

SIGN LANGUAGE IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD

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A lot of people nowadays like to travel abroad but not all of them know about traditions and conventional measures of behavior of country they visit. For example, we and foreign people interpret some gestures differently. Therefore, we can get into awkward situations.

I consider it is an interesting topic. Sometimes we show different gestures habitually and Russian people understand us. But we don't think that in the other countries we can outrage a person by this gesture.

Going abroad a lot of people believe that they don't need to know foreign language. They consider that they can «explain on the fingers». But they don't know that they can just put a fool of themselves or get into trouble using some gesture.

So I would like to tell about rules of etiquette and sign language, especially about the differences between gestures in different countries.

1. The value of the gesture as "ring" - joining the thumb and index finger, which is the letter "o" or other means "okay" - in English-speaking countries is an endorsing, a positive gesture. At the same time, in France it is an expression of negative emotions, in Japan it means "money" and in Brazil it is generally considered vulgar. In different cultures this tone is interpreted in different ways - from admiration to serious offenses. For example, in Germany there was even inquest for such problem. One driver showed this gesture policeman. He was offended and sued.

By the way, there are a lot of different theories about the origin of "OK" abbreviation, one of them is that it was created by journalist who didn't know how to write "All correct".

2. Index finger near your temple means "stupid" in France and most of European countries, the "mind" in the Netherlands and "live your mind" in the UK.

3. Gesture of the index and middle finger like "V" means victory or number 2 in most countries. In England, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa sign «V» in hand means that you are sending person in a rude manner far away.

4. If an Englishman is going to punish someone, he raises two fingers put together, which means "Well, I'll show you". In the USA, the same gesture will be seen as "We're a good team".

5. Another common gesture is thumb raised up. You can use it in different meanings. So hitchhikers use it in order to stop a car or raising a hand in front of you it means "everything is fine". But in Muslim countries the same gesture is obscene. In Saudi Arabia if you are a rotating thumb you say "Get away from here". At the same time, in America, Australia, New Zealand and England it means that you are trying to show that "everything is all right". But don't make this move sharply - it could be perceived as an insult.

6. If a German slap himself on the forehead with the open palm, it is the equivalent of shouting, "You're crazy!" In Holland – "You're clever!" When the Englishman or Spaniard does this, it means he is satisfied with himself.

7. A typical Italian gesture - hand in the shape of boats – means question. In Mexico it will be interpreted as "I say you nothing without money".

8. Inverted glass in Russia means that you don't drink. In UK you should be afraid – person who turns a glass wants to fight. In North America, the bartender can give you an inverted glass. This means that he treats you.

9. What's more, there are some extravagant for us gestures in the world. For example, you can show your tongue in France or Italy and it means just funny joke. In German you can get a fine from 150 until 300\$. In Tibet it means "Hello". At some old islands of France it's denial. If somebody shows a tongue for you in Latin America, it means he calls you a coward.

For my practice I made a survey and ask two questions: "Have you ever got into awkward situations abroad because of gesture?" and "Which country it was?" You can see it on diagrams.

So we can see that it is not very big problem but sometimes people get into awkward situation. Moreover, the most of people got into such situation in English-speaking countries.

To sum up I have to say that the only panacea to understanding of a partner is a smile and it is used in every country and every culture. Going to visit in other countries don't forget your smile!