



INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Name of the author: 1. Dr.Malathi.P, 2. Mrs.B.Porselvi

Designation 1. Assistant Professor, 2. Assistant Professor

1. Department of English 2. Department of English

J.J. College of engineering and Technology, Ammapettai,

Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nādu, India.

Abstract

The average teacher used to just teach the content of the subject, the good teacher explains the same verbally, the superior teacher demonstrates the content verbally with some experimental facts, but the great teacher always inspires the students by making an effort to create a suitable form of context which is formed with the support of nonverbal communication -William Arthur Ward. What the teacher says verbally is only one part of the teaching and how teacher communicates bodily make available of the rest of the information. Nonverbal communication in English language classroom is mainly includes the kinesics, facial expression with direct eye contact, proxemics the distance between the communicators, olfactory dimensions, paralinguistic variables, silent language, i.e., pause in between the conversation, personality, environment/ atmosphere and chronemics the concepts of time. Verbal communication and nonverbal communication always go parallel and endeavour to explain a same concept as exist side by side as two processes that are working for the same purpose in a same system to guide the message to deliver with the perfect meaning. This article gives a detailed influence of nonverbal communication of the teacher in the English Language Teaching and its impact on the teaching and learning process.

Key Words: English Language Teaching, Nonverbal communication, Aspects Body Language, Classroom Teaching.

Introduction

The acronym 'SOFTEN' represents Simile, Open gesture, Forward Lean, Tone of voice and touch, Eye contact, and Nod which expresses positive nonverbal communication for effective interaction. DeVito and Hecht in 1990 describe nonverbal communication as it is the process of delivering a message 'other than words' that people exchange while conversation and mere words won't help to express the emotions (pp.3-4). This concept provides a clear view that the process of conveying the information is understood as representational and therefore their purpose become exemplified by few body movements. For an instance, if a student extends his arm above his head signals his aspiration to answer a question in a classroom while teaching. It also explains the purpose of the signal is to exhibit his willingness to volunteer. But when the teacher questions him there may be a possibility to say that it is only stretching motion to relieve himself of a muscle cramp. Hence this kind of behaviour was not projected as communication; however, the earlier symbol of motion could be measured as an expression of nonverbal communication. That's why it is said that nonverbal communication is so intrinsic and complicated to understand without knowing the circumstances and objective of a person who implicit it and of course not all nonverbal cues convey the message in a communication process. The second part illustrates the 'other than words,' which is nonlinguistic codes such as body language and paralanguage that is used to communicate added meaning. At the same time, this definition confines that nonverbal communication has been exchanged only to other people who are following the same culture because different cultures depict different meanings for the same nonverbal cues. Thus, removing any verbal messages communicated interpersonally would occur only if a person has a reflective talk. When people exchange information, they never think about the contribution of meaning in different channels verbal and nonverbal, conceivably working as an interrelated and expressing the same meaning. Hence the verbal and nonverbal act together with each other and become incorporated into one communicative event. For example, when a teacher corrects his/her student's error in the class positively, the student will not separate positive nonverbal behaviour and pleasing tone of the words.

There are quite a lot of functions of nonverbal have been discussed by Knapp and Hall in their work “Nonverbal communication in human interaction” in 2006 discusses that nonverbal communication is conjunct with verbal messages. Nonverbal behaviour substitutes complements, accents, regulates, and contradicts the spoken message. Substitution of a nonverbal message occurs when a teacher uses a nonverbal cue instead of a word and gives the head nodding signal to the students for using the accurate verb tense. Most of the time nonverbal message complements the spoken ones as the words ‘well done are accompanied by the smiling face of the teacher and uttering praising words for the group work of students. Communicators sometimes stress a few words in a message while giving importance to those words, then that process of stressing a word or group of words is called accenting. The word ‘small’ in the sentence emphasizes the students, “have to sit in a small group in a classroom for practical activity,” indicating that not more than four or five students per group for language activities. Conversations are regulated most of the time by nonverbal messages as in the case of the language teacher who nods her head as a student is speaking to encourage more talk or the students who are working in a group and who incline frontward signaling that he would like his turn to speak. Sometimes, nonverbal cues disagree with spoken communication when the verbal and nonverbal understanding of the meaning is different from each other. In another situation when the students say “All get through it, sir!” gives the work done meaning, but the teacher thinks it differently, what the words try to convey the message, it is because of the tone of the voice which is a nonverbal factor totally change the meaning.

The different aspects of nonverbal communication as the awareness and understanding of it has a special meaning related to the person and the situation of the message. The same awareness and understanding of these characteristics of nonverbal communication help language teachers and learners reach their expected level of performance. This special knowledge makes the students aware of the culture and motivates them to concentrate more on it. In addition, without knowing the cultural differences in nonverbal communication, students cannot communicate properly with other cultured persons. Hence it is mandatory that they have to know about the discrepancy in nonverbal communication across cultures which has an essential role in communicative competence. Henceforth the understanding of this divergence is the essential step and more significant to acquire language competence for teachers and students. This knowledge will facilitate teachers and students to have a

better understanding of each other in multicultural classrooms. It also assists the students to perform more effectively in classroom activities and in the future, will help them to cope with work commitments.

Nonverbal communication creates a smooth interaction between the signaling that he would like his turn to speak. Sometimes, nonverbal cues disagree with spoken communication when the verbal and nonverbal understanding of the meaning is different from each other. In another situation when the students say “All get through it, sir!” gives the work done meaning, but the teacher thinks it differently, what the words try to convey the message, it is because of the tone of the voice which is a nonverbal factor totally change the meaning. The different aspects of nonverbal communication as the awareness and understanding of it has a special meaning related to the person and the situation of the message. The same awareness and understanding of these characteristics of nonverbal communication help language teachers and learners reach their expected level of performance. This special knowledge makes the students aware of the culture and motivates them to concentrate more on it. In addition, without knowing the cultural differences in nonverbal communication, students cannot communicate properly with other cultured persons. Hence it is mandatory that they have to know about the discrepancy in nonverbal communication across cultures which has an essential role in communicative competence. Henceforth the understanding of this divergence is the essential step and more significant to acquire language competence for teachers and students. This knowledge will facilitate teachers and students to have a better understanding of each other in multicultural classrooms. It also assists the students to perform more effectively in classroom activities and in the future, will help them to cope with work commitments.

Nonverbal communication creates a smooth interaction between the teacher and students, which is more important to learn about formal communication. Nonverbal communication in language learning is overlooked by the teachers and the students, which creates unsolved problems in communicative competence. People convey nonverbal messages all the time unconsciously. Whenever people fail to take an account of the nonverbal aspect of a conversation, automatically, they would be unable to find a part of the original meaning that is being conveyed by the sender. The ultimate goal of language teaching and learning is to acquire communicative competence with perfect skills. It is nothing but just knowing how and what to say to whom is a foundational step for attaining communicative competence. The aspiration as teachers of language is to challenge the students to go beyond the grammatical structure of being proficient to arrange the subject, verb, and object in the accurate word order/

sentence pattern. It is also significant to encourage the students to know about discourse, strategic, and sociolinguistic communicative skills. Teachers should go beyond the linguistic context and pay attention to the nonverbal cues of their students to attain the expected communicative abilities. Communicative competence is the ability to communicate successfully in a wide range of situations. With the importance of language instruction, it is essential to move from grammatical and pronunciation accuracy to making a person understand these basics of the language. It is needed to take a closer look at all of the resources at the disposal that enhance mutual intelligibility. The nonverbal channel of communication bears an estimated more than sixty percent of the social meaning and only a thirty-odd percentage of meaning carried via spoken words with the help of paralanguage.

The impact of nonverbal communication in interaction makes a good effect on understanding the meaning and flow of the conversation. It is really true in a language classroom where the mood of expression of a teacher and the students keeps an important place. The absurdity between the nonverbal message and the verbal message of the teacher while explaining the main concept makes the students confused. But on its character, it attracts the students and they may give importance to nonverbal communication and react according to that. The students who are all good observers of nonverbal communication can progress in their power of understanding and by that, they can interpret the messages with the right sense. This knowledge further develops them to communicate effectively with perfect nonverbal communication. The teachers' verbal and nonverbal expressions should go parallel to bring out a better understanding of a particular concept to the students so that they interpret the meaning with the same temperament. Teachers should be aware of the impact of their nonverbal behaviour or communication which has a significant role in touching the student to achieve and create positive attitudes towards the learning process. Miller affirmed that "when teachers explain a concept with unmatched nonverbal messages to support the verbal messages will create the confusion which often affects their understanding and thought process. Birdwhistell in his renowned book on 'Kinesics in Context' in 1970, he affirmed that body expressions and actions are treated as a language which is structured and arranged as the spoken language. As the basic units of the language combine to form meaningful messages, the basic and universal body language conveys coded and structured messages. This can be done partially by inherent and rest through proper observation and interpretation. In his view, all

distinguished linguists accept his approach that effective communication with the proper synchronization of verbal and nonverbal creates the classroom teaching a pleasant venture and brings success to all.

Galloway was also in support of paralanguage and in his study of classroom language teaching, he observed that “it is the reason of sociolinguistic and paralinguistic faults which makes so many linguistic errors as it directs to breakdowns in communication or causes serious offence. People are generally not as conscious of the intricate/complicated factors of interpretation of communication which is the main reason for the communicators to face the misconception (pp.428-430). He also believed that the uses of paralanguage in the classroom promote teaching performance and consequently the teacher in the classroom will explain with increased aspirations to transmit a message and will thereby hold the students' concentration better. The study of a teacher's nonverbal behaviour is considered to be more significant due to three factors likely the teacher acts as an artist whose presentation on the dais is usually watched very keenly by the students. If his/her body language is positive, the students enjoy the teaching and therefore retain and remember most parts of it. On the other hand, if the nonverbal communication of the teacher is downbeat the students do not enjoy the classroom experience and feel discomfort and lose most of the teaching that has been taught. The second factor which has to be considered is the function of nonverbal communication which supplements the verbal messages of the teacher by replication, complementation, substitution and regulation. If the nonverbal signals of the teacher are suitable to the student's expectation, then they get the maximum benefit from the teaching, but if the nonverbal cues are conflicting with the verbal part of teaching then the students usually get confused and in some situations completely lose the interest of learning the language. At the third level, a teacher has to be the best lively example (of the target language) for many students because rural students never get an opportunity to meet the native speaker hence, they try to imitate their teacher's body language. As there is no native speaker model available in India, the nonverbal communication of the language teacher can delight hundreds/ thousands of second language learners. Teachers should be aware of nonverbal communication in the language classroom for basic two reasons likely to become better receivers of students' messages and to gain attention to them, to become better senders of messages and to provide good teaching. All language teachers consciously/unconsciously sent nonverbal cues to students in every class. As the nature of nonverbal behaviour, the management of the classroom is an integral part. By implementing a strong

behaviour management program, teachers can make sure that their students remain in safe hands and focused on their class work.

Conclusion:

The nonverbal communication/body language of the teacher is the most essential factor to hold the students' attention and retain it throughout the class hour. Most of the researchers while recommending /suggesting the teacher community, used to tell that teachers must have controlled eye movement, proper space utilization, motivating tone of voice, proper timekeeping, and being a role model on English pronunciation with fluency would bring expected results. The above said imperceptible activities in the classroom hold a significant role, that produces a thoughtful effect on the student's mind-set and cooperation with every task of the learning process.

Work Cited:

Anderson, P. A. 1999. *Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co.

Birdwhistell Ray L. 1952. "Introduction to Kinesics: An annotated System for the Analysis of Body Motion and Gesture" Louisville.

Birdwhistell Ray L 1970. "Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body-Motion Communication" Pennsylvania.

Hecht, M.L., & DeVito, J.A. (1990). Perspectives on nonverbal communication: The how, what and why of nonverbal communication. In J.A. DeVito & M.L. Hecht (Eds.) *The nonverbal communication reader* Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press. (pp. 3-17).