

An Analysis on Politeness of Non-Verbal Communication in English as a Foreign Language Classroom

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Abstract

In an EFL classroom; teachers tend to use politeness of non-verbal communication to convey meaning(s) to students. This present research aims at analyzing and describing the politeness of non-verbal communication which was used by English teachers in EFL classrooms. Qualitative research was applied in this research. There were five English teachers chosen purposely as the participants. The data were the pictures of teachers' gestures. To obtain the data, the researchers used a Tape Video Recorder (TVR) which was used to record the teachers' gestures during the teaching and learning process. The researchers applied transcription, codification, classification, analyses, and discussion techniques to analyze data. The results showed that there were 16 politeness strategies used by the English teachers in the EFL classroom. Those politeness strategies are greetings, thanking, congratulating/praising, and apologizing, obedience, intimacy, joke, rejection, question/ evaluating, request, suggestion, chastisement, disagreement, asking permission, optimism, and instructing. The politeness of non-verbal communication has a positive impact on students in EFL classroom interaction. In some cases, the students found it difficult to understand the meanings of gestures.

Keywords: politeness; non-verbal, communication

INTRODUCTION

In the communication process, body language is involved in the act. It cannot be denied that interaction between speaker(s) and listener(s) must involve body language. The basic point of communication is to send meanings to the listener(s). Speaker feels comfortable if the listener gets the meaning. James (2009) notes that body language messages are seen by others as a more honest and reliable expression of thoughts and

feelings than words. Body language tells the truth rather than words or sentences. In the communication process, the speaker cannot avoid using non-verbal communication. Verbal and non-verbal communication may come together or but sometimes non-verbal communication comes first in oral communication. In daily communication, speakers tend to use non-verbal more than verbal. Thus; verbal and non-verbal are working as partners in the communication process.

Communicating in English sometimes fails because speakers and listeners do not understand the meaning(s) in the communication process. Allan & Pease (2004) noted body language is an outward reflection of a person's emotional condition. Thus; non-verbal communication describes the speaker's emotions so listeners must get the meaning through the gestures. In teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), teachers tend to use lots of gestures to communicate or interact with students to understand the meaning(s) easily. English teachers make gestures more and more for students in the EFL classroom. Generally; many teachers use gestures unconsciously in English class and the gestures make meaning to students.

Normally; many students understand the teacher's gesture but most of the students still find it difficult to understand the meanings. The reason is every teacher's gesture has a particular meaning; it depends on the classroom context. For example; the teacher nodding his head means he does not agree or understand his student's answer. When the teacher puts his pointed finger on his mouth; it means to forbid his students to stop making noise.

In formal conditions, the speaker tends to speak more politely to show his or her respect to the hearer (Kamlasi, 2017). The teaching and learning process in the EFL classroom is categorized as a formal meeting; therefore it is important for an English teacher to use polite strategies to convey meanings to his or her students. The use of politeness in verbal or non-verbal communication becomes an important thing to make the communication go smoothly. Furthermore; Barbar & Caganaga (2015) stated that in EFL classrooms, non-verbal communication is really important to help students to understand everything easily. Regarding politeness, verbal and nonverbal expressions are unity. They can signal polite or impolite behaviors for the speaker(s) and listeners(s). Both of them can create harmony in social interaction, and avoid misunderstanding. In EFL classroom interaction, maintaining eye contact while a teacher is explaining is polite, meaning that students are giving the teacher the consideration of full attention. When the teacher shows his thumb up to students, it means he praises his students and this kind of non-verbal communication is categorized as praising. Non-verbal expressions contain meanings of polite and impolite; it depends on the classroom context. Thus; the use of politeness in non-verbal communication in EFL classrooms is important to be analyzed. This present study analyses and describes the types of non-verbal communication which are used by English teachers in EFL classrooms. Furthermore; the researchers categorize non-verbal communication into types of politeness strategies. The use of politeness in non-verbal

communication can help the students and teachers to have good relationships when interacting in English class. The politeness of non-verbal communication shows how the teachers are polite to students in the classroom. Students feel comfortable in their class if the teacher demonstrates polite gestures for them.

Politeness is important in communication. In the communication process, the speaker(s) tend(s) to use non-verbal communication to convey or express meanings to the listener(s). Therefore; it is important to conduct a study on the politeness of non-verbal communication in an EFL classroom.

The recent studies on non-verbal communication and politeness in EFL classrooms were conducted by Barbar & Caganaga (2015), Bellés Calvera (2016), Kamiasi & Nepsa (2019), and Saragih, Rahayu, et al (2019). Barbar & Caganaga (2015) conducted research on using nonverbal communication in EFL classes. The research involved two female English teachers who were chosen as the participants. The research results found that nonverbal communication has a pivotal role in classroom management. Nonverbal language has an effective place for having prosperous classroom management in the class. Bellés Calvera (2016) analyzed nonverbal communication in EFL teaching. The study investigated the importance of gestures in the communication process and how the appropriate use of nonverbal communication enhances classroom interaction and contributes to conveying meaning. The research reported that EFL language teaching can benefit from nonverbal communication when this is used in an effective way. Kamiasi & Nepsa (2019) conducted research on teachers' gestures in EFL classrooms. A female English teacher was chosen as the participant. The analyses focused on posture, facial expression, hand gestures, and eye contact. The research reported that there were twenty-five hand gestures, thirteen gestures of facial expression, twenty-three gestures of posture, and eight gestures of eye contact. It was indicated that the hand gestures were dominated. The research reported that a teacher's gestures can facilitate the communication process in the EFL classroom. Saragih et al (2019) analyzed the positive politeness strategies in a TED talk video by Eddy Zhong. The result showed that all of the fifteen strategies of positive politeness appear in the video. There were 32 occurrences of positive politeness strategies in a speech by Eddy Zhong. The highest rank was joking which gets a frequency of 9 times. The second rank was using in-group identity markers in speech and intensifying interest to the hearer in the speaker's contribution with 6 data times. The third rank was seeking agreement on safe topics, being optimistic that the hearer wants what the speaker wants, and giving or asking for reasons which occur 3 times. Meanwhile, the last rank was covered by the strategies which have the occurrence once, namely the strategies of exaggerating (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer) and (presupposing, raising, asserting common ground).

The previous studies seem to focus on non-verbal communication in EFL classroom which describe the how the gestures works and make meanings. In other study on

politeness focused on the use of verbal. Thus this present study focuses on the use of non-verbal communication which is categorized into politeness strategies.

Pease & Allan (1988) explained that most of the basic communication gestures are the same all over the world. E.g. when people are happy they smile; when they are sad or angry they frown or scowl. Nodding the head is almost universally used to indicate 'yes' or affirmation. This means that gestures are almost similar around the world. The gesture has meaning when it is used in the context in which it occurs. Furthermore; Pease & Allan (1988) argued that verbal language differs from culture to culture, so the non-verbal language may also differ. This means one gesture may be common in a particular culture but it may be meaningless in another culture and even have an opposite meaning. For example; the cultural interpretations and implications of three common gestures; the ring gesture, hand gestures, the thumb-up, and the V sign.

In communication, being polite is an important thing and it must be learned and applied in our conversation to build social interaction. Yule (1996) states politeness means to show awareness of another person's face. Thus; politeness is an important aspect of social life. In the formal condition, the speaker should speak more politely to show his or her respect to the hearer. People use politeness strategy in order to save the hearer's face. The face is referring to the respect that an individual has for him or herself. On the other hand, Mills (2003) said 'formal politeness' refers to those ritualized phrases such as 'please' and 'thank you' which most people recognize as polite. So; being polite depends on how the speaker uses the words or utterances to deliver to the listeners. Being polite is important for everybody; therefore people use polite words or utterances in communication. On the other side, non-verbal communication is also important in communication. The speaker feels comfortable if she/he uses polite non-verbal communication.

METHOD

Research Design

Considering the issue which was investigated in this research which focused on the politeness of non-verbal communication used by English teachers in EFL classrooms; this research was categorized as descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative research design is used to solve or answer a problem that is happening nowadays. The research is done by collecting, classifying, analyzing the data, and making conclusions and reports. Regarding the issue of this research; the qualitative method was suitable to analyze and describe the data descriptively.

Participant

Participants are usually considered to be individuals or groups who agree to take part in a research process and they must contribute data to the research. Thus; the researchers used a purposive sample in this research. The researchers selected 5 English teachers from 4 different senior high schools.

Instrument

The instrument is an important aspect of the research. Thus; the instrument of this research was the picture of non-verbal communication. To obtain the pictures, the researchers used a Video Recorder. It was used to record the teacher’s non-verbal communication in the EFL classroom.

Techniques of Collecting Data

In collecting the data, there were three steps used. First, observation; in which the researchers observed the English teachers who teach English in class. During the observation; the researcher identified the teacher’s gestures that she/he uses in English class. Second, Video Recording; the researchers took video recordings while the English teachers taught English in an EFL classroom and third was taking notes is the part of collecting data in qualitative research. The researchers wrote the important parts or things in the teaching process.

Techniques of Data Analyses

In analyzing the data; the researchers applied five steps. . 1) Transcribing; in this step, the videos were transferred to the computer in order to make it easier to transcribe the data. First, the researchers listened and watched carefully the videos of the teaching-learning process; then the pictures of the teacher's gestures were screened out. Furthermore; the pictures were changed into animation form2) Codifying; in this part, the researchers coded each type of gesture that is used by the English teacher in the EFL classroom. The researchers gave code for each type of gesture which is based on relevant theory. 3) Classifying; in this section, the researchers classified the data into categories of gestures. The analyses focus on body movement that covers hand, head, facial, and eye contact. 4) Analyzing; in this part, the researchers analyzed the data based on categories of gestures used by the English teacher in an EFL class. 5) Discussing; in this part, the researchers discussed the results as the findings of the research. The discussions refer to problems of the research that contain two parts namely identifying and describing the gestures used by English teachers in EFL classrooms.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This present study focused on the use of the politeness of non-verbal communication concerning its important role in shaping classroom communication. The following section presents the data on non-verbal communication which were used by the English teachers in the EFL classroom. Then; we classified them into politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson’s theory.

Table 1.Politeness Strategy and Non-Verbal Communication

No	Politeness Strategy	Non-Verbal Communication
1.	Greetings	Stand up, Bow down, and Wave hand
2.	Thanking	Praying, Shaking hands

3.	Congratulating/praising	Clapping Hands, Thumb up
4.	Apologizing	Wave, Hand on forehead
5.	Obedience	Put a finger on the nose
6.	Intimacy	Touching students, Close to students, and Involve in groups
7.	Joke	Joke
8.	Rejection	Palm down and Palms down
9.	Question/evaluating	Hand to face and Point to the forehead
10.	Request	Palm up, Requesting, and Pointing
11.	Suggestion	Showing watch
12.	Chastisement	Counting and Judging
13.	Disagreement	Hand on chin and Shoulder shrug
14.	Asking permission	Accepting phone
15.	Optimistic	Listening
16.	Instructing	Showing hand on board and Pointing to the book

The data present the politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson's theory. There were 16 politeness strategies and 30 gestures that were used by the English teachers in the EFL classroom. The data show how the English teachers performed the non-verbal communications which are classified into politeness strategies.

This section discusses the research findings based on the objective of this research. The researchers found 16 politeness strategies and 30 gestures used by the English teachers in the EFL classroom.

Greetings

There were three gestures used by English teachers to show how the teachers greet their students in an EFL classroom. The greeting gestures were to stand up, bow down and wave hands. Stand up shows how the teacher enters the classroom and stands in front of the class then greets her students by saying good morning. Bow down shows the teacher standing in front of the class and making her head bowed down. This gesture describes the way the teacher greets her students. Wave the right-hand shows the teacher leaving the classroom while saying goodbye. The greeting is a normal activity in an EFL classroom. Greetings show how the teacher and students communicate intentionally to express the relationship between teacher and students. It is more polite or friendly when greeting before starting the lesson. Senowarsito, et al (2018) found that greeting indicated that the teacher satisfied the student's positive-face want by addressing the students to show the teacher's attention. It shows how the relationship was friendly between teacher and students. Thus; Greeting is like a habit in an EFL classroom. The greeting is a routine action at the beginning of social communication including the teaching and learning process. Teachers and students feel comfortable when they start the class by greeting each other; such as good morning sir, how are you? These kinds of greetings express politeness strategies in a classroom setting.

Thanking

The thanking strategy is an expression of words such as thank you or thanks to address the interlocutor. The data show how the teachers express thanks in non-verbal communication in an EFL classroom. The teacher shows the prayer position in which the teacher stands in front of the class and makes her hands valve down. In the Indonesian current curriculum; prayer is a must for all classes at the beginning of the teaching-learning process (Ministry of Education and Culture Number 37 of 2018). Prayer explains how the teacher and students express thanks to God Almighty for the blessing. The other thanking teacher shakes hands with his student. It explains how the teacher expresses thanks to the student because the student can answer the question. Shaking hands is a normal gesture in an EFL classroom to thank students. An analysis of thanking strategy used by EFL learners was conducted by Kustini & Sulyaningsih (2016). The research reported that thanking was noticed as the favorite strategies used by EFL Indonesian learners. Thus; a study on politeness conducted by Kamlasi (2017) showed that the speakers gave 22% of thanks in conversation. Thanking is a positive expression of feeling happy to address someone. Thanking is kind of politeness which is normally used in classroom setting

Congratulating/Praising

Clapping hands and thumbing up describe how the teachers congratulate or praise their students in the EFL classroom. In the first gesture, the teacher claps his hand to reinforce his students. The second gesture describes the teacher showing her thumb and expressing her beautiful smile to her students. These types of gestures are categorized as praising politeness in non-verbal communication. In an EFL classroom; it is important for teachers to give reinforcement not only verbal but also non-verbal reinforcement. Thus; clapping hands and pointing thumbs are kinds of non-verbal reinforcement to acknowledge the students' work. A study on politeness conducted by Kamlasi (2017) found that the speaker used 9% of congratulation in conversation. He claimed that it is hard for speakers to praise someone. In an EFL classroom setting; congratulation or praise is used to give rewards to students as a respect for their achievement.

Apologizing

Valve is an apology gesture that shows how the teacher is asking for an apology. It shows the teacher valves her hands on her chest. This kind of gesture is a kind of greeting, but it depends on the context. Hand on forehead shows the teacher putting her hand on her forehead and scratching her forehead with a little shyness; which describes how the teacher apologizes for making mistakes. This kind of gesture is commonly found in the Eastern part of Indonesia; especially in Timor. When someone makes mistakes; she/he puts her/his hand on their forehead. Thus; Kamlasi (2017) found 15% of apologies were used by the students in a free conversation. This finding showed a high percentage of speakers expressing apologies. The apology is a politeness strategy to save the speaker's face when the speaker makes a mistake during the communication process. In an EFL

classroom; the teacher showed Valve her hands on her chest and her hand on her forehead which describes the teacher apologizing for making mistakes during the communication process.

Obedience

Putting your finger on your nose is a common gesture for most people all over the country. In an EFL classroom situation; this kind of gesture is usually used to force the students from making noise. Putting a finger on the nose describes how the teacher manages the classroom to avoid students making so much noise. The teacher does not want any student to disturb other students. Kamlasi (2017) claimed that obedience was the lowest percentage that the students used in a free conversation. The data on obedience showed how the teacher put her finger on her nose indicating that the teacher did not allow the students to make noise. This kind of gesture is commonly used by most teachers in the classroom to stop the students from making noise. The students will keep silent when the teacher puts their finger on their nose while looking at them.

Intimacy

Touching students, closing to students, and involving in groups show how the teachers closely relate to their students. In an EFL classroom; teachers and students are partners. The gesture shows the teacher touching her students. It shows how they have a very close friendship between them. Closing to the student shows the teacher standing beside the student and pointing to the student's book. The gesture describes a close relationship between teacher and student. Another gesture shows the teacher being involved in the students' group activities that show how the teacher takes part in students' activities. The students are familiar with these kinds of situations in the EFL classroom. Kamlasi (2017) found that it was 10% of intimacy that the students used in the conversation. He underlined that intimacy indicated how the speakers have close relations. As in this context; the teacher touched the students or even the teacher involved in the group.

Joke

This gesture describes how the teacher makes jokes in a classroom. The teacher shows humor and a funny expression to show that the teacher makes jokes for her students. It is important for teachers to make humor for students in the EFL classroom. We do believe that students do not get bored with the lesson but they enjoy it. Semiz (2014) reported teachers to need to apply jokes in the language classroom. He said that humor in the form of jokes is helpful as learners gain a better knowledge of the use of language and the culture associated with it. While Saragih, et al (2019) found that speakers employ jokes to show positive politeness. The speaker makes a joke to melt the feeling and direct the topic of conversation in an informal direction so that the speaker and audiences get closer. Thus; making jokes is a part of a communication strategy.

Rejection

Palm down and palms down show the teacher's action of rejecting students in saying or making something in an EFL classroom. In palm down; as the teacher stands in front of the class and shows his right hand in palm down position that means to forbid certain students to stop talking. Palms down; the teacher stands in front of the class and shows her hands in a palms-down position. The gesture means to refuse all students to stop talking. These kinds of non-verbal communication are commonly understood by students in an EFL classroom; even the teacher may not talk to students, but she/he just shows these gestures to students. Yuka (2009) analyzed the positive politeness strategy which found 0,5% of rejection terms used in oral communication textbooks. Thus; rejection produces low number of textbooks.

Question/Evaluating

Hand to face shows the teacher standing in front of the class and putting her hand on the face, then her pointed finger points up the cheek while another finger covers the mouth and the thumb supports the chin. It describes the teacher's critical thinking about what she hears is supported by the legs being tightly crossed and the arm crossing the body. Point to forehead describes what the teacher asks the students to think. In this context; teachers want the students to use the brain to think, therefore she points to her head. A study on positive politeness strategy was conducted by Yuka (2009) reported that there were 27.4% of questions used in oral communication textbooks. This indicated that the question or evaluation has the potential to be used in the classroom.

Request

Palm up, requesting, and pointing show the teachers' action of requesting something from students more politely. In a palm gesture; the teacher shows the palm up to her students in an act to request the students to sit down. In requesting; the teacher shows her hand to students but it is a bit cute that meant to please a certain student to talk. Kamlasi (2017) found that request was 22% used in conversation. In a pointing gesture; the teacher points her students to answer. The gesture shows how the teacher selects certain students by pointing directly to certain students. This action means to offer a chance to certain students directly. Medeiros, et al (2020) underlined that the importance of pointing is interacting with the environment and communicating. The pointing gesture is a means of communication that humans develop in order to facilitate interaction. On other hand; pointing is a part of communication or interaction with others.

Suggestion

The gesture describes how the teacher is looking at the watch. Looking at the watch signals time; perhaps the time is enough for students to do the task or discussion. Therefore; the teacher looks at the time to remind her students; she suggests her students use the time effectively. Looking at a watch is important for teachers to use their time

effectively. Yuka (2009) analyzed the positive politeness strategy used in oral communication textbooks. The research reported that there were 1,5% of suggestions of politeness strategies used in oral communication textbooks.

Chastisement

Counting and judging describe how the teachers do chastisement. Counting gestures; shows how the teacher counts fingers. The gesture is a helpful way to make students draw an image about what is being said and help them remember each element separately. In a judging gesture; the teacher shows her right hand to her students. These kinds of nonverbal describe how the teachers judge the students. In the classroom setting; normally teachers use these kinds of gestures to communicate with students. The research reported by Yuka (2009) found that there was 1,5% of the chastisement of politeness strategies used in oral communication textbooks. Thus; chastisement was used in oral and written communication in an EFL classroom context.

Disagreement

Disagreement is a part speech act that commonly occurs in classroom settings. In an EFL classroom; teachers express their disagreement in the form of non-verbal communication. The researchers found two kinds of gestures that related to disagreement. Hand on chin and shoulder shrug are kind of gestures to describe disagreement. Hand on chin shows the teacher sitting on the teacher and puts her hand on her chin while looking at her students. This gesture describes how the teacher performs an action of disagreement. A shoulder shrug means the teacher does not know or understand what the student says. The gesture describes that the teacher does not agree with his students' statements. This finding was supported by Yuka (2009) who analyzed the positive politeness strategy used in oral communication textbooks. He found that there were 0,5% of suggestions of politeness strategies used in oral communication textbooks. This finding was claimed as the lowest percentage figure of politeness strategy used in oral communication textbooks.

Asking Permission

The gesture of accepting the phone describes the teacher answering the telephone while she is opening the window and going out of the classroom. This gesture describes how the teacher asks permission to answer the telephone out of the classroom. She does not want to disturb her students in the classroom or even the talk is a secret so the students do not need to listen to the talk. The talk may be from a very important person so the teacher decides to answer the telephone outside the classroom. The teacher's action shows a politeness strategy in non-verbal communication with her students. Barbar & Caganaga (2015) concluded that nonverbal communication plays an important role in the EFL classroom and it helps students to understand easily. Accepting the phone outside the room shows the teacher's politeness in terms of asking permission.

Optimistic

The teacher is listening to students talk in an EFL classroom. A good teacher is a teacher who listens to students. The gesture describes how the teacher is optimistic about listening to a student's talk. Thus; teacher and students are partners. This kind of non-verbal communication shows an optimistic politeness strategy. This finding was supported by Saragih, et al (2019); they found that a speaker who is always optimistic shows his optimism to the hearer, so the condition can make the hearer feel a positive face. The speaker has appreciated the hearer and satisfied the hearer's positive face. In an EFL classroom context; there was a big potential for teachers to be optimistic since teachers and students are partners.

Instructing

Showing my hand on board and pointing to the book are kind of instructing. Showing a hand on the board shows the teacher pointing her hand to the whiteboard which indicates what the teacher means to point at many things, instructing the students to follow. Pointing by fingers and using your hand in indicating things on the whiteboard. The teacher instructs the teacher to follow. Pointing to the book is described as the teacher pointing the book while showing it to students. It indicates that it is important to look at the book; so the teachers instruct the students to pay attention to the book. Khusnia (2017) said that in classroom instruction; teachers direct students' learning activities and instruct the students to do; such as please look at this book. He found that positive politeness strategies bring about positive values in EFL.

CONCLUSION

During the EFL classroom teaching; appropriate politeness that the teachers used can help promote students' learning. The strategies help students know what and how they do. The research results reported that there were 16 politeness strategies used by the English teachers in the EFL classroom. Those politeness strategies are greetings, thanking, congratulating/praising, and apologizing, obedience, intimacy, joke, rejection, question/evaluating, request, suggestion, chastisement, disagreement, asking permission, optimism, and instructing. Furthermore; the researchers found 30 kinds of non-verbal communication that were used by the English teachers in the EFL classroom. Those non-verbal communications are standing up, bowing down, waving hands, praying, shaking hands, clapping hands, thumb up, hand on forehead, valve, putting finger on nose, putting finger on nose, touching student, close to the student, involved in the group, joke, palm down, palms down, hand to face, point to forehead, palm up, requesting, pointing, showing watch, counting, judging, hands-on chin, shoulder shrug, accepting phone, listening, showing hand on board, pointing to the book. We do believe that there are still other types of politeness that we could not find in this research; therefore there must be further analyses on the use of non-verbal communication incoming research.

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