

A CROSS-CULTURAL SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE "PEACE" HAND GESTURE: A COMPARISON BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND FRANCE

Axmedova Marjona Zikriyo qizi

2nd grade Master's Student of Samarkand State Foreign Languages Institute

marjonaaxmedova57@gmail.com

Shamuratova Naima Muxtarovna

Scientific Supervisor

MAQOLA MALUMOTI

MAQOLA TARIXI:

Received: 08.11.2025

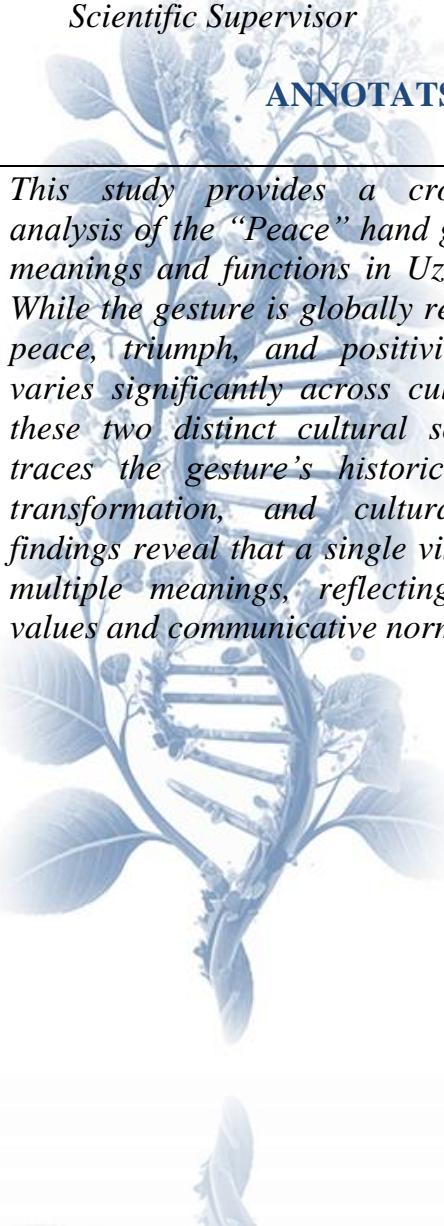
Revised: 09.11.2025

Accepted: 10.11.2025

KALIT SO'ZLAR:

cross-cultural communication; semiotics; peace hand gesture; nonverbal communication; Uzbekistan; France; cultural interpretation; globalization; symbolism; intercultural meaning; visual sign; gesture analysis; Peirce; Roland Barthes; cultural

ANNOTATSIYA:



adaptation

Introduction

Nonverbal communication represents a vital yet culturally intricate aspect of human interaction¹⁰⁶. Through gestures, facial expressions, and body movements, individuals convey emotions with immediacy and depth that often surpass verbal language. Among diverse cultures, the “Peace” sign—formed by raising the index and middle fingers in a V-shape—has become one of the most recognizable symbols of modern nonverbal communication. Its historical origins trace back to World War II, when British Prime Minister Winston Churchill popularized it as a sign of “Victory.” Decades later, during the 1960s, anti-war movements across the United States and Europe reinterpreted the gesture as a universal symbol of “Peace.” Over time, this shift transformed the gesture into a global emblem of harmony, goodwill, and hope. Nevertheless, its meaning and interpretation continue to vary depending on cultural background. This study provides a cross-cultural semiotic analysis of the “Peace” hand gesture, examining its meanings and functions in Uzbekistan and France. While the gesture is globally recognized as a sign of peace, triumph, and positivity, its interpretation varies significantly across cultures. By comparing these two distinct cultural settings, the research traces the gesture’s historical origins, semantic transformation, and cultural adaptation. The findings reveal that a single visual sign can embody multiple meanings, reflecting the unique social values and communicative norms of each culture. The Semiotic Perspective

Main body

According to Charles Sanders Peirce, signs are generally divided into three categories: icons, indexes, and symbols¹⁰⁷. The “Peace” hand gesture functions both as an iconic sign—since it visually resembles the letter “V”—and as a symbolic sign, whose meaning is shaped through social and cultural convention. Similarly, Roland Barthes’ idea of mythologies can be applied here: over time, this gesture has gathered new layers of meaning, evolving from a

¹⁰⁶ Edward T. Hall — The Silent Language. New York: Anchor Books, 1973.

¹⁰⁷ Peirce, Charles S. Collected Papers on Semiotics. Harvard University Press, 1931.

symbol of victory to one of peace, and today, even to expressions of friendliness or casual positivity¹⁰⁸.

The “Peace” Gesture in Uzbekistan

In Uzbekistan, the “Peace” gesture is widely familiar, especially among young people who are influenced by global media and digital communication¹⁰⁹. It is frequently used in photographs, on social media, and in everyday informal situations to express friendliness, happiness, or agreement.

However, the gesture does not hold a deep historical or political significance in the local culture. Rather, it is viewed as a borrowed global sign—a visual expression adopted through the forces of globalization, Western entertainment, and online trends. In traditional Uzbek interaction, other gestures carry more cultural weight, such as placing a hand on the chest to show respect or gratitude, nodding to indicate agreement, or lifting a hand in greeting. Therefore, in Uzbekistan, the “Peace” sign mainly represents modernity, openness to the world, and youthful energy rather than any political or ideological message.

The “Peace” Gesture in France

In France, the “Peace” gesture has a richer and more complex history. When the gesture is made with the palm facing outward, it is generally seen as a friendly or peaceful sign, often used by younger people. Yet when the same gesture is made with the palm turned inward (showing the back of the hand), it takes on an insulting meaning, similar to the offensive British “V-sign.”

The result of the comparison between the application of the Peace sign in both Uzbekistan and France shows that globalization affects local changes in the application of symbols¹¹⁰. The movement in Uzbekistan serves as a cultural importation, stripped of its historical context and but incorporated into the youth culture as a visual element that reflects the intentions of openness and positivity. Conversely, the interpretation in France is more contextually anchored due to the historical and linguistic traditions that provide the gesture with a positive as well as a negative connotation.

In terms of semiotic, this shows how the signifier (the physical gesture) is always the same and the signified (the meaning) varies depending on culture. The semiotic theory can therefore be used to understand the uses of gestures as mediators or obstacles of

¹⁰⁸ Roland Barthes — *Mythologies*. Paris: Seuil, 1957.

¹⁰⁹ Samovar, Larry A., & Porter, Richard E. *Communication Between Cultures*. Cengage Learning, 2017.

¹¹⁰ Observational data on gesture use in Uzbekistan and France (2023–2025).

intercultural communication. It is necessary to understand these subtleties to avoid misinterpretation of any international and intercultural situation.

Conclusion

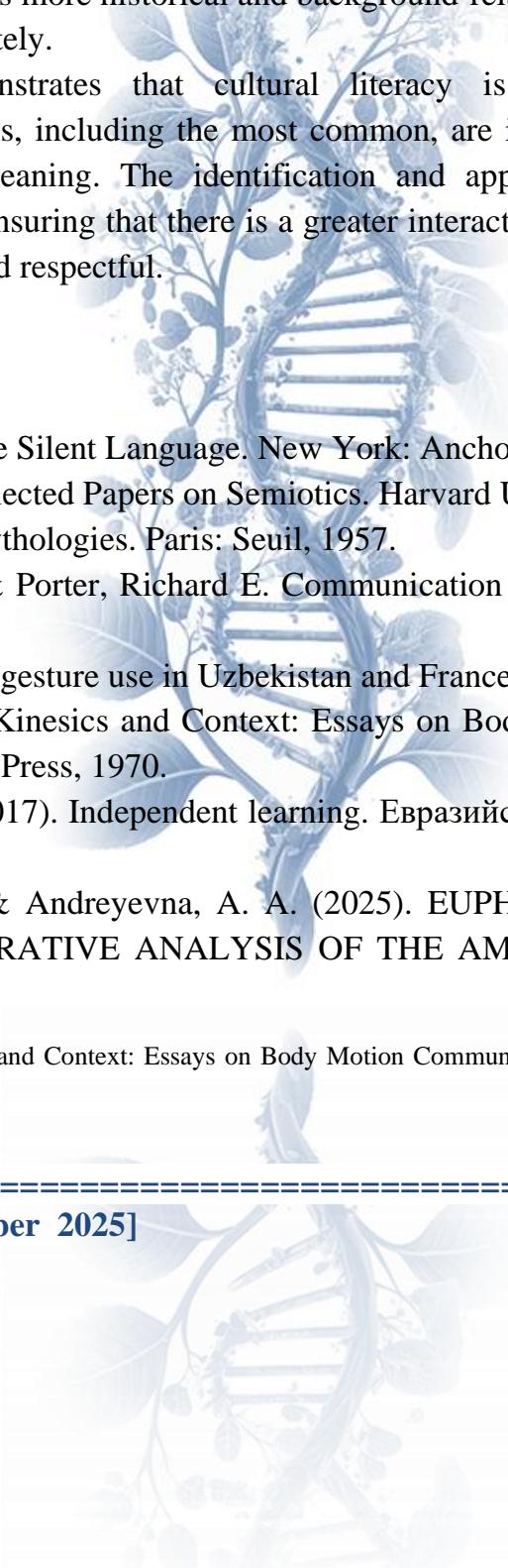
The Peace hand gesture is a good example of the strength and depth of nonverbal communication in cross-cultural communication. It seems to be merely a simple and commonplace sign but its meaning is not homogeneous. It means modernity, friendliness, international intelligence and involvement in the global youth culture in Uzbekistan, whereas in France it still has more historical and background-related implications which can change its meaning completely.

This discussion demonstrates that cultural literacy is crucial in international communication¹¹¹. All signs, including the most common, are interred in social, historical and semiotic layers of meaning. The identification and appreciation of such cultural differences is one way of ensuring that there is a greater interaction between cultures which would be more effective and respectful.

References

1. Edward T. Hall — The Silent Language. New York: Anchor Books, 1973.
2. Peirce, Charles S. Collected Papers on Semiotics. Harvard University Press, 1931.
3. Roland Barthes — Mythologies. Paris: Seuil, 1957.
4. Samovar, Larry A., & Porter, Richard E. Communication Between Cultures. Cengage Learning, 2017.
5. Observational data on gesture use in Uzbekistan and France (2023–2025).
6. Birdwhistell, Ray L. Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970.
7. Muxtarovna, S. N. (2017). Independent learning. Евразийский научный журнал, (4), 374-375.
8. Muxtarovna, S. N., & Andreyevna, A. A. (2025). EUPHEMISMS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE AMERICAN AND RUSSIAN

¹¹¹ Birdwhistell, Ray L. Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970.



CONTEXTS. Ilm fan taraqqiyotida raqamli iqtisodiyot va zamonaviy ta'limganing o'rni hamda rivojlanish omillari, 5(1), 150-154.

9. Shamuratova N. Comparative study of English and Uzbek proverbs (usage of body) [Electronic resource] // Philology Matters. — 2021. — Mode of access: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/comparative-study-of-english-and-uzbek-proverbs-usage-of-body> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

10. Shamuratova, N. S., Bobojanov, A. O., Nurullayev, S. X., & Ruzmetova, D. A. (2024). BIOLOGICAL AND NUTRITIONAL VALUE OF SORGHUM BY AMINO ACID COMPOSITION IN CERTAIN DISEASES. Web of Medicine: Journal of Medicine, Practice and Nursing, 2(5), 107-112.

