

Gestures across Africa

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The quest for the recovery of Indigenous Knowledge mainly focuses on technology involved in agriculture and health practices of indigenous people. Nonverbal communicative gestures are rich well of information on a people's indigenous knowledge that has accounted for the continuity of the people as well as the organization of their society. Ranging from symbols inherent in festive ceremonies such as different New Year's activities among Sidaama people (Fichee Cambalaalla), new yam festivals among Igbo and Twi peoples, to even such thing as funeral dirge among the Babukusu, an understanding of the various communicative symbols offer additional ways to make sense of cultural dynamics. Additionally, the study of nonverbal communicative codes (quotable gestures) as corollary of oral speech requires careful documentation, explication and contextualization. Relative to the linguistics of spoken languages in the continent, the study of nonverbal gestures is barely scratching the surface in Africa. Aside from gestures in use by the sighted, blind people also use quotable gestures. Thus, in the quest for the gestural origin of language a study of the communicative gestures in use by both demography would be of great value. In order to instigate greater participation in gesture studies from scholars on the African continent and promote research on gesture in diverse and understudied social groups, I would be discussing and highlighting some areas of ongoing research for which we seek collaboration. In addition, I would be underscoring the cultural capital inherent in gestured codes of different nations in the continent.