



# INTEGRATING BODY LANGUAGE INTO CLASSROOM INTERACTION: THE KEY TO ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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## *Abstract*

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to prove the importance of understanding body language to achieve the effectiveness of English language classes.

**Methodology:** Literature investigation is carried out to confirm the objective of this paper.

**Results:** In the teaching and learning process, effective communication between a teacher and students is the utmost importance. The failure to establish effective communication in the classroom setting will result in a deficiency of the teaching and learning process.

**Implications:** It is the fact that many cues of body language are culture-specific and therefore the only way to improve the understanding of body language is by interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds so that they can share socio-cultural and linguistic norms. Thus, the experience will enrich the teacher with cross-cultural nonverbal behavior which benefits his performance in the classroom. Both teachers' and students' knowledge of non-verbal language play very significant roles in making the classroom interaction successful. Therefore, finally, a summary is presented to reconfirm the importance of integrating body language into classroom interaction.

**Keywords:** *body language, non-verbal behavior, culture, language teaching, effective communication*

## INTRODUCTION

Every human being is born with organs with which they communicate with each other. Everyone is aware that the language they have is the most effective means of interaction. However, sometimes, people need other techniques to make their communication more effective and therefore more easily understood by their interlocutor. The fact that some people misunderstood others' message when it is written in a letter or a text message simply explains that word only is sometimes insufficient to convey the actual message they want to send. This is one of the reasons why emoticons are created to accompany text messages to ensure the reader understand the real message the sender wants to communicate and thus avoid any misunderstanding. Nevertheless, often, misinterpretation still happens although a text message is completed with emoticons. That is why learning non-verbal communication as a complement of verbal communication is significant to send and to understand messages accurately.

## NON-VERBAL BEHAVIOUR COMMUNICATION

Non-verbal communication is simply defined as communication without words. Anderson describes it as "all communication other than language" (p.2) (Andersen, P.A. 1999). As we understand language is a specific asset that human being has to communicate with each other. Animals, on the other hand, communicate with their groups as well, but they do not use language. They use non-verbal signs. Therefore non-verbal behaviour is used both by people and animals to communicate. Human beings however use it mostly to help their verbal communication more easily understood and to make sure that the interlocutors receive the same message as what they really mean (Zoric, G., Smid, K., & Pandzic, I. S. 2007; Ranjbaran, 2014) confirm that "non-verbal communication refers to all aspects of message exchange without the use of words" (p.61). Furthermore, they add that "it includes all expressive signs, signals, and cues (audio, visual, etc.)" (p. 61). (Hecht, M.L., & DeVito, J.A. 1990) construes nonverbal communication as all kinds of messages other than words that are exchanged. In this definition, nonverbal communication is considered as every communication using no language which is shared with other people.

Therefore there is an intention of sharing or sending the message from one person to another. In other words, if there is no intention of exchanging the message, there is no communication. For example, if a person is moving his head side to side to stretch his neck muscle, it is not a nonverbal communication. However when the same movement is done by a student to respond to a question from a teacher in a classroom, this movement means something, i.e. "no" or "I don't know". In this situation, the student's movement of his head side by side is a nonverbal communication as it is intended to mean something and addressed to his teacher. In Hecht's and DeVito's definition, there is also another keyword "other than words" message, explaining that this communication is through non-linguistic codes such as facial expressions, body movements, gestures, gaze, prosodic vocal features, physical appearance, space, time environment, etc. This definition also restricts the nonverbal communication to occur among people. Therefore, animals' ways of interaction among them and intrapersonal communication that a person does as an expression of his own thought and feeling are not considered as nonverbal communication (Gregersen, T.S. 2007)

Researches have revealed that in fact, only 7% of a message is sent through verbal communication, while 93% of it is through non-verbal manners, especially in a face to face interaction' ([Leathers, D. G. 1992](#); [Miller, P. W. 2005](#)) In detail, Goman classifies this 93% non-verbal communication into facial expression 55%, vocal intonation 38% ([Goman, C. K. 2008](#)). Another study suggests that at least 75% of all communication in the classroom is non-verbal. Therefore non-verbal communication is very significant in making the message well received and correctly interpreted by interlocutors. Non-verbal behaviour can give more explanation for verbal communication. It can substitute, complement, accent, regulate and even contradict the verbal expression

**Categorization of Non-verbal Communication according to different scholars**

<a href="#">Zoric, Smid, et al</a>	<a href="#">Miller,1988</a>	<a href="#">Knapp, M. L., &amp; Hall, J. A. 1992</a>	<a href="#">Malandro, L. A., Barker, L. L., &amp; Barker, D. A. 1989</a> <a href="#">Peng, H. 2011</a>
Chronemics	Facial expression	Appearance	Body types; shapes and sizes;
Haptics	Eye contact	Proxemics	Clothing and personal artifacts;
Kinesics	Touching	Body motion (which include gesture, posture, touching, facial expression, eye behaviour)	(Kinesics (body movement and gestures and posture);
Oculesics	Tone of voice	paralanguage	Facial expressions and eye behavior;
Olfactics	Dress		Environment;
Physical appearance	Posture		Proxemics including human territory and body contact;
Proxemics	Special distance		Paralanguage (voice characteristics and qualities);
Silence			Olfactics (taste and smell); and
Symbolism			Chronemics, including a schedule of each course and time that teachers give to students to prepare for the questions.
Vocalics			

Knapp and Hall divide non-verbal communication into four categories whereas [Miller,1988](#) breaks down non-verbal communication into seven categories. Malandro et al. as quoted in Peng categorize non-verbal communication in detail but not as complete as what [Zorich et. al.](#) do. The categorization of Zoric et al. seems to be scientific and one of the most comprehensive of non-verbal communication. They divide non-verbal communication into ten, (1) chronemics, timing of verbalization and pauses; (2) haptics, contact and deliberate touch between individuals; (3) kinesics, all forms of body movement including facial expression, eye movement, gesture and posture; (4) oculusics, intentional and unintentional eye contact in the act of communication; (5) olfactics, the influence of odor; (6) physical appearance, characteristics of the

body, clothing, hairstyle etc.; (7) proxemics, consideration of personal space and arrangements of physical items; (8) silence, the absence of verbal and non-verbal communication; (9) symbolism, meaning associated with symbols; (10) vocalics, vocal impacts on the act of speaking, to include tone of voice, timbre, volume, and rate of speech. As we are aware, in real communication each of the categories of nonverbal communication almost never occurs individually. There is always a combination of categories to assist the verbal expressions to ensure the accurate acceptance of the oral message and thus avoid misinterpretation.

### NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN CULTURAL CONTEXT

It is the fact that apart from the similarities of body language across cultures such as smiling as a sign of happiness and pleasure, there are some gestures which may have different meanings between one culture to another one, for example looking at the eyes of the interlocutors in a conversation, shaking and nodding the head, pointing a finger, raising the thumb etc (Barry, B. E., Bodenhamer, J., & O'Brien Jr, J. J. 2011). According to (Hartley, G., & Karinch, M. 2007) culture is "nothing more than accepted social norms for a group" (p.38). Thus culture is, in fact, agreement or convention shared among the member of the community within the same culture. Furthermore, (Matsumoto D. 2006) adds that culture plays an important role in shaping our non-verbal behaviours. It explains why the body language of a particular culture may not be the same as that of another culture. That is why ESL or EFL teachers have to know and recognize the cultural influences which form non-verbal behaviours. They need to identify and teach the non-verbal behaviours shared within English speaking countries and pinpoint the differences if any. Also, they need to identify non-verbal cues which are considered universal and those carrying specific cultural meanings.

A handful number of researchers share the idea that most body languages or gestures are learned as part of the process of learning to communicate in a socio-linguistic community. They agree that the best way to learn gestures of a different culture is by coming in contact, getting acquainted and mingling with the owners of that particular culture. By getting along with the people of a new culture infrequent occasions, we will understand how a particular body language is supposed to be used, in what situation, why and what it means when applied in a different context. That is why learning a non-verbal communication in an isolated way is never suggested as it may result in misinterpretation, create annoyance and end up with miscommunication.

One of the cross-cultural differences of nonverbal communication is looking directly at an individual or gazing and visual attention. It is true that in many cultures gaze is associated with power, dominance, and aggression (Suinn, R. M. 2006). However, the way how it is employed and the frequency of use is very culturally specific. Within the American culture, while listening to another speaker, white Americans make eye contact of 80% of the time. Meanwhile, they make eye contact of 50% of the time while speaking. On the other hand, African-Americans make more eye contacts while speaking and less eye contact when listening (Burgoon J.K. and Bacue A., 2003). In most western cultures, maintaining eye contact during a conversation shows that the listeners are interested in the message, attentive and it shows respect to the speakers. In Asian and African cultures, looking directly at the eyes of the interlocutors shows disrespect, impoliteness, and aggressiveness, while lowering the eyes may indicate polite manners (Ting-Toomey S., 1999). Within Arab cultures, individuals tend to look at the eyes more directly and for longer periods of time than in other cultures. Among the Javanese people looking at the eye of the speakers who have higher social stratum or older age is considered very impolite. They will nod their heads and looking at the ground instead. Nowadays, when social stratum is no longer a big issue, this culture is changing slowly especially among the young people, especially children, and teenagers.

Another culture-specific is the semantic meaning which is attributed to interpersonal space, body postures and degree of interpersonal contact. Some cultures prefer close proximity and personal contact during conversation and others favor wider spaces and no contact in interactions (Wang D.-H. and Li H., 2007; Pease, A., & Pease, B. 2006; Neill, S. R., & Caswell, C. 1993). For example, Latin Americans tend to communicate in closer proximity that does Europeans, while Italians interact in closer proximity than do both German and Americans. During the conversation, Arabs stand very close together which for the westerners are considered embarrassing and aggressive. They also share with the Southern Europeans, Russians, Latin Americans and Africans the tendency to touch each other during the conversation which would be avoided by East Asians such as China, Japanese and Koreans. They only use little touching in interactions. Meanwhile, Canadians, US Americans, Northern Europeans, Australians, and New Zealanders are in between these two extremes.

Another common difference between cultures that can cause non-verbal communication is the use of physical gestures with hands and arms. Matsumoto lists several gestures which may lead to miscommunication as these gestures are commonplace and socially acceptable in one culture, but are not in other cultures as they are considered obscene. For example, the "OK" sign which in many English speaking countries means zero or worthless in France, means money in Japan but is derogatory statement or obscenity signs and has sexual implications in Mediterranean, Arab and Latin American countries, Russia, Brazil, and Turkey (Gukas, I. D., Leinster, S. J., & Walker, 2010; Razavi, S. M., Nasirian, M., & Afkhami, I. 2015; Davis, B. G. 2009). The "thumbs up" sign which has positive interpretation and indicates "good job" or "congratulations" in most parts of the world, it means 'man' in Japan and is considered obscene gesture or an insult in some Middle Eastern countries. The 'V' sign which may mean two, victory, or peace in most parts of the English speaking countries but can be interpreted differently depending on how it is realized. In the UK and in the countries of the Commonwealth, the 'V' sign with the palm facing inward is an obscene gesture, but when it is produced with the palm

facing outward, it means 'two' or 'peace.' In the US, the 'V' sign is generally produced with the palm facing outward which means 'two,' 'peace' or 'victory' (Gukas, I. D., Leinster, S. J., & Walker, 2010; SAFDARI et al., 2013; Davis, B. G. 2009)

The sideways movement of the head which is commonly interpreted as a sign of disagreement or disapproval by most people such as Indonesians, Australians, Americans, Europeans, etc., in Turkey it indicates endorsement. The norms of expressing emotions are also culture-specific. Russian students who study in America often complain that their teachers smile too much which for them it shows lacking seriousness. Similarly, American teachers who teach Russian students often consider that Russian students do not enjoy their classes. This kind of miscommunication happens due to the absence of cross-cultural understanding especially in the use of non-verbal behaviours.

## INTERPRETING UNIVERSAL NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN A CLASSROOM CONTEXT

There are no arguments among experts in public communication that there are some basic similarities among non-verbal behaviours across cultures. They also believe that the use of non-verbal behaviour in communication helps the transmission of the message easier and more accurate. The following non-verbal behaviours bring similar interpretation around the world and therefore can be implemented in the language learning classroom to make the teaching and learning process more effective.

### Silence

When we are teaching, we cannot expect that every student in a classroom would be actively involved in the teaching and learning process. We will sometime find some students quiet although not for the whole session. As a teacher, we need to know what silence means before we trace the reasons why those students keep quiet. According to Gukas, Leinster and Waker<sup>20</sup> silence is the most common non-verbal communication. In general, silence is commonly interpreted as a lack of understanding of anything in any situation. In a classroom context, student silence could mean a lack of understanding or lack of knowledge (McCroskey, J. C., V. P. Richmond, et al. 2006), fear of failure (Richmond, V., & McCroskey, J. 2000; Knapp, M., & Hall, J. 2006). Sometimes silence on the part of a student can also be interpreted as a feeling of inferiority. Silence also serves time for teacher reflection on his or her performance in the classroom. Therefore when we find students quiet in the classroom, it is a "challenge" for the instructor to make him involved actively as basically silence is the product of learning preference or student's cultural background.

### Gaze or Oculistics

Gaze or oculistics is the eye contact an individual makes during communication; it can be an intentional or unintentional action. "Eyes reflect the soul." This expression has confirmed the reason why people's attention is directed to the eyes during conversation. Eye behaviour can control interaction, draw the attention of others, and show interest or even boredom in the information being communicated by other people. According to Knapp and Hall, there are five functions of gazing, i.e., regulating the flow of conversation, monitoring feedback, reflecting cognitive activity, expressing emotion, and communicating the nature of an interpersonal relationship. Therefore, the use of eyes is very fundamental in interaction.

As an experienced teacher, we are aware that a sustained gaze shows interest. These eyes will follow wherever our eyes are moving. On the other hand, when students avoid eye contact with us, it is very unlikely that they are interested in our teaching (Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. 1969). Furthermore, Knapp and Hall argue that in a classroom setting, avoiding eye contact could commonly be interpreted as not knowing the answer to a question. If a student has low self-esteem or is being evasive, he or she will avoid eye-contact (Gower, R., & Walters, S. 1983). According to Koprulu (Koprulu, Ozen 2014) looking straight into the eyes of the students, a teacher can form a bond which creates a positive relationship with them. However, a teacher who never looks at the eyes of the students indicate a lack of confidence and cause the students to feel unsecured. A study by (Zeki, C. P. 2009; Chacón, Juan Aspeé, Eduardo Cavieres-Fernández, and José González Campos. 2018) has proven that there is a positive correlation between the amount of student eye contact with the teacher with the level of student comprehension. It means the more often the students make eye contact with the teacher the higher their level of comprehension. A Higher score is associated with more time looking at the eye of the teacher during the teaching and learning process and less looking elsewhere. Research by (Webb, J. M., Diana, E. M., Luft, P., Brooks, E. W., & Brennan, E. L. 1977) has demonstrated that there is a strong link between eye-contact and the level of participation in communication. The more eye-contact individual makes, the more they are engaged in communication.

## KINESICS

Kinesics include all forms of body movement such as eye movement, head position, facial expression, body posture, gesture and hand signals. All these features are further explored below.

### EYE MOVEMENT

Student's eye movement shows his or her mindset and thoughts. According to Hartley and Karinch images are stored in the cortex, which is located in the rear of the brain. When a student tries to recall an image, his eyes tend to drift upwards. Likewise, when he tries to recall a sound, his eyes tend to drift to the right or to the left. Similarly, cognitive thought and

problem-solving is executed through the frontal lobe and is indicated by the eye's moving down and to the left. Furthermore, thoughts which are related to emotions or intense feelings are indicated through the eye's looking down and to the right. When a student is looking at the clock repeatedly, it indicates that the student is bored and wants the teacher to finish the class soon or he may be concerned with events occurring after the current sessions is over ([Radford, K. W. 1990](#)). In fact, eyes always tell the truth and that pupil dilation is a non-voluntary reaction to viewing something pleasing ([Miller, P. W. 1988](#); [Angelo, T. A., & Cross, K. P. 1993](#); [Tambunan, H. 2018](#); [Ortega, J. & Tores, N. G., 2015](#))

### HEAD POSITION

Head position is also full of meaning. The way how an individual positions his head indicates something. Knowledge of understanding the message behind the individual's head position is only possible through experience. For example, an individual who raises his chin and his eyes look down his nose indicates an imposed dominance. On the contrary, a bowed head is non-threatening and submissive. Tilting the head slightly to one side indicates sympathetic interest ([Miller, P. W. 2005](#)) and agreement is commonly indicated by nodding ([Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. 1975](#); [Duncan, S. Jr. 2005](#)). ([Thompson, J. J. 1973](#)) also argues that students usually combine nodding their heads and avoiding eye contact with the teacher as a signal that he is not ready to answer the question.

### FACIAL EXPRESSION

Facial expression is non-verbal communication which is effective to transmit messages. Knapp and Hall argue that face is rich in communication potential. They add that facial expression can communicate emotional states, reflect interpersonal attitudes, and provide non-verbal feedback on the comments of others. Gregersen clarifies that we can manage interaction, complement response and replace speech by facial expression. In regard to facial expression Ekman and Friesen list six emotions that they believe to be innate and universal. These six emotions will be expressed through the face in the same way anywhere on this planet. These include feelings of happiness, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, and surprise.

In a classroom context, a teacher is always advised to see how his students respond to his performance through their facial expression and it can tell how they feel about the class. A relaxed and smiling face indicates that the students are satisfied with what the teacher has done. However, when a student's eyebrow is wrinkled or frown, it shows that he or she is confused or angry. Yawning during the class expresses the situation that the student is bored or fatigued ([Breed, G., & Colaiuta, V. 2006](#)).

### BODY POSTURE

The way how the students are seating or standing can be interpreted accurately. For example, when a student pays attention and is engaged to the teaching and learning process, he will sit predominantly erect and lean forward slightly towards the teacher. On the other hand, when the students are slumping or slouching while sitting, they are telling us that they are discouraged or bored. [Miller, 1988](#) also states that a student's relaxed posture when addressing others is an indication of lack of respect for them. Basically, body alignment is closely related to the way how students respect their teachers. For example, a straight alignment while seated with the legs in front, not turned to the sides, indicates a higher level of respect. Hartley and Karinch add that when the students put their hands on their hips while standing, they are demonstrating defiance or dissension. Defiance or dissension is also demonstrated by deliberately exhibiting a posture significantly different from the other students in the classroom.

### GESTURES AND HAND SIGNALS

Gestures and hand signals play very important roles in making communication between people more effective. In the classroom contexts, they help teachers deliver the materials more clearly and make their explanations more easily understood by the students. Similarly, with gestures and hand signals students can express their ideas and clarify their questions and answers more accurately. For example, when the students are interlocking their fingers or simply placing their fingertips of either hand or steeping, we are aware that they are demonstrating confidence. Meanwhile, the students who are peeing excessively, actually they are in the state of stress and anxiety. As we are aware, in a classroom setting attention is obtained by raising the hand. Similarly, when a student is not sure about his opinion or lack of sufficient knowledge, he will shrug his shoulders. Neill and Caswell mention that when a student folds his arms across his chest, it indicates that he is showing dominance; however, [Miller, 1988](#) considers it as a defensive cue or withdrawal from a discussion.

According to Ekman and Friesen, there are four types of gestures which are significant to make the communication effective, i.e. illustrators, regulators, emblems, and affect displays. Illustrators are the non-verbal cues which have the same meaning as the verbal ones and usually function to either complete or complement it. For example, gesturing, smiling, frowning, or pointing to illustrate something. Regulators are the body language serving to control turn-taking and other procedural aspects of interpersonal communication. In a conversation, it is fundamental to know each other's turn when to speak and when to listen. In a practical interaction between individuals, the determination of who speaks when influences the fluency of the conversation. It usually happens smoothly and unconsciously because of the regulators such as the termination of gesture, changes in gaze direction, or the speakers' looking away from the hearer as an utterance ends. These regulators indicate transition signals which tell them the time for turn-taking. Emblems are nonverbal cues that represent

words and are used intentionally to send a message. As emblems can substitute a word, the meaning can likely be very cultural based. Therefore, students of English language need to learn them as they learn new vocabularies of spoken English. Finally, affect displays are non-verbal behaviours which express emotions and are always communicated through facial expressions such as smiling, laughing, or crying, etc.

### **VOCALISTS AND CHRONEMICS**

Vocalics is related to the way how we manage our voice when talking to people. It includes tone of voice, volume, timbre, and rate of speech. Meanwhile chronemics deal with timing and pauses during talking. An experienced teacher knows very well what the students are feeling only from the way how they are talking, especially when responding to a question. These non-verbal signals are usually demonstrated when the students try to reply to questions. [Miller,1988](#) and Neil and Caswell<sup>19</sup> investigated how students respond to questions given by their teachers. They recorded that when the students responded to questions, the students' volume increased slightly and the rate of speech also increased. This way of responding indicates the unconfident answer. Other finding confirmed that when students responded to teachers' questions slowly or moderately slow, it indicates that the students are bored. When the rate of speech is normal, it shows that the students are satisfied. However, when an individual responds a question in a fast rate of speech, it indicates that he or she is angry.

### **PROXEMICS**

Something that will contribute to the success of teaching of the learning process is the way how a teacher makes the classroom environment as comfortable as possible so that the students feel happy and motivated. To make the classroom comfortable, the teacher needs to find out how to arrange the physical items in the classroom in such a way that help the conduciveness of the environment. Rearranging the chairs and desks need to be done once in a while to give a new look and fresh environment so that the students will not feel bored. Observing how the students react after rearranging the physical stuff in the classroom needs to be done to give the best classroom design. The teacher has the authority to rearrange all the stuff in the classroom to make sure that the new arrangement will assist the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. However, personal distance is not only controlled by teachers but also managed by students. In a study conducted by Breed and Colaiuta, it was found that there was a positive correlation between students seating choices and their academic performance. They observed that students who voluntarily choose to sit in the center of the classroom forward tend to be more attentive and perform better academically. The way how the students set a distance between them and their teacher indicates the level of their confidence. There is also a positive relationship between the voluntarily set personal distance of student teacher and their level of confidence. The closer the distance to the teacher they voluntarily choose, the more they are confident. Besides, it also indicates the comfort the students feel to sit closer to their teachers. The way how the students move their body while seated, such as rocking, swinging legs or tapping, indicates that they feel uncomfortable and with the personal distance.

### **HAPTICS**

There is a significant debate in regard to the possibility of student-teacher touching within the context of the teaching and learning process. Although studies conducted by prominent figures such as [Miller,1988](#), Neil and Caswell, and Thompson have shown that student-teacher touching which is done deliberately and appropriately in the classroom give positive influence academically, the new academic ideas have suggested that it should be avoided as it may have some potentials to be misinterpreted. The only student teacher touching which is still tolerated nowadays is only shaking hands for the well-done jobs the students have performed. Furthermore, students with Islamic background have different beliefs about different sex touching. In their belief they are not allowed to touch or to be touched by individuals of different sex, even shaking hand is not permitted although with their own teachers. Therefore, teachers should find other ways to appreciate the good performance of different sex students such as by giving well-done job cards or other rewards.

### **PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

Although not valid, the physical appearance of an individual reflects what he or she feels about the current situation. Thompson states that a student envisages their outward view of the world through their outfits, hairstyle, jewelry, etc. It is true that physical appearance does not necessarily reflect the real-time students' cognitive state, but very often it tells us how to better approach them. In other words, we can adjust our teaching method simply based on our observation of the students' physical appearance.

### **EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM INTERACTION**

Effective classroom interaction is of paramount importance in the process of teaching and learning. Although the effective interaction is normally between students and teachers, it is also crucial between students, especially during the discussion. Therefore any effort leading to the improvement of the classroom interaction is always worth executing. Radford explains that in the classroom environment, effective communication is very critical. Furthermore, [Miller,1988](#) explores that effective communication is the way how knowledge is transmitted and it is nurtured by skilfully sending and receiving a message. It implies that both teachers and students need to have special knowledge to interpret the message precisely the same as what the sender means, otherwise the communication will end up in failure. Even in a student-centered classroom environment where the teacher's involvement is limited, this skill is still so important. When the students are working on

their own or when they are collaborating with their friends, from a distance, the teacher can monitor how they get along with the lesson through their verbal interaction (if possible) or from their body language which is more visible. Students' understanding and comfort of the teacher's performance can also be interpreted through their non-verbal signs which is so useful to help the teacher to find out how much the students understand the lesson and whether it is correct or not. This information is very crucial to help the teacher make a decision whether to continue the material, revise the teaching strategy, or re-explain the material.

Sensitivity or understanding towards students' way of responding through the non-verbal way of communication depends much on how experienced the teacher is. The more experienced the teacher is, the more he or she is sensitive towards students' reaction transmitted through non-verbal communication. Webb and Diana, et al. investigated how experience plays roles in helping a teacher able to judge student comprehension through their visual, non-verbal behaviour and they found that more experienced teachers were more accurate. Angelo and Cross suggest that during the teaching and learning process, a teacher needs to observe and monitor how the students respond to his instruction. He has to examine the students' comments, questions, body language, facial expressions, eye contact, voice, etc. and respond accordingly at the best time. It should be a self-regulated process within the teacher's awareness to understand what is in the students' mind through their body language. He has to be aware that understanding the students through their verbal communication only is not enough and even sometimes misleading and therefore able to interpret the students' body language will help him understand the students better.

In a study conducted with eight participants, seven students and an English teacher through an observation and interview in an experimental research, Ortega and Tores, concluded that the use of non-verbal language such as facial gestures, body movements, vocal sounds help the learners understand the target language (English) and increase the rapport between the students and teacher to develop the learners' communicative competence. They found that teachers were more effective in transmitting the materials. With the non-verbal cues that they intentionally used, the students found a way to develop their communicative competence. Besides, the relationship between the students and the teacher became stronger and closer. Finally, they came to the conclusion that non-verbal communication plays a significant role in the field of language teaching and learning. They also suggest that teacher trainers need to include non-verbal communication in their training program to equip prospective teachers with the skill to communicate more effectively in a different way.

## SUMMARY

This paper has argued how non-verbal communication can make the interaction between people more effective and therefore beneficial to be applied in the teaching and learning process. The teacher needs to be sensitive to any body language produced by the students and respond accordingly. Failure to respond appropriately which can be interpreted as having misunderstood the students will cause unsuccessful teaching. Similarly, when the students cannot interpret the teacher's non-verbal behaviour, they will react wrongly which shows communication breakdown. This will end up in learning failure as well. Although this situation is very rare, it sometimes happens when the teacher and students come from different cultural backgrounds. However, the experience will enrich the teacher to broaden his understanding of nonverbal cues. Therefore the more experience the teacher is, the better they will understand the students' use of non-verbal communication.

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