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The Role of Gesture in Shaping Audience Interpretation in Kurdish TV Programs

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Abstract

This study looks at the frequent gestures used in TV programs and how people understand gestures of TV presenters in Kurdish media. It investigates if age and ethnicity influence the viewpoint of people regarding gesture interpretation. The study used different methods. First, 20 gestures were picked out and categorized using a theoretical framework. Then, 70 people from Kurdish, Arabic, and Turkmen groups, with different age groups, were selected to participate in the survey. The results showed that while there were some common understandings, the manner in which gestures were understood by people changed depending on their socio-cultural origins. The study revealed that gestures play a highly significant role in communication platforms. It also

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highlights that understanding different cultures is key to communicating effectively with diverse audiences

Key words: Gesture, Kurdish media, Interpretation, Audience

دور الإيماءات في تشكيل تفسير الجمهور في البرامج التلفزيونية الكردية

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المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة الإيماءات المتكررة المستخدمة في البرامج التلفزيونية، وتبحث في كيفية فهم الجمهور لإيماءات مقدمي البرامج في الإعلام الكردي وتتقصى الدراسة أثر متغيري العمر والانتماء العرقي على وجهات نظر المشاركين في تفسير الإيماءات. اتبعت الدراسة منهجية متعددة الأساليب؛ حيث تم أولاً اختيار 20 إيماءة وتصنيفها بناءً على إطار نظري محدد. بعد ذلك، تم اختيار عينة قوامها 70 فرداً من خلفيات كردية وعربية وتركمانية، ومن فئات عمرية متنوعة، للمشاركة في مسح استقصائي. أظهرت النتائج وجود تفاهات مشتركة لبعض الإيماءات، إلا أن طريقة تفسيرها تباينت بشكل ملحوظ اعتماداً على الأصول الاجتماعية والثقافية للمشاركين. وكشفت الدراسة أن للإيماءات دوراً بالغ الأهمية في منصات التواصل. كما تؤكد على أن الفهم متعدد الثقافات يعد عاملاً أساسياً للتواصل الفعال مع الجماهير المتنوعة

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإيماءة، الإعلام الكردي، التفسير، الجمهور

1. Introduction

Media commonly employs visual elements to convey meaning, effect, and cultural aspects, rather than just words. The non-verbal signals, such as hand gestures, shape how people receive the story, and how they feel about the people in it. Typically, hand gestures represent feelings, provide support for conveyed words, or represent cultural elements that might not be articulated.

Ekman and Friesen (1969) defined gestures as an aspect of a broader set of non-verbal behaviors which includes things that illustrate feelings, regulate discussions, and can even substitute for speaking. Gestures carry considerable meaning in Kurdish television programming because pictorial storytelling through visual images is allied to social norms and cultural identity. Gestures are meaningful in cultural ways that resonate with local viewers and mobilize feelings. Hall (1976) emphasized that cultures that operate similarly to the Middle East embed communication into unspoken signals therefore, become central to people's interpretations.

This research considers the way viewers from different backgrounds interpret unspoken signals through identifying hand gestures employed by presenters in Kurdish television programming. This study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the most frequent gestures used by presenters in Kurdish debatable programs?
2. How do audiences from different demographic groups interpret these frequent gestures in Kurdish television programs?
3. To what extent do demographic factors such as age and ethnicity influence the interpretation of gestures in Kurdish television programs?

2. Gesture and Interpretation

A gesture is a type of non-verbal communication that involves visible bodily actions. Gestures consist of movements of the hands, facial expressions and postures that people use to convey their thoughts or feelings. Gestures are closely linked to speech, when a person talks they will often facilitate their speech with gestures, thus they are a vital part of human communication. Gestures are particularly significant because they contribute to meaning in addition to spoken language (McNeill, 1992).

Interpretation is seen as a complex cognitive activity. An interpreter is not merely required to simply understand spoken or written language, but also engage in deductive reasoning, critically evaluate meaning and communicate that meaning to others. Pöchhacker (2004) defines interpretation as the process of transforming a message meant in one form into another, taking into consideration linguistic and contextual aspects.

What people interpret in terms of gestures in media communication is influenced by many factors, such as culture, context and personal experiences. Ekman & Friesen (1969) argue that non-verbal behaviors, such as gestures, facial expressions and body posture, carry culturally specific meanings that are not universally shared. This is especially important in multilingual and multi-ethnic societies, like Kurdistan, where viewers from different ethnic origins (Kurds, Arabs, and Turkmen) may see a gesture made by a presenter on a Kurdish program in a different way. Hall (1976) additionally discusses the way cultural context affects nonverbal communication and how shared cultural codes provide meaning to things.

When it comes to televised discussions, nonverbal communication is very important for how the viewer understands what is being said. McNeill (1992) says that gestures are not just items that go alongside speech, they are also part of how individuals think and make sense of things. Nonverbal cues including hand motions, head nods, and also paralinguistic elements like tone and pitch can support or contradict what is said. Bull (2002) supports this by showing that by carefully investigating gestures that can demonstrate what someone means to say without using words.

Personal factors including mood, previous experiences, and specific cognitive frames also affect how people interpret things (Patton, 2002; Bryman, 2016). It is especially important for Kurdish TV viewers because age and ethnicity can lead the same gesture to have different emotional and cognitive responses. Abdulaziz (2022) explored nonverbal clues in Kurdish social contexts and how they are connected with respect and politeness. The cultural norms also have a big effect on the way that gestures are interpreted.

Understanding these nuances is important for analyzing how gestures influence the interpretations of audiences in Kurdish TV programs.

3. Role of Gestures in Communication Theories:

In 1969, Ekman and Friesen developed an internationally recognized taxonomy of nonverbal behavior containing five primary categories: emblems, illustrators, affect displays, regulators, and adaptors. Their research emphasized the role that kinesics plays in controlling social behaviors and communicating cultural values, with particular emphasis on the social and affective functions of the nonverbal clues.

In a complementary framework, human communication relies strongly on gestures that are essential for expressing emotion, meaning, and cultural context. According to “gesture-speech unity,” which David McNeill proposed in 1992, speech and gestures come from a single cognitive process, and the two theories work together to communicate meaning. He identified four main types of gestures and defined a role for them based on communication: iconic, deictic, metaphoric and beat gestures. This perspective focuses on the significance of gestures.

4. Previous Studies

Bull (2002) investigated how people understand nonverbal communication, such as gestures, in political interviews and conversations in public. He watched a lot of videos of politicians during TV interviews and debates and wrote down what they said and did. He examined the way people interpret movements like nodding their heads, gesturing with their hands and making facial expressions. People frequently rely on these gestures to indicate they are telling the truth, they are confident, they are uncertain of something or

that they are trying to avoid something.” Bull’s research had revealed the reason a minor nonverbal cue can have major impacts regarding how an audience responds to and understands a message. This is why they’re so crucial in terms of media communication. This research shows how important it is to listen to and understand bodily gestures in order to change anyone’s mind and trust those who lead media.

A study by Koutsombogera and colleagues (2011) explored how such non-verbal cues as posture, gesture and facial expressions are employed to regulate and manage turn-taking in political TV interviews in Greece and Iceland. In their systematic multimodal video annotation of institutional interviews peoples from Iceland are took turns speaking used posture and facial expression to show when it was their turn to talk, whereas people from Greece used gestures to indicate that someone's turn to speak. This exemplifies how nonverbal communication shifts across cultures as people talk on TV.

Hussein and Mahmood (2020) investigated the categories and communication functions of nonverbal cues used by refugees within the confinement of camps in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq. Their study intended to look at how refugees communicate through gestures, facial expression, eye-contact and posture when verbal language is not possible or is limited. Drawing upon sociopragmatic framework, they collected data through observation and interviews with refugees from various ethnic/literacy groups. The nonverbal behaviors were categorized along the dimensions of communicative intention and interactional significance by the researchers. According to the results body movements, and other nonverbal cues supported the expression conveying emotions such as fear, irritation, and hope, as well as in facilitating interactions, demonstrating politeness, and overcoming linguistic limitations. The study highlighted the importance of non-verbal communication, as a vital coping strategy for displaced individuals attempting to negotiate new social and linguistic domains (Hussein and Mahmood 2020).

5. Kurdish TV programs

Kurdish TV programs have become an effective tool for discourse, public education, and cultural expression. They are crucial for maintaining identity, language, inheritance, and education in the Kurdistan region. Rudaw is a network providing various programs that encompass social, political, and news topics. These programmers attract audiences all over the Kurdistan Region. Legal Ranj and Daroon differ from the rest of the programs as they tend to focus on social and legal issues. Legal Ranj increases awareness among people of their rights and procedures through professional discussions and real-life case studies; thereby, developing social action and awareness. On the other hand, Daroon encourages debate and thought among Kurdistan community that makes people talk and discuss with experts about the cultural norms, societal challenges, and personal stories; thus, stirring conversations and contemplations. These programs work together to improve social progress and interpersonal understanding.

6. Methodology

The study used mixed-method, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods which aim to examine the frequent gestures used by presenters on Kurdish talk shows and its interpretation by the audience. There are two stages to ensure both close observation and broad audience perspective. In the first step, the qualitative data was collected by observation of two Kurdish debate shows.

In this study, unstructured observation is used as a way to gather qualitative data. This method allows the researchers to capture behaviors and activities in a relaxed and informal way, without sticking to a strict framework or checklist. It is especially useful for exploratory research that seeks to understand social processes in their natural environments (Kumar, 2011). The researchers performed direct observation to record natural behaviors and events which happened without interference; this approach works best for studying nonverbal communication according to Angrosino (2007). The shows are chosen according to their popularity appeal and their significance to Kurdish-speaking audiences. Social media and channel data show that these programs are watched by many people, which suggests their popularity and importance for Kurdish viewers. During this phase, the main objective is to study the nonverbal communication of presenters through their gesture types. A structured coding system created for categorizing observed gestures that included hand movements. The researchers systematically recorded these gestures in order to detect particular patterns as well as meaningful expressive conduct.

The second phase focuses on collecting quantitative data. The researchers used the frequent gestures that are detected in the first phase, then they created a structured questionnaire based on them (see appendix A). The survey is designed to find out how the audience interprets these gestures. After that, the questionnaire is distributed to a varied demographic groups of viewers such as age and ethnic background, to see how these factors might affect the interpretation of gestures.

To ensure the validity of the research tools, two English Department teachers evaluated the gesture coding framework and questionnaire to verify their clarity, cultural appropriateness, and relevance, thus establishing face validity. A bilingual expert carefully translated the original English questionnaire into Kurdish, as the participants primarily spoke Kurdish. To ensure translational validity, a back-translation was performed by a person who was familiar with both languages, and any discrepancies were addressed to ensure that the Kurdish version accurately reflected the original meaning. The Kurdish questionnaire then underwent a pilot test with a small group of target audience participants before full distribution to assess reliability. Feedback from the pilot led to essential modifications that improved clarity and consistency. The data collection process began only after these final adjustments were made.

To ensure reliability, inter-rater reliability was assessed. Both researchers rated 10 survey responses, to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative interpretations using a shared coding framework then assigned these codes independently and it was found that out of 10 responses 8 received the same code, resulting in %80 agreement code. This supports the consistency and trustworthiness of the qualitative coding process.

For data analysis, the qualitative data obtained from gesture coding was analyzed through content analysis to determine the most common gestures used in media presentations. The statistical analysis of the quantitative survey data will examine correlations between audience demographic features and their responses to gestures. The integration of these research methods provides an in-depth analysis of Kurdish media nonverbal communication through the connection of objective frequent gestures and audience interpretation data from various demographic groups

6.1. Participants:

Purposive sampling is used in this study that serves as the primary selection method. The research analysis accepts only responses which match the fundamental demographic criteria of ethnicity along with age although the questionnaire distributed to many audiences. The research objective to understand sociocultural influences on Kurdish media gesture interpretation requires those characteristics to categorize the findings. The research sample does not reflect the actual population of Erbil because statistical representation was not the main goal. The researchers selected participants from Kurdish, Arabic and Turkmen ethnics and different age groups to study how different groups interpret gestures differently. This approach functions like criterion sampling which is a non-probability sampling method that selects information-rich cases for detailed analysis (Patton, 2002). Participants were categorized by both age and ethnicity, as shown in **Table 1** and **Table 2**, to explore generational and cultural differences in gesture interpretation.

Table 1: Distribution of Participants by Age Group

Age Group	Description	No.of Participants
18-35	Young participants	43
35 + (above)	Older Participants	27
Total		70

This classification follows demographic groupings used in media and communication research (Pew Research Center, 2020; Chung & Kim, 2015; Arnett, 2000).

Table 2: Participants by Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	No, of Participants
Kurdish	36
Arabic	20
Turkmen	14
Total	70

6.2. Ethical Consideration:

Ethical considerations in research are all about upholding the dignity, rights, and safety of participants. This includes key principles like informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and making sure no one comes to harm. In this study, participants chose to take part after being fully informed about the research's purpose. They weren't required to share their names on the questionnaire, but they had the option to do so if they wished. To maintain privacy and treat everyone with respect during the research, all responses were kept anonymous and used strictly for academic purposes, in line with ethical guidelines as outlined by Bryman in 2016.

7. Results and Findings: The Results are presented based on the research questions of the study:

7.1. Qualitative Analysis of Gestures in Kurdish Media:

In the observation phase, eight Kurdish talk shows were observed, revealing 20 different gestures that were commonly used. Ekman and Friesen (1969) categorize these movements as different emblems, and McNeill (1992) classifies them into various forms of iconic, deictic, and beat gestures. This provides significant insight into how they function within the media. This identification and categorization immediately tackled the first research question regarding the most frequently used gestures by presenters in Kurdish discussion shows.

7.1.1. Emblems (Ekman & Friesen, 1969)

Emblems are culturally specific gestures with direct verbal equivalents and even without words, they are easy to understand. The following gestures from the observing phase are classified as emblems:

Air Quotes: These are used to show that something is not serious, sarcastic, or ironic.

The peace sign: kindness or a hello.

Thumbs up: agree or approve.

A clenched fist : indicates determination, togetherness, or resistance.

Hand on Heart: Shows honesty or respect.

Stop Gesture: Gets someone's attention or stops something from happening.

Finger to lips: requests for silence.

Unity Gesture: Shows that you agree or support something.

7.1.2. Deictic Gestures (McNeill, 1992)

The main use of deictic gestures is to point to something or someone in the actual world or in speech to get people's attention or show where they are. These gestures help speakers in Kurdish media presentations get people's attention, stress certain ideas, or ask participants or viewers to do something.

Raised Finger: This is a common way to make a point or bring up an important idea.

Pointing: This draws attention on the person, thing, or idea being talked about, making abstract communication more concrete.

Raised hand: When people are talking to each other, they commonly use it to ask for speaking time, or gain someone's attention.

7.1.3. Iconic Gestures (McNeill, 1992)

Iconic gesture illustrates the shape, size, or movement of an item or concept. They are intimately connected to the speech content, as they enhance clarity and vividness by illustrating the concept.

Finger to Chin: This gesture indicates that an individual is thinking or considering on a matter.

Pinched fingers: indicate being precise or the act of grasping a tiny object.

Putting both hands together (palm to palm): signifies admission, prayer, or reverence.

Placing a pen on the chin: signifies that an individual is contemplating or reflecting.

Steepling: Demonstrates confidence or authority with a unique hand formation.

Crossed arms: This gesture typically signifies defensiveness, resistance, or self-protection.

7.1.4. Beat Gestures (McNeill, 1992)

Beat gestures are simple, repetitive, rhythmic hand movements performed in synchrony with the flow and rhythm of speech. They don't have meaning, but they help to generate points, organize information and keep the attention of the listener when someone speaks.

Finger Snap: Used to capture people's attention on important parts of a speech in a rhythmic style.

Tapping the table: indicates the speed of speech or nervousness.

Clapping: may indicate approval or stress rhythm in specific situations.

7.2. Quantitative Analysis of Audience Responses by Demographic Groups

The following section contains a quantitative analysis that focuses on how participants from different ethnicities interpret 20 gestures that are commonly appeared in Kurdish TV programs and used most frequently by presenters. The research shows that demographic variables strongly affected gesture interpretation based on its second research question. It also investigates the influence of age group and ethnicity as two main demographic variables.

7.2.1. Quantitative Analysis by Age Group:

The analysis evaluate how audiences of Kurdish TV programs understood 20 gestures based on feedback and responses of two age groups including Young participants (18–35 years) and Older participants (35 years and above).

7.2.2. Emblematic Gestures

- **Air Quotes:** Widely understood by the younger participants as signaling **sarcasm or irony**, while the Older participants interprets it more literally as quotation marks.
- **Peace Sign:** Both groups generally view it as a **symbol of goodwill**, but a group of Older participants sometimes associates it with **historical or political meanings**.
- **Thumbs Up:** Consistently interpreted across age groups as **approval or agreement**.
- **Clenched Fist:** Older participants associated with a **symbol of resistance or solidarity**, whereas the Younger participants often associates it with **general determination**.
- **Hand on Heart:** Younger viewers interpreted this gesture as **sincerity or respect**, while older participants connected to **emotional pride**.
- **Stop Gesture:** Recognized by both groups as a command for **attention or cessation**, but the Older participants views it as more **authoritative**.
- **Finger to Lips:** Both groups understood it as a call for **silence**, but the Younger participants adds meanings related to **secrecy**.
- **Unity Gesture:** Younger participants linked unity gesture to **solidarity**, while the Older participants associated more simply as **agreement**.

7.2.3. Deictic Gestures

- **Raised Finger:** Older viewers associated this with **authority or insistence**; Younger viewers interpreted as **emphasis**.
- **Pointing:** Generally neutral, but the Older participants sometimes perceived as **rude or confrontational**.
- **Raised Hand:** Younger participants saw it as **participation or agreement**; Older participants linked it to **formal signaling**.

7.2.4. Iconic Gestures

- **Finger to Chin:** Associated with **thinking** in both groups.
- **Pinched Fingers:** The majority of both age groups interpreted it as a **request for more time**.
- **Palm to Palm:** Older viewers linked to **religious respect**; younger groups had broader interpretations like **signaling agreement** or **indicating concentration**.
- **Pen on Chin:** Generally **contemplative**, but younger viewers emphasized on **intellectual reflection**.
- **Steeping:** This gesture was most commonly interpreted as **expressing confidence** or **intellectual thought** by both age groups.
- **Crossed Arms:** Older participants saw it as **defensive**, younger viewers as **relaxed**.

7.2.5. Beat Gestures

- **Finger Snap:** Younger participants saw it as **rhythmic emphasis**; Older participants associated it with **impatience**.
- **Tapping the Table:** Younger viewers interpreted the gesture as **speech rhythm**; older participants as **nervousness**.
- **Clapping:** This gesture was most commonly interpreted by both age groups as **expressing approval** or **appreciation**.

7.3. Quantitative Analysis by Ethnicity

This section shows the interpretation of audiences from different ethnicities like (Kurdish, Arabic, and Turkmen) without considering their age.

7.3.1. Emblematic Gestures

- **Air Quotes:** This gesture was interpreted by the majority of Kurdish and Arabic participants as indicating **sarcasm** or something not to be taken literally, whereas Turkmen participants showed more literal interpretation, more associated the gesture with **quoting** or **air-related actions**.
- **Peace Sign:** Commonly a **goodwill** symbol for Kurds, Arabs but Turkmen also associated it with **peace accords**.
- **Thumbs Up:** Widely accepted as approval among all ethnic groups.
- **Clenched Fist:** Kurdish and Arabic groups associated with **political resistance**; Turkmen saw it as **general strength**.

- **Hand on Heart:** Kurds and Arabs saw it as **respect**; Turkmen linked it to **emotional pride**.
- **Stop Gesture:** Consistent across ethnic groups as a **command for attention**.
- **Finger to Lips:** Kurdish participants most frequently associated it with demonstrating **thoughtfulness**, and Arabic participants were evenly split between **silence** and **hesitation**, whereas Turkmen participants showed minimal association with **hesitation** and a stronger leaning toward the traditional meaning of **silence**.
- **Unity Gesture:** Strongest **solidarity** meaning among Kurds and Arabs; Turkmen saw it as **basic agreement**.

7.3.2. Deictic Gestures

- **Raised Finger:** Kurds and Turkmen interpreted it as **signifying a key point or idea** but Arabs on the other hand interpreted it as **indicating “one” or “first”**.
- **Pointing:** Pointing gesture is predominantly understood as **indicating a specific object or direction** across all ethnic groups.
- **Raised Hand:** This gesture is widely recognized across all ethnic groups as a **signal to request attention or indicate the intention to ask a question**.

7.3.3. Iconic Gestures

- **Finger to Chin:** This gesture is predominantly interpreted as an iconic sign of **thoughtfulness or deep consideration** across all ethnic groups.
- **Pinched Fingers:** This gesture is predominantly interpreted as an iconic sign meaning **“a little bit” or “small,”** by all ethnic groups.
- **Palm to Palm:** Turkmen saw it as a **prayer or request**, whereas Kurds and Arabs interpreted it as **concentration or focus**.
- **Pen on Chin:** Arabs interpreted as **an absent-minded action**, on the other hand, Kurds and Turkmen viewed as **a sign of contemplation or thoughtfulness**.
- **Steepling:** Arabs interpreted as indicating a **pointed argument**, while both Kurds and Turkmen predominantly viewed it as a sign of **confidence or intellectual thought**.
- **Crossed Arms:** The dominant interpretation across all groups was that the gesture indicated a **firm stand**.

7.3.4. Beat Gestures

- **Finger Snap:** This gesture was predominantly interpreted as a **quick acknowledgment or signal for approval** by both Arabic and Kurdish participants, while Turkmen participants mainly saw it as representing **the snapping sound**.

- **Tapping the Table:** This gesture was seen as a sign of **impatience or a need for attention**, particularly among Kurdish participants. While, the majority of Arabic and Turkmen participants associated the gesture with **requesting silence**.
- **Clapping:**
The Clapping gesture was interpreted as **expressing approval or appreciation** by Kurdish and Turkmen participants, while Arabic participants primarily viewed it as indicating a **celebration**.

8. Discussion

The quantitative research demonstrates that age along with ethnicity significantly influences how people who watch Kurdish television media interpret gestures. There are many different groups of people and cultures, but gestures almost always convey the same message to all of them. The "Thumbs Up" sign is frequently used by individuals to indicate that they are in agreement. On the other hand, there are a few distinctions that illustrate the fundamental ways in which society and culture function. The findings suggest that factors such as generational background and cultural identity influence how certain gestures such as clapping, tapping the table, pen on chin, palm to palm, raised hand, raised finger, unity gesture, finger to lips, hand on heart, clenched fist, and air quotes are interpreted differently. These findings indicate that the meaning of gestures may shift over time and vary between cultural communities.

The current study's results are consistent with, and add to, past research on gesture interpretation in media. Bull (2002) found that some gestures can influence a viewer's interpretation of traits such as confidence or honesty, which relates to older participants in this study interpreting the "Clenched Fist" and "Raised Finger" gestures as being authoritarian or political. Koutsombogera et al. (2011) demonstrated that cultural context impacts gesture use in political interviews. The findings of this study support what Hussein and Mahmood (2020) found about how culture and age affect the way people understand gestures. The clenched fist and hand on heart gestures had powerful political and emotional meanings for Kurdish and Arabic participants in both studies while other group interpreted them differently. The political resistance message of the clenched fist was understood by Kurdish and Arabic participants but Turkmen individuals saw it as representing a general strength. Younger people assigned contemporary and symbolic meanings to gestures including air quotes, finger snap and unity gesture although older people perceived these gestures through conventional interpretations. The findings support Hussein and Mahmood's (2020) study that age and ethnicity determine how people interpret gestures across different cultural environments.

8.1. Influence of Age on Gesture Interpretation

The way someone interprets gestures depends heavily on their age group. Younger participants (between ages 18 to 35) are more likely to accept new and modern interpretations of gestures when they perceive them. Younger participants tend to interpret gestures such as "Finger to Lips" and "Air Quotes" with additional meanings of secrecy and sarcasm. Younger individuals demonstrate better adaptability because they experience more evolving global media and cultural standards through time. Older participants (35+) on the other hand, typically interpret gestures with direct or traditional interpretations. The way they interpreted some gestures like "Clenched Fist" and "Raised Finger" reflect political and authoritative characteristics, usually depending on their personal background as well as their style and formal communication. The older group consider these gestures to be more authoritative or forceful because cultural norms play a great role emphasizing on respect and dignity.

8.2. Influence of Ethnicity on Gesture Interpretation

It is also crucial to take ethnicity into consideration when trying to understand gestures and how do people from different ethnic group interpret them. This indicates that different societies have different interpretations of gestures. There are a lot of similarities between how Kurdish and Arabic participants perceive, understand, and interpret gestures, especially when it comes to politically charged gestures such as the "Clenched Fist," which both communities (Kurdish and Arabic) interpreted as a sign of resistance and togetherness. Due to the fact that the two ethnicities have been living together for a long period of time, this is especially clear and notable in the way that they perceive and understand the things that are happening around them. The Turkmen participants, on the other hand, appear to take certain gestures more literally or pay more attention to them, which demonstrates that there are some minor cultural differences in the manner in which individuals interact without using words.

Certain gestures, such as the "Palm to palm", were interpreted in a variety of ways by various societies. At the same time as Kurdish and Arabic viewers interpreted it as a sign of concentration and focus, Turkmen participants were more inclined to understand it as a prayer or a request. This means that, it is possible that various ethnic groups may have distinct social expectations about nonverbal cues within the same media domain.

9. Conclusion

This study provides frequent gestures used by presenter in TV programs and shows important details about how gestures are understood by audiences. It shows that both age and ethnicity have a big effect on how people understand nonverbal communication. Some gestures have the same meaning for people of all ages and all ethnic groups, while many are understood differently depending on a person's age and cultural background. The study demonstrates that while some gestures, such as the "Thumbs Up" and

"pinched Fingers" were interpreted consistently across the groups, others showed different interpretations across age groups and different ethnic groups. Specifically, the younger participants tended to attribute wider, sometimes more modern or sarcastic meanings to gestures, possibly as a result of increased exposure to an evolving global media environment, whereas the older participants tended to be more traditional or politically focused in their interpretations. Differences were also found based on ethnicity. Kurdish and Arabic participants were more likely to connect the meaning of "Clenched Fist" and "Unity Gesture" to sociopolitical meanings like solidarity, resistance, and authority, based on contexts shaped by shared cultural and political histories. Turkmen people who took part in the study looked at gesture interpretations in a literal or ontological way. Overall, this study shows that gesture interpretation varies significantly across age and cultural groups, highlighting the importance of considering demographic influences when examining nonverbal communication in media.

10. Recommendations

Based on the results of the current study, it is recommended that media professionals and presenters receive training on how different age and ethnic groups understand gestures. Some gestures are interpreted differently by younger and older people or by Kurdish, Arabic, and Turkmen audiences. Presenters should be more aware of how their body language might be viewed. Media producers should consider these differences when planning programs, especially for political or emotional topics, to avoid misunderstandings. It is also crucial for media and communication departments in universities to teach students about the role of gestures in communication, so they are better prepared for work in television. Creating more culturally sensitive and inclusive media will help connect with a wider audience and improve communication.

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Appendix A

Description: This survey is part of a study entitled The Role of Gestures in Shaping Audience Interpretation within Kurdish Television Programs. It focuses on the gestures used by the presenter and seeks to synthesize the interpretations of the audience to better understand how nonverbal communication affects meaning and reception. Your answers will contribute to valuable insights into the cultural influences and relations of reference in Kurdish media.

Name (optional): _____

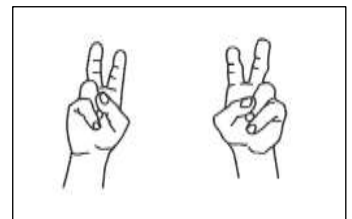
Age: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Survey: Interpretation of Gestures in Kurdish TV Programs

1. Air Quotes

- A. Indicating something is sarcastic or not to be taken literally.
- B. Referring to a specific quote or speech.
- C. Demonstrating an action involving air.



2. Finger to Chin

- A. Showing thoughtfulness or deep consideration.
- B. Indicating a problem.
- C. Asking someone to be quiet.



3. Pinched Fingers

- A. Representing the idea of "a little bit" or "small."
- B. Expressing frustration.
- C. Asking for more time.



4. Peace Sign

- A. A sign of peace or victory.
- B. Pointing to two objects.
- C. Indicating that something is clear.



5. Thumbs Up

- A. A positive approval or agreement.
- B. A representation of a raised hand.
- C. A sign for "okay" or "acceptable."



6. Clenched Fist

- A. Showing strength or resistance.
- B. Indicating something difficult to achieve.
- C. Demonstrating anger or determination.



7. Hand on Heart

- A. Showing sincerity or respect.
- B. Indicating self-pride.
- C. Signaling to pause or stop.



8. Clapping

- A. Expressing approval or appreciation.
- B. Indicating a celebration.
- C. Saying goodbye or ending a conversation.



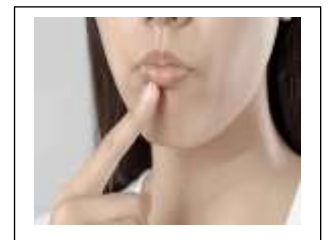
9. Stop Gesture

- A. Asking for someone to pause or stop.
- B. Signaling a change of subject.
- C. Indicating a boundary or limit.



10. Finger to Lips

- A. Asking for silence or secrecy.
- B. A sign of hesitation.
- C. Demonstrating thoughtfulness.



11. Raised Finger



- A. Signifying a key point or idea.
- B. Indicating “one” or “first.”
- C. Demonstrating a formal presentation.

12. Pointing

- A. Indicating a specific object or direction.
- B. Demonstrating anger or frustration.
- C. Representing the act of pointing to someone’s face.



13. Raised Hand

- A. Requesting attention or signaling a question.
- B. Demonstrating a greeting.
- C. Expressing a sense of importance.



14. Steepling

- A. Signifying confidence or intellectual thought.
- B. Indicating a pointed argument.
- C. Expressing hesitation or uncertainty.



15. Finger Snap

- A. A quick acknowledgment or signal of approval.
- B. Demonstrating a decisive point.
- C. Representing a snapping sound.



16. Tapping the Table

- A. Indicating impatience or a need for attention.
- B. Showing thoughtfulness or focus.
- C. Requesting silence.



17. Putting Both Hands Together.

- A. Expressing a prayer or request.
- B. Signaling agreement or peace.
- C. Indicating concentration or focus.



18. Placing a Pen on Chin

- A. Demonstrating contemplation or thoughtfulness.
- B. Indicating an absent-minded action.
- C. Signaling an idea or solution.



19. Crossed Arms

- A. Demonstrating defensiveness or disagreement.
- B. Indicating a firm stand.
- C. Demonstrating emotional closure or self-protection.



20. Unity Gesture

- A. Symbolizing solidarity or togetherness.
- B. Indicating a feeling of joy.
- C. Representing connection or growth.

