Article

Use and Function of Gestures in Persuasive Business Communication: A Contrastive Study between Spanish and English

Ana M. Cestero Mancera [1] and Mercedes Díez-Prados [2,*]

1   Department of Filología, Comunicación and Documentación, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Alcalá, 28801 Madrid, Spain; anam.cestero@uah.es
2   Department of Filología Moderna, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Alcalá, Alcalá de Henares, 28801 Madrid, Spain
*   Correspondence: mercedes.diez@uah.es

Abstract: This study sheds light on the types and frequencies of kinesic signs used in business pitches by entrepreneurs in Spanish and English, as well as the functions these nonverbal signs fulfil to contribute to the persuasiveness of their presentations. The corpus consists of 20 pitches (10 in each language) from two equivalent TV programs (the reality shows *Dragons' Den* and *Tu Oportunidad* from the UK and Spain, respectively). A specific method of analysis previously developed by Cestero Mancera is used to identify signs in an inductive, qualitative way that allows us to apply a quantitative methodology to distinguish among the different subpopulations of the subjects studied (male and female presenters in Spanish and English presentations). The results show that facial gesturing is the most frequent type used by all presenters, although speakers of each language seem to have diverse preferences for the rest of the signs (head, hand and other body gestures). Kinesic signs apparently display the same pragmatic functions in Spanish and English, although they are more frequently used in Spanish (63.78% of the 784 signs found) than English (36.22%). Gender may be considered an influential factor when observed within the same language but not as a variable; furthermore, gender preferences are reversed when associated with language (i.e., female Spanish presentations display the most signs, while English presentations by females display the least; male presentations are in between these, there being more in Spanish than in English presentations).

Keywords: nonverbal communication; kinesic sigs; contrastive study; business communication

1. Introduction

The relevance of non-verbal communication in the corporate and business world has been a topic of discussion for some time now (Gordillo León et al. 2014; De Santiago Guervós 2005; Martín Arévalo 2014a, 2014b; Olascoaga 2012; Zhou and Zhang 2008), and the use of non-strategic nonverbal signs, especially kinesic ones, is related to success in negotiations (Pease 2000). In this field, nonverbal communication fulfils different functions, specifically facilitating the understanding of a message, capturing attention, structuring the discourse or interaction and especially expressing emotions, attitudes and psychological states; the latter in particular predisposed to persuasion as it allows the persuader to modify their performance in light of the audience's nonverbal reactions (Burgoon et al. 2016, pp. 343–72). As Gordillo León et al. (2014, pp. 648–49) highlight, emotions have a crucial, leading role in cognitive processes, specifically relevant in decision making since emotional processing guides behavior at the time of the decision, which motivates action and improves the process and outcome of persuasion in the negotiation interaction. Before Cestero Mancera (2018a, 2018b), research had focused exclusively on rational aspects, leaving to one side the emotional aspects, especially because of the difficulty their study entails (McNeill 2005; Pentland 2015; Rulicky and Cherny 2011). In her studies, Cestero

Mancera (2018a, 2018b) proved the prominent role nonverbal signs, both paralinguistic and kinesic, play in displaying emotions in short business presentations such as the elevator pitch in Spanish to connect with and move investors, as well as in grabbing attention, highlighting content or organizing the discourse macrostructure.

In a previous study (Cestero Mancera and Díez-Prados 2021), quantitative and qualitative differences were found in the use of paralinguistic nonverbal signs between Spanish and British entrepreneurs, as well as between male and female speakers when using them to persuade the audience (i.e., to appeal to both ethos, or credibility, and emotion, or pathos). Spanish speakers preferred sound lengthening, while British entrepreneurs resorted to variations in tone and volume. Regarding gender, some paralinguistic devices were employed by both males and females, but with different functions (e.g., Spanish males used tone–volume variation to highlight information, while Spanish females used them to downplay it, and female entrepreneurs, both British and Spanish, used pauses more often than men and with different functions: males to highlight and females due to hesitation[1]). Likewise, the relevance of nonverbal signs (both paralinguistic and kinesic) with an engagement function was proved in Díez-Prados (2019), even to replace verbal linguistic engagement devices, in the British pitches of the same corpus (i.e., pitches collected from the UK program Dragons' Den).

In the present study, the aim is to expand the contrastive work initiated in Cestero Mancera and Díez-Prados (2021) to check the use and function of other nonverbal devices of a kinesic type: gestures. Cestero Mancera (2018b) explained in detail the frequency and function of these nonverbal devices in the Spanish subcorpus of business pitches (i.e., 10 pitches taken from the Spanish TV program Tu Oportunidad); our aim now is to compare and contrast that use with the one displayed by entrepreneurs in English presentations. There are plenty of studies that have addressed nonverbal communication from disciplines of varied fields, such as psychology or business communication (see, for example, the work of Matsumoto et al. 2016 or Burgoon et al. 2016, among many others). However, to our knowledge, little attention has been devoted to observing empirically and systematically the real use speakers make of nonverbal signs in business encounters, even if kinesics has traditionally been attended to in other areas of nonverbal communication, such as paralanguage. With this objective in mind, the research questions that guide our research are as follows:

1. Which kinesic devices (i.e., gestures in particular) are used in persuasive discourse (i.e., concretely, business presentations of the entrepreneurial type), and what function do they (seem to) fulfil?
2. Do Spanish and English speakers employ the same/different gestures? Do the gestures in English and Spanish[2] fulfil the same functions?
3. Do the nonverbal kinesic signs (seem to) attend to language and/or gender parameters? If so, which variable (i.e., language or gender) seems more prevalent?

In order to answer these questions, two corpora of similar characteristics have been analyzed following Cestero Mancera's (2016, 2018a, 2018b) framework, as explained in Section 3. The next section provides the theoretical background of the study by examining the relevant literature on persuasive and nonverbal communication. Section 4 presents the main results from a quantitative perspective, and Section 5 discusses those findings from a qualitative one. The article ends with Section 6 where the main relevant conclusions drawn from the findings are gathered, recalling the research questions in an attempt to answer them.

2. The Role of Nonverbal Language in Persuasive Communication

Humans communicate to construct and maintain social networks and they carry this out mainly using language. However, language experts from different fields know that language as a communication code is not only made up of linguistic signs, since human communication is multimodal (i.e., different channels intervene in the transmission and interpretations of discourse). Thus, Poyatos (1993) claimed that verbal language does

not operate as an autonomous system but in co-construction with two other structures or systems: paralanguage (i.e., voice quality, modifiers, independent sounds and silences) and kinesics (i.e., gestures, manners and postures); this threefold manifestation of language is what he calls the *basic triple structure* of language (Poyatos 1994a, pp. 129–47).

Likewise, one of the main functions of human communication is to express how we view the world with the aim of moving others to our side, that is, to convince them that our worldview is more valid than theirs, inviting them to change their previous beliefs or "their level of commitment to an existing one" (Pullman 2013, p. xx). This is known as *persuasion*, and it is as old, at least, as ancient rhetoric and the work of Aristotle or Cicero in 4th century B.C. Virtanen and Halmari (2005; Halmari and Virtanen 2005) believe that many of our daily life concerns depend on persuading others, such as convincing my business partner "to agree to my terms" (p. 230) or, as in our corpus, to move the investors to garner financial support for my business idea. This is the main persuasive aim of the genre we are examining in this paper, the *elevator pitch*, a brief oral presentation whose main purpose is to sell a project or idea to a so-called group of business angel(s). In this sense, this type of genre could be equated with advertising discourse (Bamford and Salvi 2007).

The entrepreneurs who deliver these pitches need to highlight their unique selling point in an attempt to present their business as worth investing in. This type of discourse is undoubtedly a kind of "persuasive pill" (Díez-Prados 2024) due to its condensed nature and its prominent function of convincing the audience of our ideas. The UK presenter of the program from where we gathered our corpus in English says that "it takes a good pitch, a great product and a persuasive personality to convince the Dragons to invest. Will our first entrepreneur have all three?" (Fear, Dragons Den, UK, Season 1). This clearly points out that, of course, the product or business idea is crucial for investment, but a great deal of moving the audience to invest depends on having a persuasive personality that will manifest in a good, persuasive pitch. Entrepreneurs persuade investors via verbal language, but, as we will try to demonstrate here, this is accompanied by a profuse number of nonverbal signs, focusing this time on gesture (for the paralinguistic devices, see Cestero Mancera and Díez-Prados 2021).

Within the tradition of classical rhetoric, Aristotle (Aristóteles 1995) held that persuasion can be accomplished via three techniques as De Santiago Guervós (2005) explains: appealing to the credibility of the speaker (ethos), appealing to emotions (pathos) or appealing to logic or reason (logos). Persuasion is most effective if all three are taken into account. In the same way these techniques are typically applied using verbal signs (i.e., the lexico-grammatical and rhetorical resources that language and style provide), the main thesis that supports our work on nonverbal signs as used in these business encounters is that nonverbal signs can also appeal to these three techniques. Cestero Mancera (2018a, 2018b)'s analyses confirmed that the expression of emotions, attitudes and psychological states can be expressed by multifunctional nonverbal signs, appealing thus to ethos and pathos. Logos is also appealed to by resorting to nonverbal signs, whose function is to structure and highlight relevant information, aiding comprehension.

Persuasion tries to awaken emotions (Goleman 1995, 2006), but persuasive discourse should not exclusively, nor mainly, be loaded with emotional language, but it should have a balanced and appropriate use of the three Aristotelian techniques to be effective (De Santiago Guervós 2005; Pullman 2013). And presenting one's ideas effectively provides entrepreneurs with more chances to be financially backed in their projects. We presume, thus, that our entrepreneurs try to do this to the best of their ability. This ability could be improved if presenters become aware of the most effective techniques at hand. This study could, therefore, be considered a contribution in this sense.

In the rest of the article, we will address the research questions posed in the Introduction to observe how the entrepreneurs in our corpus deployed their kinesic resources to contribute to the persuasiveness of their verbal messages. In the following section, we explain the research procedure of data collection and the methodology followed to analyze the kinesic signs used.

3. Materials and Methods

The investigation on kinesic nonverbal resources in persuasive communication that we present here has been carried out as part of a project[3] that attempted to discover the nonverbal and linguistic strategies that are used in persuasive discourse in the corporate and business world, as well as its socio-pragmatic and cultural variation. As aforementioned, the corpus consisted of 10 business presentations in Spanish taken from the TV program Tu Oportunidad (Your Opportunity/Chance), broadcast from 2013 to 2014 by TVE1 (Spain), and 10 in English from a similar program in the United Kingdom known as Dragon's Den, broadcast on UK TV, in order to make intercultural comparisons and to establish sociocultural patterns. The corpus collected is displayed in Table 1. As can be seen, 10 pitches were delivered by male entrepreneurs and 10 by females (5 from each language and gender); they were all middle-aged adults and their presentations lasted around 1 min. The length is represented in the table in terms of seconds and number of words used per pitch (both function and content words included). Despite the fact that these encounters are televised interactions, the pitches are non-scripted and have an authentic communicative persuasive function since the program's main objective is to give entrepreneurs the chance to present their project or business idea and garner investment from one or more of the business angels invited to the program. As García-Gómez (2018, p. 18) states, this type of program can be considered a combination of routine business practices and reality shows, and as such, they are apt for discourse analysis (see, for example, Daly and Davy 2016a, 2016b; García-Gómez 2018; De Santiago Guervós 2019; Fernández-Vázquez and Álvarez-Delgado 2019).

Table 1. Corpus.

Tu Oportunidad **(TVE1)**					
Male	**Time (s)**	**Words**	**Female**	**Time (s)**	**Words**
By-Hours.com[4]	73	275	Matarrania Cosmetica Natural	98	191
ImasD	61	191	Suproma	93	275
Vertical	39	100	Envase PET	134	266
Easy Key	41	111	PipiPop	91	219
Macetas Abril	91	219	Viseric	64	180
Subtotals	305	896	Totals	480	1131
Total Time Spanish	785 s (13.08 min)		Total Words Spanish	2027	
Dragons' Den **(UK TV)**					
Male	**Time**	**Words**	**Female**	**Time**	**Words**
Accommodationforstudents.com	59	192	Books That Matter	66	187
Baby Grippa	103	282	Skinny Tan	61	182
Fear	136	377	Treat for Dogs	83	206
BodySculpure	74	257	Coffee Bag	66	216
Signs	137	456	Pop & Go Knickers	92	175
Subtotals	509	1564	Totals	382	970
Total Time English	877 s (14.62 min)		Total Words English	1936	

We are fully aware of the limitations of the sample; 20 pitches do not seem enough to draw conclusive results, particularly when the variables of gender and language are considered. Despite this limitation, the results will demonstrate how prolific the analyses carried out were in terms of the number of nonverbal signs found. Similar studies carried out on the verbal signs of pitches have been conducted with samples of equivalent sizes (see, for instance, Daly and Davy 2016a; García-Gómez 2018; De Santiago Guervós 2019; or Fernández-Vázquez and Álvarez-Delgado 2019), achieving insightful results; future research on non-verbal features would, notwithstanding, be desirable to confirm the results found in the present study.

The presentations, or business entrepreneurial pitches, delivered at the beginning of the programs were transcribed, codified and analyzed for nonverbal features according to Cestero Mancera's ad hoc self-developed scheme. Using an inductive qualitative methodology, she established categories and their functions from the data observed in the Spanish pitches in order to identify the nonverbal signs according to the following criteria:

- Whether the signs can be segmented or not;
- Whether they occurred in combination with verbal signs or whether they could occur independently;
- Whether they were semantic or asemantic (i.e., whether they have a specific semantic value or whether they are emphasizers, regulators or specific attitudinal demonstrations, following Forgas and Herrera 2000).

The list of nonverbal signs that show a fundamental incidence in the acts studied is ample and open since new signs may be observed and consequently added to the categorization. These are the signs identified for the kinesic paradigm:

1. Facial kinesics:
    a. Smile (taking into account production moment, duration and fullness);
    b. Look or gaze (direct and distributed, upward and downward deviations, sideways);
    c. Facial markers and indicators:
        - Asemantic:
            - Eyebrow raising;
            - Blinking;
            - Raising mouth edges.
        - Semantic:
            - Blinking;
            - Nose wrinkling;
            - Sticking out tongue.
    d. Independent facial gestures:
        - Blinking;
        - Horizontal stretching mouth edges;
        - Passing tongue over lips.

2. Corporal/body kinesics:
    a. Head gestures:
        - Markers and head indicators:
            - Asemantic:
                - Head nods (vertical, horizontal, lateral);
                - Head/neck rotations (raising or lowering);
                - Head/neck stretching.
            - Semantic:
                - Head nods (horizontal, e.g., meaning 'no');
                - Head/neck stretching.
            - Independent head gestures:
                - Head nods (vertical, horizontal, lateral);
                - Head/neck stretching.
    b. Hand gestures:
        - Markers and hand indicators:
            - Asemantic:
                a. Slapping/beating/pointing hand movement (with one or both hands; vertical or horizontal—with closed positioning, semi-closed, semi-open, open and interlaced; with palms facing up or facing down,

outwards or inwards and facing each other);

b.　Hand turn/rotation (with one or both hands, semicircular, frontwards or sideways—with open positioning of hands, semi-open or closed; with palms facing up or facing down);

c.　Hand rubbing;

d.　Hand/arm swinging.

- Semantic:

a.　Slapping/beating/pointing hand movement (same description as above);

b.　Hand turn/rotation (same as above);

c.　Hand raising (with one or both hands; closed or open, palms facing upwards or towards the speaker);

d.　Finger lacing.

- Independent hand gestures (non-discourse markers):

a.　Slapping/beating/pointing hand movement (with one or both hands; vertical or horizontal);

b.　Turn/rotation;

c.　Hand rubbing.

c.　Other body gestures:

- Semantic indicators: body swinging;
- Physical contact (with people or objects).

This categorization of devices was used for the analysis of the pitches in Spanish and English to check whether it was applicable cross-culturally and cross-linguistically or whether different gestures were identified. The fact that both corpora were equivalent in form and function made them suitable for comparison; moreover, in order to establish comparisons between languages, the same model had to be applied, avoiding, if possible, adaptations or re-formulations so that the comparison is feasible (Taboada 2004, p. 3). Had the two corpora been analyzed according to different models, patterns of use in the two languages analyzed would not have been mutually compatible. Notwithstanding, the model used to classify the gestures that accompanied verbal manifestations was readily applied in both languages. Further proof of the applicability of Cestero Mancera's model was manifested in Cestero Mancera and Díez-Prados's (2021) study, where paralinguistic features were analyzed in English and Spanish as well. Some gestures like *emblems* (i.e., gestures that substitute language) may be more culturally dependent (Burgoon et al. 2016, p. 41), differing in meaning or form (e.g., nodding to say 'yes' is a well-known emblematic gesture in English or Spanish but may be odd in some cultures since they are translations and, as such, "tied to language", ibid.). However, face, head, hand or other body movements to accompany our words or in isolation can be universal in form, even if they have diverse pragmatic functions.

As for the validity of the verbal corpora selected, the fact that they are taken from television programs does not alter their authenticity for the following reasons:

- The interaction is not scripted.
- The pitches were delivered without pauses or editing.
- The type of TV program can be considered a reality show in which participants interact with an authentic transactional function (i.e., gain investment for the project); as a reality program, the discourse produced falls within the limits of public discourse (García-Gómez 2018, p. 8), as manifested in our previous study (Cestero Mancera and Díez-Prados 2021).
- This same type of corpus has been used in other studies (e.g., Daly and Davy 2016a, 2016b; García-Gómez 2018; Fernández-Vázquez and Álvarez-Delgado 2019; De Santiago Guervós 2019, as well as in all our previous studies aforementioned).

Apart from studying cross-cultural and cross-linguistic contrasts between the pitches in the two languages, we considered that the variable of gender might provide insightful findings regarding the use of gestures among the entrepreneurs. This moved us to collect five pitches delivered by male entrepreneurs and five by female ones in each language; in fact, the number of female presenters was six, not five in both languages, since two business projects were presented by two women (Suproma in Spanish and Skinny Tan in English).

The corpora were transcribed, codified and analyzed; even though some of Jefferson's transcription conventions were employed[5] (mainly pauses and sound elongation), the linguistic signs were written in conventional spelling, and the paralinguistic signs were codified according to Poyatos (1993, 1994a, 1994b) and Cestero Mancera's (2016) classification, developing new signs for the new nonverbal signs.

In the following sections, we will present and discuss the main findings of our study. In the next one, we will present the overall results for both languages and will then interpret those results in the discussion that follows.

4. The Use of Gestures in Business Communication in Spanish and English

Kinesic gestural signs, along with linguistic and paralinguistic signs, make up the basic structure of human communication (Poyatos 1994b). These nonverbal signs regulate the communicative act and the information offered (i.e., to structure it, to capture attention, and to highlight the main information), showing emotional attitude and states as well as facilitating understanding by contributing content or specific semantic values. This paper addresses the role these signs may play in persuasive presentations to compel a bench of investors to finance the entrepreneurs' projects or business ideas.

In this section, the findings for both corpora are presented and contrasted, focusing specifically on kinesic devices. In the two corpora analyzed, we identify a total of 1868 nonverbal signs, out of which 972 are identified in the Spanish corpus and 893 in the English one (see Table 2). Taking into consideration that the Spanish corpus lasts slightly over 13 min (or 2027 words) and the English one almost 15 min (or 1936 words), the ratios of signs per second are a bit more abundant in Spanish (1.24 signs/s) than in English (1.02 signs/s); when contrasted against the verbal component, the amounts are closer (0.48 signs/words in Spanish and 0.42 signs/words in English). The main difference between the two corpora rests upon the frequencies of types used, with reversed tendencies: while Spanish entrepreneurs use more kinesic signs than English ones (51.44% of all signs), the latter surpass Spanish in the number of paralinguistic devices (68.53% of all signs). Thus, Spanish entrepreneurs display a more even distribution between paralinguistic and kinesic signs, while English ones favor the former (see Table 2).

Table 2. Use of nonverbal devices in Spanish and English.

Tyes of Signs	Spanish	English	% Spanish	% English
Paralinguistic	472	612	48.56%	68.30%
Kinesic	500	284	51.44%	31.70%
Total	972	896	100%	100%
TOTAL SIGNS	1868		52.1%	47.9%
Sign ratios				
Seconds	785	877	1.24	1.02
Words	2027	1936	0.48	0.46
Paralinguistic signs	0.60 signs/s	0.70 signs/s	0.23 signs/word	0.32 signs/word
Kinesic signs	0.64 signs/s	0.32 signs/s	0.25 signs/word	0.15 signs/word

We focus now on the types of kinesic signs employed by entrepreneurs, where the main differences between Spanish and English rest. While Spanish entrepreneurs' most productive kinesic signs are those performed with their hands (142 signs), British entrepreneurs use their eyes (92 gaze signs) in most cases. The next most frequently kinesic

sign in the Spanish presentations is facial gesturing (124 signs), whereas in the English ones, it is head movements (62 signs). Thus, Spaniards use their hands strategically in these entrepreneurial encounters almost three times more (142 cases) than their British counterparts (52 signs). Spanish entrepreneurs employ their head almost twice as much (106 signs) as English speakers (62 signs). Other bodily gestures are not very productive in either language, but they are more so in English, where 11 cases have been registered as opposed to just 1 in Spanish (see Figures 1 and 2).
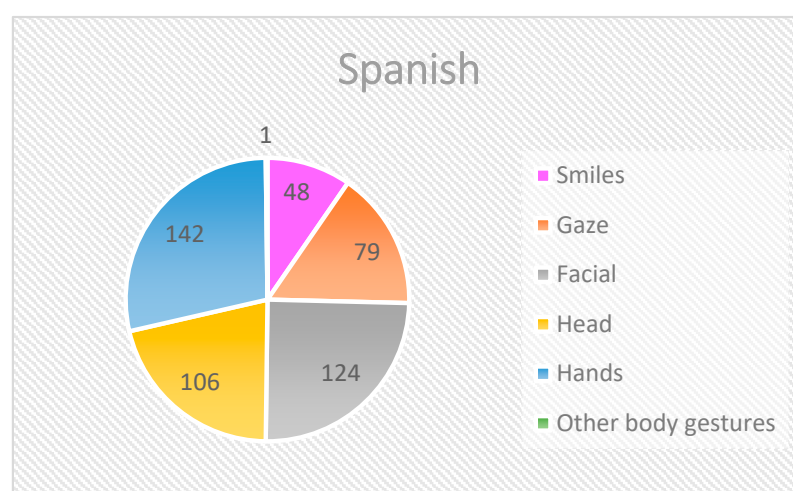

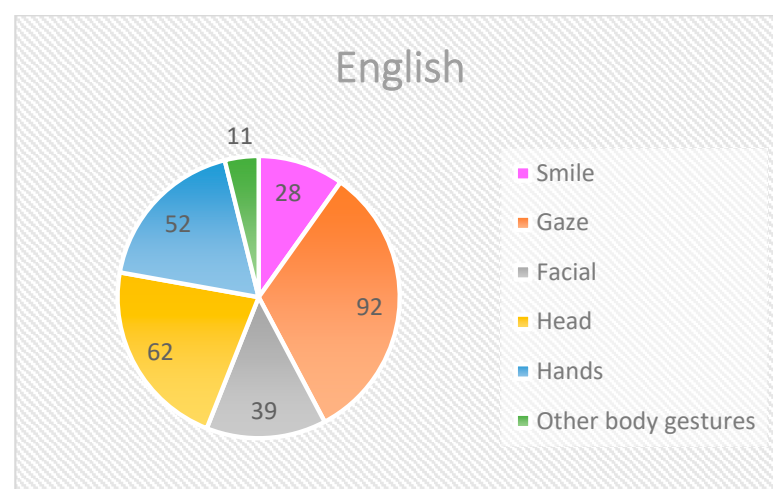**Figure 1.** Kinesic signs in Spanish.

Figure 2. Kinesic signs in English.

Both men and women entrepreneurs make great use of nonverbal resources (see ratios in Table 2), which implies that, in combination with verbal signs, this type of persuasive discourse resorts to diverse communicative channels, and at the same time, it is multimodal.

Table 3 displays frequencies for each category of signs in each language and gender. In the following sections, we will discuss the quantitative results in order to draw conclusions regarding the patterns of use of kinesic signs in Spanish and English in our corpus of entrepreneurial business presentations.

Table 3. Use of gestural devices in business entrepreneurial pitches in Spanish and English.

		Spanish		British	
		Men	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**
Facial gesturing	Smile	25	23	5	23
	Gaze	34	45	63	29
	Asemantic markers and indicators	55	58	33	5
	Semantic markers and indicators	1	2	0	0
	Independent gestures	3	5	1	0
	Total	**118 (54.1%)**	**133 (47.2%)**	**102 (54.5%)**	**57 (58.8%)**
Face gestures/kinesic signs per language		**251 (50.2%)**		**159 (56%)**	
Head gesturing	Asemantic markers: head nods	18	45	35	13
	Asemantic markers: rotating	16	6	9	2
	Asemantic markers: stretching	2	2	3	0
	Semantic markers: nods	2	7	1	0
	Semantic markers: stretching	1	1	1	0
	Independent nodding	2	3	0	0
	Independent rotation	1	0	0	0
	Total	**42 (19.3%)**	**64 (22.7%)**	**47 (25.1%)**	**15 (15.5%)**
Head gestures/kinesic signs per language		**106 (21.2%)**		**62 (21.8%)**	
Hand gesturing	Asemantic markers: slaps/beats	25	21	25	5
	Asemantic markers: rotations	4	11	1	3
	Asemantic markers: rubbing	2	0	0	0
	Asemantic markers: swinging	0	1	0	1
	Semantic markers: slaps/beats	16	32	7	8
	Semantic markers: rotations	7	8	0	0
	Semantic markers: finger lacing	0	5	0	1
	Semantic markers: hand raising	1	4	1	0
	Independent hand gestures	2	3	0	0
	Total	**57 (26.1%)**	**85 (30.1%)**	**34 (18.2%)**	**18 (18.6%)**
Hand gestures/kinesic signs per language		**142 (28.4%)**		**52 (18.3%)**	
Other BGs	Asemantic body gestures	0	0	1	3
	Semantic body gestures	1	0	2	2
	Independent body gestures	0	0	1	2
	Total	**1 (0.5%)**	**0 (0%)**	**4 (2.1%)**	**7 (7.2%)**
Other body gestures/kinesic signs per language		**1 (0.2%)**		**11 (3.9%)**	
Total kinesic signs		**218 (43.6%)**	**282 (56.4%)**	**187 (66.5%)**	**97 (34.5)**
Total kinesic signs per language		**500 (63.8%)**		**284 (36.2%)**	

5. Discussion of Results

In order to organize the discussion of the different categories of signs, we will deal with each at a time in separate subsections. We will start with facial gesturing, highlighting the main uses and functions in Spanish and English; then, head gesturing will be dealt with and finally hand gestures. As can be seen in Table 3, some signs are very frequent when compared with others that are rarely used (e.g., smiles among the British male population

are rare when contrasted with the rest of the subjects); all frequencies should be interpreted in relation to the number of subjects studied in each subpopulation in order to establish comparisons. Thus, whenever a sign is scarcely present, this means that that feature is not very productive (e.g., within facial gesturing, when smiles are contrasted with semantic markers and indicators). Frequencies are presented in tables by total raw numbers and/or percentages. Whenever absolute numbers are used, it is because the total number of instances of each type is highlighted. On the other hand, percentages indicate a specific type of sign in relation to the total number of nonverbal signs. Even if inferential statistics would have been desirable in order to contrast frequency counts among subpopulations, the sample size and the detailed nature of the categorization of signs, with so many distinct types, did not allow us to apply such tests. On the other hand, such a detailed analysis of signs impedes the study a large sample of texts. Nonetheless, the descriptive statistics of raw frequencies and percentages show insightful results regarding the proliferation of kinesic signs when contrasted with the number of words used, considering the length of pitches ranging from 100 to 456 words or, in time, between 39 and 139 s.

5.1. Facial Gesturing

Facial gesturing is a very productive type of sign for all the subpopulations of the subjects studied, as can be seen in Table 3, consisting, for most entrepreneurs, of close to or even more than 50% of their total production of kinesic signs. An insightful finding is that most facial gesturing signs for male British entrepreneurs are gazes (63 cases), used mainly to capture their audience's attention or to engage them in their interaction with them, while Spanish entrepreneurs, both male and female, resort to asemantic markers more profusely, with gestures such as raising their eyebrow and/or mouth corners or blinking their eyes with an equivalent function. British female entrepreneurs, on their part, use a balanced number of smiles and gazes (23 and 29, respectively), with different highlighting and attention-calling functions. Semantic markers (e.g., blinking, nose wrinkling), on the other hand, are only used by Spanish entrepreneurs, although quite sparingly. Since facial resources are prominent in our corpus and display diverse functions, we will devote a section to discuss each type separately.

5.1.1. Smiles

Business presentations require seriousness to gain investment, but at the same time, entrepreneurs need to engage the audience and gain their empathy. Thus, the basic strategy documented in the corpus is the entrance into the room and the beginning of the presentation with a slight smile of greeting, trying to break down the distance between the speaker and the business angels, who must decide if they will invest in the business proposed by the entrepreneur. The main function of this smile is to search for empathy, as well as giving a demonstration of a predisposition to agreement and conformity. Curiously enough, this smile is used in all Spanish presentations except for one by a man, but in the English presentations, we find a different tendency: only one man tightens his lips in what may look like a smile, but the rest of the entry smiles in the English presentations are displayed exclusively by women. In fact, all subpopulations of the subjects are close in frequency counts, except for British male entrepreneurs (see Table 3). In most presentations, this initial smile turned into relaxed seriousness to confer the correct degree of formality to the situation and the intended importance to the proposal. In this way, the entrance smile, together with the entrepreneurs' positioning on stage, and the relaxed seriousness along the presentation function as a demonstration of emotional and psychological states, as well as an expression of attitudes, which characterize the entrepreneur's image from the beginning of the intervention, appealing to pathos and enhancing their ethos.

On the other hand, various participants produced strategically a quick smile during their monologue intervention for diverse reasons. Although with hardly noticeable differences, Spanish men used smiles a bit more than Spanish women (11 cases for men compared to 9 for women). On the contrary, in the presentations in English, we found that

most smiles (23 out of 28) were deployed by women. Apart from the entry smile mentioned above (used by all but one female entrepreneur), most English-speaking women used smiles throughout their presentations, and particularly, one of them used them frequently (six times) to promote empathy (three cases) to highlight important information (once), empathetically to predispose the listener to persuasion (once) and the last one to close up her presentation.

We document five cases of smiles in Spanish men's interventions, which are used to mark discourse, to promote closeness and consequently predispose the listener to persuasion (four slight smiles and one broad smile), as well as one case in which the smile is used independently, with the same functions except for marking discourse. Spanish women make use of smiling for emphasis, either discourse marking (four cases, two broad smiles and two brief, versus three for Spanish men, always brief) or segmented by other signs (two cases in women's presentations and one in a man's presentation). Furthermore, many entrepreneurs (three Spanish speakers, two women and one man, and four English speakers, three women and one man) end up their presentations with a broad non-discourse marking smile, seeking empathy by involving the interlocutor and displaying confidence. This ending smile is an indicator of attitude and mood, as well as a regulator of multifunctional structuring, predisposing the listener to persuasion.

Finally, we must mention the occasional use of the non-discourse-marking "embarrassed" smile that occurred in the intervention of a Spanish woman as a result of something unexpected and inappropriate. This is a resource that reflects social anxiety, which has been stereotypically associated with female discourse. However, even if in our data female presenters seem more permeable to the expression of emotions than males, this tendency of displaying emotions cannot be univocally associated to one gender. In our corpus, we found the case of an English male entrepreneur who suffered a similar embarrassing situation, and he also displayed his concern through a nonverbal sign, although of a different nature (i.e., placing his upper teeth on his lower lip instead of a smile).

5.1.2. Gaze

Persuasion is a pragmatic phenomenon that involves perlocution, which requires the active inclusion of the interlocutor(s) in the communicative act. Hence, subjects need to continuously distribute a direct gaze around the audience, which reflects the desire to include the business angels in the communicative activity, to display a positive attitude and, at the same, one that confers seriousness and shows the persuader's confidence, encouraging persuasion. In all the interventions analyzed, the way the speakers look at the audience is in a direct, continuous and distributed way, which makes this a strategic resource typical in this type of business communication.

As occurs with smiling, the entrepreneurs also use certain gazes as discrete signs, with diverse functions and meanings. These are always deviations from the direct and distributed gaze at the audience. Firstly, we document a great number of deviations of looking towards the exhibit stand where the product is presented, towards a model that holds the product or shows how it works and towards the product itself held by the entrepreneur. In these cases, both in women's interventions (26 cases in Spanish and 7 in English) and in men's (18 cases in Spanish and 20 in English), the reason for the deviation is to direct attention to the product itself, so these are signs that call attention to the product and make it stand out, although their use does not seem to be strategically persuasive but rather associated with the demonstration of the products and with the structuring of the presentation; in several cases in the Spanish presentations, this type of gaze is used to close a presentation (six cases, equally distributed between the genders). Thus, we can consider them pure regulators. Another type of gaze deviation associated with this is when the entrepreneur redirects his/her gaze towards the audience; we document 5 cases in the Spanish presentations and 23 in the English ones (2 by a Spanish male, 21 in English male pitches, 3 by a Spanish female and 2 by females in English pitches). In the case of male deviational gazes in English, most cases concentrate in one entrepreneur, who spends most

of his presentation directing his look at the objects he presents on stage and redirecting his looks towards the audience once he finishes looking at the product. This gaze deviations mark information as relevant since it is emphasized. These are also attention-grabbing nonverbal signs.

We also identify non-rapid downwards deviations of gazes (10 cases in the Spanish presentations and 9 in the English ones), which are carried out, above all, to emphasize important information and/or show confidence; on one occasion in a Spanish presentation, this type of downwards gaze is used to emphasize important information and seek approval, although in an attenuated fashion. These signs also reflect attitude and mood and call the audience's attention. We document two cases in Spanish women's interventions of downwards deviating looks as indicators of nervousness due to hesitation and consequently a lack of confidence. This reflects emotion and attitude, confirming that permeability in the expression of emotional and psychological states that seems characteristic of women's presentations in our corpus.

There also exists a deviation of the gaze upwards, which shows a certain lack of confidence. This upward look is a sign of reflection in search of an element of appropriate content and is only documented in Spanish presentations, more so in the case of women's presentations (three cases) than in men's (one case). This latter type of gaze also displays attitude or state.

Finally, we identify deviations of looking towards the side. These are sideways glances used mostly to grab attention and thus emphasize important information, although in some cases, they seem to be a sign of subordination (two cases in Spanish, one per gender, and three in English, two by the same male speaker and one by a female British entrepreneur). In the Spanish presentations, these looks are also used to show the opposite, attenuated mastery (three cases in total, two in female interventions and one in a male intervention), which encourages persuasion in a direct manner. There are no cases of this latter use in the English presentations.

5.1.3. Other Facial Gestures: (A)Semantic Markers and Independent Gestures

Apart from smiles and gazes, we document a frequent use of facial kinesic signs, carried out especially with the upper part of the face (e.g., raising eyebrows and blinking) and, to a lesser extent, in the middle part (e.g., wrinkling up the nose) and in the lower part (elevation of the edges of the mouth and sticking out the tongue). The use of *facial gestures* is especially relevant as *asemantic* discourse marking, although the frequency between languages varies: while it is used a total of 113 cases in Spanish (55 cases in men's presentations and 58 in women's), it was only used 38 times in English and mostly by men (33 versus 5). Due to their discourse marking function, entrepreneurs use these asemantic signs to call attention to themselves and thus to emphasize important information, although, on occasion, facial signs like blinking reflect mood and psychological states or attitudes, indicating nervousness, hesitation and reflection.

Eyebrow raising is unequally distributed among subpopulations. While male entrepreneurs in the English presentations use this sign in a similar fashion to both male and female Spanish presenters (28 for English and 19 for male and female Spanish speakers each), female presenters in English only use it twice. All eyebrow raising signs are used as an emphasizing strategy, although women, both in Spanish and English, use it on several occasions with a double meaning: emphasizing and regulating the discursive act, which enables confirmation of the more marked multimodal character of these communicative acts. Raising the mouth edges to highlight important information is used almost exclusively by men in both languages (eight cases in Spanish and one in English); therefore, this can be considered a sign more characteristic of male entrepreneurs, at least in our corpus. Lastly, blinking with an emphatic function is also more profusely used in Spanish than English presentations (27 times by females in the Spanish presentations, 22 times by males, while in the English presentations, it was only used twice by males and 3 times by females).

Although the frequency of occurrence is very low (three cases) and exclusively used in the Spanish presentations, we cannot fail to mention the use of multifunctional *semantic discourse-marking facial gestures* that facilitate conciseness in communicative actions. These kinesic signs capture attention and thus highlight important information, while they also provide added meaning, facilitating the understanding of the communicative act. In our corpus, we identify, in the Spanish presentations, a rapid repeated blinking indicating pain/negativity (upper facial area) and a sticking out of the tongue that expresses contrariness, in women's presentations and a wrinkling up of the nose indicating unhappiness/negativity (middle facial area) in the presentation of a man. All of them are indirect ways of communicating negativity, which can be associated with the strategic use of this type of communicative act.

Finally, in the public business presentations analyzed, we identify nine *independent facial gestures (non-discourse marking)*, eight in the Spanish ones and one in the English one. These are used in the Spanish ones to show satisfaction with one's own actions and search for empathy, as well as regulating (i.e., ending device) and emphasizing information given immediately beforehand: three cases of blinking carried out by women (one emphasizing and two finalizing, indicating satisfaction and subordination) and two by men (both emphasizing but one of them also indicating satisfaction and subordination), two cases of stretching the mouth's edges, finalizing and indicating satisfaction and subordination, one carried out by a man and the other by a woman, and an emblematic sign of the tongue (passing the tongue over the lips) carried out by a woman to express pleasure. The only one sign found in English is the one aforementioned to indicate a disagreeable situation (i.e., upper teeth over the lower lip), specifically a failure in the product being presented and accompanying a verbal sign (i.e., *oops*) to indicate uneasiness due to a setback.

According to what is documented here, in the corporate and business world, facial expression can be considered a strategic resource, which men take advantage of more often than women. Figure 3 provides a clear view of the general tendencies between languages and genders.
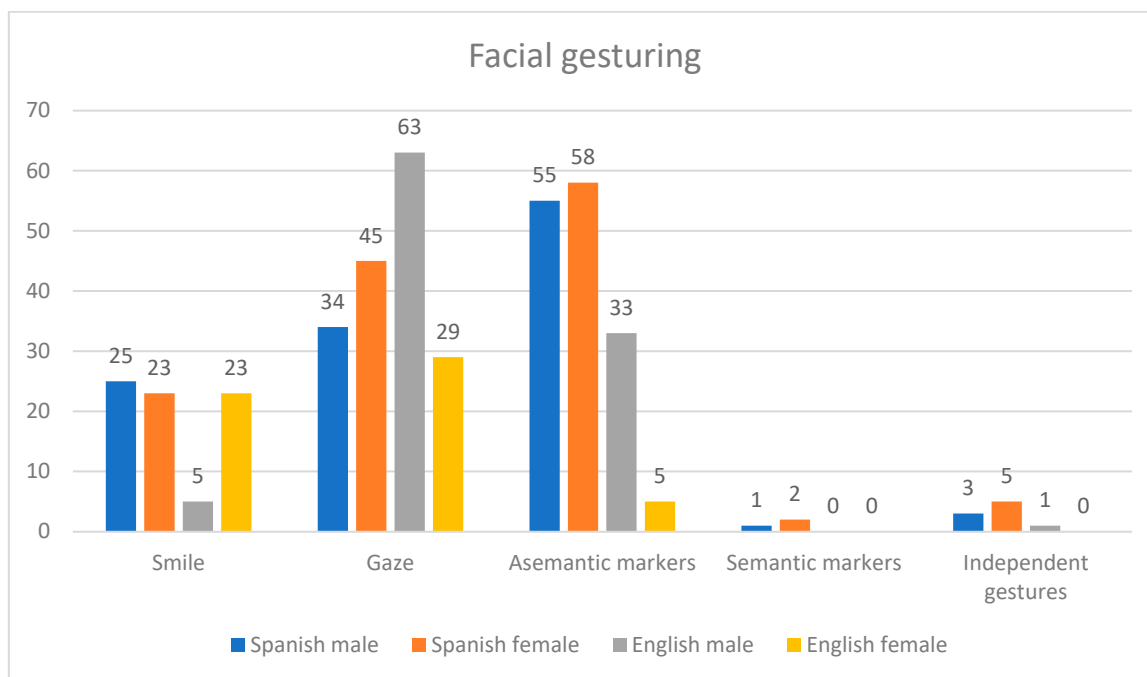

Figure 3. Facial gesturing (language and gender).

All in all, in the presentations analyzed, a slight initial smile tends to be used as a strategy to draw the interlocutors closer, to search for complicity and empathy that encourage persuasion. Although possessing certain differences among the languages and

genders, gaze proved to be the most profusely used. Apart from the distributed gaze among the business angels that most entrepreneurs employed, they also deviate their looks towards the object or product that is being presented, although the gaze is re-established to look at the audience once the object has been highlighted via that gaze deviation. These signs are typically used with the same functions in both languages.

Regarding the use of smiles, this is typically maintained all throughout the presentation, although it is replaced by a relaxed seriousness due the formality of the business encounter. The most striking difference regarding this sign is that British male entrepreneurs barely use them, and when they do, it is typically as a discourse regulator during the presentation or to mark the ending.

Asemantic markers are also frequently used as emphasizers, regulators and attitude markers (particularly, showing confidence and complacency). Eyebrow raising or frowning and blinking tend to be used with a highlighting function, although most frequently in the Spanish presentations, as pointed out above, and very sporadically in presentations in English (e.g., most cases of eyebrow raising are concentrated in one male entrepreneur).

5.2. Head Gesturing

In the business presentations analyzed, a quite productive group of sign gestures is that which involves the head (106 in Spanish and 62 in English). Three types of gestures have been identified that involve head movement: rotation of head/neck (lowering or rising), stretching of head/neck (forward or to the side) and nods (vertical, horizontal and sideways). As can be seen in Table 3, most head gestures imply nodding (asemantically, semantically and independently), but the most frequent is, by far, the asemantic nod. An insightful finding is that Spanish females are closer to English males, and vice versa, the frequencies of use between Spanish males and English females are more alike. Head or neck rotations are also frequent as asemantic markers among Spaniards, particularly males (16 and 6, respectively). In English, they are used by males (nine times), but its use is anecdotal among females (only two). Head/neck stretching is mainly used by English males but not frequently (three times as opposed to two by Spanish males and females each). Both nods and rotations can be used with a single nod (i.e., simple) or repeatedly.

Head gestures display different persuasive functions:

- Affirming with a vertical head nod is used to highlight information while seeking agreement. These signs also show emotional and attitudinal permeability.
- Lateral head nods are also used to highlight and capture attention.
- Horizontal nods imply negation, together with a highlighting function and as an attention-calling device.
- Lowering head rotations indicate some kind of nervousness or insecurity, which let emotion permeate.
- Rotating the head upwards seems to indicate security, apart from highlighting important information.

Although the frequency of use is slightly different in both languages, their functions seem to be the same. In the Spanish corpus, signs of these types seem to be more sparsely present among the entrepreneurs, while in the English corpus, there seems to be a concentration of devices in certain entrepreneurs, that is, a kind of idiosyncratic feature (e.g., a male entrepreneur displays a total of 21 head gestures).

Semantic markers are multifunctional and favor communicative economy since they capture attention, highlight relevant information and contribute content. They are horizontal head negative nods and head/neck stretching, being used more frequently in Spanish presentations by females than males (one nod and one rotation vs. two nods and one rotation). The only two semantic markers in presentations in English are used by two males (one of them the entrepreneur mentioned before who also used 21 asemantic head gestures). Lastly, independent markers are only used in Spanish presentations and are rather infrequent (six gestures in total, five nods and one rotation). Differences between males and females also seem anecdotal. The function of this type of independent sign is

to show either satisfaction of submission, in the case of lateral nods, and confidence and submission in the case of vertical nods.

In order to make the results more visual, Figure 4 is included below, which displays head gesturing by the subpopulations of the subjects.
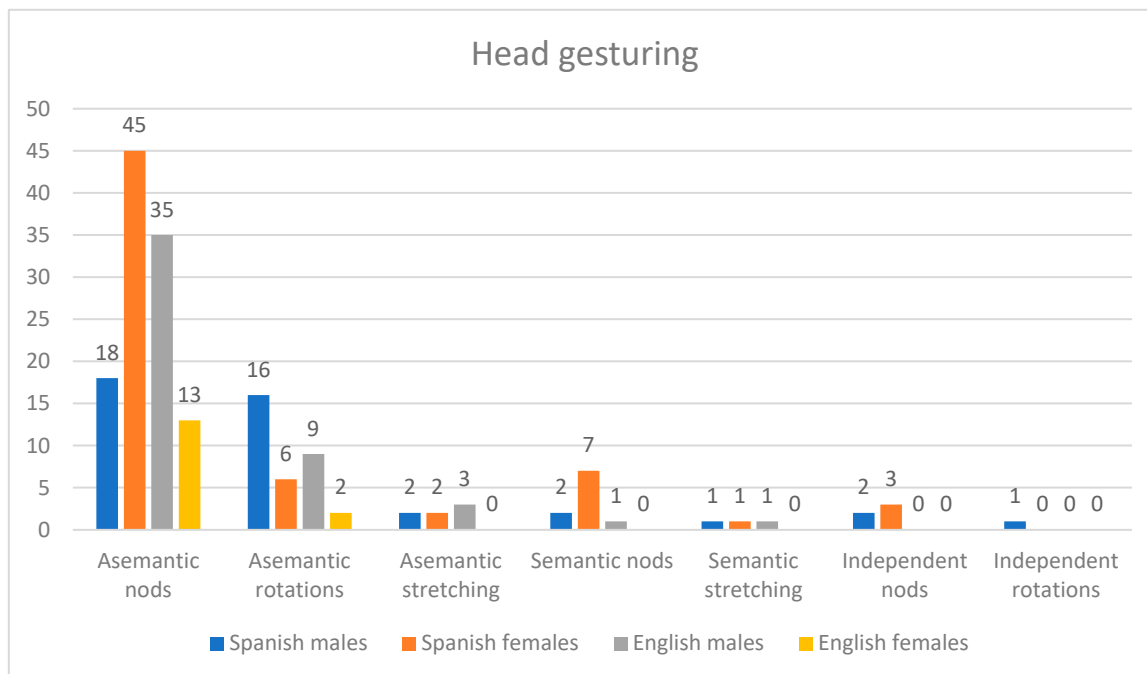

Figure 4. Head gesturing (language and gender).

5.3. Hand Gesturing

Hand gesturing is the second more profusely used type of sign in business communication in the Spanish presentations in our corpus (142 cases or 28.4% of all kinesic signs), but it is not that frequent in presentations in English (52 gestures altogether, which represents 18.3% of their total kinesic signs), mainly because many entrepreneurs have their hands occupied holding an object related to their presentation (one was holding a dog), and many keep their hands linked (either in front of or behind their body) for most of their pitches. Hand gestures are strategic signs and are more characteristic of the female Spanish pitch subcorpus; Spanish male presenters also use them much more than male presenters in English for the aforementioned reasons.

Even if frequency counts between the two languages or genders differ, they are still used with some of the same functions. Both Spanish and British entrepreneurs use asemantic hand slaps or beats with the same frequency (25 each); however, the 25 cases in English are distributed among three male entrepreneurs, and one of them presents the most demonstrations (21 cases); this is an entrepreneur who appears on stage with several objects and constantly points at them through his presentation. Most movements are thus made with one hand.

The most frequent hand gestures in Spanish are *semantic markers* (73 in total), and there are four basic movements: a sort of slap or beat (i.e., firm and direct movement with an upwards and downwards movement), rotations, finger lacing and hand raising (see Table 3 for frequencies). Since the semantic meanings deployed by semantic markers are varied, hand and finger positions can also vary greatly, which makes them difficult to categorize. Hand beats always highlight information and facilitate understanding by conveying meaningful content for the presentations. Many semantic hand gestures are performed with both hands, particularly in the Spanish presentations, which enhances their highlighting function. When hands are open or semi-open, they are considered positive

and are oriented towards the audience and their engagement in the communicative act. In the English presentations, there are only 17 semantic markers.

In the Spanish corpus, the conceptual value of hand beats can be very diverse, although the abundant use of spatial pointers is worth noting (21 cases); they are followed in frequency by gestures indicating opening and great magnitude (5 cases), negation/rejection (4 cases), breadth (3 cases), grabbing (4 cases), succession (2 cases), finishing (2 cases) and abundance, combination, duration, diversity and totality (1 case each). Lastly, two illustrators have been identified, one of form and one of unity. In the English corpus, there are 10 cases of spatial pointers (6 by men and 4 by women), grabbing (2 by a female), negation (1 by a female), offering (twice) and two signs to indicate the actions of cleaning and driving by gear (both by male entrepreneurs).

Semantic rotations are also frequent in the Spanish corpus (15 cases) but are absent in the English one[6]. Finger lacing is used occasionally in both corpora, always by women (five in Spanish and one in English); they imply negativity and frustration. Hand-raising semantic markers are also documented in the Spanish subcorpus (four by women and one by a man) but only once in the English corpus, performed by a male entrepreneur.

The last type of hand gesture is the independent markers. Once more, they are used in Spanish business presentations (five cases, with diverse functions and meanings) but are inexistent in English ones. Figure 5 displays the use of hand gestures by the different populations of subjects, as carried out in previous cases.
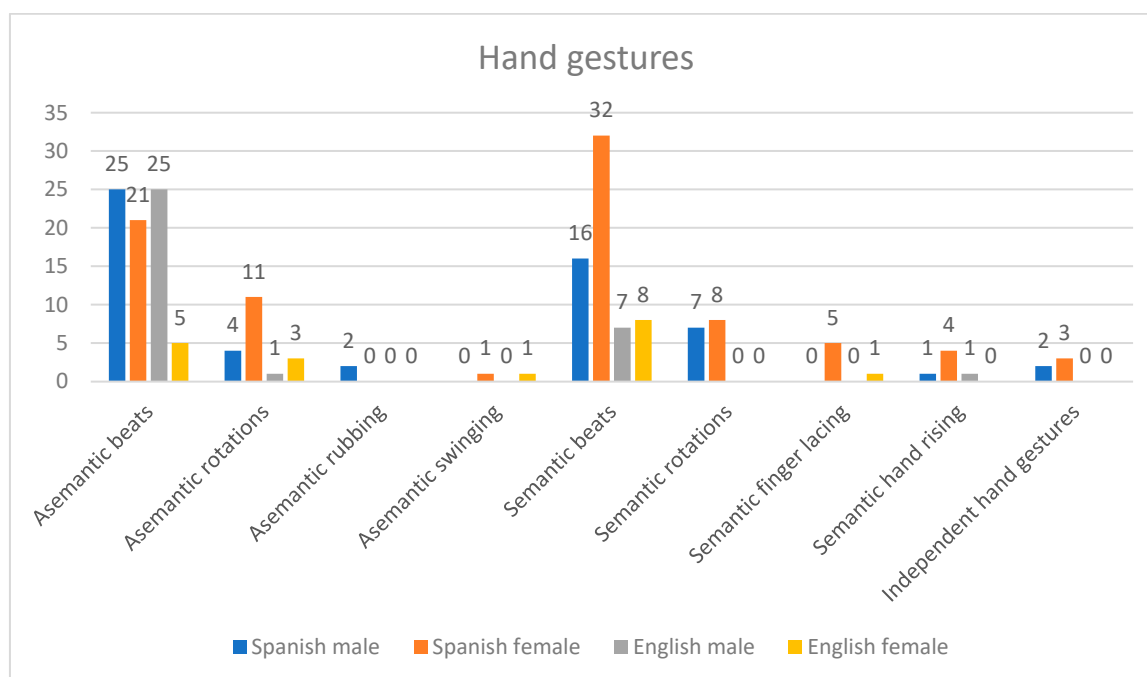

Figure 5. Hand gestures (language and gender).

5.4. Other Body Gestures

In this case, it is English-speaking entrepreneurs who used their body more profusely to produce nonverbal signs. The only gesture in the Spanish presentations was a case of trunk balancing as a semantic marker by a male entrepreneur to indicate conflict. This type of balancing was also employed by a female entrepreneur in the English presentations. The rest of the cases were distributed between asemantic (four, three by women and one by a man) and semantic markers (four in total, distributed in a balanced way) and three independent body gestures (two by females and one by a male). Body gestures are typically used to highlight information, at the same of indicating some type of content in the semantic ones. One independent gesture by a male British entrepreneur involved shoulder raising.

Taking into consideration that our corpus consists of presentations of business proposals, on various programs, products are shown, or their functioning is explained by touching them. In our corpus, this was a strategic resource in one occasion, in the case of the Spanish men's subcorpus, and in four of five of the Spanish women's presentations; it was equally frequent in presentations in English (in seven pitches, four by males and three by females) which allows us to state that it is a habitual practice in business persuasive discourse as a resource of demonstration and attention-grabbing.

5.5. The Effect of Language and Gender

In this last section of the discussion of the findings, we display the overall results grouped by language and gender to check how each subpopulation of subjects behaves when choosing and using their nonverbal signs, in particular, of the kinesic type. The percentages in Table 4 were calculated in relation to the total signs used within each language and in relation to the total amount of kinesic signs found. Thus, in Spanish, 43.6% of the 500 signs found was used by male entrepreneurs and 56.4% by female presenters; therefore, in the Spanish presentations, women used more kinesic signs in general than men. In the British corpus, the opposite tendency was encountered: female entrepreneurs used 34.5% of the 284 kinesic signs, while male entrepreneurs used almost twice as much (66.5%). Figure 6 groups kinesic devices by language and distributes them by gender.

Table 4. Results per language and gender.

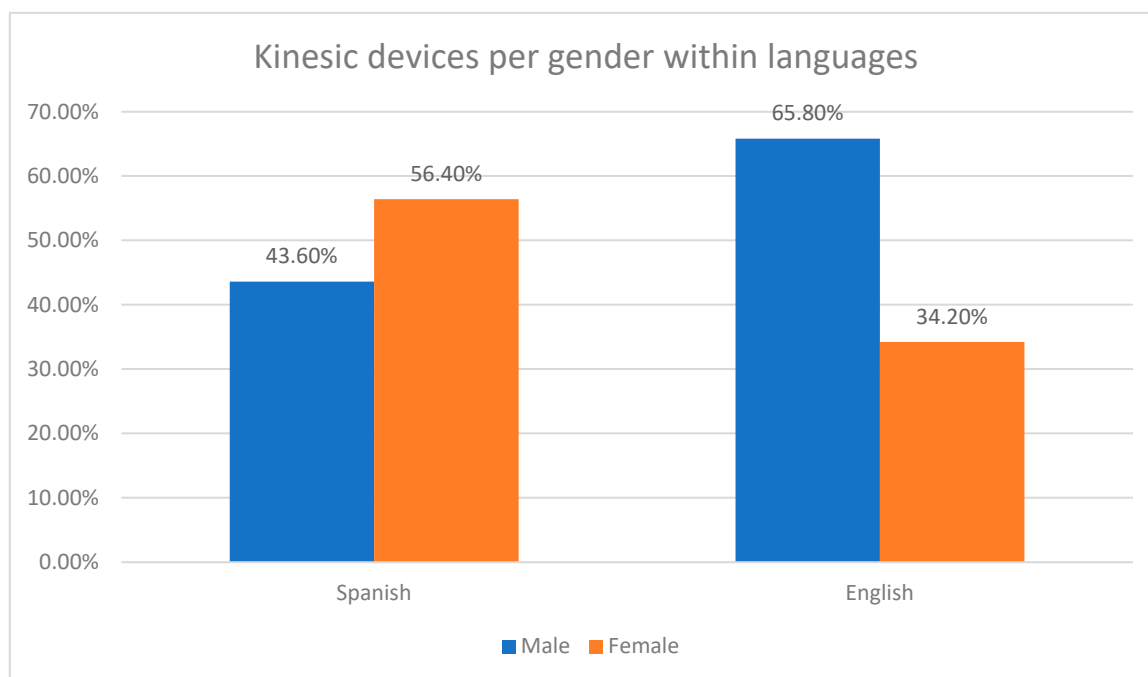| Kinesic Devices	Spanish Men	Spanish Women	British Men	British Women
Totals per gender/language	218	282	187	97
Male vs. female within language	43.60%	56.40%	66.55%	34.52%
Subpopulation/total signs	27.81%	35.97%	23.85%	12.37%
Total signs by language		500		284
Total signs/language		63.78%		35.22%
Total kinesic signs			784	

Figure 6. Percentages by language and gender.

Absolute and relative frequencies in percentages allow us to observe differences in the expression of nonverbal kinesic types, which may have a (direct) effect on the perception of

persuasive potential of different groups of subjects. When all kinesic signs were considered (N = 784), Spanish female presenters used 35.97% of all signs identified; Spanish male speakers used 27.81% of the signs; presentations in English by males gathered 23.85% of the signs; and those by females, 12.37%.

Lastly, the results were examined by types within the variables of gender and language to check how the total amount of kinesic signs was distributed within genders and across languages. When looked at from the perspective of gender, we observed that female entrepreneurs (both Spanish and English together) used 24% of all facial gestures, 10% of head gestures, 13% of hand gestures and 1% of other body gestures. When grouping all types together, female presenters employed 48% of the kinesic devices. On the other hand, male entrepreneurs used slightly higher percentages of facial and head gestures (28% and 11%) than females, slightly fewer hand gestures (12% versus 13%) and the same amount in the last category of body gestures (1%); in their overall use of kinesic devices, they were also close to females (52% vs. 48%). Thus, as opposed to our previous publication on paralinguistic devices (Cestero Mancera and Díez-Prados 2021, p. 266), the gender variable did not seem to have a bearing on the use of kinesic signs. When grouped by languages, the differences increased: Spanish entrepreneurs used higher percentages in all types except for the last category (see Table 5 and Figure 7).

Table 5. Total kinesic signs grouped by gender and language.

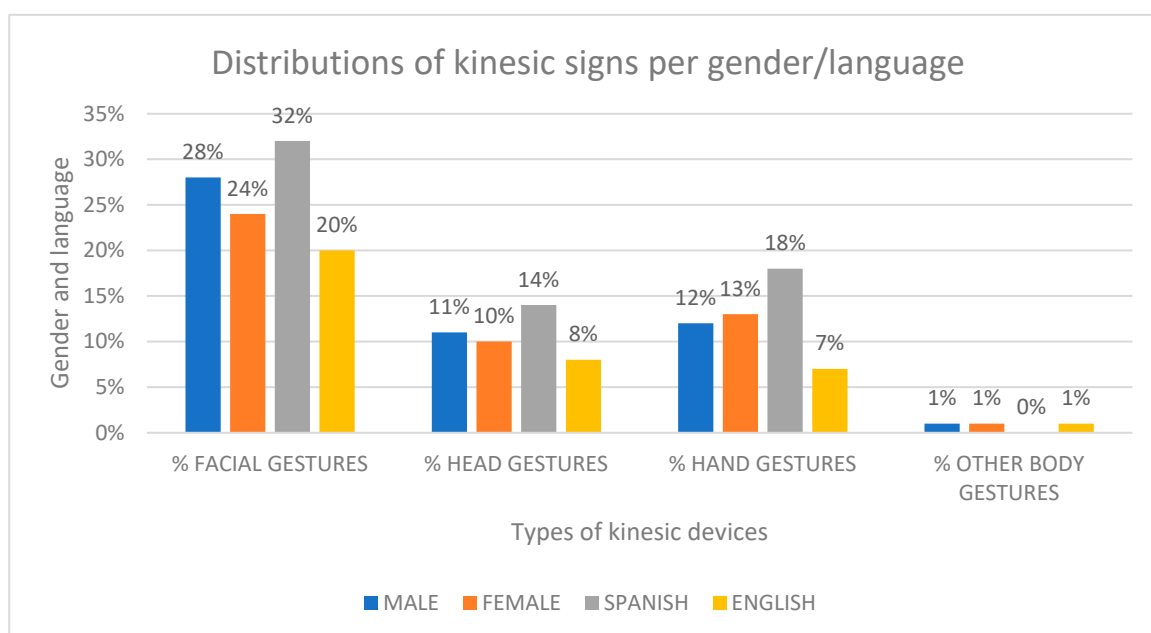| Kinesic Signs	Gender		Language	
	Male	**Female**	**Spanish**	**English**
% Facial gestures	28%	24%	32%	20%
% Head gestures	11%	10%	14%	8%
% Hand gestures	12%	13%	18%	7%
% Other body gestures	1%	1%	0%	1%
% Per variable (gender/language)	52%	48%	64%	36%
Total kinesic signs (N = 784)	100%		100%	

Figure 7. Distribution of signs per gender and language.

The last group of results responds to the question of how each subpopulation of subjects (males in Spanish, females in Spanish, males in English and females in English) used the different categories of signs in relation to the total amount of kinesic signs found.

As can be observed in Figure 8, facial gestures are deployed, from most to least frequently, in the following way: males in English, males in Spanish, females in Spanish and lastly females in English. Head gestures show the same tendency, but differences are slighter (14%, 11%, 10% and 8%, respectively). In hand gestures, the percentages between male and female entrepreneurs in the Spanish presentations are reversed, being females the ones that used them most, although males in English presentations used them more than both of them (males in English 18%, females in Spanish 13%, males in Spanish 12% and females in English 7%). Other body gesture differences are not very prominent, taking into account these signs are barely used by all.
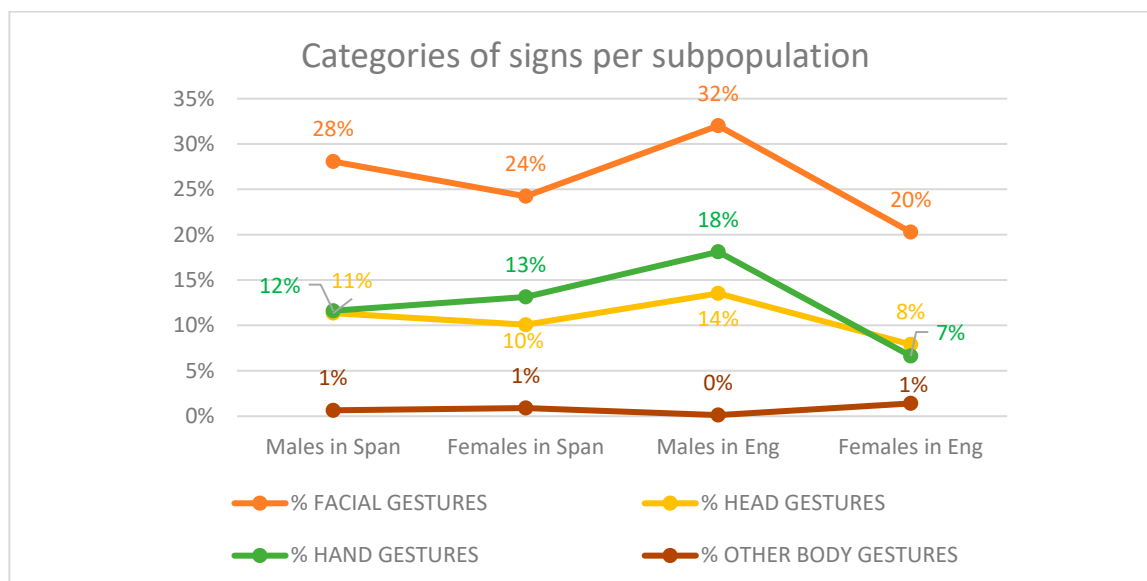

Figure 8. Distribution of categories of signs per subpopulation.

When focusing on gender, males used a slightly higher percentage of kinesic signs than females 52% versus 48%). When focusing on languages, Spanish entrepreneurs employed more signs than English-speaking ones, almost twice as much (64% versus 36%, see Table 5). In all categories except for other kinesic signals (the least frequent type), Spaniards surpassed presenters in English. These results seem to be indicating a greater display of movement in all body areas in presentations in Spanish than in English.

6. Conclusions

In this section, we recall the initial research questions in an attempt to answer them. The first one had to do with the types of kinesic devices used and their functions. In order to answer this question, we analyzed the corpus collected (10 business pitches in Spanish and 10 in English, 5 by males and 5 by females in each language) according to Cestero Mancera's (2018b) categorization of kinesic devices, included in the methodology section. The kinesic devices found seemed to fulfill the same functions in both languages, those of highlighting and emphasizing relevant information, structuring or organizing the communicative act, showing emotions and attitudes and/or contributing to content (specifically in the case of semantic signs). However, entrepreneurs did not use the same signs with these pragmatic functions.

Regarding the frequencies of use, the proportions across languages differed somehow in their preferences of types of signs: although the most productive category of signs, both in Spanish and English presentations, were facial gestures (50.2% of the 500 Spanish signs and 56% of the 284 signs in English presentations, see Table 3), the rest were different: the second most productive one in Spanish was hand gestures (28.4%), while in English, it was head gestures (21.8%). Head gestures were used by Spanish presenters in equal amounts (21.2%), but English presenters used their hands less frequently than their Spanish

counterparts (18.3% of their signs), mostly because many entrepreneurs had their hands occupied or laced in front or behind their bodies during their presentations, which did not allow them to gesticulate with their hands. Regarding the last type of sign (i.e., other body gestures), the presentations in English displayed more than those in Spanish (3.9% vs. 0.2), although they were very rare in all subcorpora (for all these results, see Table 3).

Within facial gesturing, gazing was used outstandingly more by males in English presentations, although mostly by two presenters, which implies that it could be a more idiosyncratic feature due to the nature of the products being presented. Smiles were evenly distributed among the presenters (all close to 25), regardless of language, except for male entrepreneurs in the English presentations, who remained fairly serious throughout their presentations. Of all head gestures, asemantic nods were the most frequent in all presentations, followed by head rotations (in a range of 6–16 depending on the subpopulation). In this case, female English speakers were the ones that used them least (just twice). Hand gestures were overwhelmingly represented by hand beats, both semantic and asemantic (see Table 3); hand rotations were also quite productive in Spanish presentations but not that much in English. In the case of other body gestures, there were more cases in pitches in English, although they were rarely used across any language or gender (close to 1% of all devices).

In cross-language and gender comparisons, female Spanish entrepreneurs proved to be the most profuse signers (35.97% were found in their presentations), and females in English were the least signers (12.37%). In the middle, Spanish male entrepreneurs used 27.81% of all kinesic devices found, and in presentations in English by males, 23.85% of all devices were used (N = 784). The gender variable thus does not shed light on the role played in kinesic sign use. As far as language was concerned, Spanish presentations displayed 63.78% of the signs found in total (N = 784) and for presentations in English, this was 36.22%. Thus, Spanish entrepreneurs used many more kinesic signs than English ones (see Table 4). Therefore, the language variable does seem to play a role when using these types of signs.

Notwithstanding the differences in frequencies, it is fairly obvious that kinesic signs are a very communicatively productive feature of business presentations whose main function is to persuade the audience, a bench of business angels, to invest in their products and projects. Therefore, the findings in this study, as well as those in previous studies (Cestero Mancera 2018a, 2018b; Díez-Prados 2019; and Cestero Mancera and Díez-Prados 2021) have demonstrated the communicative capabilities of nonverbal signs in business presentations in both languages, regardless of gender, which could have immediate pedagogical implications, much needed in the field (Daly and Davy 2016a, 2016b; Valeiras-Jurado 2019).

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.M.C.M.; methodology, A.M.C.M.; validation, A.M.C.M. and M.D.-P.; formal analysis, A.M.C.M. and M.D.-P.; investigation, A.M.C.M. and M.D.-P.; resources, A.M.C.M. and M.D.-P.; data curation, A.M.C.M. and M.D.-P.; writing—original draft preparation, A.M.C.M. and M.D.-P.; writing—review and editing, A.M.C.M. and M.D.-P.; supervision, A.M.C.M. and M.D.-P.; project administration, A.M.C.M. and M.D.-P.; funding acquisition, A.M.C.M. and M.D.-P. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Data Availability Statement: Data is contained within the article.

Notes

[1]   For a detailed explanation of results, readers are referred to Cestero Mancera and Díez-Prados (2021).

[2]   The language varieties that predominate in these TV programs and in all the samples selected for analysis in this study are the peninsular variety for Spanish and the British variety for English.

3   The investigation was carried out within the framework of the project title "Emotion and Language in Action: The emotional/evaluative discursive function in different texts and contexts in the working world (Persuasion Project)" (EMO-FUNDETT: PROPER), whose principal researcher was Dr. Díez-Prados, financed by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (Spain) (Ref. FFI2013-47792-C2-2-P).

4   Product brands are the original ones (i.e., they have not been translated). Curiously enough, some of the Spanish products have brand names in English, maybe due to a possible pragmatic effect of prestige or glamor of the name in English.

5   See https://www.universitytranscriptions.co.uk/jefferson-transcription-example/ (accessed on 7 April 2024) for an example of how this type of transcription system is used.

6   For a more complete and detailed use and frequency counts of asemantic and semantic hand gestures, the reader is referred to Cestero Mancera (2018b).

References

Aristóteles. 1995. *Retórica*. Madrid: Gredos.

Bamford, Julia, and Rita Salvi, eds. 2007. *Business Discourse: Language at Work*. Roma: Aracne Editrice.

Burgoon, Judee K., Laura K. Guerrero, and Kory Floyd. 2016. *Nonverbal Communication*. London and New York: Routledge.

Cestero Mancera, Ana M. 2016. La comunicación no verbal: Propuestas metodológicas para su estudio [Nonverbal communication: Research methodology proposals]. *Lingüística en la Red* Monográfico XIII: 1–36. Available online: https://linred.web.uah.es/monograficos_pdf/LR_monografico13-2-articulo1.pdf (accessed on 7 April 2024).

Cestero Mancera, Ana M. 2018a. Recursos no verbales en comunicación persuasiva: Imagen, proxémica y paralenguaje. *Lengua y Habla* 22: 135–59.

Cestero Mancera, Ana M. 2018b. Recursos no verbales en comunicación persuasive: Gestos. *Zer* 23: 69–92.

Cestero Mancera, Ana M., and Mercedes Díez-Prados. 2021. Paralinguistic resources in persuasive business communication in English and Spanish. In *Discourse Studies in Public Communication*. Edited by Eliecer Crespo-Fernández. Amsterdam and Philadelpia: John Benjamins, pp. 245–71. [CrossRef]

Daly, Peter, and Dennis Davy. 2016a. Structural, Linguistic and Rhetorical Features of the Entrepreneurial Pitch: Lessons from the *Dragon's Den*. *The Journal of Management Development* 35: 120–32. [CrossRef]

Daly, Peter, and Dennis Davy. 2016b. Crafting the Investor Pitch Using Insights from Rhetoric and Linguistics. In *The Ins and Outs of Business and Professional Discourse Research*. Edited by Glen M. Alessi and Geert Jacobbs. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 182–203. [CrossRef]

De Santiago Guervós, Javier. 2005. *Principios de comunicación persuasiva*. Madrid: Arco Libros.

De Santiago Guervós, Javier. 2019. Rhetorical Analysis of a Discourse Model in the Business World: Elevator Pitch. *Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación* 80: 7–16. [CrossRef]

Díez-Prados, Mercedes. 2019. Engagement in Business Persuasive Discourse: The Elevator Pitch. In *Engagement in Professional Genres: Deference and Disclosure*. Edited by Carmen Sancho Guinda. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 217–42. [CrossRef]

Díez-Prados, Mercedes. 2024. *Comunicación persuasiva en clave de cohesión y coherencia. Estudio contrastivo (inglés-español)*. IULMA Monographs. Valencia: PUV Universitat de València.

Fernández-Vázquez, José Santiago, and Roberto Álvarez-Delgado. 2019. The Interaction between Rational Arguments and Emotional Appeals in the Entrepreneurial Pitch. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 26: 503–20. [CrossRef]

Forgas, Esther, and María Herrera. 2000. Los componentes no verbales del discurso académico. In *El discurso académico oral*. Edited by Graciela Vázquez. Madrid: Edinumen, pp. 271–99.

García-Gómez, Antonio. 2018. *Dragon's Den*: Enacting Persuasion in Reality Television. *Discourse, Context & Media* 21: 1–9. [CrossRef]

Goleman, Daniel. 1995. *Emotional Intelligence. Why it Can Matter more than IQ*. London: Bloomsbury.

Goleman, Daniel. 2006. *Social Intelligence*. London: Hutchinson.

Gordillo León, Fernando, Rafael M. López Pérez, Lilia Mestas Hernández, and Beatriz Corbi Gran. 2014. Comunicación no verbal en la negociación: La importancia de saber expresar lo que se dice. *Revista Electrónica de Psicología Iztacala* 17: 646–66.

Halmari, Helena, and Tuija Virtanen, eds. 2005. *Persuasion across genres. A Linguistic Approach*. Amsterdam and Philadelpia: John Benjamins. [CrossRef]

Martín Arévalo, S. 2014a. Comunicación no verbal y lenguaje corporal en la negociación. Available online: https://managersmagazine.com/index.php/2010/08/comunicacion-no-verbal-y-lenguaje-corporal-en-la-negociacion/ (accessed on 7 April 2024).

Martín Arévalo, S. 2014b. Cómo usar el lenguaje corporal al negociar. Available online: http://www.martinarevalo.com/COMOUSARELLENGUAJECORPORALALNEGOCIAR.php (accessed on 1 October 2017).

Matsumoto, David, Hyisung C. Hwang, and Mark G. Frank, eds. 2016. *APA Handbook of Nonverbal Communication*. Washington: American Psychological Association.

McNeill, David. 2005. *Gesture & Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Olascoaga, Miguel A. 2012. *El lenguaje corporal en las negociaciones*. Veracruz: Universidad Veracruzana.

Pease, Allan. 2000. *Questions Are the Answers. How to Get to 'Yes'? in Networking Marketting*. Portsmouth, NH: Pease International.

Pentland, Alex S. 2015. La importancia de la gestualidad social. *Cuadernos de Mente y Cerebro. Lenguaje y comunicación: Neuropsicobiología de la expresión oral y gestual* 11: 66–74.

Poyatos, Fernando. 1993. *Paralanguage: A Linguistic and Interdisciplinary Approach to Interactive Speech and Sounds*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Poyatos, Fernando. 1994a. *La comunicación no verbal. Cultura, lenguaje y conversación*. Madrid: Istmo.

Poyatos, Fernando. 1994b. *La comunicación no verbal. Paralenguaje, kinésica e interacción*. Madrid: Istmo.

Pullman, George. 2013. *Persuasion. History, Theory, Practice*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co.

Rulicky, Sergio, and Martín Cherny. 2011. *Comunicación no verbal. Cómo la inteligencia emocional se expresa a través de los gestos*. Buenos Aires: Granica.

Taboada, M. Teresa. 2004. *Building coherence and cohesion. Task-oriented dialogue in English and Spanish*. Amsterdam and Philadelpia: John Benjamins. [CrossRef]

Valeiras-Jurado, Julia. 2019. Modal Coherence in Specialised Discourse: A Case Study of Persuasive Oral Presentations in Business and Academia. *Ibérica* 37: 87–114. [CrossRef]

Virtanen, Tuija, and Helena Halmari. 2005. Towards understanding modern persuasion. In *Persuasion across genres. A Linguistic Approach*. Edited by Helena Halmari and Tuija Virtanen. Amsterdam and Philadelpia: John Benjamins, pp. 229–44. [CrossRef]

Zhou, Hui, and Tingqin Zhang. 2008. Body Language in Business Negotiation. *International Journal of Business and Management* 3: 90–96. [CrossRef]