



Body language in ELT: Meaning and Function

Saddam HM Issa

Hajjah University, College of Education, Yemen

Abstract

Verbal and nonverbal communications are known as the two major types of communication between individuals. We use more than just words when we speak. We also communicate with our hand gestures, facial expressions including eye contact, and other movements of the body. This is called non-verbal communication or body language. Body language is a comprehension and communication tool via physical movements and changes that show a person's feelings, thoughts, and attitudes about other persons and things. Humans used body language before they developed verbal language. People through body language, share with other people their feelings, thoughts, desires, and needs. The objectives of this paper are to outline the nature and functions of non-verbal communication, to show why integrating non-verbal phenomena into different areas of FLT can be highly valuable, and to present drama activities that help sensitise students to non-verbal aspects of communication in various contexts especially within those context related to ELT.

Keywords: body language, communications, physical, non-verbal

1. Introduction

“Speech is important in most human social interactions, and it is what most distinguishes our social activities from those of animals; however, even when an encounter is primarily conversational, non-verbal cues of various kinds play an essential role in the process”.

“Speech is important in most human social interactions, and it is what most distinguishes our social activities from those of animals; that do not, as a rule, attract much attention are of great importance in the process. “The physical presence of the teachers in the classroom is of enormous importance”, says Bernd Hackl summing up the results of his investigations. “It is teachers' body language which gives them credibility and determines whether learning processes will be fostered, or not, as the case may be”, Hackl adds. In a nutshell, successful teaching hinges on the physical presence of the teachers and the learning context they create in the classroom. Effective teachers use body language to communicate with students, build rapport with them, and make them feel safe and supported. Successful Teachers Blend both Verbal and Nonverbal Communication. Body language is a way of communicating along with your verbal communication. So if you are learning English, you need to be aware of body language and its powerful role that impacts communication. Let's look at it a little further so you can see what I mean.

In the context of foreign language teaching, however, non-verbal phenomena have not been given sufficient attention (cf. Eber 2007: 320; Knabe 2007: 13). Language classes have traditionally emphasised verbal communication. Although the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages does at least intermittently pick up on non-verbal communication (cf. 4.4.5), the way this is dealt with does not suffice: the text sporadically refers to body language in terms of pointing, gesture and mime to support the verbal reference -

but it does not include a structured and explicit description of non-verbal competences. Most manuals for foreign language teaching similarly do not include materials and exercises which focus on non-verbal forms of communication (cf. Reimann 2012: 36; Özkul 2012: 17). Mahrebian and Ferris (1967) have found that we leave impressions on person or persons in the process of communication by voice and body language with clear proportions among these tools. According to Izgoren (1998, p. 5) the three channels used when forwarding a message are word, sound and body language. Sometimes it is difficult to understand people's feelings. It is not easy to ask them because they often do not say what they feel, or they struggle to tell their feelings as they often can't describe them. In verbal communication, it has emerged that the content of speech has 7 %, tone and quality has 38 %, and body language has 55 % effect (Pease, 1988, p. 9-13; Bailey, 2001, p. 44; Kasikci, 2003, p.19-20; Kuhnke, 2007, p. 12; Feng, 2009). Therefore, it can be argued that how we look like and behave when we talk is more important than what we talk about.

Nonverbal communication can also reveal a person's true thoughts, feelings, and intentions. For this reason, nonverbal behaviors are some-times referred to as tells (they tell us about the person's true state of mind). Because people are not always aware they are communicating nonverbally, body language is often more honest than an individual's verbal pronouncements, which are consciously crafted to accomplish the speaker's objectives. One of the fascinating things about an appreciation for nonverbal behavior is its universal applicability. It works everywhere humans interact. Nonverbals are ubiquitous and reliable. Once you know what a specific nonverbal behavior means, you can use that information in any number of different circumstances and in all types of environments. In fact, it is difficult to interact

effectively without nonverbals. If you ever wondered why people still fly to meetings in the age of computers, text messages, e-mails, telephones, and video conferencing, it is because of the need to express and observe nonverbal communications in person. Nothing beats seeing the nonverbals up close and personal. Humans move their bodies when communicating because, as research has shown, it helps "ease the mental effort when communication is difficult." Physical expressions reveal many things about the person using them. For example, gestures can emphasize a point or relay a message, posture can reveal boredom or great interest, and touch can convey encouragement or caution. A handshake is always a nice way of greeting, whether in formal or casual circumstances. Show confidence and interest in the one you are greeting with a firm handshake. In shaking hands, it is important to make an eye contact and accompany it with a slight sincere smile. Make sure your hand is pointing downwards, since pointing the hand upward may indicate awkwardness and hesitation. See to it also that your palm will come in contact with the palm of the other person.

As is known to all, classroom teaching is one kind of communicative activity between teachers and students. Some students are absent-minded, which may lead to the failure of communication in classroom. Apart from the students' subjective reasons, the teachers also have responsibility for this phenomenon. Teachers need to work hard to captivate and sustain the attention of students in order to engage them to focus on the lessons. Actually, in some cases, nonverbal communication is more important than the verbal one in the communication between teachers and students. Such as known to all, volume, speed and tone of voice will stimulate the students' response directly. Human body language, as a nonverbal communication, including gestures and facial expressions, is actually often used to communicate in countless subtle and complex ways. In class, most of students are often more attentive to what teachers do than what they say. To arouse students' interest in learning English and to help them learn better, teachers have to try their best to think of as many ways as possible to motivate students' enthusiasm, and body language is one of them. In order to improve student's English mentalities, teachers should use mother tongue sparingly, especially in the background of nowadays' quality-oriented education. And body language has become the necessary media. Body language of both teachers and students plays an active role in teaching English class. Teachers accompanied by gestures and facial expressions could create visual effects. It helps teachers express their own ideas and viewpoints more accurately and vividly to draw the attention of students. When teachers add body language to English teaching, students will be interested in learning English. What's more, students can learn to maintain long-term memory. This is a wonderful magic that body language has.

In one word, body language is helpful for English teaching. In this article, the theoretical study and application of body language will be discussed.

2. Body Language

What is body language? Well, when we speak, we use more than just words. We also communicate with our hand gestures,

facial expressions including eye contact, and other movements of the body. This is called body language or non-verbal communication. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines body language as the gestures, movements, and mannerisms by which a person or animal communicates with others. It is the conscious and unconscious movements and postures by which attitudes and feelings are communicated e.g. his intent was clearly expressed in his body language. It is safe to say that body language represents a very significant proportion of meaning that is conveyed and interpreted between people. Many body language experts and sources seem to agree that between 50-80% of all human communications are non-verbal. So while body language statistics vary according to situation, it is generally accepted that non-verbal communications are very important in how we understand each other (or fail to), especially in face-to-face and one-to-one communications, and most definitely when the communications involve an emotional or attitudinal element. The studies seem to support the fact that facial expressions are learned in society as we grow up. It is interesting that some facial expressions are genetic and some are due to environmental factors. I believe environmental factors play a very large part in developing facial expressions in childhood. Body language as such has its own grammar and punctuation. Every gesture has the same value as a single word. Although it seems to be rather difficult, body language is a matter of instinct. Observation of children who are born blind, who have never seen gestures, proves that there are two ways of gestures: born and learned (Thiel, 9)

3. On the importance of body language in language teaching

One of the main teaching objectives in the foreign language classroom is the development of communicative competence. As an essential part of communication is non-verbal, communicative competence cannot consist solely of the correct use of verbal language. The fact that non-verbal phenomena play an essential role in conversation becomes evident when we consider the different functions non-verbal behaviour can fulfil (cf. Jakobson 1960: 353ff.; Ekman/Friesen 1969; Argyle 2002: 106, 117ff.; Strasser 2008: 68ff.). Non-verbal cues may have an emotive function in that they (e.g. through facial expression) reveal the speaker's personality, feelings, thoughts and attitudes; a conative function in that they (e.g. through body posture) externalise the social roles of and the relationship level (sympathy/antipathy) between two interlocutors; a phatic function in that they regulate conversations and structure interaction (e.g. indicating changes of speakers or the beginning/ending of contributions); a function as illustrators of verbal communication: they may anticipate, repeat, contradict, substitute, complement or accentuate the verbal message (e.g., nodding our head to accompany verbal agreement); or lastly, a function as emblems with a binding lexical or ritual meaning (e.g., 'V' for victory).

If we leave out the non-verbal dimension of communication in foreign language teaching, we are creating artificial situations, which do not reflect real-life encounters between speakers of the foreign language. Students do not learn to coordinate word and action, language and gesture, neither in the reception of

the foreign language nor in its production.

To an inexperienced instructor, classrooms can appear to be an overwhelmingly busy environment. If active learning conditions are utilized, the classroom truly is busy. However, it is the experienced instructor that has developed the ability to dynamically mental- multi- task in the classroom; speaking, observing conditions, reacting, interacting, and facilitating active learning. That is a skill that cannot be readily taught, but rather must be learned through experience. Radford (1990) notes that “observation is a discrete teaching skill that needs to be learned” (pg. 37) and “teachers learn to observe in the classroom on their own with little direction or training” (pg. 37). As Webb, Diana *et al.* (1997) state, “Accordingly, expert teachers are able to attend to myriad and complex information that they can organize and interpret, and they appear to perceive and understand students, social information, and classroom events in a qualitatively different manner than less experience teachers” (pg. 89).

If teachers fail to observe and recognize that a student is struggling with a concept, it can lead to bored and frustrated students. “Only when we can accurately perceive what is occurring can we reflect upon what the student is learning and upon what interests and feelings they bring with them to the learning situation” (Radford, 1990, p. 38). Thus, there is a clear need for instructors to be sensitive to nonverbal cues as a means of real- time assessment. Angelo & Cross (1993) state that while other forms of classroom assessment may be more accurate, they simply are not timely enough.

As body language carries such great significance in interpersonal relationships, it is extremely useful and beneficial to raise our awareness for the signals we send and to learn to read and understand those transmitted by others.

Finally, the combination of verbal and non-verbal communication in the foreign language classroom can make it easier for learners to remember new words or grammatical structures. As neurological research has shown, we remember vocabulary and language patterns for a longer period of time if language is linked with non-verbal signs (cf. Knabe 2007: 61).

4. Make body language as your superpower

Communication begins before you open your mouth. In a classroom, there is constant interaction between teachers and students. Elements such as gestures, facial or corporal expressions that do not, as a rule, attract much attention are of great importance in the process. In the context of classroom instruction, the relatively small percentage of communication that occurs verbally will primarily stimulate cognitive meanings (cognitive domain) for the student, while the more pervasive nonverbal communication or body language (~93% of all communication) stimulates the students’ feelings and attitudes (affective domain) about the material (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006). “Face the student with arms uncrossed and relaxed,” says Mindy B. (on NEA Today Facebook) “and usually always smiling! Give them eye-to-eye contact, and pay attention to them! By doing this, I’m conveying the message that ‘I care!’

“The ability of a teacher to establish positive rapport with students is a critical aspect of the teacher-learner relationship,” explains Ron Benner, a school psychologist in Bridgeport, Connecticut. “The successful teacher blends both verbal and

nonverbal communication skills in establishing good rapport with students and this has a direct correlation to student achievement.”

Test your understanding of your students and how your body language affects them by standing in the doorway of the room as your students shuffle in. This close contact sets up a naturally occurring single file line that calms them before they enter the classroom and enables a positive learning environment before they even sit down, according to body language expert Chris Caswell.

From the start, command the classroom. Greet the class with a loud, clear, upbeat voice. If you look frazzled, you seem vulnerable. Lack of confidence is a red flag to students.

Angelo & Cross (1993) state that “through close observation of students in the process of learning...teachers can learn much about how students learn and, more specifically, how students respond to particular teaching approaches” (p. 3). The nonverbal clues that our students provide in return are critically important, real- time feedback that influences our subsequent communication (Suinn, 2006) and allows us to alter our course of action if needed (Davis, 2009; Neill & Caswell, 1993). Thus, given the potential impact on student learning that body language has, it would seem important that all instructors be mindful of their personal outward nonverbal projection, as well as observation of student nonverbal cues. Communication, when done properly, is a two- way interactional process (Suinn, 2006). That statement remains valid in the classroom, where, as instructors, we strive to communicate clearly and effectively with our students.

Teacher’s role in body language teaching

The language -teacher aiming at teaching a foreign language to her/his – students effectively should learn about the body language system of the target language and the meaning of gestures, facial expressions and body movements that are specific to the target language. The teacher can learn what paralinguistic expressions native speakers of English use to express what communicative functions, watching specifically developed DVD films on the market where there is a wide variety of samples of communicative situations which reflect nonverbal behaviors exhibited by American or British people. Besides watching DVD films in relation to English or American culture specific nonverbal behaviors, the teacher can read the published materials available on the market to get information about how native teachers of English use body language in an artificial context like language classroom and how doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc. Use it outside the language classroom in real life situations to manifest certain communicative functions. Thus, being aware of the use of body language within and beyond the classroom context, the language teacher may become a good model for the students and teach them basic nonverbal behaviors in the English language successfully by increasing their awareness of the target culture. A good language teacher can prepare a short body language questionnaire concerning common nonverbal behaviors (e.g. gestures) exhibited by native speakers of English and students can be required to fill in it at the beginning of a course to check to what extent they are aware of the body language system of English. Thus, the teacher can learn about students' weak and strong points in relation to recognizing English or American culture-specific nonverbal

signs and can design a related program and apply it to the students so as to raise their awareness of these nonverbal aspects. The language teacher should exhibit appropriate nonverbal behaviors in the classroom so as to avoid undesirable communication breakdowns when interacting with students. Especially, in multi-lingual and multi-cultural classrooms, a non-native language teacher's using nonverbal behaviors by being under the influence of her/his mother tongue may harm the authenticity, effectiveness and success of the communication process. The language teacher should, therefore, provide students with accurate and natural nonverbal behaviors in order not to create a barrier between her/him and the students. Therefore, it can be stated that one of the most important teacher roles in foreign language teaching is the provision of correct nonverbal behaviors and signs to match students with varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In addition to this, the language teacher should also analyze the course book to see whether the course book already includes elements of body language or English or American culture-specific body language training. If elements of body language are not already included within the course book, the language teacher should look for some texts or other teaching materials specifically designed for teaching the cultural semiotics (i.e. body language system) of English. The language teacher should also evaluate her/his own language teaching method and person-specific teaching style. S/he can check whether her/his lesson plans give students the opportunity to learn non-verbal behaviors used by native speakers of English or not. The language teacher can also be sensitive to whether his body language training is implicit, explicit, or both. It should be stressed that enquiring herself/himself as to what s/he aims to do prior to each lesson and assessing the so-called lesson plan following the lesson in terms of body language training, the teacher may become more inclined to highlight nonverbal behaviors and body language training during the act of foreign language teaching.

5. Common body language cues

As an instructor interested in improving one's ability to identify and interpret the nonverbal cues of your students, there is some basic information that would be useful for that endeavor. There is currently very little available literature that focuses on that specific topic. This document cannot hope to present a comprehensive summary of nonverbal cues specific to the classroom that relate to all situations, but the following is a recommended group of that all instructors should develop a sensitivity to and an ability to interpret. The following list of cues is generalized relative to culture, gender, type of academic institution, and course subject. It has been accumulated from a variety of sources and in most cases adapted specifically to classroom conditions. The previously identified taxonomy offered by Zoric, Smid *et al.* (2007) has been used to categorize and discuss each item.

Silence: Silence or merely the absence of communication, "is the most common non-verbal (sic) expression" (Gukas, Leinster, & Walker, 2010, p. 7). Silence is commonly interpreted as simple lack of understanding. However, silence on the part of the student could be interpreted as a "challenge" to the instructor (Suinn, 2006), a lack of understanding (Gukas *et al.*, 2010), a lack of knowledge (Gukas *et al.*, 2010), fear of

failure (Davis, 2009; McCroskey *et al.*, 2006), or a feeling of inferiority (Gukas *et al.*, 2010). Student silence can also be a product of learning preference or cultural background (Gukas *et al.*, 2010).

Oculesics: Oculesics is the act of intentionally or unintentionally making eye contact with an individual during communication. While a sustained gaze indicates interest (Neill & Caswell, 1993), instructors more commonly witness students avoiding eye contact. Knapp & Hall (1992) confirm the most common interpretation of avoiding eye contact as someone who does not know the answer to a question. Miller (2005b) also points out that students will avoid eye contact when they simply dislike or are disinterested in the subject matter. Students with low self-esteem or who are being evasive are also likely to avoid eye contact (Hartley & Karinch, 2007; Pease & Pease, 2006). Breed & Colaiuta (2006) researched and found a positive correlation between the amount of student eye contact with an instructor and student comprehension. Specifically, higher test scores were associated with increased time looking at the instructor during discussions and less time looking elsewhere about the room.

However, how does the teacher use eye contact to help English teaching? The teacher may look around the whole class, which can let students feel the teacher's pertinence. If some students do not listen earnestly, the teacher also can prompt their attentions in the way. Teacher focuses partly on some students for helping them build up their self-confidence to study English and be more active in learning English. If a teacher has expressive eyes, he can control the class better.

Kinesics: Kinesics encompasses all forms of body movements. As such, several of the primary kinesic indicators are addressed separately in the following paragraphs.

Eye movement: Observation of eye movement can provide instructors with an indication of a student's mindset and thoughts. For example, images are stored in the visual cortex, which is located in the rear of the brain (Hartley & Karinch, 2007). Thus, when students attempt to recall an image, their eyes tend to drift upwards. Likewise, recall of a sound is indicated by the eyes drift to the left or right and in line with the ears (Hartley & Karinch, 2007). Cognitive thought and problem solving is performed in the frontal lobe and results in the eyes migrating down and to the left (Hartley & Karinch, 2007). Thoughts associated with intense feelings and emotions result in the eyes projecting down and to the right (Hartley & Karinch, 2007). Observation of eyes repeatedly migrating towards the clock could be interpreted as a student bored with the current discussion or a student concerned about events occurring in the near future (Miller, 2005b). Pease & Pease (2006), Thompson (1973) and Miller (2005b) also note that pupil dilation is a non-voluntary reaction to viewing something pleasing.

Head Position: An individual with a raised chin is forced to look down his or her nose. Such a head position is associated with imposed dominance. Conversely, a bowed head is considered non-threatening and submissive (Neill & Caswell, 1993). Sympathetic interest is indicated by slightly tilting the head to one side (Neill & Caswell, 1993) and agreement is indicated by nodding (Miller, 2005b). Radford (1990) notes that students have become "accomplished avoiders" by lowering their heads to avoid eye contact with an instructor

and create an appearance that they are searching for a response to a question.

Facial Expression: A relaxed and/or smiling facial expressions is an indication of student satisfaction with their current environment (Gukas *et al.*, 2010). Whereas, a frown and/or wrinkled brow is an indication of anger or confusion (Neill & Caswell, 1993). The involuntary reflex of yawning is an indication of boredom or fatigue (Miller, 2005b). For instance, when a student gives a wrong answer, will the teacher criticize him with an angry face or just encourage him with a smile? The answer is self-evident. English studying is comparatively difficult for most students. Thus, teachers need to keep students optimistic and perky in English learning. To keep smiling has this magical function.

Some pedagogic professors proposed once, "Teachers should use smile with love to conquer a student's mind." A good English teacher should take the warm smile into classroom teaching. A warm smile could give students comfy studying surroundings. How does the teacher do this? Teachers can tell students some humorous stories in English or let them give some short role-plays. Teachers and students can keep their relationships under a happy and comfy atmosphere. A philosopher once said: "Education is important but it does not mean that teachers should keep a long face in the classroom." When students cannot focus their attention on the text, teachers can use some grandiloquent facial expressions to draw their attentions.

To sum up, if a teacher can use his facial expression diplomatically, he can receive a perfect classroom teaching result.

Body Posture: Student body posture, while seated and standing, is a clear-cut and accurate nonverbal cue. Neill & Caswell (1993) and Miller (Miller, 2005a, 2005b) state that an attentive and engaged student will sit predominately erect and lean forward slightly towards the speaker. A content person also tends to walk with an erect posture (Miller, 2005b). On the other hand, boredom or a discouraged state is indicated by slumping or slouching when seated (Miller, 2005a, 2005b). It should be noted that a non-erect posture could be an indication of fatigue or drowsiness. A student's relaxed posture when addressing someone is an indication of a lack of respect for that person (Miller, 2005b). Respect is also indicated by body alignment with the instructor. A straight alignment while seated (legs in front) indicates a higher level of respect than legs turned to the side (Miller, 2005b). Defiance or dissention is demonstrated by placing hands on hips while standing (Hartley & Karinch, 2007) and by deliberately exhibiting a posture significantly different than the rest of the group when seated (Miller, 2005b; Thompson, 1973). Teachers usually lead students to read in middle school. When the teacher is reading, he can go to students' "space zone". If he does like this, he will control the disciplines and correct their wrong pronunciation properly. Moreover, if the teacher does the dictation with walking properly in the classroom, he can draw students' attentions. If a teacher stands on the platform which is from students four to five meters, it's hard to draw their attentions. Some teachers often complain that they cannot get satisfactory teaching effects when they are teaching in multimedia classrooms.

Overall, gesture has most expressions in Gestures and Hand

Signals: The use of gestures and hand signals help students express themselves and clarify verbal questions or responses. Steepling, which is either the process of interlocking one's fingers or merely placing the fingertips of opposing hands together, is a demonstration of confidence (Miller, 2005b; Thompson, 1973), while, excessive preening is an indication of stress and anxiety (Neill & Caswell, 1993). In most classrooms attention is obtained by raising a hand (Miller, 2005b), but the "frantic hand waver" is excited to offer a possible solution (Knapp & Hall, 1992). Shrugging of the shoulders is a common expression of lacking sufficient knowledge (Miller, 2005b). Neill & Caswell (1993) state that arms folded across the chest is an indication of dominance, but Miller (2005b) interprets that gesture as a defensive cue or withdrawal from the discussion.

Some other simple gestures act the role of conveying teachers' message. For instance, "Come here" (teacher stretches out one hand which points to himself with palm, then beckons), "It's OK" (with thumb upward) and so on. Therefore, it has abundant expressions. However, teachers cannot use too fussy gestures to distract students' attentions.

Vocalics & Chronemics: Vocalics includes tone of voice, timbre, volume, and rate of speech, while Chronemics relates to timing and pauses. In a classroom environment, these nonverbal cues are most commonly exhibited when students attempt to verbally respond to a question. Miller (2005b) and Neill & Caswell (1993) describe the propensity of students to answer a question with a nonverbal question mark. That is, during delivery of a response, a student's volume increases slightly and the rate of speech also increases. This results in the appearance of an unconfident answer. Miller (2005b) also states that a slow to moderately slow rate of speech is an indication of boredom, "normal" rate of speech is an indication of satisfaction, and a fast rate of speech is often an indication of anger. According to Mehrabian, the tone of voice we use is responsible for about 35-40 percent of the message we are sending. Tone involves the volume you use, the level and type of emotion that you communicate and the emphasis that you place on the words that you choose.

Proxemics: Personal space and arrangement of physical items in a classroom has a surprisingly significant influence on student comfort within the learning environment. Rearrange the desks and chairs in your classroom (number of columns or rows) midway through an academic term and observe the verbal and nonverbal reaction of your students as they arrive for class. The use of space in a classroom (with flexible arrangement) is commonly at the discretion of the instructor. However, personal distance is controlled by both students and instructors. Breed & Colaiuta (2006) identified a positive correlation between student seating choices and both attentiveness and academic performance. Specifically, students that self-selected seating in the center and forward portions of a classroom tended to be more attentive and performed better academically. Filtering for cultural influences, the personal distance established by a student, between the student and instructor, is an indication of the student's confidence and comfort (closer interaction is an indication of high confidence and comfort) (Neill & Caswell, 1993). Rocking, leg swinging, or tapping are indications that a student feels uncomfortable with the established personal

distance (Thompson, 1973).

Haptics: Extrapolating the concept of personal space to the point of physical touching is a subject of significant debate. While studies have shown that deliberate and appropriate student/instructor touching in the classroom can be academically beneficial (Miller, 2005b; Neill & Caswell, 1993; Thompson, 1973), the modern academic environment suggests that the risks of misinterpretation outweigh the benefits. At the college-level a hearty handshake between student and instructor, for a job well done, appears to be the limit of appropriate physical touch.

Physical Appearance: Students project their outward view of the world through their dress, hairstyle, jewelry, etc. (Thompson, 1973). While physical appearance is not necessarily a real-time indication of a student's cognitive state, it does often provide context in which we can better situate other nonverbal cues.

If you read through this list and each item seemed intuitive to you and you can readily identify and interpret these cues in your classroom, then it is likely that Webb, Diana *et al.* (1997) and Radford (1990) would classify you as an "experienced" instructor. If, however, you gleaned new information from this list, then congratulations! You have made an important step towards improving the nature of your classroom instruction.

Miller (2005b) states that "an observant teacher can...tell when students understand the material or if they are having trouble grasping major concepts" (pg. 30). Without question, it is rewarding to identify definitive nonverbal indications that students are comfortable with the course content. Gregersen (2005), however, wisely indicates that it is more critical that instructors identify anxious and confused nonverbal cues, as those are the students that need our assistance.

6. Specific use of body language in English teaching

Body language, an inseparable part of nonverbal communication, plays an important role in foreign language learning and teaching. Language teachers use body language in interpersonal communication in the classroom for a wide variety of functions. Here are some of the fields where language teachers use body language in the foreign language classroom (Marwijk, 2002:1)

As we all know, listening constitutes a significant part in our daily communication. To understand others and be understood is a basic purpose in English learning. To improve the process of effective listening, it can be helpful to turn the problem on its head, and look at barriers to effective listening, or ineffective listening. For example, one common problem is that instead of listening closely to what someone is saying, we often get distracted after a sentence or two, and instead start to think about what we are going to say in reply. This means that we do not listen to the rest of the speaker's message. We may also get distracted by the speaker's appearance, or by what someone else is saying, which sounds more interesting. These issues not only affect you, but you are likely to show your lack of attention in your body language. Generally, we find it much harder to control our body language, and you are likely to show your distraction and/or lack of interest by lack of eye contact, or posture. Stand up straight. Poor posture—slumped shoulders, stomach sticking out—is not only physically unhealthy, but it can convey a whole range of attitudes and

degrees of interest and respect.

Avoid folding your arms, standing behind a desk, and using barriers. These behaviors "simply sends the signal that you don't want to make contact," says Caswell. It blocks you off and makes you appear unapproachable. Don't cross your arms or shuffle papers that aren't related to the lesson, and refrain from looking at your watch when a child is speaking. The speaker will detect the problem, and probably stop talking at best. At worse, they may be very offended or upset. In this process of training students' listening ability, if teachers use the body language properly, they can achieve better effect. For instance, a teacher can extend his or her arms slowly when he or she says "She lives in a very large house" and open his or her eyes widely with mouth opened when he or she says "She is such a beautiful lady". As a result, the students will have deep impressions that the room is very big and the lady is beautiful.

The spoken language is one of the important ways to communicate with others. Chinese students are very shy. They usually can write and read English very well but cannot speak English, so we should try to develop the students' ability of speaking. How can teachers help students overcome their passive attitudes? Body language can arouse and sustain the students' interests of using and learning English. In fact, they are helped to reach the aim in a certain degree by their teacher's body language. In the English classes, the teachers should not only use body languages themselves, but also ask the students to use them according to different situations. For example, a text about when the new students meet for the first time, and they don't know each other. So teachers can introduce themselves first. During the introduction process, the teachers should use the new words and sentences together with a vivid expression and proper gestures as possible as they can. Use the whole classroom. Walk around the students' desks to show interest, and indicate approval with a head nod. Caswell suggests leaning slightly forward and moving momentarily into their territory in a nonthreatening way.

Be aware of your facial expressions (or lack thereof!). They can easily convey any number of moods and attitudes, as well as understanding or confusion.

Smile. It conveys happiness and encouragement. Frowns show sadness or anger. Big, open eyes suggest fear. An animated face draws the listener in.

Make eye contact. It helps establish rapport and trust, and it shows that you're engaged and listening to the students. They smile when they say hello to the class, they shake hands with some students saying "Glad to meet you". When they express their interests, they imitate the actions of dribbling and shooting at the basketball, turning pages to indicate reading. After the teachers' introductions, they can create an environment for the students to practice. Indeed, the application of body language in different situations will help to create an interesting and successful lesson. We use body language to make the meaning of our words clear. In a foreign language classroom, the teacher uses hand and arm gestures to give students visual clues about what they are studying. S/he may gesture the visual images of wide, tall, short and so on when discussing a particular subject of study. She may illustrate what s/he is saying using her/his fingers and hands) Body language is helpful in improving students' reading

ability. Here we mainly discuss the usefulness of reading aloud. It can help students to achieve good pronunciation and intonation of English. What is more, it can help them to fully and deeply understand the beauty of the language. As a famous saying goes, a poem is not a poem until it is read. Teachers should tell students to use proper body language while reading loudly. For example, pay attention to where to raise or lower our tone, when to speak softly. To achieve better result, we can adapt the strong or soft parts that are used in music teaching. For instance, we use falling tones in declarative sentences, use rising tones and then falling tones in the selective question sentences. A teacher can extend his or her arms slowly when he or she says "She lives in a very large house" and open his or her eyes widely with mouth opened when he or she says "She is such a beautiful lady". Teachers can use a variety of vocal intonations while presenting new material. For example, loud and soft voice can be used while teaching opposite words like 'big' and 'small' respectively. This one is easy. Smile. A gentle smile makes the communication easier and more persuasive. It's a mood changer and will evoke warm feelings in both teachers as well as students. At first the students might feel confused as they are not accustomed to it yet. However, with the help of body language, they can master it more easily. For example, when they read a selective question sentence, they put up their hands in rising tone and put down hands in falling tones. After training for some times, whenever they read the sentences, they will use this body language unconsciously. In a word, fluent English with vivid gestures helps to can create a good learning environment, which will surely motivate student's reading ability.

7. Conclusion

Communication, a process of sending and receiving messages to share knowledge, attitudes and skills, is generally associated with speech though being composed of two dimensions - verbal and nonverbal. Nonverbal communication (i.e. body language) which is a real provider of effective, natural and successful communication is regarded as too complex and too pervasive to include in the curriculum by language professionals. However, the point here is not to push for incorporating "nonverbal communication" or "body language" into the curriculum as a separate subject, but to increase awareness that it is already there.

The use of body language will help teachers express their ideas and thoughts accurately and lively. The purpose is to ensure that students can understand them clearly. Consequently, teaching activities can be carried out accordingly without any misunderstandings or confusion. In addition, the use of body language can improve teacher's enthusiasm, thus reducing student's lassitude in classes, especially in the afternoon classes. And as a result, the English class teaching can be facilitated.

In the future teaching program, the teachers should have visible and audible teaching material like cards and tapes. People can communicate with each other not only through verbal means, but also nonverbal communication. Moreover, the latter plays an important role. Body language is an important part of nonverbal communication. A great attention is paid to the function and effect of the teachers' body

language in English class in recent years. Researchers tell us that the effective use of proper body language can greatly improve the relationship between the teachers and the students. What is more, it can enhance students' learning efficiency and cognitive ability. A successful English teacher knows how to make full use of the body languages such as expression, gesture, eye contact and so on in order to get the best teaching effect. Using body language in English class can not only make the teachers and the students know each other. Language teachers should make their students aware of the fact that powerful communication is not based on spoken words alone. One of the shortcomings of the language classroom is its being a rather sterile setting in comparison to the real life social interactions which occur outside the classroom. If the goal of language teaching is to prepare students to be able to function successfully in real life situations, language teachers should expose their students to the variety and complexity of the nonverbal behaviors which complement speech (Fujimoto, 2003:1).

8. Acknowledgement

Saddam Hussein Mohammed Issa is thankful to Hajjah University for financial supporting under teacher fellowship.

9. References

1. Angelo TA, Cross KP. Classroom assessment techniques: a handbook for college teachers 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey- Bass Publishers, 1993.
2. Breed G, Colaiuta V. Looking, blinking, and sitting: nonverbal dynamics in the classroom. *Journal of Communication*. 2006; 24(2):75- 81.
3. Cooper, Pamela. *Speech Communication for the Classroom Teaching*. New York: Gorsuch Scarisbrick Publishers, 1988.
4. Davis BG. *Tools for teaching* 2nd ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass, 2009.
5. Gregersen TS. Nonverbal cues: clues to the detection of foreign language anxiety. *Foreign Language Annals*. 2005; 38(3):388- 400.
6. Hall JA. How big are nonverbal sex differences? In K. Dindia & DJ Canary Eds., *Sex*, 2006a.
7. *Differences and Similarities in Communication* 2nd ed., Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 55- 81.
8. Hall JA. Women's and Men's Nonverbal Communication: Similarities, Differences, Stereotypes, and Origins. In VL Manusov & ML Patterson Eds. *The SAGE handbook of nonverbal communication* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2006b, 201- 218.
9. Hartley G, Karinch M. *I can read you like a book : how to spot the messages and emotions people are really sending with their body language*. Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press, 2007.
10. Helweg- Larsen M, Cunningham SJ, Carrico A, Pergam AM. To nod or not to nod: an observational study of nonverbal communication and status in female and male college students. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. 2004; 28(4):358- 361.
11. Kenney A, Neverosky DT. *Quantifying sleep and performance of West Point cadets: a baseline study*. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, 2004.

12. Knapp ML, Hall JA. Nonverbal communication in human interaction 3rd ed. Fort Worth: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1992.
13. Leathers DG. Successful nonverbal communication: principles and applications 2nd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1992.
14. Matsumoto D. Culture and nonverbal behavior. In V. L. Manusov & ML Patterson Eds., The SAGE Handbook of Nonverbal Communication Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2006, 219- 236.
15. Davis F. La comunicación no verbal. Madrid: Alianza Editorial. 1987.
16. Hall Edward T. The Silent Language. United States of America, 1959.
17. Navarro Joe. Every Body is talking. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.
18. Rebel G. Body language. Madrid: EDAF, 1995.