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THE TEACHER'S USE OF GESTURE AND SPEECH IN A BRITISH SITCOM

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ABSTRACT

Gestures alongside language constitute one of the essential semiotic resources in an English classroom interaction. It is based on the credence that the meaning-making in any English classroom discourse is realised not only through a language as a semiotic resource, but gestures constitute the other determinant semiotic resources that might facilitate the effective instructional practices and assist students' English learning. However, scant scrutiny of the way a native English teacher uses gestures in an EFL classroom setting was still found. Thus, the present study aimed to investigate one of the British sitcoms, *Mind Your Language*. This film is worth investigating for it tells about a native English teacher teaching pupils with multicultural backgrounds. A systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis (SF-MDA) focusing on the ideational metafunction was employed to analyse the artifact, the British sitcom. The findings reveal that various types of gestures were employed by the teacher. Also, the gestures deployed had significant roles and functions, i.e. not only help visualise the lesson learned but also indicate the teacher's state or condition as well as state during the lesson delivery. Lastly, it suggests that English teachers should take into account the co-contextualising relation between semiotic resources for it might lead students to achieve the expected outcome of the curriculum.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers' gestures constitute one of the semiotic resources playing the essential roles in the teaching and learning processes. This is in particular important for English teachers. It is, as McNeill (2016, p. 4) asserts, because gestures constitute 'inseparable' element of language. Interaction or communication (either face to face teaching and learning or online learning utilising technology) has been considered to entail more than one some semiotic resources, and one of which necessarily includes gestures (Adami & Pinto, 2020; Vungthong, Djonov, & Torr 2022).

Furthermore, the acknowledgement of technology has led that teaching does not only depend upon a language as a semiotic resources but the other semiotic resources, such as gestures

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have been regarded to be an influential aspect that cannot be hinder to facilitate students' learning; hence multimodality is on duty. Multimodality has become one proliferating domain investigated by lots of scholars, particularly in the English language learning, for instance multimodality with respect to a textbook analysis and evaluation (Sugianto, 2021; Sugianto, Andriyani, & Prasetyo, 2021; Sugianto, Prasetyo, & Asti, 2022; Sugianto & Prastika, 2021), multimodality in regard to English teaching and learning assessment (Campoy-Cubillo & Querol-Julian, 2022; Canale, 2022), multimodality associated with intercultural learning (Hege Emma Rimmereide, 2022; Sindoni et al., 2022).

In addition to studies pertaining to multimodality above, the present study also aims to scrutinise multimodality in the English classroom, particularly it deals mainly with

gestures alongside language as semiotic resources. Recent studies have shown that these variables have gained interests among scholars and researchers recently. For instance, a study conducted by Ngo (2019) who reveals the significance of gestures alongside the verbal language in semi-casual oral discussions among Vietnamese postgraduate students in Sydney. Additionally, Lim (2011, 2017) scrutinised two teachers in junior college level (akin to senior high school level in Indonesia). In a similar vein, some scholars also investigate gestures as one of the semiotic resources, in the other contexts, for instance Taleghani-Nikazm (2008) and Sato (2019) investigating the primary and secondary level, Sime (2006) scrutinised student teacher in one Scottish university. Also, Kartchava and Mohamed (2020) investigated teacher's use of gestures in university level, particularly in the context of a Canadian university. All studies above come up with the agreement and similar notion that gestures play essential roles in English instructions. Consequently gestures are deemed to be proven to facilitate effective teaching, particularly if it co-emerge with speech or language (Cao & Chen, 2017).

The present study attempted to scrutinise one of the well known British Sitcom, entitled *Mind Your Language* which aired the first time in 1977. This British Sitcom is available online (<https://thetvdb.com/>; <https://www.imdb.com/>; <https://www.amazon.com/>). Some scholars had conducted investigations associated with this film, for instance Nalkar (2021) who analysed the errors found in the film; he found that some ambiguity to a certain degree was found in the film as well, which in this case, is due to the students' various origins or nationalities. In addition, Istiqomah (2017) investigating it through associating it with translation study, i.e. analysing the Indonesian subtitle. Romadlani and Wijana (2022) investigating the film by utilising the Hay's (2000) framework of humour functions. Moreover, a study conducted by Lasekan (2021) revealed that the male teacher in the film could be used as a reflective tool for preservice teacher as well as Mr Brown (the main character having a role as the native English teacher in the film), was regarded as a highly effective teacher due to his professional and personal characteristic traits. Despite gaining interests to be investigated by some scholars, this film has not been investigated using the Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SFMDA) focussing on the interaction of the language and the gestures used, particularly by the English teacher, were still scarcely found. For instance, some related studies were conducted to investigate the Science teachers' gestures (Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn, & Tsatsarelis, 2001; Ngo, Unsworth, & Herrington, 2021) as well as in the context of mathematics education (Farsani, Lange, & Meaney, 2022).

Meanwhile, scrutiny of the English teachers' gestures has been conducted by some scholars in various domains, for instance, vocabulary learning (García-Gámez, Cervilla, Casado, & Macizo, 2021; Lazaraton, 2004) and the other study is the investigation emphasizing on the context of a grammar classroom (Matsumoto & Dobs, 2017); in addition, besides the English classroom context, another study also investigating in another language classroom context, for instance, in the context of Swedish as a second language (Majlesi, 2015). Furthermore, more initial and earlier studies on gestures investigated within the systemic functional theory were conducted by Martinec (2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2004). Nevertheless, the context of those studies did not have to do with the educational context. Therefore, the present study was intended to unravel the language and gestures used by the English teacher.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of the ideational meaning in speech in this study mainly in terms of construing the experience realised through a number of processes. The transitivity system constitutes a means for scrutinising the experiential meanings. There are three semantic categories that can be used to analyse a text, i.e. processes, participants, and circumstances (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). The three semantic categories above have a particular typical realisation. In this regard, process is realised by a verbal group, participant is realised by a nominal group, and circumstance is realised by adverbial group or prepositional phrase (Halliday, 1994, p. 109; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 177, 2014, p. 222). The transitivity system above is represented in a system network consisting of some processes. The processes are summarised in Figure 2.1.1 below.

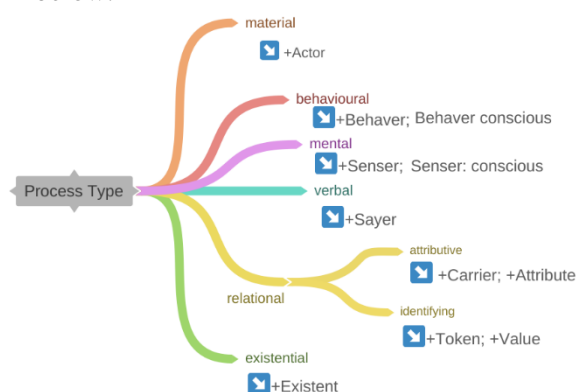


Figure 1. Types of Processes of Transitivity System (Halliday & Matthiessen (2004, p. 173; 2014, p. 219))

Based on Figure 1 above, there are six types of processes. Nevertheless, Gerot and Wignell (1994) add another type of process, namely meteorological process. Table 1 provides a brief description of each type of processes.

Table 1. A brief description of each process (Gerot & Wignell, 1994: 39; Halliday, 1994: 143)

Type of Processes	Meaning	Additional Notes
Material: • Action • Event	Doing • Doing • Happening	bodily, physically, materially
Behavioural	Behaving	physiologically and psychologically
Mental: • Perception • Affection • Cognition	Sensing • Seeing • Feeling • Thinking	emotionally, intellectually, sensorily
Verbal	Saying	lingually, signally
Relational: • Attribution • Identification	Being • Attributing • Identifying	equal to, or some attribute of
Existential	Existing	there exist
Meteorological	Weathering	

Furthermore, drawing on the theories from the systemic functional theory as the point of departure, the gestures in this study were scrutinised within the ideational metafunction. The present study follows the SF-MDA framework proposed by Lim (2017) and Martinec (2000b) summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Ideational Meanings in Gestures (Lim, 2017; Martinec, 2000b)

Types of Action	Subtypes
Presenting Action (Performative gesture), i.e. it has to do with perceptions and motor actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material processes, i.e. processes indicated by 'obvious expansion of effort'. They can be subclassified into non-motion and motion as well as non-directed or directed (which can be 'productive', which results in 'the Goal into being' or non productive, and actual or virtual, i.e. imaginary or the Goal is not present and potential where the Goal is present). The participants include Actor, Material Process, Goal. • Behavioural processes, i.e. processes involving 'an expenditure of energy' and they are directed to self. These processes only have the main participant 'behave' • State processes, i.e. processes having no 'significant movement and expenditure of energy.' These processes only have one participant, namely 'stayer'. • Verbal processes, i.e. processes having two types of realisations, namely visual and auditory. The participant of the verbal processes is called sayer. • Mental processes, i.e. processes that are not 'directly observable (processes of cognition, such as think, imagine, and consider)'

Types of Action	Subtypes
Representing action (communicative gestures, language dependent gestures, and language independent), i.e. 'gestures with a conventional signifying function and are recognisable universally or withing a semiotic community'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic processes, which can be subclassified into three systems, namely straight or curved (which can be circular and non-circular), iterative or non-iterative (the number of repetitions), transitive (directed at another participant which is called Patient. The initiated participant is called Agent) or intransitive (not directed at another participant); in addition, the transitive dynamic processes can be classified into actualised or non actualised and deictic/non deictic. • Static processes realised by stasis or no movement. These processes can be clasified into round or direct (hand/finger) shape.
Indexical action (communicative gestures and language dependent gestures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of importance, realised by 'rhythmic beats'. • Representation of receptivity, realised by 'open palms'. • Representation of relation realised by 'pointing', which physically and vectorally by extension mediates between the enactor to object or goal it is referencing'.

In addition to the elaboration of gesture and speech aforementioned, the interactions between these two types of semiotic resources have resulted in some conceptual relations. In this regard, Lim, (2004b) proposes two theoretical conceptions portraying the relations among semiotic resources, i.e. co-contextualising and re-contextualising relations. The former refers to the relations in which one semiotic resource constitutes the reflection of another semiotic resource; thus, it generates the meaning between the semiotic resources which is convergence; meanwhile, the latter refers to the interactions turning out one semiotic resource to be unrelated with the other semiotic resource (p. 239). To bear in mind, the gestures that go along with language is considered essential in the context of education. It is on account of the fact that the educational context, studies concerning the use of gesture as one of the semiotic resources that go hand in hand with language, hence multimodal, for meaning making have registered an upward and burgeoning trend among scholars. This trend is resonated by numerous recognitions of multimodality that plays key roles in the educational domain. It is as Macken-Horarik (2004, p. 6) reveals, "multimodality is increasingly a feature of the school curriculum and we need to take account of this in our work in education". Thus, it can be concluded that not only speech is necessarily required, but another type of semiotic resource, such as gesture, constitute another potential and concern that should a teacher, particularly that who teaches in an English classroom, takes into account.

III. METHODS

A descriptive study by utilising SF-MDA was employed in this study. The present study follows the method used by Lim (2017) and Martinec (2000b). The present study investigates the semiotic resources of a male native English teacher teaching in an EFL classroom, deriving from a British Sitcom entitled *Mind Your Language*, particularly episode one. This episode entitled ‘The First Lesson’, which tells about a situation in which the English teacher managed to know his students one another; in this episode, he also delivered a lesson about ‘to be’. Moreover, the semiotic resources investigated in this study were focused on the native English teacher’s speech and gestures over the film. The duration of the film is 24 minutes 12 second. Nevertheless, the investigation was only limited to as the male teacher came into the classroom until he ended the class, started from the minute 4: 17 to 23:27 (in other words the duration of the film inspected was approximately 19 minutes 20 seconds). Moreover, in regard to the coding procedures, the male teacher’s speech and gestures were transcribed using ELAN 6.3 and Ms Excel so as to the verbal and gestural meanings could be identified and analysed. Besides, to maintain the trustworthiness, the present study tried to apply some ways. In this light, on account of the fact that the present study is deemed to be qualitative in nature, some techniques used to keep its trustworthiness involve the way suggested by Guba, (1981), namely audit trail and practicing reflexivity. In this respect, the researchers tried to double check the analysed artefacts and thoroughly re-examined its result based on the framework used. In this light, the parameters used based on the framework are illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Parameters of coding the ideational meaning of gesture and speech (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Lim, 2004a, 2011, 2017; Martinec, 2000b)

Category	Parameters
Gesture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting action • Representing action • Indexical action
Speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material process • Mental process • Behavioural process • Relational process • Existential process • Verbal process • Meteorological
Intersemiosis between gesture and speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-contextualising relations/Re-contextualising relations

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Albeit in a brief lesson video, the study through the artefact found that nearly all the types of processes associated with gestures were conducted by the male teacher found in the film. It was found that one fragment of the video may consist more than one type of action or gesture. It is as illustrated, for instance by Figure 2 which shows the teacher uses a state process and verbal processes which belong the presenting action, he also used an indexical action characterised by his open palms (Allan Pease, 1988).



Figure 2. State; Verbal Processes (Presenting Action); Receptivity (Indexical Action)

In one occasion, the teacher was found to use the other type of action, namely representing action, i.e. relation while he was also uttering the phrase ‘to be’ on the white board as shown by Figure 3. Such pointing is considered helpful for it co-contextualise with the semiotic resource, language, he uttered.



Brown: ‘To be’

Figure 3. State and Verbal Processes (Presenting Action); Relation (Representing Action)

One interesting finding in this study is misunderstanding between one of the students and the teacher was found. For instance, as the teacher was introducing himself saying ‘I am Brown’ the student thought that he was telling them his physical appearance (skin colour). In this scene, if the teacher’s speech is analysed through transitivity system, it was categorised as an identifying clause but the student understood it as an attributive clause (see Figure 4). Interestingly, the teacher deployed some gestures accompanied his speech. In this light, for instance, the gestural processes

found comprise indexical action as he tried to introduce himself and state process as he listened to Ali attentively as shown in Figure 4.



Brown: 'I am Brown.' (Indexical action: receptivity)
Ali : 'Oh, no. You are committing a mistake.'
Brown: 'Mistake?'
Ali : 'You are not brown. You are white.'
Figure 4. Receptivity (Indexical Action); State Process (Presenting Action)

To counter back the student's misunderstanding, the teacher tried to generate another clause 'My name is Brown. I am your teacher.' Both these clauses in regard to speech are identifying clauses.



Brown: 'My name is Brown. I am your teacher'
Figure 5. Relation (Indexical Action); Dynamic Curved Process (Representing action)

Additionally, Brown's speech above co-contextualise his gesture. In this respect, the group 'your teacher' converge on the gesture emerge, that is, indexical action (relation) emphasised by the representing action (dynamic curved process) to point and refer to the whole students.

Moreover, the other interesting finding in this study is that the teachers have some ways through his gestures to condemn or warning students as illustrated by Figure 6, in which he only stay and stand still while he is also telling the students 'pay attention, please'. Meanwhile, Figure 7, he tried to control his student by rising the intonation of his speech, and Figure 8 instead of telling them verbally, he tried to give the students homework.



Brown: 'Pay attention, please.'
Figure 6. State; verbal (presenting action)



Brown: 'What am I?'
Figure 7. State Process; Verbal Process (Presenting Action)



Brown: 'There's really not much more we can do.'
Figure 8. Material Process (Presenting Action)

Moreover, it was found that mental and behavioural processes constitute the least process types of actions used by the teacher. Interestingly, these two types of processes of actions were found frequently without being accompanied by speech. Besides, these two processes were commonly found by state process.



Figure 9. State and Mental processes (Presenting Action)



Figure 10. State and Behavioral Processes (Presenting Action)

Moreover, another least type of process found in this study was the indexical action categorised as 'the representation of other than the above', which we name here as a specialised gesture (for its meaning is only be able to retrieved by referring to the context and co-text (language) in which the gesture happened. This is as illustrated by Figure 11 in which the teacher was firstly putting his hand on the table but as one

of his student made ‘indecent movement’, he immediately drew his arm from the table.

Regarding the ‘specialised gesture’ (see Figure 12), the teacher tried to make a space between him and the student. Regarding the space made by him, it is interesting to figure out more about this issue which is part of interpersonal meaning (Lim, 2011, 2017). Nevertheless, it is beyond the focus of the present study.



Danielle: ‘We are lucky to have’

Figure 12. Specialised Process (Indexical Action)

Moreover, in this study it was also found a re-contextualising relation between the two semiotic resources, gesture and language. In this case, it occurred as Brown tried to give an example of a sentence using *to be ‘it’* to one of his students, named Juan. Brown said, ‘It is raining’ while he was gesturing his hand expressing raining and pointing outside the window of the classroom. However, because there was no raindrop then, Juan was confused (see Figure 13).



Figure 13. Brown: ‘It is raining’ (Presenting Action; Indexical Action)

Such divergence between these two semiotic resources necessarily require to be taken into account as one is teaching, moreover in the context of EFL teaching and learning in which the students do not hinge on language merely. Thus, it suggests that they might learn better if their teacher is able to contextualize any message between the semiotic resources, which eventually enable them to effectively attain the objectives of the curriculum employed (Ngo, 2018).

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings aforementioned, the present study reached some conclusions. In this regard, the teacher is deemed to use various types of actions indicated by types of processes emerged during he delivered the instruction. Also, the use of the teacher’s gestures have significant roles and functions for it can not only provide some assistance in visualizing the lesson learned but also may indicate the teacher’s state or condition as well as trait; in this regard, for instance, the teacher might be deemed to be open to the students indicated by the indexical action used

(open palm). In addition, the present study also suggests that the co-contextualising relation between the semiotic resources, such as gesture and language, need to be the teachers’ consideration as it might help the students to understand the material learned and eventually lead to achieve the objective of the curriculum. Also, the other metafunctions, namely interpersonal and textual metafunctions, can be areas worth scrutinising for future studies to provide more vivid horizon in relation to the types of actions by the teacher.

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