking to seems to be backing away from him across the room.

In addition to the gestures which might be taught as part of the dialogue, we have those gestures which the students need to recognize but which they need not attempt to produce. Such gestures may be described and discussed. In this category we might find the gestures that accompany emotional expressions and the gestures that refer to the character or characteristics of others (gestures indicating stinginess, thievery, garrulity, for example). Because of the difficulty in knowing when to use them, students should not be expected to produce them; however, the introduction of such gestures provides excellent stimuli for classroom discussion. These discussions lead to useful comparisons between cultures and form a good bridge to work on connotation. Discussion of such gestures serves best, therefore, in an advanced class.

Since we all use gesture quite unconsciously, it often comes as an interesting surprise when others describe our habits to us. Similarly, the introduction of gesture into the language class always brings forth humour and lively discussion from the students. The enthusiasm and interest thus generated by dramatization and discussion often carries over into the learning of the linguistic patterns of the target language. Thus not only does the use of gesture provide the students with information valuable in itself, but it insures an initial stimulus which the language-teacher should be able to take advantage of.

News item. Congratulations and thanks to Dr J. Svartvik, of Göteborg, Sweden, who has collected forty-five new subscribers to E.L.T. and sent in a cheque on their behalf.