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GESTURES IN COMMUNICATION: AN INVENTORY OF EMBLEMS OBSERVED IN SEVILLE, SPAIN

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE MASTERS OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT

Gestures in Communication: An Inventory of Emblems Observed in Seville, Spain

by

María José Gómez-Calderón

Gestures are studied as part of the communicative strategies pertaining to a language. This study focuses strictly on the gestures observed in the city of Seville, Spain. The inventory includes the emblems most frequently used by native speakers under 35. The scope of the inventory reaches all the social classes and educational levels currently occurring in the city of Seville.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The study of gesture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Kinesics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. The description of gesture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. Gestures and Cultural Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4. Gestures and Non-Verbal Communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5. Gestures and Foreign Language Teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Emblems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Definition of emblem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Emblems and words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Idiosyncratic and international emblems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Methodology for research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Observations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. Data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. Sociocultural setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4. Informants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5. Illustration of the emblems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6. Presentation of the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conclusions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Inventory of emblems observed in Seville.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1. Inventory of idiosyncratic Sevillian emblems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1. Action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2. Approval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.3. Describing personal feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.4. Descriptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.5. Insults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.6. Money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.7. Relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.8. Threats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.9. Unclassified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2. International emblems used in Seville.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1. Actions and directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2. Approval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3. Describing personal feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.4. Descriptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.5. Insults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.6. Money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.7. Threats.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GESTURES IN COMMUNICATION: AN INVENTORY OF EMBLEMS OBSERVED IN SEVILLE, SPAIN

. . . in order to understand and teach a "culture's behavior" one should look at the postural repertoire that is most conspicuously characteristic of its members, because just as English-speaking people move in English, in Schleifer's words, so Hispanic peoples move, sit and stand in Spanish.
F. Poyatos, Gesture Inventories: Fieldwork Methodology and Problems.

Anyone attempting the task of interacting with a given social group may find it useful to know its repertoire of gestures. The interpretation of what is actually communicated through language is often affected directly by the non-verbal information conveyed in movement. If one is not aware of the body language of others—that is, movements—one will not be able to decode information correctly, and consequently communication may fail. Movements include postures, the way we stand, sit or look, facial expressions of emotion, and gestures. Particularly, the term "gesture" refers to the specific subgroup of movements performed with a communicative purpose.

Gestures have an outstanding role in communication; they not only are used with words, but also can replace them in conversation, as is the case with "emblems." Emblems are a specific class of consciously performed gestures with a constant meaning used by the members of a community of speakers for communicative purposes; their definition will be presented in chapter 2. The aim of this thesis is to prepare an inventory of the most frequent emblems used by Spanish speakers under 35 years of age from the city of Seville, Spain.

Some gestural patterns, such as smiling, winking or the wrinkling of one's eyebrows, may seem to be universally understood as expressions of happiness, approval or complicity, and anger respectively. However, the meaning of gestures may change among different cultures. As kinesthetic R. Birdwhistell stated, there are no universal gestures: "Que sepamos, no existe
una expresión facial, una actitud o una postura corporal que transmita el mismo significado en todas las sociedades." This implies that gestures are culturally coded, that is, that one knows their meanings because one has learned them within a particular cultural context.

This fact becomes more evident when dealing with a foreign culture. In that case, gestures have to be learned and interpreted as part of the communication strategies pertaining to the target culture in order for understanding to take place. Therefore, descriptive inventories may be helpful in introducing the reader to the repertoire of meaningful gestures. In this sense, the present thesis is an attempt to contribute to an enhanced knowledge of the repertoire of gestures in Spanish.

In the past, interest in cross-cultural studies generated several studies on gestures, yet the bibliography regarding those occurring in Spanish-speaking communities is scanty. In the late 60's and early 70's a few researchers began to publish in this field. Green (1968) presented a collection of Peninsular Spanish gestures, and Saitz and Cervenka (1972) issued a contrastive catalogue of Colombian and American gestures. These authors' inventories followed the trend of research in communication current in the United States two decades ago. Important as these contributions are, they are not conclusive,

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1As quoted in F. Davis, La Comunicacion No-Verbal (Madrid: Alianza, 1971). Although the original source was published in English, only the Spanish translation was available for this thesis.

2This thesis shares Gumperz's idea of communicative strategies as presented in J.J. Gumperz, Discourse Strategies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). "There is no question that the effective employment of communicative strategies presupposes grammatical competence and knowledge of the culture" 4-5.

but only the starting point.

Neither Green's nor Saitz and Cervenka's works seem to take into account the sociolinguistic background of their informants. They collect their data from informants belonging to unclassified groups; Green only says that his were university students "most representative of the nonverbal communication patterns of residents of Madrid" (24). Saitz and Cervenka just mention that "The informants in Colombia were young-adult and middle-aged, and came from Bogota and Tunja (though our observations were made in a number of other cities and towns in Colombia as well)" (8). Since no further information is provided, it is difficult to know which of the gestures collected by the researchers are in the common repertoire of the overall population of those countries, which gestures are specifically used by certain social classes, if they are considered to be formal or informal or whether their use is determined by the sex, age or educational level of the people who use them. Also, the gestures are presented as an amalgam that does not discriminate between autochthonous and internationally known gestures, so that specifically Colombian ones cannot be identified. Also, there is no reference to the verbal expressions that usually accompany the gestures collected.

Another author dealing with Spanish gestures is F. Poyatos.4 In his articles, Poyatos proposed a model for research, but he provided no inventory. In contrast to the works by Saitz and Cervenka or Green, Poyatos's methodology for gesture research pays special attention to the "conditioning background" of the informants. Poyatos (1975) established a classification based on biopsychological aspects (sex, health, age, physiology, etc.), and social aspects (socioeconomic, sociogeographic ones). Some of these

parameters have been taken into account for the present research, especially those dealing with variables such as educational and economic levels and geographical distribution. Nevertheless, some other aspects which Poyatos proposed—"hereditary-somatogenic" or "physiological," included in the psychobiological group, or "individual," "married couple," "family-clan," in the social section—have not been considered for the present thesis.

Regarding theoretical perspectives, the inventories of Spanish gestures mentioned above differ from the category "emblem." This was established by Efron in the 40s, and is nowadays widely accepted by researchers in non-verbal communication.\(^5\) Only Poyatos's non-inventorial work includes "emblems" among the proposed semiotic classification of gestures.

The current thesis deals specifically with a class of emblems of Peninsular Spanish, those used by young speakers in the city of Seville. This set includes both idiosyncratic emblems as well as those used internationally. The repertoire of gestures in a culture is always subject to modifications: new entries do appear while some others become old-fashioned and vanish. In this sense, this thesis provides an up-dated inventory of emblematic gestures currently employed in Seville. The emblems described here are those used by Sevillians under 35 in natural conversation and in everyday situations.

Only data collected through direct observation has been considered, and information about its immediate context and users is provided for each item in the inventory. Literary texts have not been used since they usually reflect the author's elaboration on the gestures for artistic purposes. Unlike previous gesture inventories, this study lists the verbal expressions --including slang ones-- commonly associated with each emblem. Likewise, some other relevant

\(^5\) D. Efron, Gesture and Environment (New York: King’s Crown Press, 1941). This work was re-issued as Gesture, Race and Culture (La Haya: Mouton, 1972).
cultural information and factors affecting the performance of the emblems appear under the heading "Comments" when necessary.

In comparison to the works by Green or Saitz and Cervenka published more than twenty years ago, the present inventory proposes a different format for the presentation of the material. Items have been photographed instead of drawn. We do not share Green's opinion about line drawing being a better way for the illustration of the emblems. We feel that photography is a more objective device for registering gestures and expression than the drawings or sketches appearing in previous gesture inventories of Spanish. Also, photography allows the recording of data on the spot, without altering the naturalness of the performance.

Getting to know the repertoire of emblems in a given culture is a task that takes a long period of exposure to it; as a matter of fact, many cross-cultural misunderstandings and misinterpretations are due to the ignorance of the rules of body language in general and emblems in particular. Hence the interest in compiling and systematizing the information, which may be of use in such different fields such as Cultural Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Linguistics or Language Learning and Teaching.
1. THE STUDY OF GESTURE.

1.1. Kinesics.

Movement is one of the many non-verbal devices for communication which human beings have at their disposal. Just like touch or smell, movements seem to be a much older communicative system than the spoken language. Body movement seems to be a central factor in natural communication. According to studies in Ethology, most animals communicate through body movement. Investigation about primates, the closest ancestors of man, shows that the way human beings move presents many similarities to the movements of animals. The implications are that movement in general and gestures in particular are an integral part of human interaction. Movement plays a much more important role in everyday communication than it might seem at first sight. Natural conversation requires movements; body language is so highly operative in communication to the point that complete, yet limited, exchanges can at times be carried out just by meaningful gestures.

Both as a substitute or as a parallel performance to that of language, the way we move is very informative, even without our having a direct control over it—as when we smile or wrinkle our eyebrow unconsciously. In this sense, sociological experiments as the one developed by Ekman indicate that when people try to lie with words, uncontrolled movement can reveal their real untruthfulness.\textsuperscript{6} This may explain why most of us prefer a personal meeting to a conversation over the phone for really important matters: through face-to-face interaction we can witness our interlocutor's more direct physical reaction both to us and to what is being discussed.

As a consequence of the interest of researchers in non-verbal

\textsuperscript{6}For further information about this experiment of Ekman's see F. Davis's La Comunicación No-Verbal mentioned above.
communication, movement became the subject of interdisciplinary, cross-cultural studies and debate in the second half of the twentieth century. D.Efron's studies in the 40s were the beginning of modern research in movement; his work on Jewish and Italian gestures used by immigrants in New York was the first cultural study devoted to gestures in communication.

The impact of Efron's work drew other scholars' attention towards the study of movements. In the early 50s R. Birdwhistell's works formally launched Kinesics as a science. As such, Kinesics focuses on the study of any kind of human movement, conscious or unconscious, with or without relation to speech. From the 50s onwards, Kinesics had been of interest to anthropologists, psychiatrists, ethnologists, ethologists, psychologists, and sociologists, who used it as a resourceful tool for research in their own fields.

Researchers in non-verbal communication deal with body movement both at conscious and unconscious levels. Frequently, our bodies move or adopt some postures without our really noticing, yet at that moment we are effectively communicating through them. The signals we emit unconsciously are also received by others in the same way, conveying information of which we are not even aware. The difference between conscious and unconscious movement lies in that at the unconscious level, we do not control what we are revealing about ourselves. Only the trained eye of expert kineticists and/or psychiatrists, who have produced most of the current studies in Kinesics, would realize its significance, and use the information conveyed by unconscious movements for diagnostic purposes.

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7R. Birdwhistell's first work on Kinesics was *Introduction to Kinesics: An Annotation for Analysis of Body Motion and Gesture* (Louisville, Kentucky: University of Louisville Press, 1952). Since 1959, Birdwhistell has developed his kinetic research at the East Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute; most of its results were collected in *Kinesics and Context* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1970).
1.2. The description of gestures.

Gestures can be described according to which part or parts of the body are involved. In these terms, it is possible to distinguish between three groups of gestures: the ones performed just by the face, those performed by the rest of the body, and gestures performed by both the face and other parts of the body.

The head marks the direction in which the body is facing, and it easily centralizes all attention. The face is the most expressive part of the human anatomy, especially the eyes. As an unconscious reflex action, we all tend to look for the eyes of the animals we see in order to identify their kind. The eyes are so revealing that they are the first part one covers when one is trying to remain anonymous. As a whole, the face can show an enormous range of emotions by itself: brow, eyes and mouth interact to register almost the slightest emotion by means of thousands of combinations. The movements performed by the face are known as "facial expressions," and they are indeed very difficult to describe objectively. In order to solve this problem, P. Ekman and his team developed FAST (Facial Affect Score Technique) in the 70s, a catalogue containing all the possible expressions the human face can perform. FAST allows accurate descriptions; taking into account that light variations in the movements—a wider or narrower smile, a more or less tightly closed mouth, etc.—may alter the meaning of the message they convey, FAST is a useful tool for kinesic research.

Besides facial expressions, there are gestures performed with other parts of the body. The way one walks, sits, or folds one's arms, belongs to this group. Here hand movements play an important role due to their highly expressive value.

It was R. Birdwhistell who issued a kinesic theory which connected the
study of gestures to that of language. In the same way verbal discourse can be divided into smaller parts, so can gestures. The minimal units are the "kines," which combine among themselves to form messages. Birdwhistell called "kinemes" the gestural analogues of the semantic linguistic unit "morphemes," and elaborated an exhaustive system of description similar to that operative in Linguistics. According to Birdwhistell, gestural messages are made up of "kinemes" in the same way verbal ones are made out of morphemes. Both morphemes and "kinemes" are meaningful items within their own communicative systems. Both of them can appear by themselves as well as combined. For example, the "kineme" "rised eyebrow" can be interpreted as a warning" when appearing by itself; nevertheless, if it appears in combination with an open mouth it implies "surprise".

1.3. Gestures and Cultural Studies.

Anthropologists point out that, along with its language, every known culture develops its own repertoire of gestures. From the 50s onwards, there have been several studies devoted to compiling repertoires of gestures in different languages, the scope of these works ranging from the mere curiosity-collecting handbook to the more scientific, specialized study. As stated above, Efron (1941) is generally considered as the starting point for the scientific treatment of the subject.

Several contrastive studies and inventories appeared in the 70s: a comprehensive work in this trend is D. Morris et al. (1979), in which the same twenty gestures appearing in different European cultures are studied and catalogued.8 The area studied in this research extended from Ireland to the

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Canary Islands and from Turkey to Portugal. Most of these gestures also occur in Seville; they are actually listed in this thesis in the last section --International emblems used in Seville. Thus, Sevillians use what Morris termed “Fingertip kiss,” “Finger cross,” "Hand purse,” "Eyelid pull,” "Forearm jerk,” “Flat hand flick,” (with a slight variation since it is performed with both hands instead of with hand and forearm), “Ring” and "Up thumb" as described by Morris. Two gestures present variations: “Horn sign” and “Back palm V sign." Morris distinguishes these two performances of the former gesture although they both have the same meaning of insult or threat. Sevillian speakers use the “Horn sign” as an insult regardless of whether it is vertical or horizontal. Also, the “V sign” is usually performed with the palm facing the interlocutor. The gestures labeled by Morris as “Cheek screw,” "Fig,” "Head toss,” "Chin flick," "Cheek stroke," “Teeth flick,” "Ear touch” and "Nose tap” do not often appear in Sevillian speakers. Also, another gesture such as “Nose thumb” is known but its use is not frequent among adults.

Lately, there has been a renewal of interest in gestures, with the publication of works by Axtell (1991) and Bremmer and Roodenburg (1992). These works, which focus on gestures from an anthropologic point of view, discuss several aspects of the use of gestures in different cultures, but they do not provide proper inventories.

Besides the set of gestures generated in a given culture, there exist within it some specific repertoires of gestures belonging to particular groups, such as the language for deaf-mute people, gestures used in sports by coaches, referees and players, the system of signals for boy scouts, for soldiers, etc. In many cases, these sets of gestures are operative internationally.

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Nevertheless, they are not considered to be a part of the gestural background of the culture as long as they are not known by the majority of native speakers. Eventually, some of these particular gestures may reach the common gestural repertoire and be finally integrated as emblems in most cases. An example of this is the gesture meaning "time out" in sports, in which both hands form a "T". It is now used by many people in Spain meaning "let's take a break" or "give me a break."

1.4. Gestures and verbal communication.

It is commonly accepted that getting to know a language implies mastering its verbal as well as its non-verbal resources, so that complete communication is achieved only through the use of both systems. When gestures are co-occurrent with the speech activity, they are linked to the same frames of interpretation of the verbal information negotiated by the participants in the conversation. Likewise, they are always context-bound, and their actual meaning depends on the ongoing communicative exchange. Also, the decoding of gestures relies on the participants' knowledge of the semantics of a given culture, a knowledge that is always culturally learnt and which changes from context to context and from culture to culture. As indicated above, each culture develops its own set of meaningful gestures, as well as standards for what is acceptable and when it is proper to use each gesture.

According to Argyle (1967, 1988), gestures have several functions when used simultaneously with speech.\textsuperscript{10} Gestures such as nodding, facial expressions, eye-contact, etc. can complete the meaning of locutions. They control the synchronization of speaking-turns among the participants in a

conversation, and offer a non-verbal feedback. They also indicate to the speaker that the message is being understood. In this sense, Kinesics can be a helpful tool both for discourse analysis and foreign language teaching.

Within the frame of discourse analysis, gestures are an important part of what Gumperz (1982) called "socio-cultural knowledge in conversational inference."11 By means of the interpretation of diverse gestures, the participants in a conversation fill the gap of what is not said. Their knowledge of the non-verbal elements of body language fulfills an interpretive function. This knowledge is acquired through the subject's acquaintance with the cultural and social environment that produces the gestures. Participants in a conversation should share the same kinesic code to be fully competent, otherwise interferences will affect the communicative exchange.

Discourse analysts pay special attention to the information conveyed through non-verbal channels like gestures. Gestures may appear just by themselves or as supporters of verbal utterances, and they can be used to mark the transition between what Austin's Speech Act Theory calls the "moves" of a conversation.12 For instance, in a natural conversational situation it is not unusual for one of the speakers to change the topic and start a new move—a new section in the communicative exchange—just by marking the transition with a particular movement of the hands. If participant A makes a gesture and participant B is not aware of it and does not produce the suitable response, the behavior of the latter will probably be considered as inappropriate or even rude, and consequently this person's competence in social interaction may become suspicious. Frequently, turn-claiming and turn-yielding are also non-verbally

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11 In Gumperz's words "Conversational inference... is the situated or context-bound process of interpretation, by means of which the participants in an exchange assess others' intentions, and on which they base their responses", 153.
negotiated through gestures, which vary in different cultures. In Spain, as in other countries, the participants in a conversation may indicate that they have something to say by raising one finger or a hand. In the same way, the current speaker may avoid being interrupted by avoiding eye-contact with the turnclaimer; that is, by deliberately ignoring his/her gesture.

*Gestures are so intrinsically linked to our cultural background that the native speakers of a given language can easily recognize their fellow countrymen by the way they gesticulate and move when speaking. In fact, a person's cultural origin can be traced through the accurate observation of his/her repertoire of gestures, the way he/she moves being more persistent than accent when speaking a foreign language. As Flora Davies pointed out:*

> Hay personas bilingües que cambian su manera de gesticular al mismo tiempo que el idioma... Muchas otras no, y es por ello por lo que podemos encontrar gente que habla perfectamente inglés y mantiene movimientos de cinesis absolutamente yiddish; de algún modo su inglés [or any other language] no sonará tan bueno como realmente es, porque los movimientos que hace no lo acompañan adecuadamente. (103)

### 1.5. Gestures and foreign language teaching

As cross-cultural studies indicate, it is important to notice not only that the meaning of gestures varies from culture to culture, but also that in some cultures people gesticulate more than in others. As it has been stated above, the way people gesticulate and move is culturally patterned and learnt, and identifies them as members of a given cultural group.

Each culture establishes its own standards of degree of body movement. In this sense, what in some cultures would be considered as overacting, in others would be the accepted expressive behavior. This degree of demonstrativeness depends directly on the kind and amount of gestures people
habitually perform in normal social interaction. It is generally accepted that Mediterranean people move more both face and hands when speaking than Anglo-Saxon people. Thus, the normal way in which Spaniards greet each other in informal situations may probably seem to involve too much movement for American observers. When Spaniards casually meet in the middle of a street, they usually pat or touch each other's arms lightly; while women kiss men and women on both cheeks, men tap each other on the back and shake hands with vigorous movements. Should the participants refrain from or refuse this type of physical contact, their behavior would be regarded as unfriendly. The Spanish style may be an excessive public display of affection for American standards; conversely, Spaniards would regard the typical American greetings, limited to shaking hands, as cold and distant according to their own cultural rules.

Gestures that occur both in America and Spain may have different interpretations within the two cultural contexts. This is the case with smiling. Spaniards tend to smile less frequently than Americans, which does not mean that they are less happy. According to Davis (43), there exist differences in smiling among Americans themselves; those from the Northern states apparently smile more often than those in the South. In this sense, the "outsider" has to learn to decode appropriately the gestures of the target cultural frame.

Visitors to foreign countries often find that gestures have to be redefined and explained in order to achieve a better and more accurate understanding of the culture. Students of Spanish may benefit from having some kind of guidance regarding the gestural behavior of Spanish speakers. It would be in their interest to know the do's and don'ts concerning some gestures. This might help them to avoid interferences in communication and also to avoid getting into embarrassing situations.
Kinesics can complement foreign language teaching. The observation of how the native speakers of the target language move and use gestural elements may be beneficial for students. As part of the classroom-teaching strategies, teachers can provide students with accurate information about gesticulation through different devices such as pictures, slides, films, videotapes or inventories such as the one included in this study.
2. EMBLEMS

2.1. Definition of emblem.

Up to this point the term "gesture" has been used in its broadest sense, that is, to indicate any body movement relevant to communicative purposes. Thus, only unintentional movements such as blinking or the way one moves a cigarette when smoking, have been excluded from this category.

From a theoretical point of view, there exist different definitions of "gesture" that vary according to authors. Kendon (1981) stated that "gesture" is

... any distinct bodily action that is regarded as part of the process of deliberate utterance or expression. ... To qualify as gesture, a pattern of action has to be seen to have well-defined beginnings and endings and usually the action is seen as being performed against a background of more long-lasting activities, the gestural action being seen as an "excursion" against such a background. The action has to be seen as having a communicative function and it has to be seen as something that the individual could have avoided doing. (131)

Poyatos (1975) completed Kendon's definition by explicitly introducing both the question of consciousness and physical descriptive aspects:

By gesture I understand a conscious or unconscious body movement made mainly with the head, the face alone, or the limbs, learned or somatogenic, and serving as a primary communicative tool, dependent or independent from verbal language; either simultaneous or alternating with it, and modified by the conditioning background (smiles, eye movements, a gesture of beckoning, a tic, etc.) (203).

Poyatos also posited a further functional division of gestures into "ritualistic," "conversational," "floor-apportioning" and "receiver's feedback." From a semiotic point of view, he issued a subclassification of gestures as "free" ("emblems," "illustrators," "affect displays") and "bound" ("self-adaptors,"
"object-adaptors" and "alter-adaptors"). He took this terminology mainly from Ekman and Friesen (1969). These authors based their ideas on Efron (1941).

Ekman and Friesen proposed a distinction among "facial expressions of emotion," "illustrators" (movements to illustrate simultaneous speech), "regulators," "adaptators" (movements in which a part of the body manipulates others) and "emblems" on the basis of the different origin, coding and usage these movements have. In a later work published in 1972, Ekman and Friesen believed that emblems could also be iconically coded. Regarding this, Efron had stated that "emblems" are patterns of movement with an exact meaning and that they are only arbitrarily coded actions. In preparing our inventory of Spanish emblems we have used their terminology:

Emblems are those non-verbal acts (a) which have a direct verbal translation usually consisting of a word or two, or a phrase, (b) for which this precise meaning is known by most or all members of a group, class, subculture or culture, (c) which are most often deliberately used with the conscious intent to send a particular message to other person(s) (d) who sees the emblem usually not only knows the emblem's message but also knows that it was deliberately sent to him, and (e) for which the sender usually takes responsibility for having made that communication. A further touchstone of an emblem is whether it can be replaced by a word or two, its message verbalized without substantially modifying the conversation. (336)

In 1975, Johnson, Ekman and Friesen published an article dealing strictly with American emblems in which they applied their final definition of the term "emblem." 15

Emblems are frequently used in communication because they are

quicker than words, and usually replace these when silence is required or when
the medium does not easily permit communication through sound. Thus,
emblematic gestures become very useful when communication deals with noise
or distance, as in crowded settings. They can even be performed in meaningful
sequences.

2.2. Emblems and words.

As Kendon indicated in his definition of emblems, they are "consciously
performed and they may be reenacted in much the same way that a word in
one's spoken vocabulary can be quoted" (136). It is important to note that the
parallelism between words and emblems, dictionaries and emblematic
inventories goes even further. The size of both linguistic and gestural
repertoires will grow throughout the subject's lifetime by adding new items
acquired through interaction within a given cultural community.

As cultural phenomena, both vocabulary and emblems are socially
negotiated and depend on the fashion of the time. Although perhaps more
persistent in their duration, emblems are much like slang: each generation
produces and popularizes its own emblems, and only those which are broadly
accepted will endure the fickleness of fashion and eventually be finally
registered in the general background emblematic repertoire. An example of this
is the now international emblem for "stop, give me a break" (performed with
open hands, one perpendicular to the other, shaping a "T"). This emblem --
which comes from the world of sports-- seems to be nowadays especially
fashionable among young Sevillian speakers, and its use is also spreading
among the older generation.

The study of the origins of emblematic gestures is similar to the
etymological study of words. One can see the influence of different cultures in
an area by paying attention to the local vocabulary as well as to the repertoire of emblems, since the pattern of diffusion and degree of persistence of words and emblems are much alike.

The set of emblems a person performs identifies his/her education and social extraction as much as the vocabulary that a person uses. There are certain gestures which educated people will not perform even though they can understand them, in the same way they will not say some words in public even though they are part of their personal lexicon. Thus, both emblems and words are linked to the concepts of what is socially proper and improper: there are nice, vulgar or obscene gestures just as there are nice, vulgar or obscene words.

Both emblems and words can also have an ironic meaning. The correct decoding of the information relies on interpretative clues provided by the context itself.

Just as we have linguistic "false cognates" which easily confuse the student, there are gestures identically performed in two cultures whose meanings are completely different. For instance, the harmless Italian or Argentinean emblem for "I don't care"--the hand is placed in front of the throat, the palm facing the performer, the tips of all the fingers except for the thumb slightly bent touch the lower part of the chin, and then the whole hand moves forth with an energetic extension of the fingers--is an offensive gesture for Americans, for whom it means "I don't give a d. . .n."

These similarities lead to the same conclusion: if there are dictionaries of words, "dictionaries" of gestures --that is, inventories-- would be equally useful. As soon as the student faces daily interaction in the target culture, he/she will run into emblems everywhere. By not understanding the emblems in that specific culture the student may have problems. An inventory of emblems may
be of as much help for the student of a culture as a dictionary of idioms or slang. The present thesis attempts to provide a better knowledge of Spanish gestures and, in that respect, one might say that it is the equivalent of a lexicon of Sevillian Spanish.

2.3. Idiosyncratic and international emblems.

Native speakers of a language have incorporated into their language a set of emblems that they can decode and/or perform in their communicative exchanges. Nevertheless, some emblematic gestures seem to be universally used, since they appear all over the world with the same meaning, e.g. the emblem for "okay"—index and thumb shaping a circle vertically while the other fingers remain extended--The opposite may also occur: the same gesture may have different interpretations in different cultures.

The geographical extension of emblems depends on historical reasons, such as the contact among peoples through trade, conquests, occupation of territory, etc. In many cases emblems seem to be more persistent in the cultural background than language itself. That explains, for example, the shared repertoire of emblems in Mediterranean countries. Emblems such as the "Horned hand" are understood from Turkey to Spain, and therefore stand as a meaningful gesture whereas communication through unrelated languages such as Turkish and Spanish would fail.

These special classes of international emblems are so widely known that they have been traced throughout different cultures, their origins studied, and they even have even been given proper names such as "Nose Tap" or "Fingertip Kiss."

Throughout the years, several kinesic inventories which do not discriminate clearly between emblems and gestures in general have been
published. Also, these works sometimes include entries without distinguishing the idiosyncratic emblems of a culture from those used internationally. Saitz and Cervenka (1972) include extensive collections of gestures and point out that these emblems are American and/or Colombian. Thus, their list can eventually be confusing to the reader. These authors do not seem to be aware of the fact that gestures they present as American or Colombian are actually known and used in many European countries. The gesture for "female," "Hands shape, exaggeratedly, the outline of an attractive female figure" (54) considered by the authors as "common" for Americans and Colombians, is actually international. The same can be said for other items such as "Approval (Applause)" (20), or "Flirtation (Wink)" (55) etc.

The present inventory includes the idiosyncratic and international emblems that occur in the city of Seville. Only those emblems which are not documented as part of other national gestural repertories are recorded as idiosyncratic. Only those international emblems most commonly employed by Sevillian speakers have been included in the last section of this thesis. For obvious historical and cultural reasons, many items appearing in this emblematic repertoire are shared by other Hispanic countries. Emblems come along with the linguistic heritage, so that most of the Hispanic countries are familiar with the set of emblems used by Spaniards. There is much contact and influence among the people of these countries. Also, emblems may be associated with idiomatic expressions that are used in every Hispanic country.
3. METHODOLOGY FOR RESEARCH

3.1. Observations

The emblems appearing in this work are part of the gestural repertoire of Sevillian speakers. They have been divided into two sections, "Sevillian emblems" and "International emblems". The items classified as idiosyncratic are those emblems known by the majority of Sevillian speakers (as indicated by 70% of the sample of native informants consulted). Emblems found only within the frame of specific groups such as army people, sport teams, gay communities, etc., and which are not part of the general emblematic set used by Sevillians, have been excluded from our inventory.

3.2. Data

The data for this research was gathered by direct observation of Sevillian speakers. Developed in a twelve-month period, the current thesis is based on the fieldwork carried out from June 1993 to June 1994. As a Spaniard, born and educated in Seville, I could rely on my knowledge of my native culture in order to compile this emblematic inventory. Also, my experience as a lecturer in Spanish abroad gave me an opportunity to compare and contrast the gestural repertoire of different cultures.

For the purposes of this study, my first task was to observe native speakers in normal communicative situations. The subjects of study were emblems performed in spontaneous conversation. In order to avoid artificial performances, the informants were not told they were being observed. Data provided by films, television programs or the print media were also taken into account; however, they were always carefully contrasted with the data presented by our informants.

After the observation period, the second stage of the research was the
selection of a sample of fifty informants, who were representative of the different
types of Sevillian speakers under 35. They were interviewed twice individually
and later gathered in group meetings of ten people. I explained to the
informants the purpose of the project in the first interview. I also asked them to
perform the emblematic gestures from a general list obtained during the
previous observation period. In the second meeting, the informants were also
provided with pictures of these emblems to identify, comment and discuss them.
After this, local emblems not known by 70% of the informants were considered
to be representative only within specific groups and were therefore excluded
from this work. In the third group meeting, the informants were shown the final
list of idiosyncratic Sevillian emblems. They were asked to check and compare
different performances and variations of meaning and contexts.

Sevillian speakers are also familiar with a wide range of internationally
used emblems. Those occurring more frequently have been listed and
classified in the last section under the heading "International emblems used in
Seville." These emblems were gathered by interviewing foreign residents of
Seville, by studying the gestures portrayed in foreign films, and by consulting
bibliography on the topic.16

3.3. Sociocultural setting

This research was conducted in Seville and its surrounding areas. The
capital of southern Spain, Seville is an adequate location for this research since
it is representative of a modern Spanish urban environment. With a population
of more than 700,000 and one of the most prestigious universities in the
country, Seville is the administrative head of the Comunidad Autónoma and the
center of the economic life in the area. The inhabitants of Seville are exposed to

16See Axtell, Bremmer and Rodenburg, Efron, Johnson, Ekman and
Friesen, Kendon, Morris, and Saitz and Cervenka in "Bibliography."
outside influences. This helps to make them familiar with a broad repertoire of emblems beyond those used locally. People of all social and educational strata who live in the city have been taken into account for the current research.

After the period of general observation throughout the city, I focused my research on neighborhoods representative of the high, middle and working-class areas of the city. Two neighborhoods representative of each social and educational type were selected for this research. In order to ensure a wider scope of observation and test the distribution of the emblems all around the city, the chosen neighborhoods were located in different areas. The areas were selected according to the classification established in Cruz Villalón (1986).17

Neighborhoods studied:

1. High-class neighborhoods: Santa Clara-Habitat (E) and La Palmera-Heliópolis (S).

2. Middle-class neighborhoods: Nervión (E) and Triana (SW).

3. Working-class neighborhoods: Polígono San Pablo (E) and La Macarena (N).

The following map shows the distribution of neighborhoods in the city of Seville according to Cruz Villalón's work.

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17 To our knowledge, this is the only work devoted to the study of the distribution of the population of Seville in neighborhoods according to educational and socioeconomic variants. J. Cruz Villalón et al., La Población de Sevilla (Sevilla: Servicio de Publicaciones del Exmo. Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, 1986).
Fig. 1. Map of the neighborhoods of the city of Seville.

1 Sta Clara-Habitat
2 La Palmera-Heliópolis
3 Nervión
4 Triana
5 Pol. San Pablo
6 Macarena
3.4. Informants

Fifty people were selected for the personal interviews after the observation period. As indicated above, the informants for this research were native Sevillian speakers currently living in Seville. All the informants were under 35. They were professionals or unemployed people with or without university degree, students, workers, shopkeepers, housewives; some of them had lived abroad while others had always lived in Seville.

Fig. 2. Distribution of the Informants.

![Bar Chart]

- university degree professionals
- non university degree professionals/ university students
- housewives/ workers
3.5. Illustration of the emblems

The emblems presented in this inventory were photographed in 35mm.

3.6. Presentation of the material

In contrast to other inventories of gestures, such as Green's (1968) or Saitz and Cervenka's (1972), the current thesis makes a distinction between emblems and general gestures, and also between the idiosyncratic Sevillian ones and those emblems known internationally. Also, it provides accurate information about the performance and context of the emblems.

Emblems have been organized according to topics. Each item in the inventory is labeled with a name if it has one. The "Comments" section supplies extra information about the emblem. The words or idioms spoken along with each emblem appear under "Expressions." In many cases, these are slang expressions that only occur simultaneously with the performance of the emblem itself.

Under the heading "Users" the inventory specifically indicates whether the emblem is generally performed by male or female users.

Under the heading "Context," the reader will find information about the appropriateness of the emblem for formal or informal situations. The term "formal" refers to any communicative situation in which some rules of social propriety are observed by the participants (as in professional meetings, public appearances, interviews, etc.). "Informal" refers to family conversations, gatherings of friends, etc.
4. CONCLUSIONS

This research has led to certain observations about the way Sevillian speakers use emblematic gestures in communication.

In natural situations, Sevillians always tend to gesticulate during the conversation; usually, facial expression appears simultaneously with noddings and hand movements. Sevillian speakers generally avoid staring at their interlocutor(s) without gesticulating. A static attitude would be considered as unkind and even hostile. It is also noticeable that even in formal situations Sevillians tend to maintain less distance than Americans. Also, depending on the degree of familiarity between the speakers, Sevillians occasionally pat and touch each other throughout the conversation. Contrary to the habits of other cultures, this kind of physical contact is not considered offensive even when the persons are not close acquaintances.

Sevillians use emblems regardless of their educational level or social class. Nevertheless, their use is not totally uniform; in fact, there are certain emblematic restrictions related to the users' socio-educational background. Generally speaking, uneducated people tend to use more emblems than educated people, and the latter seem to be more conscious of the appropriateness of the emblems used in a given communicative context. For instance, educated people would not use emblems considered as very informal—such as "I swear" (see item 25 in the inventory)—unless they are talking to friends in very informal situations.

The sex of the speaker seems to determine the number of gestures he or she may use. Most women tend to move themselves and to use their hands for gesticulating more than men during conversation. On the other hand, men who use many gestures may be considered effeminate. Furthermore, there are a set
of emblems which are not considered as appropriate for men to use; for instance, the emblem "I am smart" (see item 4 in the inventory). Likewise, some other emblematic gestures are especially regarded as improper when used by women, particularly those implying insults. These restrictions in the use of emblems have to do with the question of manners, which are always culturally coded.

Differences in age do not seem to affect the use of emblems among Sevillian speakers. Both young and elderly people are basically familiar with the same repertoire. Although this study deals only with the emblems of people under 35, all the emblems gathered were also known and performed by older people.

The use of some emblems may become very common or it may lose frequency. As it happens with words, some emblems become outdated and people stop using them without very clear reasons. This is the case with the emblem for "let's go" (see item 2 in the inventory). Although it has been known and used by most speakers for a long time, nowadays it seems to be popular mostly among teenagers.

The considerations about the use of emblems by Sevillian speakers mentioned above can be applied to other Spaniards. Also, many of the local emblems appearing in this inventory are known in other parts of the country. However, some items seem to be geographically restricted, such as the emblem "boquerón"-"poor" (see item 18 in the inventory) which is hardly used outside Seville.

Regarding different cultures, one can observe that there are national standards in the use of gestures in general and emblems in particular. Thus, observation points out that average Spaniards tend to gesticulate more than Anglo-Saxon or Oriental people. However, since to our knowledge no study
about the frequency of the use of emblems has been published, it is not possible to determine which culture may employ emblems more frequently. Likewise, it is not known if some cultures really have more extensive emblematic repertoires than others. What is observable is that contact among cultures favors the diffusion of emblems, producing an important set of emblems internationally shared. In this sense, emblems previously restricted to a given culture spread their range of use and become communicative universals.
5. INVENTORY OF IDIOSYNCRATIC SEVILLIAN EMBLEMS

5.1. ACTION

1. terminar, acabar  
   to stop, finish
2. puerta  
   let's go, let's get out
3. salir corriendo  
   to run away

5.2 APPROVAL

4. ser la mejor  
   to be smart, the best

5.3 DESCRIBING PERSONAL FEELINGS

5. estar asustado  
   to be frightened, freak-out
6. con el agua al cuello  
   to be worried

5.4 DESCRIPTIONS

7. caradura  
   shameless
8. cotilla  
   loose-tongued, gossiper
9. fino, delicado  
   delicate
10. firme  
    controlled
11. gorrón  
    scrounger
12. homosexual  
    homosexual, gay
13. presuntuoso, pegotero  
    haughty, boastful

5.5 INSULTS

14. trompetilla  
   don’t give a d. . n
15. cuajo  
    dummy
16. aguantarse, joderse  
    f. . k you

5.6 MONEY

17. pagar  
    to pay
18. pobre, boquerón, a dos velas  
    poor
5.7 RELATIONSHIPS

19. pelea, enemistad  quarrel, enemity

5.8 THREAT

20. como yo hable  If I only tell
21. cruz y raya  You are finished
22. ni mijita  Don't you dare

5.9 UNCLASSIFIED

23. bulla, multitud  crowd, crowded
24. muy difícil, sorpresa  difficulty, surprise
25. por estas  I swear
5. INVENTORY OF SEVILLIAN EMBLEMS

5.1.1. ACTION

1
Name: tijeras / scissors
Description: one hand perpendicular to the floor, the index and third finger extended shaping a "V" approach and separate quickly
Meaning: stop it, finish
Expressions: terminar, cortar, acabar
Context: formal and informal situation
Users: male and female
Name: puerta/ door (flat hand flick)
Description: open hands are placed in front of the performer at waist level; one palm- down hand is perpendicularly placed on top of the other hand in an energetic way. The movement is emphatically repeated two or three times.
Meaning: let's go, let's get away
Expressions: puerta, irse
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
Name:
Description: the palms of both hands clap vertically once in a quick motion
Meaning: run away, let's get out of here, let's go away
Expressions: salir corriendo, irse, (slang) salir por pies, por patas
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
5.1.2. APPROVAL

4
Name: the fingertips of one hand all touching are kissed and then placed on one cheek; the whole movement is repeated and the second time the kiss is placed on the other cheek.
Meaning: I'm smart, I'm the best
Expressions: soy la mejor, que lista soy!, me quiero
Context: informal situation
Users: female
5.1.3. DESCRIBING PERSONAL FEELINGS

5
Name:
Description: the fingers of one hand touch the Adam's apple
Meaning: I'm terribly frightened, freak-out
Expressions: estoy asustado, (slang) acojonado, con los huevos de corbata, se me pusieron aquí
Context: informal situations
Users: male
Name:  
Description:  the fingers of one hand extended with the palm down, the hand touches the performer's throat  
Meaning:  I'm really worried, in a difficult situation  
Expressions: estoy con el agua al cuello, estoy hasta aquí  
Context:  informal situation  
Users:  male and female
5.1.4. DESCRIPTIONS

Name: cara/ face (cheek stroke)
Description: the palm of the hand hits twice or three times one cheek
Meaning: shameless person
Expressions: caradura, ¡qué cara!, (slang) carota, ¡qué morro!
Context: formal and informal
Users: male and female
Comments: this emblem is also used as an insult
Description: the fingertips of one hand together, these are placed horizontally and quickly open and closed in energetic motion while keeping the hand at the performer's mouth level

Meaning: loose-tongued, gossiper, nosey

Expressions: cotilla, bla-bla-bla

Context: informal situation

Users: male and female

Comments: this emblem is also used as a insult meaning "You're a harmless boaster"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>ring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>index and thumb shaping a vertical circle, the other fingers extended, the hand outlines little circles in delicate motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning:</td>
<td>delicate, posh, snob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressions:</td>
<td>fino, delicado, cursi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context:</td>
<td>formal and informal situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users:</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td>this gesture can be used both for approval or for criticism towards someone's snobbery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description: index finger spread, the other fingers folded
Meaning: controlled, dominated, under one's command
Expressions: firme, (slang) más derecho que una vela
Context: formal and informal
Users: male and female
Comments: this emblem is also used as a threat
Description: all fingers extended, the thumb is placed under the chin, the little finger touching the base of the throat as if measuring its size
Meaning: scrounger
Expressions: es un gorron, (slang) ir de cuello, ser un cuello, ser un gañote, ser un buitre
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
Comments: this emblem can be used as an insult too
Description: index slightly touches the performer's cheek and move towards the chin
Meaning: homosexual, gay
Expressions: es homosexual, gay, marica, (slang) tiene vena, es venoso
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
Comments: this emblem is usually used to indicate one's interlocutor that someone else is gay
Name: pegote/ lump
Description: one hand cleans from both cheeks imaginary dirt and shakes it off. This emblem is also performed by sweeping one's shoulders
Meaning: boaster, excessively proud, bullshit
Expressions: presuntuoso, pegotero, ¡qué pegote!, ¡qué modestia! (ironic)
Context: formal and informal situation
Users: male and female
Comments: this emblem is used both to criticize one's interlocutor's attitude as well as to refer to someone else
5.1.5. INSULTS

14
Name: trompetilla or pedorreta/ trumpet
Description: index folded against thumb, the other three fingers extended, the hand pressed the lips shaping an "U"
Meaning: mocking, I don't care, I don't give a damn, I don't believe you
Expressions: tururú
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
Description: forearms extended in front of the body, parallel to the ground; both hands move up and down, sometimes with the fingers moving simultaneously back and forth. The whole movement is performed very slowly.

Meaning: you dummy one, jerk, lame-brain

Expressions: ¡que se te cae el cuajo! (meaning you are able to let fall your own sexual organs)

Context: informal situation

Users: male and female
Description: one forearm folded, the fist is shaken back and forth once or twice energetically. When standing, one foot stamps on the floor
Meaning: f..k you, take that
Expressions: te aguantas (slang) te jodes, te chinchas
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
5.1.6. MONEY

17
Description: one hand is made into a fist while its folded index is a little forwarded; this hand hits energetically the open palm of the other hand or an imaginary surface in front of the performer

Meaning: pay
Expressions: pagar, (slang) apoquinar
Context: formal and informal situation
Users: male and female
Description: index and third finger extended shaping an "V" are placed under the eyes keeping the nose in the middle or under the nostrils; then the hand is moved downwards
Meaning: I'm poor, I've run out of money
Expressions: pobre, sin dinero, (slang) a dos velas, boquerón, tieso
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
5.1.7. RELATIONSHIPS

19
Description: both hands facing each other, the fingernails clash
Meaning: quarrel, enemity
Expressions: estar de uñas
Context: formal and informal
Users: female
5.1.8. THREATS

20
Description: index or index and third finger point to the mouth
Meaning: if I only tell, watch what you say
Expressions: como yo hable, (slang) como yo largue, como yo abra el pico,
            como yo pie
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
Name: cruz y raya/ cross
Description: open hand depicts a cross in front of the performer
Meaning: this is your end, you're dead for me
Expressions: cruz y raya, estar acabado, estar muerto
Context: formal and informal situation
Users: male and female
Description: thumbnail touches the index fingertip while the hand is raised to the performer's eye level
Meaning: don't you dare
Expressions: (no te pases) ni mijita, ni tanto así
Context: formal and informal situation
Users: male and female
5.1.9. UNCLASSIFIED

23
Description: forearms raised, the hands placed at both sides of the face, the fingers of each hand are made into a bunch; these bunches are quickly open and closed
Meaning: crowd
Expressions: multitud, (slang) bulla
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
Description: the third finger and thumb of one hand touching, the hand is energetically shaken; the index slaps against the other fingers producing a sound similar to snapping. Usually, the lips shape an "U".

Meaning: difficulty and surprise

Expressions: mucho, (slang) tela, tela marinera, un montón

Context: informal situation

Users: male and female

Comments: the sound produced by the slapping stresses emphasis; this emblem is most frequently used for negative emphasis
Description: index and thumb of one hand shaping a cross, the other fingers extended; the hand approaches the mouth in an energetic motion and the cross is kissed, then held in front of the performer's face.

Meaning: I swear

Expressions: por estas

Context: informal situation

Users: male and female

Comments: this emblem is performed by low-class people
5.2. INTERNATIONAL EMBLEMS USED IN SEVILLE

5.2.1. ACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>ven</td>
<td>come here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>silencio</td>
<td>quiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>teléfono</td>
<td>telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>comer, comida</td>
<td>to eat, food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>beber, bebida</td>
<td>to drink, drinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>dormir, sueño</td>
<td>to sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>despacio</td>
<td>slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>esperar</td>
<td>to wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>parar</td>
<td>to stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>pausa</td>
<td>pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>por favor</td>
<td>please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>auto-stop</td>
<td>hitch-hiking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>ojo, atención</td>
<td>watch out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.2. APPROVAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>asentimiento</td>
<td>assent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>estupendo</td>
<td>excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>anticipación</td>
<td>anticipation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>palmas</td>
<td>clapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>aprobación</td>
<td>approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>okay</td>
<td>okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>exacto</td>
<td>exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>guiño</td>
<td>wink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>negación</td>
<td>denial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>desaprobación</td>
<td>disapproval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>negación</td>
<td>denial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.3. DESCRIBING PERSONAL FEELINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>desilusión</td>
<td>disappointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>impotencia</td>
<td>hopelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>asco, rechazo</td>
<td>disgust, rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>desinterés</td>
<td>disinterest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>estar harto, hasta la coronilla</td>
<td>to be fed up with it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.4. DESCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>mujer</td>
<td>female, woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>loco</td>
<td>crazy, insane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>delgado</td>
<td>skinny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>ladrón</td>
<td>thief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>torpe</td>
<td>clumsy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.5. **INSULTS**

35. joderse  
36. cuernos  
37. corte de mangas  

38. agarrado  
39. dinero  

5.2.6. **MONEY**

5.2.7. **THREAT**

40. amenaza  
41. enfado  
42. advertencia  

5.2.8. **UNCLASSIFIED**

43. adiós  
44. más o menos  
45. dificultad  
46. suerte  
47. victoria  
48. frío  
49. doble sentido  
50. lío  
51. mucho
5.2. INTERNATIONAL EMBLEMS USED IN SEVILLE

5.2.1. ACTIONS AND DIRECTIONS

1
Description: hand extended with the open palm up, it closes and opens quickly
Meaning: come here
Expressions: ven, ven aquí
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Description: the index touches the lips, these usually shaping an "U"
Meaning: silence, quiet
Expressions: silencio
Context: formal and informal situation
Users: male and female
Name: teléfono/ telephone
Description: thumb and little finger extended, the hand is raised to the ear; this emblem is also performed with one hand made into a fist, raised to the ear
Meaning: telephone, call
Expressions: teléfono, telefonear, llamar
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
4
Name: Hand purse
Description: fingertips of one hand in a bunch, the hand approaches the mouth repeatedly
Meaning: food, eat
Expressions: comer, comida
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Description: extended only the thumb or also the little finger, the other fingers folded, the thumb points to the mouth while the hand moves back and forth. Sometimes the head is slightly bent backwards

Meaning: drinking, thirst

Expressions: beber, bebida

Context: informal

Users: male and female

Comments: this emblem is also used to imply someone is a drunkard or is presently drunk
Description: palms together, the hands are placed under one cheek while bending the head to one side

Meaning: sleep, tiredness

Expressions: dormir, sueño, cansancio

Context: formal and informal situations

Users: male and female
Description: open palm-down hands are raised and lowered horizontally in slow motion
Meaning: slow down
Expressions: despacio
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Description: open hands are slowly moved back and forth with the palms facing the interlocutor; this emblem is also performed with one hand only
Meaning: wait
Expressions: esperar
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Description: open hand is raised emphatically showing the palm to the interlocutor
Meaning: stop
Expressions: parar
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Name: pausa
Description: open hands shape a "T"
Meaning: pause, break, time out
Expressions: pausa, tiempo, un momento
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Description: palms together, they are placed in front of the chest pointing to one's interlocutor; occasionally the hands are shaken a little
Meaning: I beg you, please
Expressions: por favor
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Name: auto-stop
Description: hand into a fist, the thumb is extended horizontally
Meaning: hitchhiking
Expressions: llévame
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
13
Name: ojo/ eye (Eyelid pull)
Description: index touches just below the eye pressing slightly
Meaning: watch out
Expressions: ojo, cuidado, atención
Context: formal and informal
Users: male and female
this emblem is also used to indicate approval
5.2.2. APPROVAL

14
Description: nodding
Meaning: approval, agreement
Expressions: sí, eso es, vale
Context: formal and informal
Users: male and female
Name: (Fingertips kiss)
Description: the joined fingertips of one or both hands are kissed emphatically, then the hand is open
Meaning: excellent
Expressions: estupendo
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
Description: rubbing hands
Meaning: approval (anticipation)
Expressions: venga, estupendo
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Name: palmas/ clapping
Description: the performer claps, usually without sound
Meaning: approval
Expressions: ¡bien!
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Name: up thumb
Description: the thumb of one hand points up while the other fingers are folded.
Meaning: approval
Expressions: bien hecho, vale
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
Name: okay (ring)
Description: the thumb and index of one hand shape a circle while the other three fingers are extended.
Meaning: approval
Expressions: okay, vale
Context: informal
Users: male and female
Description: the thumb and index of one hand shape a cyrcle while the other three fingers are extended. The cyrcle is kept parallel to the ground, while the hand moves downwards slowly.

Meaning: exact, for sure

Expressions: exacto, (slang) fijo

Context: formal and informal

Users: male and female
Name: guño/ wink
Description: one eye winks
Meaning: approval, complicity or flirtation
Expressions: sí, vale
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Description: shaking the head horizontally
Meaning: denial
Expressions: no, nada de eso
Context: formal and informal
Users: male and female
Name: down thumb
Description: the thumb of one hand points downwards while the other fingers are folded
Meaning: disapproval, failure
Expressions: mal, fuera
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Description: moving extended index from left to right quickly, the other fingers folded
Meaning: denial
Expressions: no, nada de eso
Context: formal and informal
Users: male and female
5.2.3. DESCRIBING PERSONAL FEELINGS

25

Description: arms extended at both sides of the trunk, open hands are held with the palms up while the arms are slightly risen and then fall

Meaning: disappointment

Expressions: vaya, anda

Context: formal and informal

Users: male and female
Description: hands in fists, both wrists are joined as if they were bound
Meaning: helplessness, compulsion to do something one does not want to
Expressions: estar atado de pies y manos
Context: informal
Users: male and female
Description: index and third finger are introduced into the mouth as to vomit
Meaning: disgust
Expressions: qué asco, vomitaría
Context: informal
Users: male and female
Comments: this emblem can also be used as an insult
Description: shugging shoulders, the palm of the hands usually upwards and open while the forearms are risen
Meaning: disinterest
Expressions: no me importa, a mí qué, a mi plín
Context: formal and informal
Users: male and female
Name:
Description: the thumb and index of one hand touch the top of the performer's head, the other fingers extended; the movement is slowly made, sometimes the fingers falling emphatically on the head.
Meaning: I'm fed up with something, I can't stand it any more
Expressions: estoy hasta la coronilla, estoy harto, estoy hasta aquí
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
5.2.4. DESCRIPTIONS

30
Description: both hands move shaping an exaggerated female figure
Meaning: female, woman
Expressions: mujer, (slang) tía
Context: informal situation
Users: male
Description: the index taps the temple twice or three times; this emblem is also performed with the index rotating while touching one's temple.

Meaning: crazy, insane

Expressions: loco, faltarle a alguien un tornillo

Context: formal and informal situations

Users: male and female
Description: little finger extended, the other fingers folded into a fist
Meaning: skinny, thin, weak person
Expressions: delgado, canijo, esmirriado
Context: formal and informal situation
Users: male and female
Name: ladrón/ thief
Description: the palm of the hand raised, the fingers are folded one after the other in a quick movement, the hand then closed into a fist
Meaning: thief, thieve
Expressions: ladrón
Context: formal and informal
Users: male and female
this emblem is frequently used as a warning against thieves
34
Name: la higa, el pajarito/ the fig, the little bird
Description: the hand in a fist, the third finger is extended and emphatically shown to the interlocutor(s).
Meaning: f. k you
Expressions: por aquí, te jodes, mótate y pedalea
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
Name: cuernos (horned hand)
Description: the little finger and index extended while the other three fingers are folded
Meaning: cuckold, bastard
Expressions: cornudo, cabrón
Context: informal
Users: male and female
Comments: this emblem is actually one of the strongest insults in Spanish
Description: index and third finger extended are energetically placed on one's forehead
Meaning: bone-head, clumsy
Expressions: no tiene dos dedos de frente, corto de entendimiento, corto de luces
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
Comments: this emblem is also used as an insult towards one's interlocutor
37
Name: corte de manga (forearm jerk)
Description: one hand is placed on the opposite arm's bent elbow; the second hand is made into a tight fist or simultaneously performing the horned hand emblem (see emblem above)
Meaning: f. k you
Expressions: ¡jódete!, ¡chínchatel, que te den
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
5.2.6. MONEY

38
Description: one hand is held into a tight fist, the other placed under its elbow.
Sometimes this emblem is performed just by showing one's interlocutor a tight fist
Meaning: you're stingy
Expressions: ser agarrado, (slang) ser de la Virgen del puño
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
this emblem is also performed just by showing the interlocutor one's clenched fist
Name: dinero
Description: the thumb rubs index and third finger in a quick motion
Meaning: money
Expressions: dinero, duros (slang) parné, pelas
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
5.2.7. THREAT

40
Description: hands in the waist, the chin is raised towards the interlocutor, occasionally one foot stamping on the floor
Meaning: threat, challenge
Expressions: vamos, qué pasa aquí
Context: informal situation
Users: female
Name: puño/ fist (tight fist)
Description: the hand in a tight fist is held, usually the lips are also tightly joined.
Meaning: anger, threat
Expressions: any expression of anger, hate or threat
Context: formal and informal
Users: male
Description: open hand is raised parallel to the ground with the palm up, then the hand is shaken sideways
Meaning: I warn you, I'll beat you up
Expressions: que te doy, que te voy a dar
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Comments: this emblem is usually used by parents to warn their children
5.2.8. UNCLASSIFIED

43
Description: one hand is waved while keeping the open palm towards the interlocutor
Meaning: goodbye
Expressions: adiós
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Description: one open hand with the fingers towards the interlocutor is shaken twice or more
Meaning: more or less, approximately
Expressions: más o menos, allá allá
Context: formal and informal
Users: male and female
Description: one hand with spread fingers is shaken horizontally
Meaning: very difficult, lots of problems
Expressions: muchísimo, (slang) telas, tela marinera, un montón, vaya, vaya
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Comments: this emblem is usually used in negative contexts.
Name: cruz/ cross
Description: index and third finger are crossed
Meaning: good luck
Expressions: ¡suerte!
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
Name: Uve/ "v"
Description: index and third finger shape a "V" while the other fingers are folded
Meaning: victory, success
Expressions: victoria, éxito
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
arms folded, the hands rub the opposite arm

cold

frio

formal and informal

male and female

in some countries the emblem indicating "cold" is performed
by clapping the arms, what is not frequent in Spain
Description: index and third finger extended shaping a "V", the hand rotates back and forth several times. This emblem is also performed with the thumb and index shaping the "V"

Meaning: double meaning
Expressions: ¿lo coges?
Context: formal and informal situations
Users: male and female
50
Description: both hands are made into fists, the indexes extended clash sideways several times
Meaning: liaison, love relationship
Expressions: estar juntos (slang) andar liados
Context: informal situation
Users: male and female
Comments: this emblem is usually performed to indicate an informal or illicit liaison
Description: forearms raised, the fingers of each hand are made into a bunch; these bunches are quickly open and closed
Meaning: large amount, a lot, many
Expressions: así así, a montones, mucho
Context: informal situation
Users: female
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY


