

Non-verbal Communication by Yemeni Arab EFL Learners: A Case of Communicative Failure

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W. et al. 1996; Guerrero et al. 1999). It should be emphasized that these terms do not usually function independently or sequentially; rather, they work simultaneously.

Although Communication may be classified as either verbal or non-verbal, people may use both simultaneously in order to convey their thoughts and ideas (cf. Knapp, & Hall, J. A. 2007).

1.2. Importance of Non-verbal Communication

While verbal communication has been extensively studied and is the focus of much applied attention in the areas of linguistics, the fact is that human beings communicate more through non-verbal means. Some research in non-verbal communication accounts for 65, 70, even 90 percent of human communication (Mehrabian, 1981). Using the 70-percent figure for non-verbal communication, the voice accounts for another 20 percent or so, and specific words only about 10 percent. According to Adelman and Levine (1993), people express their emotions and attitudes more non-verbally than verbally. It is, therefore, discernible that non-verbal communication is very important in human interaction. In addition, it usually forms the first impression which may cost someone a job or a scholarship. We make judgments and decisions about a person or culture based on their behaviors.

1.3. Cultural Differences

Just like verbal communication is culturally bound, so is non-verbal communication. Even in the current era of tremendous global communication

Abstract

This paper investigates the non-verbal communication by the Yemeni EFL learners as judged by the English native speakers. Data was collected via videotaping 40 Yemeni EFL learners debating a contentious issue. The learners' non-verbal communication was evaluated by two judges being American native speakers of English. Results revealed that most of the body movements demonstrated by the learners were inappropriate and carried a high risk of causing a communicative failure.

Keywords:

body language; communicative failure; non-verbal behavior; non-verbal communication; Yemeni EFL learners

1. Introduction

1.1. Types of Non-verbal Communication

It should be noted here that terms non-verbal communication and body language are used interchangeably. Literature in non-verbal communication provides six categories of non-verbal communication. Body movements, gestures, and facial expressions are referred to as kinesics; the technical word for body language. Oculistics is the term for eye contacts whereas proxemics is the use of space/personal distance between interlocutors. Behaviors of touching including handshakes, holding hands, kissing, etc. are coded as haptics. Vocalics refers to vocal activities other than the verbal context itself such as tone, pitch, loudness, and finally, the use of time is called chronemics (cf. Hall, E. T. 1966; Hanna, 1987; Hall, C.

used to denote victory but in western culture it is considered as sexually insulting if used with back of the hand facing the audience (cf. Julius, 1971). The danger lies in the lack of a proper awareness of such confusing non-verbal forms of communication cross-culturally.

Eye contact is also a culture-bound behavior. In the west, direct eye contact can commonly take about 40 percent of the time while talking and 70 percent while listening. In Japan, it is more common to look at the throat of the interlocutor (cf. Julius, F. 1971). In China and Indonesia, the norm is to lower the eyes since direct eye contact is considered bad manners, and in Hispanic culture, direct eye contact is a form of threat and disrespect (cf. Morrison et al. 1994). In Arab culture, eye contact during discussions - often long and direct - is important. Staring is not necessarily rude (except gazing at women). However, eye aversion is the norm when addressing a person of much higher social power. Ling (1997) reports that people from certain cultures may lower their gaze to convey respect, whereas this may be interpreted as evading or even insulting in other cultures. US American women felt insulted and embarrassed at being looked at in their eyes for prolonged periods by Italian and French men. Conversely, Italian and French females perceived American males as cold because of their relatively short eye contact with females (Vargas, 1986). However, in most Arab cultures having long eye contact with females is understood as imprudent.

Similarly, the commonly accepted space between speakers varies from one culture to another. For example, standing close while talking to a person from a western culture, where the personal distance is generally greater, is perceived as threatening by the 'intrusion' into his/her personal space.

means and the information superhighway, many differences in physical expressions are bound by culture and do not transfer via electronic media at any level. It may be true that some forms of non-verbal communication are universal, the majority of these signals are culture-specific and have different meanings or no meanings in the other culture. In this connection, Craig Storti, as quoted in Wienchecki, (1999), outlines three main categories of non-verbal communication in the cross-cultural context:

- i. Behaviors which exist in your own culture and in the target culture which have the same meaning in both cultures.
- ii. Behaviors which exist in both cultures, but have different meanings in the two cultures.
- iii. Behaviors which have meaning in one culture but no meaning at all in another culture.

It is those forms of non-verbal behavior which differ from culture to culture that may cause intercultural miscommunication and could be a source of confusion for foreigners. For example, one culture may consider snapping fingers to draw someone's attention as appropriate, whereas another may consider it as rude (cf. Anderson, P. 2004). It is difficult for an Arab to keep his hand still while speaking which is so often misjudged for aggressiveness or threatening. Another example of a culturally bound body behavior is the use of the emblem "Finger Ring" or "OK" gesture which has different meanings in different cultures. In the USA and in English speaking countries, the "Finger Ring" or "OK" gesture means "Everything is OK". In France, it can also mean zero or nothing. In Japan, it can mean 'money' whereas in Arab culture and some Mediterranean countries, it is used to infer that a man is homosexual (cf. Pease, 1990; Remland, and Jones, 1995). The V-sign is usually

appreciating intercultural differences ultimately promote sound communication, breaks down barriers, builds trust, strengthens relationships, opens horizons and yields tangible results in terms of business success.

1.4. Non-verbal Communication and ELT in Yemen

Although non-verbal communication is very important for effective interaction with others, this form of human communication is rarely taught in schools. Being aware of non-verbal behaviors in the target language will no doubt allow learners to become better at sending and receiving signals that correspond with their intended oral messages. One of the major aims of teaching a foreign language is to develop students' intercultural communication ability, which includes both verbal and non-verbal abilities. Non-verbal communication, therefore, should be an integrated part of any foreign language teaching without which foreign language teaching remains incomplete. This is because awareness of possible intercultural differences in non-verbal communication is especially important in today's increasingly mixed societies.

Developing cultural fluency in learning a foreign language, though was once a soft skill, has now gained currency. Non-verbal communication, being an integral part of cultural fluency, has received a great emphasis especially when the goal of a foreign language learning is instrumental. Language educationalists, translators, interpreters, and cross-cultural studies are now important careers and have great opportunities. Organizations are hiring such language trainers to impart soft skill training to their employees or help in translations while dealing with foreign clients. Employers are seeking the workforce which can easily adapt to new work environments, cultures and can communicate in more than one language.

However, keeping distant from a person from an Arab culture, where the personal distance is generally close, is interpreted as evading and possibly mistrusting (cf. Julius, 1971). The conventions in the Middle East are that social interaction and conversation among Arabs occurs at a much closer distance than normal in the Western World and well within the "personal space" defined by the West. Depending on the culture, the situation, and the intimacy of the relationship, physical space can communicate many different messages, including degree of intimacy, aggression, dominance, or affection (cf. Morrison et al. 1994).

Likewise, the meaning conveyed by touching is highly culture-specific. It has been reported that Mediterranean, Arab and Latin American cultures use much social touching in conversations, including embraces, kissing and hand-holding (cf. Morrison et al. 1994). Long handshakes, grasping elbows, even walking hand-in-hand by two males in public places are common in the Arab world. If an individual Arab does not touch you, he does not like you or perhaps he may be trying to restrain himself from you. However, A full body embrace, accompanied with hugging, is only among close friends. In North America and Northern Europe, touching is used only occasionally. In low-contact cultures as in Northern Asian cultures, social touching is very rare (cf. Dolin & Booth-Butterfield, 1993).

Finally, vocal qualifiers such as volume, pitch, rhythm and tempo differ from culture to culture. In Arab culture, for example, speaking loudly connotes sincerity, whereas in western and some pacific cultures it is often interpreted as aggressive (cf. Morrison et al. 1994). To conclude, working, meeting, dealing, entertaining, negotiating and corresponding with colleagues or clients from different cultures can be a minefield. Therefore, understanding and

study attempts to achieve the following objectives:

1. To find out the consistency of the non-verbal behaviors by Yemeni Arab EFL learners with that of the native speakers of English.
2. To find out whether the body language demonstrated by the Yemeni Arab EFL learners can cause a communicative failure.
3. To suggest some possible remedial instructions and pedagogical insights in the light of the findings.

3.Methods

3.1. Subjects

Since the study targets the Yemeni Arab EFL learners who are supposed to have a considerable command of the English language and its culture, the subjects were randomly taken from the graduating fourth level of EFL students in the department of English at the College of Arts of Sana'a University. Accordingly, 40 students were selected to be the subjects of the present study including 30 males and 10 females. The reason for restricting female subjects to only 10 participants is that because most of the female subjects happened to be veiled, thus preventing an access to face expressions which are an essential part of our enquiry. This is the least to see how much appearance can hinder intercultural communication.

3.2.Instrument and Procedures

The 40 subjects were divided into 20 pairs. Data was collected via videotaping each pair while debating in a situation of a contentious issue. The situation involves discussing what was so called 'the youth revolution' in Yemen in 2011, which has now become a controversial issue worldwide. Pairs were required to debate the issue once at a time with one pair pro and the other against. The situation includes a reconciliation act by the participating pairs at the end of each

Therefore, being interculturally fluent is largely acceptable and preferred, because employees can use the general cultural competency to get along with people of diverse cultural backgrounds (cf. Levine et al. 2005). Hence, EFL trainers should never ignore the implications of body language and should equip EFL learners with not only the linguistic forms of a language but also the socio-cultural norms and body language of its users as well. This is because knowing a language without its culture is one way of making a fool of one's self (Brembeck, 1977). Nevertheless, English language teaching (ELT) in Yemen solely focuses on verbal communication. Learners are prompted with speaking drills and oral practice in isolation of relevant social values and cultural norms. The syllabus of ELT in Yemen relies heavily on linguistic forms in that students are taught about the language and not how to communicate properly. Spoken courses consist mainly of different speech acts with very less listening materials. Even language laboratories, if any, are mostly kept for decoration and are rarely used. Body language or non-verbal communication is completely ignored by both the syllabus and the teachers. Moreover, students have never been taught by native speakers nor had the chance of residing in the target language community. As a result, learners' language tends, in most of the cases, to be a bookish language. They may speak English but their body movements are carried out from their mother tongue. Hence, the present study.

2. The Study:

The present study addresses a very serious phenomenon in the interlanguage of the learners. Its purpose is to investigate the body movements demonstrated by the Yemeni EFL learners and the potentiality of causing a communicative failure. Specifically, the

one situation and being fed up or bored in another.

1. Go for sufficient evidences – that a single body movement signal is not enough to draw a conclusion. As with any system of evidence, combinations of consistent and persistent body movements provide much more reliable conclusion than one or two signals in isolation.
2. Eliminate physical or environmental factors – in that some body movements can simply be caused by external factors such as illness, disability, fatigue, lack of food/drink or cold/hot weather or conditions. For example, the act of someone rubbing owns hands or arms may be referred to cold conditions and not to a cultural behavior. Consider that, apart from intercultural interpretation, non-verbal communication is one of several indicators of mood, meaning and motive, and psychological state. Therefore, since the major inquiry of our study is cross-cultural in nature, factors relating to environmental, psychological or of individual concerns are considered external to our inquiry and thus eliminated as far as possible.

In the light of the above guidelines, a convenient framework for data analysis was developed and the body movements demonstrated by the learners were categorized into 20 major body movements which are as follows:

1. Posture/ Gesture
 11. Itching head
2. Appearance
 12. Hold owns hands
3. Head movements
 13. Hugging

debate session. The purpose is to find out the type of non-verbal behaviorsthat may be used for reconciliation. Because gender variation is out of the scope of our study, each debating pairs were constructed from homogeneous gender in order to avoid possible awkwardness that may occur during male-female interaction. Accordingly, each pairs of participants were requested to stand in front of the class and debate the issue for a period of five minutes, thus, yielding 100 minutes of videotaped materials. The debate was deliberately kept open for audience from students and teaching staff members in order to add the element of enthusiasm into the scene and maintain seriousness throughout debate.

4. Dada Analysis

Although interpretation of non-verbal communication may appear to be instinctively easy to the layman, the subject is potentially and immensely complex. This is true, given the complexity of human nature and human body which is said to be capable of producing 700,000 different movements (Hartland& Tosh, 2001). As the case with other behavioral sciences, the study of non-verbal communication has benefitedfrom the development of psychology and brain-imaging technology in the last decades which have dramatically enriched the research and understanding the interpretations of non-verbal communication, though much of which are based on experience and observation. Therefore, in respect of the scope of the present study and for the sake of excluding the risk of confusions in data interpretations, the following points were taken into considerations while analyzing the learners’ non-verbal communication:

Always consider context – that body language depends on context, i.e., a body movement in a certain situation might not mean the same in another. For example, rolling eyes might be interpreted as showing disagreement in

problematic and unclear were rated as ‘Ambiguous’. It should be noted that for such body movements one needs to obtain plausible explanations from either the learner or with reference to the learner’s native language and culture.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. General Observations

As could be inferred from Table 1, the number of learners’ body movements rated by judges as inappropriate is considerably high. However, by looking at each type of body movements separately, important observations will emerge. In prelude, since every emotion brings with it an impetus to take an action related to the shown emotion. Emotions can, therefore, affect not only our ability to negotiate or communicate but also as our behavior. For example, because Arabs are generally believed to be highly emotional in nature, their attitudes and feelings can easily be reflected in their body language. Regardless of the truth of this stereotype, the emotions of our participants were actually triggered by the contentious debate and most of their body movements were evaluated by the judges as inappropriate. One would argue that this could happen with subjects from any other cultures as well given the same contextual circumstances. This may be true if the purpose was to test the degree of anger or sentiments cross-culturally. The issue here, however, is of an intercultural communication interest and whether the stream of learners’ body language is on the line with the non-verbal behavior in the target language community.

In this view, 25% of the learners’ postures/gestures, were inappropriate and another 25% were ambiguous (cf. Table 1). A similar rating was given for appearance where only 50% of the learners’ appearance was appropriate. It is worth mentioning here that most of the inappropriateness for appearance was

4. Head position
5. Facial expressions
6. Eye movements
7. Hand movements
8. Tapping/cracking/ fingers
9. Pointing
10. Rubbing nose
14. Kissing
15. Patting
16. Arm movements
17. Leg shapes/movements
18. Space/distance
19. Pitch/Loudness
20. Vocal fillers

These were the most prevalent body movements found among the subjects. The videotaped materials obtained from 40 subjects were, thus, analyzed against the above 20 categories of body movements, yielding a total of 800 responses which is the corpus for the study. Accordingly, videotaped materials were watched and evaluated by two American native speakers as the judges who also happened to be EFL teachers. The judges were supplemented with a close-ended questionnaire listing the 20 body movements of the participants and were requested to rate each body movement as ‘Appropriate’, ‘Ambiguous’, or ‘Inappropriate’ (cf. Appendix). We refrained from rating learners’ body movements as offending or non-offending because it was found that some body movements can simply be inappropriate and not necessarily offending. Therefore, under the ‘Appropriate’ column, the judges listed those body movements which were evaluated as being normal or acceptable and were in the line with the spoken words and discourse. On the other hand, those body movements which were either offending or simply not matching the spoken words or discourse were listed under ‘Inappropriate’. In both cases, inappropriate body movements result in a communicative failure. Those body movements which were

superiority and fearlessness, head tilting expressing negative attitude such as mocking or despising, and head-down showing disapproval or dejection. The inappropriate facial expressions appeared to have a higher rate (45%) versus only 17.5% as appropriate and 37.5% as ambiguous. Again, most of the inappropriate facial expressions were caused by female subjects as will be seen in later discussions.

caused by female subjects, as will be discussed later.

However, a big number of the learners' head movements were considered ambiguous (37.5%) whereas 17.5% were inappropriate. For head positions, 37.5% were inappropriate which were distributed between three major head positions exhibited by the learners. These were head lifting high with chin putting forward signaling

Table 1: Evaluation of Body Movements (all subjects, N= 40)

S. No.	Type of Body Movement	Appropriateness Rate						Total Responses
		Appropriate		Ambiguous		Inappropriate		
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
1	Posture/ Gesture	20	50	10	25	10	25	40
2	Appearance	23	57.5	8	20	9	22.5	40
3	Head movements	18	45	15	37.5	7	17.5	40
4	Head position	18	45	7	17.5	15	37.5	40
5	Facial expressions	7	17.5	15	37.5	18	45	40
6	Eye movements	25	62.5	9	22.5	6	15	40
7	Hand movements	7	17.5	7	17.5	26	65	40
8	Tapping/cracking/drumming fingers	23	57.5	6	15	11	27.5	40
9	Pointing	15	37.5	5	12.5	20	50	40
10	Rubbing nose	29	72.5	0	0	11	27.5	40
11	Itching head	34	85	0	0	6	15	40
12	Hold owns hands	23	57.5	14	35	3	7.5	40
13	Hugging	21	52.5	0	0	19	47.5	40
14	Kissing	27	67.5	0	0	13	32.5	40
15	Patting	21	52.5	6	15	13	32.5	40
16	Arm movements	12	30	16	40	12	30	40
17	Legs shape/movement	30	75	6	15	4	10	40
18	Space/distance	19	47.5	9	22.5	12	30	40
19	Pitch/Loudness	15	37.5	7	17.5	18	45	40
20	Vocal fillers	8	20	17	42.5	15	37.5	40
Total		395	49.4	157	19.6	248	31	800

Therefore, eye movements were very difficult to monitor and detect by the judges since this requires a special attention and camera focus. On contrary, hand movements were very prominent which received the highest rate of inappropriateness (65%) which justifies the stereotype that it is difficult for an Arab to keep his hand still while talking. Tapping/cracking/drumming fingers

Table 1 also shows that eye movements appeared among the least inappropriate non-verbal behavior (15%). Eye movements such as looking for micro gestures (wide open, pupils contract, an eyebrow lifts, corner of the mouth twitch) were among the inappropriate eye signals observed. However, these micro gestures are very small, difficult to spot and are rather subconscious.

appeared to be ambiguous for the judges. Legs shape, however, recorded the least inappropriate behavior by the learners (10%), although 15% was ambiguous. In maintaining acceptable level of space between interlocutors, the learners scored as high as 30% for inappropriateness and 22.5% for being ambiguous which indicates that spacing between interlocutors in Yemen is less than normal level in western culture. This is a good sign that learners tend to carry out some non-verbal behaviors from their mother culture. Similarly, the sound pitch was evaluated as higher than normal and got 45% for inappropriateness and 17.5% for ambiguous. This is again a strong indication that talking loudly is a potential miscommunication behavior by Arabs who reckon that higher volume is a proof for sincerity but for our USA American judges this was inappropriate. They think that talking to people in such an energetic fashion can be mistaken for an angry mood. Besides, high-pitched voices are not very pleasant.

Finally, only 20% of the learners used vocal fillers appropriately. It was noticed that most learners had a problem using vocal fillers - non words - such as "uh", "er", "um", "you know", "okay.". It has been observed that these vocal fillers were used by learners either too much, which became distracting, or they used them inappropriately resulting in a clumsy discourse. One more worth mentioning behavioral phenomenon which has attracted the judges' attention, was the way the subjects tended to very frequently interrupt each other. However, interruption, though could be offending, is not very unusual in Yemeni culture and it may not be considered as severely offending as in the western culture.

was rated as 27.5% inappropriate most of which came as a result of nervousness rather than of cultural value. Pointing is considered amongst the highest inappropriate body movements by the learners (50%). Such non-verbal behavior is considered as rude by native speakers. However, in Yemeni culture, this behavior is considered offending only when used with an angry or threatening tone which have ignited the tense situation in our case. For rubbing nose, as high as 27.5% was considered inappropriate whereas 72.5% for appropriate with nothing for ambiguous. It seems that rubbing one's nose can only be rated as either appropriate or inappropriate and cannot be considered as ambiguous. Itching one's head while speaking was among the least rating (15%) which seems to require psychological explanations rather than cultural ones.

With the exception of holding one's hands, hugging, kissing, and patting (touching) are amongst the highest scores of inappropriateness. One should mention that this non-verbal behavior took place only during the reconciliation part at the end of the debate. However, it was observed that touching was more prevalent between the same sex, though much more frequently between males. Generally, if an individual Arab does not touch you, he does not like you or he may be trying to restrain himself. Therefore, when the debate was over during the reconciliation part, subjects pretended to appear friendly by touching and patting each other which was usually accompanied with hugging and kissing.

Arm movements, on the other hand, proved to be a typical Arab behavior which accounts for 30% of inappropriate incidents and only 30% of appropriate ones whereas 40%

considered inappropriate. This was due to their traditional black dress and face covering (veil) which, according to the judges, is considered inappropriate in western culture point of view. Only one of the girls was not veiled but again dressed in black which was rated as ambiguous. Interestingly enough, girls did not have any inappropriate occurrences of head movements compared to boys (23.3%).

Table 2 shows the differences between male and female subjects in the parameters of body movements. It can be inferred that girls appear to be more steady than boys in their postures and have 0% inappropriate occurrences compared to boys whose inappropriate postures were as high as 33.3%. In contrast, girls obtained zero score for appropriate appearance and whereas 90% of their appearance was

5.2. Gender Variations

Looking at the data gender-wise, amazing results can be drawn.

Table 2: Gender-wise Evaluation of Body Movements (%)

S. No.	Type of Body Movement	Appropriateness Rate (%)					
		Appropriate		Ambiguous		Inappropriate	
		M	F	M	F	M	F
1	Posture/ Gesture	40	80	26.7	20	33.3	0
2	Appearance	76.7	0	23.3	10	0	90
3	Head movements	43.3	50	33.3	50	23.3	0
4	Head position	46.7	40	16.7	20	36.7	40
5	Facial expressions	23.3	0	50	0	26.7	100
6	Eye movements	60	70	23.3	20	16.7	10
7	Hand movements	13.3	30	13.3	30	73.3	40
8	Tapping/cracking/ drumming fingers	53.3	70	20	0	26.7	30
9	Pointing	30	60	13.3	10	56.7	30
10	Rubbing nose	63.3	100	0	0	36.7	0
11	Itching head	80	100	0	0	20	0
12	Hold owns hands	50	80	43.3	10	6.7	10
13	Hugging	50	08	0	0	50	20
14	Kissing	66.7	80	0	0	33.3	20
15	Patting	36.7	100	20	0	43.3	0
16	Arm movements	26.7	40	40	40	33.3	20
17	Legs shape/movement	66.7	100	20	0	13.3	0
18	Space/distance	33.3	90	26.7	10	40	0
19	Pitch/Loudness	23.3	80	16.7	20	60	0
20	Vocal fillers	20	20	43.3	40	36.7	40
Grand Percentage		245.	.536	21.5	14	33.3	22.5

the girls. It seems that too much head and hand movements by girls contradict the supposedly females' decency and prudery in a conservative Muslim country like Yemen. The above variations among male and female subjects can be explained with reference to their cultural, religious,

On the other hand, girls were evaluated as 100% inappropriate for facial expressions because of their face covering which prevented judges from having an access for face evaluation. Boys, however, had more inappropriate hand movements (73.3%) and pointing (56.7%) than did

likely to follow. However, such non-verbal behavior was very less among females who deemed such behavior inappropriate in public places. Similarly, females exhibited less inappropriate incidents of arm movements and legs shape than did their males counterparts. Female subjects were also better in maintaining reasonable space and kept distant from their interlocutors which generally support similar findings by Alhamzi (2010) in that Yemeni women tend to be more sensitive to social distance and are more conservative in public places than men. The volume of their voices was more appropriately evaluated than that by the males. Finally, both male and female learners seem to have more or less similar rating in misusing vocal fillers.

and social background. One possible explanation could be that females have more self-consciousness in public places than males. They appear to be more prudent because of the socio-cultural restrictions in a conservative Muslim society like Yemen. It has been found that women's affinity to socio-cultural considerations are much more higher than that of men.

Another interesting result that can be drawn from this survey is that rubbing nose and itching heads were not observed among females, which made them appear more decently than the boys. The body movements of hugging, kissing, and patting are linked to each other and tended to take place in the same situation in a complementary way, i.e. when hugging takes place, kissing and patting are

Table 3: Overall Evaluation of all Body Movements (N=800)

Appropriate		Ambiguous		Inappropriate	
Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
396	49.5	157	19.6	247	30.9

movements

is ambiguous whereas 30.9% responses were considered as inappropriate which result in a communicative failure or perhaps can be very offending. It should be noted here that even the ambiguous body movements can carry the risk of being misunderstood by the native speakers of the target language.

Table 3 gives us an overall evaluation and a general outlook of the data. As can be seen, out of 800 responses by all subjects, only 396 responses are appropriate which forms 49.5% of the total evaluation. On the other hand, 19.6% of the accumulative body

Table 4: Rank Order of Inappropriate Body Movements

Rank	Body Movement	Average
1	Hand movements	65
2	Pointing	50
3	Hugging	47.5
4	Facial expressions	45
5	Pitch/Loudness	45
6	Head position	37.5
7	Vocal fillers	37.5
8	Patting	32.5
9	Kissing	30
10	Arm movements	30
11	Space/distance	30
12	Tapping/cracking/ drumming fingers	27.5
13	Rubbing nose	27.5

14	Posture/Gesture	25
15	Appearance	22.5
16	Head movements	17.5
17	Eye movements	15
18	Itching head	15
19	Legs shape/movement	10
20	Hold owns hands	7.5

mother culture (cf. Corder, 1993).

2. Arm movements, pointing, hugging, and high voice volume are the most problematic non-verbal behaviors for Yemeni EFL learners and are more likely to cause a communicative failure.
3. It has been found that EFL learners resorted heavily on their Arabic non-verbal behaviors while speaking in English almost in all types of body movements which means that transference from L1 to L2 is not restricted to only verbal communication but also to non-verbal communication as well.
4. Gender variations did exist in that male learners tended to apt for more vigorous and seemingly provocative body movements (e.g. hand/arm movements, pitch/loudness, etc.) than did female learners who generally appeared to be less aggressive and maintained comparatively more steady body movements.
5. On the other hand, the findings revealed that females were more likely to have even worse communication problems in appearance and facial expressions than their male counterparts.

7. Recommendations and Suggestions

1. Raising the awareness of the EFL learners in Yemen about

Table 4 provides a list of a descending ranking order of body movements. The purpose is to make it easier to see which body movements are more problematic for the learners. Therefore, from Table 4, it can be seen that hand movements come at the top of the rank order which confirms that this body movement is a typical Arab non-verbal behavior. This behavior can cause a lot of communication problems to Arabs when contacting people from other cultural backgrounds. Pointing while talking comes at the second place followed by hugging. Such highly problematic and inappropriate body movements should receive a special attention by ELT educationists. Likewise, the list expresses itself and goes on till it concludes with the non-verbal behavior of holding one's hand which is the least problematic one.

6. Conclusions

The findings discussed above can be summarized in the following points:

1. Only 49.5% of the total learners' body movements were appropriate. The rest were either ambiguous (19.6%) or inappropriate (30.9%). The inappropriate body movements inevitably cause a fatal communicative failure and can be offending as well. Even those clumsy body movements which were rated as 'Ambiguous' can be considered as erroneous non-verbal communications since they can only be explained with reference to the learner's

different interpretations of body language, signals, and emblems in different cultures by collecting relative information, from pictures, films, TVs, internet, etc.;

4. It is hoped that an awareness of these cross-cultural differences in non-verbal communication can be useful for both facilitating intercultural communication between these two communities and serve as a guideline for EFL teachers and learners as well.
5. Further subsequent cross-cultural studies of non-verbal communication are still needed with a special focus on the more problematic elements of body language evoked by the present study taking into consideration important social variables such as power status, situation, social distance, and gender while assessing body language.

8. References

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the socio-cultural norms and non-verbal communication in the target language is a communicative necessity.

2. A special attention by EFL teachers in Yemen should be given to more problematic body movements such as arm movements, pointing, hugging, and high voice volume in the light of the norms of the target language culture.
3. The teacher is considered the hidden curriculum. Hence, EFL teachers themselves should be carefully trained so as to enable them to be a source of guidance and motivation for their students to learn non-verbal communication behaviors in classroom (cf. Wiechecki, 1999). A part from the syllabus itself, the teacher can do a wonderful job in this regard in many ways such as:
 - a. Giving a brief introduction of some background knowledge of non-verbal behavior.
 - b. Comparing different non-verbal behaviors in different countries and cultures to raise learners' awareness about cultural differences in this respect;
 - c. Giving learners more examples of different body movements in both the target language and the mother tongue in order to help them develop linguistic as well as non-verbal communication skills;
 - d. Using teaching aids such as drawings, pictures and even films can be analyzed in classrooms.
 - e. Giving learners home assignments to make surveys about possible

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APPENDIX

Body Movements Evaluation List

S. No.	Type of Body Movement	Appropriateness Rate		
		Appropriate	To Some Extent	Inappropriate
1	Posture/ Gesture			
2	Appearance			
3	Head movements			
4	Head position			
5	Facial expressions			
6	Eye movements			
7	Hand movements			
8	Tapping/cracking/ drumming fingers			
9	Pointing			
10	Rubbing nose			
11	Itching head			
12	Hold owns hands			
13	Hugging			
14	Kissing			
15	Patting			
16	Arm movements			
17	Legs shape/movement			
18	Space/distance			
19	Pitch/Loudness			
20	Vocal fillers			

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