

'I See What You Mean': The Role of Kinesic Behaviour in Listening and Implications for Foreign and Second Language Learning

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Abstract

Kinesic behaviour (i.e. body movement) plays a significant role in communication, both in encoding and decoding. Evidence is reviewed which demonstrates the importance of information derived from kinesic behaviour to the activity of listening in the mother tongue, and the possible effects of an absence of this visual information. The implications are considered for the development of listening skills in a second or foreign language, particularly in the light of the increasingly common practice of using audio-taped material for listening comprehension practice and testing. Video-taped listening material preserves much of the visual information, including that conveyed by kinesic behaviour, that we normally use in listening. The question as to whether kinesic behaviour is interpretable and usable across cultures is briefly considered.

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