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**Research Article** 

# The Use of Illustrators by Bahdini Kurdish Teachers in EFL University Classrooms

 Fakhir Omar Mohammed / Department of English, College of Humanities, University of Zakho, Kurdistan Region-Iraq.

 Sazan Abbas Saidgul / Directorate of Training, Ministry of Education, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq.

 Bokan Ghazi Khalid / Language and Development Center, College of Basic Education, Raparin University, Kurdistan Region-Iraq.



CORRESPNDENCE Bokan Ghazi Khalid Bokan.ghazi@uor.edu.krd

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## Abstract

This study investigates the various kinds of illustrators that male and female Bahdini Kurdish (BK) lecturers perform in EFL university classes. In this area of study, there is still a lack of research on the impact of nonverbal cues on university-level teaching and learning processes when it comes to classroom communication between instructors and students. Ten university instructors, both male and female, were chosen as a sample for the study. Data was gathered from the lecturers using a descriptive observation method based on the illustrator classification system developed by Ekman and Friesen (1969, 1972). According to the results obtained from using excel sheets, the majority of lecturers employed deictic movements in their classes, followed by kinetographs and spatial movements. In terms of gender, females made up a large share of illustrators, except for ideographs.



#### About the Journal

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#### **1. Introduction**

Leading successful trends in all facets of life requires a speech community's members to have an efficient communication style. While everyone has their unique style of communication, it is important to learn how to do it effectively. Not everyone naturally has excellent communication skills; typically, purposeful work is needed to develop and refine these abilities. Nonverbal communication includes body language, postures, gestures, facial expressions, and spoken words. In the purpose of our research, we concentrate exclusively on a single type of nonverbal cues, namely illustrators, as exhibited by a sample of Bahdini Kurdish (BK) instructors in university EFL courses.

Few studies and researches have been conducted about the employment of illustrators by instructors in Kurdish EFL courses. That is why; the use of illustrators as nonverbal communicating cues is undertaken in the current study. Basically, the study investigates:

- 1. The statistical analysis of illustrators achieved by BK teachers in EFL classrooms.
- 2. The use of illustrators according to gender distinctions.

It's worth mentioning that several researches have been undertaken to demonstrate the impact of nonverbal gestures and cues on teaching and learning processes. However, no research papers are available to investigate the use of illustrators (i.e., conversational gestures) used by teachers and learners in EFL classrooms. Also, studies and research on such a field within settings where the BK is the official language and English is the second language is still open to investigation. Therefore, it is very important to manifest the BK university teachers' illustrators in EFL classrooms, showing the influence of such illustrators according to gender differences.

### 2. Literature Review

Human beings are not robots or machines. Human beings have feelings, emotions, and sensations toward each other. This means that, alongside verbal communication, it is not easy or comfortable for communicators to convey messages without nonverbal cues. This is due to the fact that the speaking and nonverbal movements of the human body usually go parallel. That is, there is a kind of unity between the body and personality (Allport & Vernon, 1933). According to the literature, nonverbal communication is even more affective. On the basis of the findings presented by some linguists such as Mehrabian and Weiner (1967), 93% of all our communication understanding and engagement comes from the nonverbal part. Furthermore, Birdwhistell (1970) and Rammal (2007) believe that humans communicate nonverbally (65% of the time) rather than vocally.

Priori (2005) notes that nonverbal communication (NVC) has been described in a variety of ways because of its complexity. Second, NVC, as a coding and decoding act, refers to sending and receiving messages that enable individuals to communicate their behaviors, knowledge, emotions, and expressions (Hall, 1959). Third, NVC is purposeful. That is, humans communicate nonverbally for some reasons such as: conveying emotions, manifesting interpersonal attitudes, assisting speech in handling the cues of interaction between speakers and listeners, and presenting one's personality, among others (Argyle, 1988; Wrench et al., 2020). Fourth, as a psychological behavior, Gifford (2009, p. 2) states that NVC is inevitable since all our "interpersonal interactions are informationally rich from a myriad of gesture, posture, glance, gaze, expression, distance, tone, clothing, and grooming cues". Fifth, NVC is contextual, where all the context, circumstances, environment, and time and place settings play an important role in interpreting the messages conveyed (Wrench et al., 2020).

Briefly, nonverbal communication is any aspect of communication that is expressed without using words, according to the definition provided by Watzlawick et al. (1967).

### **3.Nonverbal Communication Cues**

Nonverbal cues refer to the expressions and movements that human beings use to communicate with each other without speaking. They include proxemics, postures and gestures, paralanguage, touch, eye contact, and kinesics.

The term "proxemics" refers to the closeness in distance between humans. The interpretation of personal space varies by individual and society. Some cultures value close touch with one another and feel comfortable welcoming each other with hugs, for example. On the other hand, people in other cultures find it more acceptable to shake hands instead of hugs while meeting one another and maintaining their personal space (Dwyer, 2005; Hodgetts et al., 2006).

Postures and gestures are frequent and continuous movements of the body that reflect individual thought processes and regulate communication. For body language to be interpreted as positive and genuine, it needs to appear as natural as possible (Goldman, 1994). The term "paralanguage" describes vocal characteristics that influence how something is uttered rather than what is stated (Deresky, 2006; Dwyer, 2005). Voice plays a crucial part in NVC in terms of message delivery and greatly enhances it (Eunson, 2008).

"The most basic meaning of touch is that an interpersonal bond is being offered or established," states Argyle (1988, p. 226). Depending on the nature of the connection, touch can be used to offer comfort, support, or congratulations (Harris, 2002). Similar to other forms of communication, touch may provoke both good and negative responses based on the situation and the individuals involved (Knapp & Hall, 2002). The use of eye contact in communicating is referred to as eye contact. The eyes are regarded as vital organs in the human body that are involved in both seeing and communication. Both the tongue and the eyes communicate, especially when there is a discrepancy between what is spoken with the eyes. People may convey delight, anxiety, and rage with their eyes (Axtell, 1998).

The systematic study of nonverbal body language in relation to communication is known as kinesics (Markovic, 2017). Kinesics is the study of nonverbal cues sent by body language, including hand, head, foot, and facial expression movements (Birdwhistell, 1970; Jolly, 2000). Because kinesics and spoken word are intimately connected, they can support and strengthen the message being conveyed. For instance, a head nod indicates assent and supports a spoken agreement (Kendon, 2004). Taking into account the purpose of facial expressions and body movements, American psychologist Ekman (2004) separated kinesics into five broader categories: regulators, emblems, adaptors, emotional expressions, and illustrators. They are discussed below:

- Regulators are motions that control how two or more people communicate and listen to each other. They instruct the listener to wait longer, retain that thought, focus, cease talking, start talking again, etc. They tell the speaker to talk more quickly, to repeat, elaborate, to be more engaging, to allow others an opportunity to speak, and so on. (Ekman, 2004).

-Emblems are gestures made with hands with a determined meaning (Hans & Hans, 2015). Emblems are multicultural. The most well-known illustration is the "thumbs up" symbol,

which denotes agreement, like, or acceptance. However, this gesture is absent and inappropriate in the Middle East, west of Africa, and South America (Markovic, 2017, p. 13). Emotion-al expressions, commonly referred to as "affect displays," are gestures that, typically unconsciously, convey feelings to other people. They mostly consist of posture, certain

gestures, and facial emotions (Borg, 2009, p. 20). The face is a vital component of communication as it is the most expressive area of the body. Emotions are frequently a more trustworthy source of information since, in contrast to thinking, they are conveyed externally (Ekman, 2004).

-Adapters, often referred to as "manipulators," are touching movements that represent positive or negative internal moods (Ekman & Friesen, 1969). Subconscious emotions of discomfort, anxiety, and inferiority are typically the cause of manipulator usage (Ekman, 2004). According to Hans & Hans (2015), the most typical touching activities include fidgeting with hands or fingers, twirling hair, and scratching.

-According to Ekman and Friesen (1969), illustrators make reference to gestures that represent speech. Illustrators are people whose bodies speak for them. They serve as visual aids for the spoken word they intend to follow and are the most frequent gesture. You may, for instance, point while providing instructions, smack someone's fist to stress a point, raise your palms to show you don't know, or make hand gestures to show the size or form of an object (Hans & Hans, 2015).

## 4.Illustrators as Significant Cues of Communication

Illustrators are nonverbal actions or signs that serve to illustrate (amplify) what is being said verbally and are closely linked to spoken discourse. Although they can also work with the head, face, and body, illustrators typically work primarily with their hands. "Help emphasize or explain a word" refers to all of these illustrative movements. (Wrench et al., 2020, p. 168). Illustrators are also called conversational gestures (Krauss et al., 1996) or gesticulations (Kendon, 1983). And this is indeed the main purpose of using illustrators appear to be learned in the family, which reflects the larger social or cultural pattern. Illustrators perform acts that are inextricably linked to speech, phrasing, content, voice contour, loudness, etc., from one movement to the next. Conversation is necessary for illustrators to function. Also, illustrators are only shown in a conversation by the speaker, not by the listener.

In brief, illustrators use hand gestures that typically accompany speech.

This kind of relatedness is manifested in three ways (Krauss et al., 1996):

1.Illustrators are made only by the speaker.

2. They are temporally coordinated with speech. That is, one cannot perform conversational gestures when they are silent.

3. They seem to be related to the semantic content of the speech delivered in one way or another.

Illustrators can help the speaker explain his/her ideas through behaviors. In other words, illustrators also serve "a self-priming function, helping the speaker get going or get through a difficult-to-explain thought" (Ekman, 2004, p. 43). This means that the choice is left for the listener to analyze and interpret the illustrated movement into a verbal message.

In this regard, and for the purpose of collecting data in our research, illustrators as important kinesics cues of NVC are classified into seven categories (Ekman & Friesen, 1969, 1972; Bancroft, 1995). They are defined below:

1. Batons are movements that emphasize or accent a single word or phrase. The batons move in ways that emphasize or punctuate; They outpace the verbal message's tempo.

2. Ideographs are movements that depict a thought's path or direction. Ideographs show how an idea develops. The receiver will be able to see the connection between ideas or the direction in which a line of thought is moving thanks to these rolling or flowing movements.

3. Deictic movements are used when pointing to an object, location, or event. The pointer only indicates a current object, location, or event.

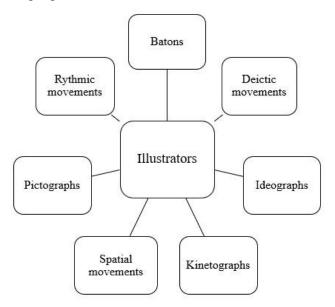
4. Kinetographs are movements that show a person moving or a non-human moving thing.

5. The size of something or a spatial relationship is shown by spatial movements.

6. Pictographs are movements that depict the shape of the reference object in the air. Pictographs are related to pantomiming, frequently used in classrooms; demonstrating an action with a standard imaginary object is what it entails.

7. Movements that depict an event's rhythm or pacing are known as rhythmic movements. Movements are movements that depict the rhythm or pacing of an event.

The abovementioned categories of illustrators are used for data collection. That is, the illustrators achieved by teachers in EFL classrooms are studied. These illustrators are presented on the following figure.



## Figure 1

*Categories of Illustrators* Adopted from Ekman and Friesen (1969, 1972)

## 5.Method

To calculate the number of illustrations used by teachers inside EFL university classrooms, the researchers used the quantitative method in the current research. Ekman and Friesen's research (1969, 1972) was very helpful in finding definitions of the different types of

illustrators and some extra information about them. The following sub-sections include research design, participants and sampling procedure, instruments, and data collection procedure.

#### 6. Research Design

To study the different types of illustrators as a part of kinesics in NVC in Bahdini EFL university classrooms, the researchers collected information and data from teachers during the lecture when they clarified their speech through their illustrative movements. The researchers attended only one lecture for each teacher to record the number of illustrators they used inside the class by a table of recording illustrators on a paper. The teachers selected were male and female, to demonstrate the level of comparison between both genders in EFL university classrooms during the academic year 2022-2023 at the English Department, University of Zakho.

#### 7. Participants and Sampling Procedures

The participants chosen for the current study were only teachers from both genders. The teachers were 10 in number (5 males and 5 females) from the English Department, University of Zakho, Kurdistan Region, Iraq. Since gender differences were important in this study, teachers from both genders were chosen for participation. In this study, the importance and the role of teacher regarding the use of illustrators is considered as one of the most important topics to be covered.

#### 8. Instruments and Data Collection Procedures

The instruments and procedures that were used to gather the information and data were the following:

1. For this study, a table that includes the seven types of illustrators by Ekman and Friesen (1969, 1972) is used by the researchers to attend classes of teachers from both genders (male and female) for recording the illustrators.

2. Before attending the classes, the researchers asked teachers for permission to allow them to attend their lectures. The researchers used a smartphone to record time for only 1 hour in the lecture.

3. The researchers sat at the end of the class to observe the teachers' illustrators while they explained the material about different subjects. They put their whole focus on teacher's each illustrator in the class. To note how many times (i.e., occurrences) they used each type of illustrator, they put a line next to each type of illustrator, which was included in the table (See Appendix I).

4. The table was used to collect the total number of all the illustrators to show the percentage of each illustrator of both male and female teachers.

5. The total number of participants was 10 (5 males and 5 females). The researchers attended the lectures of (6) male teachers, but one of them was excluded because he did not use enough illustrators and was only sitting on his seat while explaining the lecture; therefore, the researchers could not be able to choose him as a participant teacher.

6. The classes were second, third, and fourth year at the English Department, University of Zakho, and teachers were also from the same department.

7. The researchers used Excel sheets to create a table of illustrators to show the frequencies and percentages of illustrators under investigation.

### 9. Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

Based on the literature review and aims of the study, the obtained data were analyzed and discussed according to two areas, namely, 1) the types of illustrators performed by teachers in EFL classrooms, Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, University of Zakho, and 2) the effect of gender on teachers' illustrators. For data analysis and discussion, the researchers used a classification of illustrators developed by Ekman and Friesen (1969, 1972): batons, ideographs, deictic movements, kinetographs, spatial movements, pictographs, and rhythmic movements.

As referred to earlier in the methodology, a total of 10 teachers (5 males and 5 females) voluntarily participated in our study. The teachers were asked for permission so the researchers could collect data from them during the lecture. Observing the teacher's illustrators performed in the class, the results showed that there were different frequencies of the illustrators performed understudy. The percentages of illustrators performed by the selected teachers in EFL classrooms are presented in the following figure:

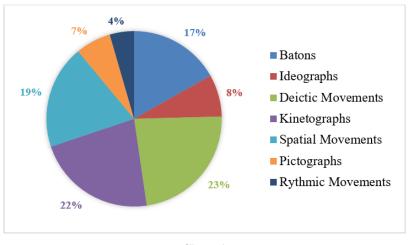


Chart 1 Percentages Calculated for Teachers' Illustrators in EFL Classrooms

From the total of 826 illustrators, as nonverbal cues performed by teachers in EFL classrooms, it was observed that the highest percentage was calculated for the deictic movements and it was 23%. In contrast, the lowest percentage (i.e., 4%) was recorded for the rhythmic movements. The other types of illustrators showed different percentages, as presented on Figure 2.

Concerning the effect of gender on how the selected teachers in EFL classrooms use illustrators, almost all types of illustrators recorded higher percentages for females. The highest percentage calculated for females was the use of deictic movements and it was 13.7%, followed by kinetographs (11.6%), spatial movements (10.8%), and batons (10.2%). On the other hand, the lowest percentage of illustrators the females showed was the ideographs (2.5%). The results show that females tend to use more deictic reference points than males. This may be because females do their best to create images in the minds of learners by

referring to existing physical objects and entities around them. That is, female teachers are reluctant to stay in their position in the classroom, not establishing any kind of relational closeness with their students (Miller, 2011). This could be one reason. Another good reason, as confirmed by Sokolov, et al. (2011), is that "females exhibit higher sensitivity to non-verbal cues".

According to male teachers, they manifested kinetographs more frequently (10.5%), showing a slightly higher percentage than females. This was the highest percentage recorded for males among all types of illustrators. However, it is something natural for male and female teachers to behave in a way that shows different physical bodily movements and postures in daily life situations, especially in the classrooms. Human beings are not robots. The second highest percentage among males was calculated for deictic movements (9.4%), followed by spatial movements (8.4%), batons (6.7%), and ideographs (5.2%). The following figure shows percentages of illustrators according to gender:

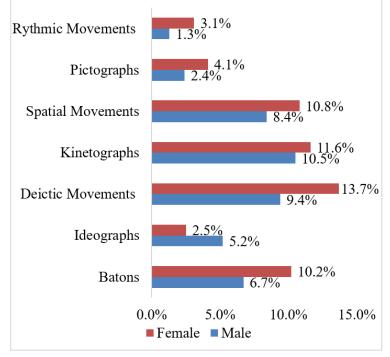


Chart 2 Percentages Calculated for Teachers' Illustrators according to Gender

#### **10.** Conclusions

Basied on the results, the current paper attempted to answer the study's main objectives, that are, observing and interpreting the use of illustrators presented by teachers in Bahdini EFL classrooms, tackling the effect of gender differences on these illustrators. This study was conducted because illustrators as NVC cues within Kurdish settings have not been assessed before. The main points of conclusion that are drived throughout the study are the following:

1. Deictic movements were mostly used by teachers in EFL classrooms. Kinetographs and spatial movements were also very remarkable in classroom settings. However, the least frequently used type of illustrators was the rhythmic movements.

2. Concerning gender, females recorded high percentages for almost all types of illustrators, except for ideographs. Deictic movements, batons, spatial movements, and kinetographs were mostly used by female teachers. Such frequencies were slightly different with those of males.

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#### Appendix 1

A screenshot of frequencies calculated for illustrators used by teachers in EFL classrooms

(one sample)

Teacher: Male 🦳 Female 🔀				
Illustrators	Frequency	Total		
Batons (Emphasizing something)	-HIT H# H# IIII	19		
Ideographs (Directing a thought)	Htt 1	6		
Deictic movements (Pointing to objects)	Htt-Htt Htt Htt Htt Htt I	31		
Kinetographs (Depicting physical actions)	HTT HTT HTT HTT	22		
Spatial movements (Identifying space)		25		
Pictographs (Drawing pictures in the air)	HHT 111	8		
Rhythmic movements (Showing pacing motions)	111	3		

		1
Illustrators	Frequency	Total
Batons (Emphasizing something)	THE THE U	12
Ideographs (Directing a thought)	JULY IN I	5
Deictic movements (Pointing to objects)	THE THE THE THE UN	23
Kinetographs (Depicting physical actions)	الا الملك المحل الحل	18
Spatial movements (Identifying space)	ות אוד גווד מור אור אור אולו	28
Pictographs (Drawing pictures in the air)	411( -1417	10
Rhythmic movements (Showing pacing motions)	AHT 1	6

#### بەكارھێنانى پەيوەنديە نازارەكيەكان لەلايەن مامۆستايانى كوردى بادينى لە پۆلە زانكۆيەكانى EFL

بۆكان غازى خالد	سازان عباس سيدگوڵ	فاخير عمر محمد
سەنتەرى پەرەپێدان و زمان، كۆلێژى پەروەردەى بنەڕەت،	بەرپۆەبەرايەتى راھێنان، وەزارەتى پەروەردە،	بەشى ئىنگلىزى، كۆلىرى زانستەمرۆڤايەتيەكان،
زانكۆى پاپەرين، ھەرێمى كوردستان-عراق	ھەولێر،ھەرێمى كوردستان -عراق	زانكۆى زاخۆ، ھەرێمى كوردستان-عراق

faxir.mohammed@uoz.edu.krd

sazan.saidgul@su.edu.krd

bokan.ghazi@uor.edu.krd

#### پوخته

ئەف قەكولىنە خواندن و شروقەكرنە بو ھندەك جورێن لڤىنێن نەزارەكى كو ژلايێ ماموستايێن بەھدىنى يێن EFL (نێر و مێ) دناڤ پولێن زانكويێ دا ھاتىنە ئەنجامدان. دڨ بوارىدا، قەكولىن لدور چەوانيا بكارئىنانا لڤىنێن نەزارەكى و كارتێكرنا وان لسەر پروسێسا خواندن و فێربوونێ لسەر ئاستێ زانكويێ دكێمن. لەوما دەھ ماموستايێن زانكويێ، نێر و مێ، بو مەرەما ڨێ قەكولينێ ھاتىنە ھەلبژارتن. داتايێن قەكولينێ برێكا ميتودا وەسفى و چاقدێريكرنێ ھاتىنە كومكرن، و قەكولەران سيستەمێ پولينكرنا لڤينێن نەزارەكى يێن ئێكمان و فريزنى (1969، 1972) بكارئىنايە. ب رێكا ميتودا وەسفى و چاقدێريكرنێ ھاتىنە كومكرن، ماموستايێن پشكدار لڤينێن ئىشارەتكرنێ دوانكن خودا بكارئىنان، پاشى لڤينێن فيزيكى جەستەيي و دويڤدا لڤينێن جهى، و ھەروەسا رەگەزێ مێ پترين لڨينێن نەزارەكى ژبلى ئىديوگراڧان بكارئىنان.

**پەيۋا سەرەكى**: وێناكێشان(لڤينێن ئيشارەتكرنێ)، لڤينێن نەزارەكى ، ماموستايێن كوردى بەھدىنى ، زانكۆ

#### ستخدام الإشارات من قبل مدرسوا البهديني الكرد في الفصول الجامعية لمادة اللغة الإنجليزية

بۆكان غازى خالد	سازان عباس سيدگوڵ	فاخر عمر محمد
مركز التنمية واللغة، كلية التربية الأساسية،	مديرية التدريب، وزارة التربية، اربيل،	قسمر اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية العلومر الإنسانية،
جامعة رابرين، إقليمر كردستان-العراق	اقليمر كوردستان - العراق	جامعة زاخو، إقليم كردستان-العراق
bokan.ghazi@uor.edu.krd	sazan.saidgul@su.edu.krd	faxir.mohammed@uoz.edu.krd

#### ملخص

يبحث البحث الحالي في انواع مختلفه من الأشارات التي يستخدمها مدرسوا باهديني الكرد(BK) ، ذكوراً وإناثاً، في الفصول الدراسية لمادة اللغه الانكليزيه في المرحله الجامعيه كلغة أجنبية. ومن خلال الإشارة إلى التواصل الصفي بين المعلمين والطلاب، نجد بانه لا يزال هناك نقص في الأبحاث حول كيفية تأثير الإشارات غير اللفظية على عمليات التدريس والتعلم على المستوى الجامعي. وياتي هذا البحث كمحاوله لمعالجة هذه الظاهره. ولإجراء الدراسة تم اختيار عينة مكونة من 10 مدرسين وأساتذة جامعيين. ومن خلال اعتماد تصنيف إيكمان وفريزين لمستخدمي الاشارات (1969، 1972)، تم استخدام أسلوب الملاحظة الوصفية لجمع البيانات من المعلمين عن طريق جداول برنامج إكسل. وتوصلت الدراسه إلى أن غالبية المعلمين استخدموا الدراليه في فصولهم الدراسية ومن ثم الأشارات الحركية والحركات المكانية. وفيما يتعلق البحث بالجنس، سجلت الإناث نسباً عالية لجميع أنواع الأشارات تقريباً، باستثناء الأيديوغراف (الرسم البياني).

الكلمات المفتاحيية: الأشارات، مدرسوا باهديني الكرد، الإشارات غير اللفظية، جامعة