



## Gestures and Their Meaning of Main Character in Alex Hardcastle's Movie "Senior Year (2022)"

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### ABSTRACT

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This study analyzes gestures and their meaning in Senior Year (2022) movie. The objectives of this study are (1) to find out the types and their meaning used by the main character, and (2) to analyze the meanings of gestures in relation to the semantic meaning of the main character. This study used a qualitative descriptive method using the theory of types and meaning of gestures by David McNeil and Levy (2005), and Semantic Meaning by Chaer (1994). This study showed that 86 data had been found. There are 12 (14%) data as iconic gestures, 13 (15%) data as deictic gestures, 16 (19%) data as metaphor gestures, and 45 (52%) data as beat gestures. The meaning of the gesture used by the main character also varies based on gesture. The meaning of gesture is supported by the utterances in the dialogue (Semantic Meaning). It means that the use of gestures related to the meaning of utterances. But, there are some data that do not have a cultural meaning and no relation to the semantic meaning, such as beat type. A beat gesture is a simple gesture a rhythmic movement that does not express semantic content. The main character used beat gestures to lose nervousness, to get more relaxed, to be more effective and expressive, and to increase self-confidence.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Gestures are often found when communicating between two or more people in everyday life so that it cannot be separated from communication activities. According to Hanif Raah (2015), gesture is the language that speaks without words. Then, according to Toastmasters and McNeill (2011), a gesture is a particular physical. From this understanding, it can be seen that gestures are movement activities carried out by the speaker accompanying the speech that is being carried out. However, sometimes gestures can also be done alone without speech. Our hands help us talk, think, and remember, sometimes revealing unique knowledge that cannot yet be verbalized (Goldin-Meadow et al., 1993). This is because using gestures is more effective, expressive, and time efficient than using words. In other words, gestures are important in communication. This is also represented in *Senior Year (2022)* movie, an American comedy movie directed by Alex Hardcastle from a screenplay, released on May 13, 2022, on Netflix. This 1

hour 51 minutes movie occupies the first position in the list of English-language movies that were watched by 55.94 million/hour, and the trailer was watched 10 million times. Based on the phenomenon, the new gap in this research to find out why the dominant gesture and whether the meaning of all gestures used in "*Senior Year (2022)*" movies are related to the semantic meaning.

## **METHOD**

This research is conducted using a qualitative descriptive method. In collecting the data, download and watch the movie by researcher. Then, take documentation by the screenshot, and clarify the data. While, the researcher analyzes the data by following steps, such as identify types of gestures, analyze the meanings of gestures, concludes and re-examines whether the conclusions are appropriate enough to answer the two research problems of the researcher.

## FINDINGS

### Data 1 (00:16:47)



Stephanie : **Cause there's bunch of birthday cards for, like, a really old person. (Using thumb to point)**

Nurse : Dr. Johnson to the third floor, the cheerleader just woke up.

#### a) Type and Meaning of Gesture

Type of gesture is Deictic Gesture. Deictic gesture is gesture that pointing. This is shown by the main character where she uses her thumb to point the direction according to the concept of a deictic gesture. Based on the gesture, using the thumb to point in another direction can be interpreted as a gesture to indicate and emphasize to the other person to look in the direction indicated.

#### b) Meaning of Gesture in Relation with Utterance (Semantic Meaning)

The meaning of the gesture in relation to the utterance “Cause there's a bunch of birthday cards for, like, a really old person!” means that there is something as strange and confusing as a bunch of birthday cards for the very old.

### Data 2 (00:16:52)



Stephanie : **And the TV's flat, like the back of it is missing. (Hand gesture to describe flat shapes)**

Nurse : Dr. Johnson to the third floor, the cheerleader just woke up.

#### a) Type and Meaning of Gesture

Type of gesture is Iconic Gesture. Iconic gesture is a gesture that describes an object that has

definite meaning. This is shown by the main character where she moves the hand gesture to describe a flat object. Based on the gesture, the meaning of gesture in this scene, Stephanie wants to describe an object by using a hand gesture.

b) Meaning of Gesture in Relation with Utterance (Semantic Meaning)

Based on the utterance "And the TV's flat, like the back of it is missing", the meaning of gesture in relation to utterance (Semantic Meaning) is that Stephanie describes an object, more clearly describing a flat-shaped television different from what she has seen before.

**Data 3 (00:19:18)**



**Martha : I'm actually a high school principal at Harding.**

**(Gesture of hands holding stomach)**

Stephanie : Oh my God, you still got a good sense of humor.

a) Type and Meaning of Gesture

Type of gesture is Metaphor Gesture. Metaphor gesture is a gesture that describes something abstract or uncertain. This is shown by the main character where Stephanie holds her stomach. Based on the gesture, holding the stomach means that someone has a stomach ache, hungry, or full.

b) Meaning of Gesture in Relation with Utterance (Semantic Meaning)

Based on the utterances "Oh my God, you still got a good sense of humor", it is included in the contextual meaning. The meaning of the gesture based on the utterance clarifies the meaning of Stephanie's gesture in that she feels that the conversation of her interlocutor is very funny.

**Data 4 (00:25:28)**



Martha : Steph, hey, you know what? Instead, there's online classes or GED courses at the community college.

**Stephanie : I cannot move on to the next chapter of my life.  
(Gesture of the hand where up and down)**

a) Type and Meaning of Gesture

The type of gesture is Beat Gesture. Beat gesture is gesture in the rhythm of speech. This is shown by the main character where Stephanie shows hand gestures such as going up and down, left and right as a compliment when speaking so she is not stiff. The Meaning of Gesture in this context has nothing to do with it. The gesture this scene is used only as accompaniment when speaking.

b) Meaning of Gesture in Relation with Utterance (Semantic Meaning)

Based on utterance "I cannot move on to the next chapter of my life", it includes contextual meaning where Stephanie feels frustrated at what has happened to her.

The following is a table of the percentage of types of gestures:

**Table 1 : Percentage of Type of Gesture**

No.	Types of Gesture	Data	Percentage (%)
1	Iconic	12	14 %
2	Deictic	13	15 %
3	Metaphor	16	19 %
4	Beat	45	52 %
Total		86	100 %

## DISCUSSION

There are four types of main character gestures in the film *Senior Year* (2022), as the researcher had done in the analysis. There were 4 types found, such as iconic gestures, deictic gestures, metaphor gestures, and beat gestures. Based on the findings, the most dominant type is the beat gesture where the main character often uses hand gestures such as going up and down as a complement when speaking so they are not stiff. Meanwhile, the type of gesture that is rarely found is the iconic gesture, where the main character only uses it occasionally, such as when Stephanie told Seth to call her immediately. Then, the analyzed data has different meaning gestures. This is because every gesture has its own meaning according to the gesture. For example, meaning of the gesture where the main character holds her stomach which can mean that she has a stomach ache or even is hungry. The last, the use of gestures is to support semantic

meaning. This research, on the contrary, analyzes how the meaning of gesture is related to semantic meaning. It turns out that the findings show that the meaning of gesture is related to the semantic meaning. However, some of the meanings of gestures actually have nothing to do with the semantic meaning or the meaning of the utterances that are spoken, such as beat gesture.

## CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, the conclusion are:

1. There are four types of gestures in the film *Senior Year* (2022), as the researcher has done in the analysis. There are 86 data found. There are 12 (14%) data as iconic gestures, 13 (15%) data as deictic gestures, 16 (19%) data as metaphor gestures, and 45 (52%) data as beat. The meaning of gesture varies greatly based on the gesture.
2. The meaning of gesture supported by the utterances in dialog (Semantic Meaning). It means that the use of gestures related to the meaning of utterances. But, there are some data that do not have a meaning and no relation to the semantic meaning, such as beat type. A beat gesture is a simple gesture a rhythmic movement that does not express semantic content. The main character used beat gestures to loss nervousness, to get more relax, to be more effective and expressive, and to build self-confidence.

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