

Analyzing Non-Verbal Communication In Instructors' Classroom Demonstration

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Abstract: This study analyzes the role of non-verbal communication in instructors' classroom demonstrations, focusing on how gestures, facial expressions, body movement, eye contact, and spatial behavior influence students' understanding and engagement. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the research observes several classroom sessions across different disciplines to identify patterns of non-verbal behavior and their pedagogical effects. Findings reveal that instructors who effectively integrate non-verbal cues tend to enhance clarity, motivation, and interaction among students. Conversely, lack of non-verbal awareness may lead to confusion and reduced attentiveness. The study concludes that non-verbal communication serves as a powerful tool in teaching, complementing verbal instruction and reinforcing learning outcomes.

Keywords: non-verbal communication, classroom demonstration, instructor behavior, teaching effectiveness, student engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Nonverbal communication denotes the conveyance of messages absent of verbal expression. It includes several components such as body language, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and classroom management. Nonverbal communication complements verbal communication by reinforcing and clarifying the spoken word, therefore boosting comprehension between the sender and the recipient. Ghafar and Mahmood (2023) assert that in language instruction, nonverbal signals can enhance understanding, especially for pupils acquiring a new language such as English. Nonverbal communication plays a crucial role in English language acquisition by promoting improved contact between teachers and students, despite the challenges that language learners may face. In English language courses, educators employ nonverbal clues to enhance comprehension, provide emotional context, and direct students' understanding of the content.

Nonverbal communication is a crucial tool for facilitating talks and clarifying information in the context of English language acquisition. Nonverbal communication functions as an effective instrument to enhance pupils' comprehension. Baugh et al. (2020) identify inadequate training and insufficient facilities as substantial barriers that hinder educators from fully utilizing nonverbal communication in second language classrooms, where cultural disparities in nonverbal cues may exacerbate the challenges. Given the importance of nonverbal communication in the classroom, it is essential to have a greater understanding of its function in English instruction. A teacher may use gestures to emphasize key terminology or facial expressions to communicate the tone or emotional quality of a lecture. Such strategies empower educators to augment student involvement and promote successful information delivery.

Nonetheless, some educators remain insufficiently cognizant of the impact of their non-verbal communication on student learning. Keskin-Senkal et al. (2024) assert that variations in instructors' professional experience manifest in their gaze patterns, which directly affect classroom engagement and student attention. In reality, educators may employ non-verbal communication spontaneously rather than intentionally, resulting in variable outcomes. This situation is exacerbated in EFL classes, where cultural differences in the interpretation of non-verbal cues may lead to a disconnect between teachers' intentions and students' views.

Research in the Indonesian setting substantiates the beneficial impact of instructors' non-verbal communication on students' learning motivation and self-assurance. Muhayyang et al. (2023) demonstrated that lecturers' eye contact enhanced students' motivation to participate in English learning activities, whereas Istiqamah et al. (2023) indicated that facial emotions, such as smiling, fostered students' excitement and engagement. These findings underscore the necessity of enhancing instructors' knowledge and training in non-verbal communication techniques.

Despite recognized advantages, research on the comprehensive use of non-verbal communication by instructors in classroom presentations is scarce. Much of the current research predominantly concentrates on isolated elements, such as gestures or gaze, rather than examining them as cohesive modalities of instruction. This research aims to examine the utilization of non-verbal communication by English teachers during classroom presentations and its impact on students' understanding and engagement.

Recent research indicate that nonverbal communication enhances clarity in relationships and diminishes potential misunderstandings. Hu and Wang (2023) indicated that when EFL instructors employed behaviors like as gestures and eye contact, student engagement increased, and the likelihood of misinterpreting instructions diminished. Lopez-Ozieblo (2024) similarly discovered that the utilization of instructional gestures facilitated learners' comprehension of abstract grammar, hence mitigating confusion in the classroom. Sharkiya et al. (2023) demonstrated that nonverbal cues such as smiling, nodding, and eye contact enhanced communication between physicians and patients, resulting in clearer and more productive interactions.

METHODS

This study utilized a qualitative research approach, using classroom observations and in-depth interviews to achieve a thorough knowledge of instructors' non-verbal communication tactics. The qualitative technique is suitable in this situation since it allows for an in-depth analysis of the subtleties of nonverbal communication and its role within classroom dynamics. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) assert that qualitative approaches enable researchers to explore the "complexities and processes" inherent in social contexts, making them especially effective for analyzing classroom interactions characterized by various communication layers.

This study involved the researcher performing direct, non-participatory observations in English lessons at SMKN 3 Banda Aceh. This study concentrated on recognizing the utilization of non-verbal communication components, including gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and proxemics, in educational contexts. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with chosen English teachers to obtain insights into their perceptions and deliberate application of non-verbal methods. The data obtained from both modalities were thematically examined to discern common patterns and themes pertaining to non-verbal communication in classroom presentations. Through the integration of different data collection approaches, the researcher acquired a comprehensive, contextual knowledge of how non-verbal communication enhances instructional practices and student engagement

Methods of Data Collection

Observation

The observation of classroom interactions aimed to record particular examples of non-verbal communication demonstrated by instructors during their sessions. The primary emphasis of the observational data was on four essential elements of nonverbal communication: gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and body language. Cohen et al. (2011) asserted that it is crucial to examine these elements in a natural environment,

since this minimizes observer bias and facilitates a more precise representation of standard classroom interactions.

RESULTS

The data from classroom observations and teacher-student interviews were subjected to thematic analysis as per Braun & Clarke (2006). Four principal themes developed through thorough coding, classification, and interpretation.

1. Unplanned and intentional utilization of non-verbal communication
2. Non-verbal communication as educational support
3. Student input influencing educators' methodologies
4. Posture and spatial movement as markers of dominance and approachability

Each subject is elaborated upon in length below, succeeded by a discussion section that tackles the research issues.

1. Unintentional and Intentional Utilization of Non-Verbal Communication

The results demonstrate that instructors' non-verbal communication (NVC) is both instinctual and deliberate. Some gestures and expressions arose organically while teaching, while others were deliberately utilized to enhance learning and govern the classroom.

For instance, during grammatical elucidations, one instructor gestured her hand backward and forth to exemplify past and future tenses—an instinctual motion that rendered abstract temporal notions more tangible. Simultaneously, intentional gestures such as a thumbs-up, nodding, or pointing were utilized to direct pupils' attention, convey approbation, or indicate turns.

The teacher remarked, "I often do not recognize that I am using my hands, yet students typically comprehend more effectively when I demonstrate my meaning." Facial expressions were noted as both involuntary and intentional. Smiles fostered engagement and established a congenial educational atmosphere, whereas stern expressions indicated discipline. Eye contact was methodically employed to seize attention, particularly during inquiries.

Teacher II stated, "When I make direct eye contact with them, they exhibit increased attentiveness." It functions as a discreet prompt to maintain concentration. These findings demonstrate that instructors' nonverbal communication has two purposes: it occurs instinctively as part of expressive behavior, and it is also deliberately utilized as a teaching tool. This paradox illustrates that NVC is not ancillary but fundamental to good classroom presentation.

2. Non-Verbal Communication as Educational Support

The second theme highlights that NVC offered essential support for student understanding. The gestures, emotions, and movements of teachers served as additional clues that facilitated comprehension.

During observations, kids frequently imitated teachers' gestures while acquiring grammatical skills. For example, while elucidating the "present continuous tense," the instructor gestured with her hands in a circular manner to represent continuous action, which students subsequently replicated during collaborative activities. This demonstrates how movements facilitated the assimilation of abstract concepts.

The teacher stated, "At times, when I provide explanations solely through verbal means, they appear perplexed." However, when I utilize gestures or facial expressions,

they comprehend more rapidly. Facial expressions also inspired learners. Affirmative smiles and nods prompted reticent students to articulate their thoughts, while direct eye contact affirmed the value of their contributions. The teacher's mobility inside the classroom diminished distractions and indicated engagement, fostering a dynamic educational atmosphere.

Consequently, NVC served as an educational framework—converting courses from solely verbal descriptions into multimodal, interactive experiences that enhanced understanding and sustained engagement.

3. Student Feedback as Responses

The third topic emphasizes the adaptive characteristics of instructors' nonverbal communication. Educators modified their non-verbal techniques in accordance with pupils' observable reactions.

When pupils exhibited confusion, teachers incorporated explanatory gestures or reiterated motions. When pupils appeared inattentive, teachers enhanced closeness, employed more intense eye contact, or altered facial expressions. Teacher II remarked, “Their reactions indicate my subsequent actions—if they appear perplexed, I incorporate gestures; if they seem fatigued, I approach them or alter my expression.” This reactivity indicates that NVC is interactive rather than unilateral. Educators not only convey meaning but also understand students' cues and adjust accordingly, facilitating more effective engagement and education.

4. Posture and Spatial Movement as Indicators of Authority and Approachability

A fourth element that emerged was the significance of posture and spatial dynamics. Educators sometimes transitioned between places, asserting authority from the front while circulating the classroom to diminish distance and oversee activities. Observational studies indicated that when teachers approached groups, pupils exhibited increased quietness and attentiveness, interpreting the teacher's proximity as both supervisory and encouraging. In contrast, an erect posture in the front signified authority and gravity, whilst a relaxed demeanor during conversations indicated receptiveness. A student remarked, “When the teacher circulates, I perceive her as both evaluating us and prepared to assist.”

This signifies that proxemics—utilization of space—conveys nuanced yet potent messages on authority, accessibility, and concern.

DISCUSSION

The four themes jointly illustrate that instructors' non-verbal communication is an essential component of classroom presentations. Gestures enhance clarity and diminish cognitive obstacles, facial expressions foster a supportive and inspiring atmosphere, eye contact maintains engagement and modulates behavior, while posture and spatial movement communicate both authority and approachability.

These findings correspond with contemporary scholarship. Hu and Wang (2023) highlighted the significance of teachers' immediacy actions in augmenting students' communication willingness, whilst Lopez-Ozieblo (2024) illustrated how gestures aid in comprehending abstract grammatical notions. Church (2025) also affirmed the cognitive function of gestures in reinforcing learning. Moreover, Keskin-Şenkal et al. (2024) and Mendes et al. (2025) emphasized that gaze and visual attention patterns serve as intentional techniques for regulating classroom interaction. Local research (Muhayyang et al., 2023; Istiqamah et al., 2023) corroborates the notion that teachers' non-verbal

behaviors—such as eye contact and facial expressions—enhance student motivation in Indonesian classrooms.

This study's theme analysis builds upon prior research by investigating nonverbal communication (NVC) as an interconnected system rather than as discrete actions within classroom presentations. Teachers' gestures, emotions, gaze, and posture together facilitate multimodal education that improves understanding and engagement. The results indicate that educators ought to be educated to employ Nonviolent Communication (NVC) with more awareness and strategic intent, rather than depending on instinctive and impulsive actions

CONCLUSION

Thematic analysis of classroom observations and interviews revealed four themes: Gestures improve instructional clarity and manage classroom engagement. Facial expressions offer emotional support, motivation, and feedback. Eye contact captivates learners and upholds classroom discipline. Posture and movement convey authority while enhancing accessibility. These topics highlight the educational importance of non-verbal communication in instructors' classroom presentations and its essential role in promoting effective teaching and learning in EFL environments. The results indicate that instructors' nonverbal communication is both instinctive and deliberate. Gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and movement were employed concurrently to convey message, govern interaction, and control behavior.

The data reveals that NVC facilitated understanding by serving as multimodal scaffolding. Gestures rendered abstract language intelligible, facial emotions encouraged reluctant learners, and gaze directed attention. The teacher's closeness decreased distractions, whereas adaptive nonverbal communication facilitated response to student requirements. The findings align with recent evidence indicating that non-verbal communication strategies diminish ambiguity, elevate motivation, and cultivate positive classroom environments. Overall, non-verbal communication augmented students' comprehension by not only reinforcing meaning but also by establishing relational connections that rendered the classroom more interactive and engaging.

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