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The Speech Acts Recognition of ESP Students with and without Body Language

Abstract

This paper mainly deals with recognition of speech acts of body language by suggesting various types of body language in order to achieve the study objectives which aim at identifying the difference between speech act recognition of the ESP students with and without body language, once by listening to the speaker then by listening and watching the speaker body language of the speaker. This study is limited to 1st year students at Computer Science department/ College of Science for Women at University of Baghdad.

Two listening tests are designed which consist of various types of speech acts in the audio that suit ESP university students’ level of English language. In the first test, the students listened to the audio voice of the speaker talked about English proverbs and the students are asked to tick the speech acts items each time they appear, while in the second test, the same students listen and watch videos of body language of the same speaker talking about the same subject and they are also asked to tick the items of speech acts that they are ticked in the first test each time they appear.

Results show that there is a significant difference between the speech acts tests by listening to the audio recording of the presenter on one hand, and watching the video recording on the other hand, and in favour of watching the video that used body language. The results validated listening and watching the video since the computed value of the t-test (1.98) is higher than the tabulated t-value (1.69) at (29) degree of freedom and (0.05) level of significance.

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تمييز الأفعال الكلامية لدراسي اللغة الانكليزية للأغراض الخاصة مع أو بدون لغة الجسم

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الخلاصة

الأفعال الكلامية ميزة عامة يمكن تجسيدها عن طريق الأفعال التواصلية للغة الجسد. يتناول هذا البحث بصورة رئيسية تمييز الأفعال الكلامية للغة الجسم من خلال اقراح عدة أشكال للغة الجسم لتحقيق أهداف البحث التي تنص على تشخيص الاختلاف بين تمييز الأفعال الكلامية لدراسي اللغة الانكليزية للأغراض
Learning English requires communication through various ways including verbal and nonverbal. Body language is considered as nonverbal communication which is regarded as an effective way to support both teaching and learning. Body language has recently become a concentrate for speech act theory and recognition. A body language and its affections introduced in this paper on understanding Searle’s (1975) types of speech acts. For ESP students, they have to recognize what the speaker intends to say, not only what the speaker says, i.e. the hidden meaning of the sentences. John Borg (2008: n.d.) stated that communication of human beings contains 93 percent of body language and paralinguistic keywords including the tone of the voice, movement of eyes, hand gestures, facial expressions . . . etc. Nearly 60-70 percent of all meaning is derived from nonverbal behavior, while only 7 percent of communication is for language words.

Speech act is used in this paper to show how students can understand spoken language, since speech act can help to make better communication. Austin (1962:
101) defines speech act as a statement which requires performance of specific action on the behalf of the speaker or hearer.

Essentially, a body language is an important scope of modern communications due to its social nature. When community with body language, people may share information, ask questions, using gestures and facial expression as well as verbal language, etc. which are all examples of “speech acts” (Austin, 1962)

The present study aims at investigating the effect of speech act when used in spoken language with both verbal and nonverbal communication. This study is limited to 1st year students at Computer Science department in the College of Science for Women at Baghdad University.

2- Aims

The study aims at identifying the difference between speech act recognition of the ESP students with and without body language

1. The ESP students’ recognition of speech acts while listening to the speaker.

2. The ESP students’ recognition of speech acts while listening and watching the speaker body language.

3- Meaning of Speech Acts and Body Language

The language has been influenced by a number of factors; circumstance, age, gender, formality, etc. Started with the situation in which we use language because of course the way we communicate in a college is different from that in a reception, for example.

People communicate with each other by two main sorts of communication: verbal and nonverbal. While verbal describes words, nonverbal describes all types of communication that happen by devices of body movements, that's why the body language is a kind of nonverbal communication, which is used in an effective way to convey a person's ideas and intentions. Language users have the ability to recognize the type of any action before it is being told by the speaker, and that what is called a speech act.
Richard Nordquist (2019: n.d) stated that speech act theory is a pragmatic scientific discipline. This area of research deals with the ways in which words cannot only be used to present information but also to perform actions.

A speech act is the statesman's action within the utterance. Speech acts remain one of the most significant phenomena which should be accounted for any general pragmatic theory. (Marinescu2006: 179)

David Crystal (1997: 301) has described pragmatics as the subfield study of what speakers say. It means that people interact when they are communicating with more than the same or literal meaning of words.

Norbert Schmitt (2002: 74) said that pragmatics is the science which is interested in connecting transmitted language forms; messages and users of language. Pragmatics is “the science of the relation of signs to their interpreters”. Charles Morris (1938:30) the historical sensors of speech act theory assert that it has been first grow by Ludwig Wittgenstein, the German philosopher, but has been stated some linguistic shade by Austin and Searle, later on (Al-Hindawi, et al2014: 28).

Speech act theory clarifies how words are used not only to show information but also to commit actions. As explained above, a speech act theory is a crucial factor in any pragmatic analysis. It could be a question, a command, a request, a statement, or whatever it is.

3.1 The Speech Act Recognition

Elmadany et al (2018: 1) said recognition of speech acts has been an active investigation in recent years. The recognition of speech act role is to mark the intention of the speaker to create a specific utterance. The language of the speech act is roughly the equivalent of the speech act of Searle, in which it was described as a fundamental concept in linguistic pragmatics. What does it mean, for example, to ask a question or make a statement. (Underwood, 2008: 6)

Brown (1979:90) suggested a classification for indirect speech acts and a model for recognizing these acts. It is important to distinguish between classes of indirect speech acts that take part in public properties and to use various representations and treatment strategies for each class.

Searle suggested that the listener of an indirect speech act explains the act during a chain of thought or reasoning. Baktir(2012:201) said that
speech act is an important theory about the actual communicative role of language and seeks to address the degree to which objective interaction between speakers is possible. Communication is a language function and is conducted by speech acts in the spoken language. Allen (1979) suggested a plan-based way to the speech act analysis which accounts for the conventional part of speech acts.

### 3.2 Speech Act Theory

The speech act theory assesses language as a kind of action alternatively more than a medium to convey and indicates. (Kent Bach, 1994:4) The modern-day theory developed via J. L. Austin a British truth seeker of languages; he introduced this idea in 1975 in his widespread book of ‘How to do things with words’. Later John Searle added the elements of theory into much greater dimensions. All types of linguist conversations and communications are included of linguistic actions.

The theory confirms that, according to the language, the utterances have specific or particular senses; that means different to their person and listener than their words. The sense of act of speech is rather than explanatory in the context of situation. The act of speech gathers from the ides of structuralism. John Searle ’s indirect speech act was established on the basis of the Austin speech act. [http://www.communicationtheory.org/speech-act-theory](http://www.communicationtheory.org/speech-act-theory)

### 3.3 Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

Sebastian P. (2016: 4 ) stated that a direct speech act is a sentence or an utterance that has a direct connection between its form and its function. For example;

A declarative is used to make a statement: “You wear a safety belt.”

An interrogative is used to ask a question: “Do you wear a safety belt?”

An imperative is used to make a command: “Wear a safety belt!”

Yule(1996, 55) mentioned that the direct speech acts explain the intended meaning of the speaker when saying a specific utterance, i.e. if you have a question, it has to take an interrogative form. Requests and commands have an imperative structure.

On the other hand, an indirect speech act is when you mix or reverse the two things; i.e. it is a sentence or an utterance that has an indirect connection between its form and its function. For example; you have a request but you use an interrogative form: “Could you pass the bread?”

This utterance isn’t actually a question; it is a request by using question form politely.

To determine how speech act is to be interpreted the type of act to be performed first needs to be determined. In his book “How to Do Things with Words”, Austin names three featured levels of action beyond the act and the components of utterance itself. He identifies the physical act of saying something, what one does in saying it, and what one does by saying it, and dubs these the locutionary, the illocutionary, and the perlocutionary act.

The Elocutionary is the grammatical structure of the utterance; the speaker makes a sentence in a specific situation or context. For example:

Declarative: “you are genius”
Imperative: “Be genius!”
Exclamative: “how genius you are!”
Interrogative: “Are you genius?”

The Illocutionary is the intended meaning beyond the utterance; the speaker makes a sentence to apologize or to explain something, or just a statement. It has several possible meanings depending on the context. For example: “it’s hot here”. It could be a statement about a temperature, or it can be stated to make the hearer open the window. So, the same sentence shows ambiguity.

The Perlocutionary is a matter of attempting to get the hearer to form some inseparable attitude. For example: “there is a good football match tonight”. The perlocutionary may be the hearer understands the information and answers “Thanks.”. Or it is an excuse and apology politely and answers “Never mind.”

Searle carried on the spread of a theory of illocutionary acts [Searle 1969, 1979]. Speech act has come to mention entirely to the illocutionary act. A spoken or written utterance accomplishes an illocutionary act insomuch as it has an
illocutionary force and is effective. There are seven components in illocutionary force: [Searle and Vanderveken 1985:111] illocutionary purpose of a sentence, level of strength of the illocutionary point, style of fulfilment of the illocutionary point, proposal content situations, preparative situations, dedication situations, and level of strength of the honesty situations. These situations or conditions acquaint the harmony that qualify a speaker to express an act and a listener to understand its expression.

3.4 Types of Speech Acts

The division of speech acts into various subcategories is largely due to five basic categories of Searle’ (1975), these categories include:

1/ **An assertive speech act** has the objective of introducing the proposition as introducing an active event of affairs in the world. An assertive is an act of speech committing the speaker to the validity of a proposition. Assertives are either true or false, and fit in the direction of world-to-word. http://www.gavinjensen.com/blog/reality-and-the-uses-of-language

2/ **A directive speech act** has the objective of the speaker trying to make someone to do something qualified by the suggestion content of the message. Directives are those kinds of speech acts which shows the intention of the speaker to make someone else do something that means making words fit for the world. In other words, speaker needs the situation. The utterances of the directive consist of requesting, welcoming, authorizing, urging, telling, suggesting, advising, requiring, and enabling. (Muhartoyo; KeillyKristani 2013: 959)

3/ **A commissive speech act** has the objective of carrying out the speaker to some course of action qualified in the suggestion content of the message. Comissives are those kinds of speech acts used by speakers to agree to some future action. They express intention of the speaker. These are agreements, promises, threats, refusals and commitments and can be made by the speaker himself or by the speaker as a member of a group.

4/ **A declarative speech act** has the objective of the speaker carrying into existence the state of events qualified in the suggestion content of the message.
Declarations are the most remarkable kinds of speech act, because they are the cornerstone of human society. Declarations are statements which change the world by presenting it as so changed.

5/ **Expressive speech acts** are among the five basic categories of speech acts that Searle identified. Expressive remain under-researched, though more focus has been paid to specific types of expressive speech acts, in particular offering thanks and compliments.

An expressive illocutionary point has the objective of interacting an emotion or behaviour about the state of affairs qualified in the suggestion content of the message. David Crystal (2008:446) also argues in "Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics" for these types. He lists many possible categories, including "directives" (speakers seek to get their listeners to do something, such as requesting, and commanding), “Co missives” (Speakers agree to a potential course of action, e.g. pledging, assuring), “Expressive” Speakers express their feelings (for example, apologizing, accepting, sympathetic), “Declarations” (Statements which the speech gives rise to a new external event, e.g. christening, marriage, resignation) Those five commonly accepted definitions do a good job of describing the scope of human expression, at least where speech act theory is concerned with illocutionary actions.

4. **Body Language**

Vijendra (2018:n.d) defines body language as a science that has an effect on every part of our life. It is a system that a person can have knowledge of other people, and one can improve (him/herself) through noticing people movements.

Rebin and Paiman (2018:38) state that body language is an important field of modern communications. It explains the way of communicating using gestures and facial expression as well as verbal language. There are two main sorts of communication: verbal and nonverbal, verbal describes words, whether nonverbal describes all communication that happens by devices of body movements, that is why body language is a kind of nonverbal communication, which is used in an effective way to convey a person's ideas and intentions.

Body Language plays an important role in communication; it consists of the use of gestures, facial expressions, head motion, and postures (Dipika, 2014: 93). Vijendra (2018:n.d) adds that body language provides keys to describe the mood of a person.
As, it probably refers to offensive, wakefulness, monotony, relaxed, excitement, confused, and entertainment. Aric Watson states that Body language is an art that teaches a person how can he/she achieve his/her aims of popularity.

4.1 Types of Body Language:


4.2 The Importance of Body Language (BL) in English Teaching

4.2.1. to promote the educational influence,
4.2.2. to increase limitation of students in vocabulary and expressive ability,
4.2.3. to reduce the less interest of students in English class, and to motivate the teaching,
4.2.4. to develop the effects of teaching language,
4.2.5. to reinforce the role of information,
4.2.6. to awake the mood of classroom,
4.2.7. to engage students' imagination, and
4.2.8. to realize the nature of students.

4.3 Using the Body Language in English Teaching

4.3.1 Using Facial Expressions

When teachers use appropriate facial expressions, they will make an excellent class atmosphere, and awake the mood of classroom.

All human beings can express their emotions and feelings by the use of facial expressions, like confusion, fear, sadness, and excitement. So, teachers have to know the exact use of different facial expressions to manage various kinds of situations in the classroom. For example; when teachers smile in the classroom, they will reduce the pressure of the students towards learning, and give students smooth studying atmosphere.

4.3.2 Using Eye Contact
Moore (2003:84) notes that the use of eye contact might be the most used type of BL, and the strongest way we communicate especially in teaching English because of the importance of eye contact in keeping a class focused. There is a proverb which says "eyes are windows of the soul." This means the eyes can reflect the inner feelings and can attract the individual's attention. If teachers look at students regularly in teaching, teachers will control the class better and attract the students' attention. And if teachers miss use the eye contact in classes, this will make lack of attention between teachers and students.

Hui Yang (2016:n.d) states that in class, there are two types of eye contact that teachers usually use: One is looking around. Looking around is a type of an effective eye contact in teaching in the classroom. It used to pay all the students’ attention, encouraging them and to make them to participate in the activities. The second type of eye contact is looking attentively. When teachers reproach students’ bad manner, they avoid looking at students' eyes, by doing this, teachers will show as serious, nervous, and explicit.

4.3.3 Using Gestures

Rebin&Paiman, (2018:39) explain that using gestures means the use of hands and fingers' movements in expressing our thoughts and feelings. It is not an easy type of BL and is considered the most beneficial way for communication as well as verbal communication.

According to Xiaoling (2017:1335) English language teachers usually use suitable gestures to express whatever is in their words, mind, and feelings. By gestures, students feel interesting, and can understand quickly, so the teaching impact will be better.

4.4 Using Body Language in Teaching Listening and Speaking

4.4.1 Using BL in listening

Listening is the ability to receive and comprehend words and sentences in the process of communication. https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-skills.html. Listening is the source of all communicative messages. Without listening appropriately, messages will not be understood effectively.

Listening means monitoring not only to the message, but also noticing how it is told, the use of words and voice, and how the message user applies his/her body
language. In other words, it means the listener should be acquainted with both verbal and non-verbal messages. In teaching English, for example, a teacher can use his/her hands movement when he/she says “She works in a very large hospital” and open his/her eyes vastly, with an open mouth when he/she says “They are very smart boys”. Thus, the students can form an idea about the hospital how big it is, and the boys how smart they are.

One’s ability to listen comprehensively relies on the degree to which one can grasp and understand these messages. In fact, students have to be involved in the process just as speakers. To be an active listener this means that a person should fully engaged in the process of listening. The listener has to pay full attention to what is said by the speaker, and assures that he/she comprehend the delivered information. The right way to make someone be an active listener, is to be more receptive to the speech of the speaker; that is to say, the listener makes sure he/she confronts the speaker; he/she keeps eye contact and listens attentively. By doing this, the listener can understand whether the speaker feels relaxed, eager, or nervous. _https://learn.filtered.com/blog/body-language-for-active-listening_

4.4.2 Using Body Language in Speaking

Speaking is the ability to send and produce messages. It is a main part in our daily life communication through it we can express our thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that always take place in cultural and social contexts (Norbert Schmitt: 2002: 211).

Tai (2014:1206) explains that the oral language is one of the most important ways in communication. Most EFL learners feel shy when they speak the second language. They face little difficulty in writing and reading English, but they cannot speak fluently. So they should be encouraged by their teachers to overcome their passive shyness. Body language can engages students in using it in every day conversations, this happened by teacher’s BL. BL should not be done by the teachers only, but also the students have to be asked to use it according to various situations. For instance, teachers may use their smile when they greet the class, shake hands with students saying “Nice to meet you”. By doing that, teachers break the fear of the students and make the relaxed atmosphere for them to take part in class. The use of BL in varied situations, will promote to activate a pleasant and successful lesson.
5. Previous studies

Abdul-Qadir Mohammed (2013) describes in his research the socio-pragmatics of sign language in Iraqi Arabic conversations. His study concentrates on nonverbal actions of indirect speech acts including refusal, threat, greeting, etc. He also states that Iraqis, speaking informally, express their feelings through non-verbal actions of refusal, threat, promise, greeting, insult and disrespect. A set of gestures and facial expressions can be more effective than speech because these are psychologically and socially bound which have direct relation to the strategy of power / solidarity norms. The researcher concludes that there should be inseparability of language and culture. One cannot treat language as a phenomenon which can be taught or learned separately from cultural context. His paper makes the reader aware of the cultural norms and etiquette of his/her own language. The awareness of one's culture norms and linguistic etiquette may help efficiently in understanding and acquiring the norms of another culture.

Filippo Domaneschi1, etal(2017) have also studied speech act and body language, their research is on facial expressions and speech acts and the role of the upper face as an illocutionary force indicating device in language comprehension. They discuss the problem of how language users recognize the kind of speech act performed by a speaker uttering a sentence in a particular context. They have done so by investigating the role played by the illocutionary force indicating devices, the role of facial expressions and, in particular, of upper-face action units in the comprehension of three basic types of illocutionary force: assertions, questions, and orders. The results from their pilot experiment on production and two comprehension experiments show that; (1) certain upper-face seem to constitute nonverbal signals that contribute to the understanding of the illocutionary force of questions and orders; (2) assertions are not expected to be marked by any upper-face; (3) some upper-face can be associated, with different degrees of compatibility, with both questions and order. More generally, within a study of ordinary language processing in a multimodal perspective, it has investigated the non-verbal indicators of illocutionary force. The main message offered by this study is that facial expressions are non-verbal signals that contribute to the understanding of the different kinds of illocutionary forces performed by language users in ordinary conversations.

6. Methodology
The research methodology in this research paper is quantitative in nature. In order to carry out the speech act recognition analysis of body language within selected test listening to the speaker, and watching her body language, the approach of Searle (1979) is adopted in the current study, due to the clarity, exhaustiveness, and easiness. Two tests are formed for undergraduate ESP students in Baghdad University/ College of Science for Women.

### 6.1 Population and Sampling

The population of interest for this research paper is ESP undergraduate students at the University of Baghdad. The population of the current study is 30 ESP undergraduate students of the academic year of 2019-2020. Most of the participants are in age 17 years or older. They are studying English Language at Computer Science department.

The research sampling method used, is random sampling to achieve a more specific result that can be used to study the whole population. Each student is chosen by her desire and each of them has an equal chance, or probability of being selected.

### 6.2 Tool

For our first test, a table that contains 15 types of speech acts is created according to functions. The students listen to the audio with recording to the speaker lesson about some English proverbs. The students are supposed to distinguish sentences that contain one or more speech acts or implied in utterances from sentences that do not contain any speech acts. The students are told to read the labelled test and tick (√) the type of speech act every time they notice it.

The next test, we repeated the first test with the same form but this time the students are asked to listen and watch video in computer screen in order to pay attention to the speaker’s body language.

The first test is about listening to an audio of the speaker talking about the English proverbs, the following items are given to 30 students and they are asked to tick the items each time they hear, then in the second test, after students listened to the same speaker talking about English proverbs but this time with video presentation which means that the students see the body language of the speaker while speaking, then the same form of the test with the same items are given to the
same students to notice the difference in their answers with and without noticing the body language of the speaker.

The following is the form of the test with instruction:

**Listen to the lesson about English proverbs, then tick (√) the types of sentences each time it appears**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of speech act</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Request</td>
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<td>Advice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suggestion</td>
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<td>Invitation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Refusal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thanking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaint</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Command</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


7.1 Test validity

To check the validity of the test, a group of specialists in the field of English language teaching has checked the appropriateness of the test items and they all stated that the test is valid to be implemented to the students.

7.2 Test Reliability

To check the reliability of the test, split – half scale has been used to check its reliability which revealed the following:

The reliability factors for each test by using split- half scale:

Audio= 0.78                      Video= 0.81

Both results showed that they are good reliability degrees, which mean that the test is reliable.

3.7 Description of Two Tests Implementation

Two tests are implemented in this study. The first one is without seeing the video when students only listen to the talk and then answer the questions concerning speech act recognition by marking the points of different speech act that they recognize while listening. The second test is done after two weeks of the implementation of the first one. The second test is applied after the students have seen the same video which they only heard but now associated with body language so the students can see all the body language gestures and facial expressions with speech act functions and they are asked to answer the same form of the first exam. After marking the papers of the students who undergo the two tests and applying the statistical tools the obtained results show that there is a significant difference between the students’ performance on the test without seeing the video and the students’ performance on the test after seeing the video, i.e. they achieved better results when seeing the video.

8. Results and Recommendations

8.1 Results

According to the study aim, There is a significant difference between the act of speech tests by listening to the audio recording and watching video recording and in favor of watching the video, since the computed value of the t- test (1.98) is higher than the tabulated t- value (1.69) at 29 degree of freedom and (0.05) level of significant, as shown in the following table (1).
The table (1) : Paired Sample T- test for Finding the Differences between the Students’ Responses to Audio and video Recording.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Calculated T- value</th>
<th>Tabulated T- value</th>
<th>Sig. 0.05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.95</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.98</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of this study is to explore how ESP students identify the difference between speech act recognition with and without body language. The obtained results reveal that the ESP students are influenced by the body language of the speaker while watching and listening to the lesson by video in the test.

8.2 Conclusions

To sum up, several of speech acts have been examined in which what a speaker means can be recognized from the speaker’s body language. Indexical, ambiguous, easily interpretable, non-literal and indirectly, English words are not uniquely directly linked with the behaviours and body language used to express them. It is also noticed how the notion of meaning of speakers can be imbedded into the theory of acts of speech insofar as these are communicative in character rather than traditional. Body language or Non-verbal communication; the explicit method of putting thoughts into sentences, nor the opposite but equally understanding simple process to decode those words, i.e. types of speech acts.

In essence, communicating is not a matter to communicate linguistic meanings yet to convey attitudes and comprehension is a matter of acknowledging attitudes expressed.

8.2 Recommendations

In terms of the research results, the researchers recommend the use of body language with speech acts in conversations and in English language teaching to make students fully comprehend the language and they will be able to use body language with speaking to convey meaningful messages to the listener. By doing
this, both teachers and students will achieve the main aim of teaching English language which is the use of language communicatively in meaningful situations.

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