



Teachers' Perceptions of Using Non-verbal Communication in Language Learning

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Abstract

Non-verbal communication (NVC) refers to the transmission of information, feelings and thoughts without any written words. In foreign language teaching, it is often used to make the learning environment more meaningful by serving functions from classroom management to teaching practices. This paper aims to investigate the relationship between the perception of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors about NVC in teaching and their actual practices in classroom. Qualitative research method is employed, and classroom observation and semi-structured interview were utilized to collect data. Convenience sampling method was adopted, and eight instructors at a private university participated in the study. To analyze the data, transcriptions of the interviews and the researchers' observation notes were utilized. Findings show that instructors mostly use NVC tools in Listening and Speaking course and various NVC tools are used for different purposes. The results indicate that there is a general consistency between the instructors' perceptions and their observed practices with regard to their NVC usage in EFL classes.

Keywords: Non-verbal communication (NVC), English as a foreign language (EFL), gestures, mimics, eye contact.

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1. Introduction

As social beings, humans need to deliver and exchange information with other individuals or groups, which is called communication. Verbal communication (VC) and non-verbal communication (NVC) are its two main categories. VC, which is the synthesis of conveying and receiving messages, refers to both written and spoken communication. Books, articles, notes, mails and text-messages are types of verbal communication as much as speech. To exemplify, while two people are reading the same book, both readers can comprehend different themes and messages from the book. Even though it is attributed to subjectivity and people's different lives and experiences, some reasons for the difference are due to the fact that gestures and mimics do not take place in written communication.

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Therefore, writers need descriptions in order to express an emotion or an idea. It can be the reason why cinema and theatre are more popular than books. Furthermore, the reason why Charlie Chaplin's movies were silent was to make everyone understand him. Even though any verbal communication tool is not included in those movies, it is a crystal clear fact that everyone understands the theme and topic. The primary means of VC is "language" which comprises 30% of communication in total. (Percentage can be changed according to different sources.) The big part of the communication belongs to non-verbal communication. It is the process of sending or receiving messages by means of wordless cues such as gestures, mimics, eye contact and proxemics. NVC is a robust and effective way of interaction. Based on Patterson's study (2012), there are some characteristics of NVC. One of the characteristics is that "nonverbal channel is always 'on' in social settings" (p.731). Even if you do not speak and move, your body gives signals only with your posture and eye contact. Such a prominent way of communication is also used in foreign language education.

NVC depends on the culture in which the person is and people learn NVC tools and their meanings by using them. A good example for this situation is raising our eyebrows up. While this mimic means "no" for the people living in Turkey, it is vice versa for the African people. This situation can be concluded that the power (or degree) of NVC is higher amongst people sharing the same culture. It also means that it is essential to learn about the culture and mimics if you are learning a foreign language. Otherwise, the degree of your understanding of others' thoughts and emotions will be low as your ability to express ours to them.

Ünal and Altay (2013) state the importance of NVC in language teaching because of the cultural differences and inadequacy of verbal communication at lower proficiency levels (p.417). Erton (2006) supports the idea with the aim of "providing a better understanding in the target language, gaining acceleration and avoiding cross-cultural failure in the classroom while teaching a foreign language" (p.75).

2. Literature Review

The Communication refers to interaction operating through multiple channels. VC is functions as speech and writing; however, NVC is the part that most of the communication takes place which is supported by Birdwhistell reporting that 65% of meaning in communication is conveyed through NVC (as cited in Karim & Sotoudehnama, 2017, p.110).

Having a dyadic relationship, VC and NVC is explained by McNeill (1985) supporting the idea saying that "the whole of gesture and speech can be encompassed in a unified conception, along with, and not fundamentally different from speech itself." (p. 351). In addition, VC serves from a cognitive perspective even though NVC has an affective role. Gregersen, et al. (2009) state:

"Nonverbal behaviors are often below our level of consciousness, thus less controllable, most individuals perceive them as a truer manifestation of a speaker's feelings and as more deeply ingrained meanings. When messages within the two modalities are conflicting, most interlocutors

sense that the nonverbal ones more accurately reflect true feelings”
(Gregersen, et al., 2009, p. 197).

Although it can be supposed that VC means more than NVC, NVC speaks louder.

NVC is an essential facet of human life since the beginning of birth. It enables listeners to get significant signals from speaker to understand what s/he is talking about. When people start to speak, their body generally gives off different signals. For instance, they smile, use their gestures (hand movement) and make eye contact. Even if they do not use any of them, their posture and dress-code mean a lot. Negi (2009) defines nonverbal communication as “the process of one person stimulating meaning in the mind of another person or persons by means of non-linguistic cues e.g. facial expressions, gestures etc.” (p.101).

According to the recent research, NVC is generally used unconsciously. However, both s/he is successful receiver of messages and s/he can send positive or negative signals consciously when a person uses NVC consciously.

1.1. *Forms of Nonverbal Communication*

There are different taxonomies of NVC elements. The most extensive classification is offered by Zoric et al. (2007) with ten elements:

Kinesics (body language) which comprise facial expressions, eye movements, gestures, posture, and the like.

Oculesics (eye contact).

Haptics: touching behavior.

Proxemics: personal space usage.

Paralanguage: Non-word utterances and other non-verbal clues relatively closely related to language use.

Chronemics: Use of time, waiting, pausing.

Silence: The absence of sound (muteness, stillness, secrecy).

Olfactics: Smell.

Vocalics: Tone of voice, timbre, volume (loudness), speed (rate of speech).

Physical appearance and artifacts: Physical characteristics of body, clothing, jewellery, hairstyle (p.2).

Also, Knapp & Hall’s classification include appearance, proxemics, body motion (gesture, posture, touching, facial expression, eye behavior), and paralanguage (as cited in Barry, Bodenhamer & O'Brien, 2011, p.2). Ünal and Altay (2013) classify NVC as eye contact, posture, mimics, gestures, proxemics, clothing and movement (pp.418-19).

As is seen, there are different taxonomies of NVC elements; however, the elements below are covered in this research: kinesics (gestures, mimics, and posture), oculesics, proxemics, vocalics, physical appearance and artifacts. The functions of NVC, the meaning that NVC elements convey, are also essential. NVC elements are used both simultaneously with VC

and independently. Substitution for verbal messages is generally used, as Negi (2009) says that “substitution of non-verbal message occurs when a non-verbal cue is used instead of verbal one” (p.102). For example, a teacher does not need to say anything, but just frown. It already means “I am angry with you”. It is also used to support what is said verbally. Ekman and Friesen (1969) state that illustrators are “movements which are directly tied to speech, serving to illustrate what is being said verbally” (p.68). For instance, Helweg-Larsen et al. (2004) call head-nodding “a miniature bow which is consistent with acceptance and agreement” (p.358). When a teacher approves something, s/he talks and nods at the same time. According to Ekman and Friesen (1969), regulators like nodding, eye contact and postural shifts maintaining and regulating the flow of conversational exchange increase the influence of conversation. They are also useful to give signals in social settings. Patterson (2012) says that “clothing, hair style, grooming, tattoos, and jewelry are frequently indicators of socioeconomic status, group membership, and even personal interests (p.736). Briefly, it conveys information about the person. Additionally, Yang (2018) says “what a person says and does mirror their identity, which is interpreted with reference to situations and contexts” (p.2). In EFL context, language teachers need to consider their non-verbal communication in class as much as they have to make students to communicate through second language. In order to communicate, students should learn how to be communicatively competent. Before they learn, teachers must learn how to incorporate NVC usage into communicative competence. Communicative competence defined by Hymes in 1972 is competence for both language use and knowledge of grammatical structures appropriate to social context and situation. Moreover, Ellis (1994) mentions “Canale’s (1983) model of communicative competence. There are four components: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence (i.e. the ability to use language in socially appropriate ways), discourse competence (i.e. the ability to participate in coherent and cohesive conversations) and strategic competence (i.e. the ability to deal with communication breakdown) “(p.12). As teachers need to compensate for the gap in communicative competence, NVC elements are valuable to achieve this ultimate goal. For instance, teachers can use mimics, which is used effectively in language teaching, in order for the conversation to continue. Moreover, learning a language means not only speaking or writing in a language but also learning the target culture. Thus, learners can be frustrated, anxious and even they can misunderstand the meaning of NVC elements because of the cultural differences. As Yang (2017) state that “intercultural communication competence is their ability to employ both verbal and nonverbal communication competence that makes them successful and adaptable to different cultures” (p. 5), teachers need to integrate NVC elements into their classroom environment both consciously and unconsciously. Indeed, there is a bunch of related research about non-verbal communication.

There are studies in the literature investigating NVC in language teaching from different perspectives such as the effect of NVC usage on learners’ motivation (Negi, 2009), learners’ perspective on NVC usage in language learning process (Karim & Sotoudehnama, 2017), and the influence on NVC usage on learners’ comprehension (Sueyoshi & Hardison, 2005). However, there is a gap in the literature aiming to investigate English language instructors’ perception of NVC usage in language classes. The present study aims to fill in

this gap by seeking for the difference between instructors' perspectives about NVC usage in EFL classes and their actual usage of NVC usage in a preparatory school.

To address the purpose of the study, the research questions below guided the study:

1. Do English language instructors use non-verbal communication in language classes? If yes, how often do they use non-verbal communication?
2. Does the skill have an influence on the level of teachers' non-verbal communication usage? Reading & Writing / Listening & Speaking / Main Course
3. Which elements of non-verbal communication are used mostly by instructors of English? Why do they use these elements?
4. Do instructors use non-verbal communication consciously or unconsciously?
5. Is there any significant difference between the observation results and instructors' perceptions on the non-verbal communication usage in language classes?

In the current study, these research questions were explored.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

Qualitative research design was adopted, and collective case study approach was adopted in this study. Dörnyei (2007) stated that a number of cases are studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon or a general condition (p. 152). As would be mentioned, participants in one context were selected according to criterion of their main lessons. Observation and interview methods were utilized in order to empower the study's results.

3.2. Sampling and Participants

Participants in interview part of the research were 8 EFL instructors who work in the preparatory school of a private university in Turkey. (6 females; 2 males). Also, 4 instructors (4 females) are included in the observation part. They are all 23 to 49 year-old, teaching in the preparatory education program. This sample was selected purposefully as "L2 learners receive considerable input in nonverbal form that may modify and make verbal input (more) comprehensible" (p.111) (Lazaraton, 2005). When students' English proficiency level was A2, the study was conducted, and A2-level learners may need more explanation and demonstration by instructors. The other reason was all the lessons in the curriculum was included i.e., three instructors teach Listening & Speaking Skills, three instructors teach Reading & Writing Skills, and two instructors teach Main Course.

3.3. Instruments

Two instruments were conducted to find out responses to the research questions: (a) observation, (b) semi-structured interview. The observation phase of study was executed in 1 week, and it is conducted via note-taking. The researcher took notes of significant parts regarding gestures, mimics, eye contact, posture, nodding and moving in class. It was

carried out carefully because voice recording or video recording was not utilized during observation. The reason why the researchers did not use recording is explained by Dörnyei's (2007) statement: "the process of videotaping in the classroom may distract the participants and may elicit out-of-the-ordinary behavior on the part of both teacher and the students" (p.184).

The interview phase of study was carried out in a semi-structured way. Dörnyei (2007) mentions a compromise between structured and unstructured interviews "although there is a set of pre-prepared guiding questions and prompts, the format is open-ended and the interviewee is encouraged to elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 136). The interview sessions were conducted in 1 week. At the beginning, background information about interviewees was collected. The researcher both took notes of key words during interview and recorded them. The questions covering non-verbal communication and its elements were formed to find out their opinions about usage of non-verbal communication elements in language classes (see Appendix 1).

3.4. *Data Collection Procedure*

This study was conducted in preparatory program at a private university in Turkey. Thus, data for this study were gathered via observation and semi-structured interview. Researcher observed one instructor twice to check whether there is consistency between the usages of non-verbal communication. Then, the interviews were conducted with the lecturers and recorded.

3.5. *Data Analysis*

Data collected through the audio recordings and researcher's observation notes were transcribed to have a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Instructors' direct statements and researchers' observation notes were utilized to reveal the patterns. Given the main purpose of the study, gender factor was excluded from the research.

4. **Findings**

The data from the interviews showed that English language instructors use non-verbal communication in language classes because 8 instructors mentioned the significance of using NVC in the classes. Analysis of instructors' responses demonstrated the importance of using NVC elements in the class. To illustrate the topic, below are the instructors' responses:

NVC is again really important because sometimes we need to teach a new word. I realized that at a time I was trying to explain the word "exchange". I gave the board marker to my student and I had the other. We just tried to exchange. We used our hands and arms. And later, a week or two weeks later, I asked the same word again. They just show the movement again.

We always use verbal language in our classes but sometimes maybe it is better for kinesthetic learners to use NVC. It will make everything easier for them to understand, get the ideas.

In EFL context... If we cannot convey our messages to our students, we are just using our gestures and mimics.

Verbal and nonverbal are obviously quite different but we need to use both of them I think in the classroom. It is very boring if you don't use any gestures or don't have any movements.

It is really useful because we are teaching a different language to our students. For ex. Let's think about vocab. Sometimes I use the synonyms but sometimes my students, they don't know both the synonyms and the words that's why I try to use my gestures and you know my movement to talk about the word. It is very important because if I cannot find a word to talk I found a gesture to show.

For A1 level, NVC is better because they just observe the way you behave because they don't understand what you say so they just look at you what you do what you don't do and they try to understand.

Verbal is important but non-verbal is really important. When students. Don't understand u, you have to use your body, mimics and gestures. Nonverbal is important, verbal is a necessity.

I am from Africa, I have different accent sometimes I pronounce thing in a different way because of that it is difficult for them to understand things. NVC is so important especially for me. It makes them to understand what I am saying.

In order to answer the first research question, all instructors consider that NVC usage in language classes is crucial because it is a foreign language in EFL context. They may have difficulty in understanding verbal communication. Thus, 75% of instructors *always* use NVC elements during their lessons and 25 % of instructors *usually* utilize NVC elements during teaching process.

To refer to second research question, the skill that instructors teach have an influence on the level of teachers' non-verbal communication usage. All instructors who are main teachers in Listening & Speaking lesson reports that they *always* use NVC in their classes. It is understood that 100% instructors of Listening & Speaking lesson always use NVC elements in their lessons. We understood it from their responses

I move around the class esp. for speaking classes...

If students get the control of the topic, they can change it and they can destroy what you are trying to do. In those times, I just take the control back with my using NVC with my behaviour I just stir them to the topic so that we can continue the lesson.

For Reading & Writing lesson, 66,6% of instructors *always* use NVC elements whereas 33,3% of instructors *usually* use NVC elements. It is understood from their responses:

I think often, more than often actually. Not always.

I try to use it in every class.

I actually use very much because I always use my hands. I always move my hands and I move around the classroom. I always touch them or touching like to get their attention.

For Main Course lesson, 50% of instructors *always* use NVC elements while 50% of instructors *usually* use them. Below are their responses:

Very often. Because it is really fun and interesting.

I always carry a material as a back-up because sometimes they can get bored and then sometimes they don't want to talk.

From their responses, it is understood that they also use NVC for different purposes. In order to answer the third research question, from the instructors' responses it is estimated that 75% of instructors use gestures and mimics in their lessons. 25% of instructors reported that they use tone of voice and visuals and pictures. They use gestures for different purposes:

Because I observe that our students, all students love that culture, they like people that talk about their culture so in our culture I use my body all the time. Body is used mostly and also hands.

Definitely mimics, gestures. Because you are teaching another language and you are trying to teach that language in target language so you have to show them what you are teaching.

Because a teacher with gestures and mimics is more interesting than a boring teacher.

I use my body in a way that, for example, someone sitting on a desk and not moving is too cold. So, you need to move your arms and move around... mm... the way that you use your body says a lot about the teacher.

Gestures and mimics take the boredom out of the class and bring joy and happiness into the classroom. Instructors' perception is on the way that their lesson will not be monotonous if they use their hands, arms and change their facial expression. Also, the effect of teaching in EFL context is shown here, teaching the language in target language requires instructors to use gestures and mimics more than ever in order students to understand them easier.

To answer the fourth research question, analysis showed that there is a variety on the topic of instructors' usage of NVC elements consciously or unconsciously. 50% of instructors use NVC elements both consciously and unconsciously. However, 37.5% of instructors use them unconsciously while 12.5 of them use NVC elements consciously.

It is as habit. Whether I am at university whether I am at home, I try to practice these days not to use my hands too much. Cuz I think it shows non-confidence. Maybe I don't have confidence that's why I am using them so much but it is a habit for me.

Some of them as a habit for example my hands but the others are on purpose. Because I know that they will get their attention.

As a habit. Like gestures mimics.

On purpose. Always.

These quotations from instructors' responses illustrate the answer better.

In order to answer the fifth research question, researchers' observation is utilized. It indicates that NVC elements have remarkable part in class. Eye contact is generally used to warn students and instructors avoid eye contact to give time students to answer. Nodding is used to accept and confirm the students' answers. It motivates them extrinsically. As for gestures and mimics, they are used to support verbal communication. Additionally, they make the meaning comprehensible for low proficiency level students. They create more energetic classroom environment because instructors take students' attention easily. Posture is another foremost NVC element which changes from situation to situation i.e., period of checking homework, leaning in order to point to somebody, and warning students not to misbehave. Furthermore, one instructor who cross her arms during the lesson time give the impression of boredom and being under pressure because of the observer. The other element, distance, means a lot to students because instructor shows her interest when instructor gets closer to students. They feel important and motivated since instructor focus on only that student. Besides, instructor gets closer and attracts their attention in order to prevent misbehavior in class. Instructor's move is to

check and monitor students. Both instructor and students move in class and get closer to each other during some activities.

Table 1. Observation Results

Why is non-verbal communication is used in classes?	
1.	To reinforce students
2.	To create warm classroom atmosphere
3.	To increase participation
4.	To make students understand clearly
5.	To convey feelings
6.	To attract students' attention
7.	To teach grammar
8.	To teach vocabulary

As for the interviewees' responses, they show that NVC has a significant place in language classes. There are some examples of NVC elements used by the instructors such as eye contact, gestures and mimics, nodding, moving in the class, posture, proxemics, and clothing and ornaments. As their responses will be given, their perceptions about using these NVC elements will be enlightened. For the eye contact, they said:

When you make eye contact with the student, they feel important. When they feel important, ... they participate more. If you don't make eye contact, they feel I am not important for the teacher so I can sleep.

They feel so valuable during the class because they are like "teacher is listening to me, not you guys. So, I wanna talk." I cut the eye contact in that place...to avoid the direct correction.

I can see that they didn't understand the topic, if I eye contact with them, I can understand it.

Usually, I am quite jovial so if my face is straight, my eyes change and I am looking in a way that "please stop what you are doing" and they understand I am annoyed. I am a very patient teacher but if they push me and I make eye contact in a way that they shouldn't do that. Sometimes if a student is misbehaving, I can avoid looking at them. Make them feel like they are not included in the class. By doing this, I cut them off with the eye contact.

When they are saying something, they should not say. For example, I am asking something to a student, the other person is saying something out of blue. I don't look at

them it is like let's say I am ignoring this person for a while because I want to give attention to that person.

They participate. There are 2 reasons. One of them is "oh teacher is looking at me I should participate" or the other one is "teacher is really fond of me he cares about me so I should participate" so participation, I guess.

It gets the students to be closer to you. It creates the atmosphere to take away fright, fear from between the teacher and student.

There was one student who says "Ok, teacher I was talking about technology and I know you are from Africa and there is no car in your country" and when I feel I am nervous and I am a little angry then I don't want to look at my student's face.

They are young. So they may misunderstand it. I don't like it doesn't take more than 10 seconds.

As is seen, making eye contact and avoiding eye contact is literally important. Instructors use eye contact for different reasons. For nodding, the instructors said:

To give positive response

I am always nodding I am doing it because they feel what they are saying is true.

They are making a sentence and if I nod they feel "Ok I did it good it was correct."

They feel encouraged.

In our daily lives, we are just looking for being nodded by the others. When it comes to students, I think they are already feeling uncomfortable during the classes.

If I nod something, they think that they are making contributions to the class.

I ... feedback by nodding.

When I want them to speak more.

These show they use nodding to reaffirm what students say and motivate them to speak and participate in the lesson.

Moreover, instructors said that gestures and mimics are used for many purposes. They said:

When you use gestures, students feel you are also human and they feel the emotions that you have.

Students will see that I am not dead. I use my gestures.

If you add some theatrical moves to the class, it just makes it enjoyable at the first time. They listen to the class as if they are in a movie. ... it is like a taste in a salad.

It makes the lesson interesting. The word or thing gets catchy, easy to remember. And students get motivated to the class all the time and they don't feel themselves lost.

When I use my hands, they get distracted but sometimes when a student is playing with phone if I use my hands they get distracted from their phones and say "Wow teacher is doing something and I should look at her and listen to her".

With your mimics, you can make your students laugh and tell many things to students. I would say sending information, sending emotions.

Sometimes the words aren't enough. You have to support them with your mimics. Sometimes ... they don't know the words you used. They try to understand according to your mimics.

A class's atmosphere or a lesson's atmosphere depends on the authority, teacher's mimics and gestures.

Posture is another element that is effective in language classes according to instructors. They said:

Posture sends certain type of energy to the students. So, they will understand what your mood is, how you are feeling.

If you are sitting straight, it shows that you know what you are doing. You are self-confident. If you are sitting in a self-conscious way the audience will think that you don't know what you are doing. If you are sitting in a bad way, student. say "Oh teacher doesn't know she is just speaking but she doesn't know" if I sit straight or I stand in the classroom, they think "she know everything she has all the answers and I can trust her."

It is about confidence. When the teacher feels confident, they think she knows or he knows the best, they realize it.

Because I do a lot of yoga, I try to keep my chest up, my shoulders back. If your chest is closed ... it doesn't look good as a teacher, you know. You've got to present kind of look confident. Nobody wants a teacher who doesn't look confident.

You know it depends on your posture. If you want to be the authority in the class, you can use one of your posture. If you want to show that you are a friend of them, you can change your posture. You know it depends on the effect that you want to have on students.

Another pre-eminent NVC element is proxemics, the distance between teacher and students during the lesson. There are different opinions of instructors on it. To illustrate:

The distance shouldn't be far. We should be close to the students.

It's up to the students. For below 10 or 14 you can be like a brother, sister, father or mother. But for adults I think it is not good.

It shouldn't be so close and it shouldn't be so far. I think it should be changeable according to the situation. For example, if I want to warn some students, I am getting closer to them. If I am talking to whole class, that's why I am standing in the middle.

It varies. Usually, I am at my desk.

I believe in personal space. Yes, you need to be close because when you are close, they listen to you. But if you are too close, they can feel uncomfortable about this. They will want to avoid the situation I mean not in their personal space but close enough.

It shouldn't be too far It should be close enough to understand each other, close enough to communicate easily.

Furthermore, they use the distance between teacher and students for different purposes such as:

While giving feedback, while controlling their homework, while checking their exercises.

If I gave them any exercises, I get closer to check them. During a speaking activity, to check their speaking. If I go around the class, I hear some of their mistakes. After the activity finishes, I correct those mistakes.

I want to warn them by looking at closely. Especially students understand if I get closer, there is something dangerous because I always keep the distance between me and my students.

I do sometimes get up and walk around to check if they are doing what I asked. Because I teach mostly speaking, I like to listen to them closely to check their pronunciation.

When I feel, they are not listening to me I go to them I get really close to them and the feel uncomfortable and say “Wow ok I will listen to you just move back “.

If they don't understand something, but I want to teach them in person. If they get distracted by something, I go them and I stand near them so they participant again.

There is another NVC element, moving in the classroom, which is closely related to proxemics. Teachers use it in a wide range of ways:

Moving, it makes them active in the classroom. Because they don't know when the turn will come to them. So, they feel ... they feel threatened when you move around the class.

I like moving in the class because the students must see that teacher is somewhere here. He can come here and check me.

I think this is the waking up move for teachers. Like we are changing the environment. I let them move during the class. Because sitting for forty minutes, I think they are getting bored. That's why I always move and I make them move.

It changes the energy in the classroom. Instead of having to ask a question in front of your classmates sometimes they don't want to ask it when you go up to them, they feel they can speak to you.

I think students think that teacher is really interested in their process.

It is very effective. When you are sitting somewhere it is all stable and they will just think you are a flower in the classroom, not a teacher. But if you walk around the classroom and just joke in the class, go to some students and talk to them, they will tell “Oh there is an energy in this classroom.” And if you don't move, they will sleep probably.

To get attraction. You move around and students always follow you.

The last NVC element is clothing and ornaments, which are really effective and make instructors think in different ways. They said:

When you dress formally, they feel formal. Again one day, I wear a jacket and one of my students said to me “Teacher, why are you wearing jacket?” They think that wearing jacket or wearing formally is not usual for the classroom. But when they see you in that way, they need to be also formal.

I like wearing casual clothes. It is more comfortable for me. And I feel like a student. And they feel close to me.

Because it really contributes to peripheral learning around them and then they like creating them. If I wear something interesting, they start to talk about it. This is nice for starting communication as a warm-up.

It depends. We’ve just had Christmas time. I decided one day to wear red and kind of colorful clothes. Students really liked it.

Everything new makes the classroom interesting. I use different clothes, different ornaments, different objects to make the lesson interesting. That’s the only reason and effect, I think. So, students get motivated.

When you wear something nice when you take care of yourself it shows that you respect your job and students. It’s about the people you are around with.

This watch, especially this watch as you see this is orange. When I come to the classroom with this, they look at me right away. They start asking questions about you and so their focus is on you. Communication I mean.

As is seen from instructors’ responses in the interview, there are different NVC elements that are used in the classroom, most of which had different purposes for different instructors. Even though they use the same NVC element for different purposes, their perceptions about NVC usage in the classroom and observation results are similar.

5. Discussion

Qualitative data is scrutinized through content analysis to investigate whether there are any differences between observation results and interviews with instructors. As main categories, seven non-verbal communication elements, i.e., gestures, mimics, eye contact, nodding, posture, distance and moving in the class are observed and asked in the interview.

The results show that instructors use non-verbal communication in their lessons. In order to refer to 1st and 2nd research questions, instructors of Listening and Speaking Skills *always* use NVC in their classes whereas instructors of Reading and Writing, and Main

Course Skills *usually* use NVC. It means that instructors are aware of the importance of using NVC elements in language teaching process.

It is shown that gestures and mimics are mostly used in language classes. Gestures are used both to support verbal communication and to simplify what instructor means. McCafferty and Rosborough (2014) state that “for L2 students with little proficiency in the language, teachers might also use more gestures as a whole, that is, gestures with speech as well as gestures by themselves to scaffold comprehension” (p.229). Moreover, gesture and verbal communication are used to motivate students. They are utilized when students need explanation and clarification, especially during teaching vocabulary. Smotrova and Lantolf (2013) recommend that “a teacher’s nonverbal moves constituted a significant component of vocabulary explanations” (p.398). Mimics have a range of usages from emotions to motivation. Kaya and Ergül (2025) reported that EFL teachers’ motivation is also fluctuated during teaching process, which highlights the significance of using strategies to increase both teachers’ and learners’ motivation such as the use of NVC tools- gestures, mimics and eye contact. Also, it is mostly used to demonstrate the feelings. An example from the observation notes demonstrates that student gets motivated and her/his affective filter level gets lower when instructor looks at a student with a smiling face. At the end, a relaxing classroom atmosphere is created to speak target language. Instead of using verbal communication, we can express what we want to say with mimics. In addition, they are useful to give feedback to students and Ünal and Altay (2013) support that mimics are used for students to find the correct answer instead of giving the answer directly. For instance, one of the instructors frowned when she did not understand the student and needed clarification from student. She wanted student to speak more rather than give the answer directly. Like gestures, mimics are used to define meaning of words. For visual learners, it is easy to remember meaning via mimics.

Analysis demonstrated that instructors use NVC consciously, unconsciously, and both consciously and unconsciously due to different factors like proficiency level and classroom atmosphere. It constitutes a considerable part of communication in class hence, Shaw state that NVC needs to be given more attention in teacher development programs (as cited in Lazaraton & Ishihara, 2005, p.539).

Instructors think that NVC is important in EFL context and there are a wide range of reasons why NVC is used in language classes. They use NVC elements to motivate students, to increase participation, to make students understand clearly, to convey feelings, to attract students’ attention and to teach vocabulary. For instance, when instructors use their mimics, they attract students’ attention easily. When they change their facial expressions, they can convey their feelings at that time and control students’ reactions. Even instructors’ clothes are significant part of education. When teachers’ clothes are formal, it can convey messages and it affects students’ perception about the instructor. When they wear clothes which are related to important days like Christmas, it can start a conversation between instructor and students, thus it leads to communication. One of the most crucial effects of NVC elements is to teach vocabulary. For instance, one instructor gave the example of “exchange”. They used their hands and arm. Even though the student cannot explain the meaning via words, s/he used her/his gestures to define it.

Also, using NVC in class has more advantages than disadvantages according to interviewees. The following table shows the advantages and disadvantages of using NVC.

Table 2: Advantages and disadvantages of NVC in class.

Advantages of NVC in class	Disadvantages of NVC in class
It enables students to understand target language clearly.	Instructors get exhausted.
It creates a warm atmosphere.	There are cultural differences of NVC elements.
It is a great way to teach new words.	If teacher relies on NVC too much, students cannot learn enough.
It attracts students' attention.	Misunderstanding can be occurred.
Students get motivated.	Students rely on NVC more than VC.
They are catchy and easy to remember.	
The effectiveness of materials increases.	

All the instructors use eye contact with different purposes i.e., motivation, showing his/her interest in students, increase in participation, giving the meaning of message, and making students to feel relaxed and motivated. As much as making eye contact with students is significant, avoiding eye contact is valuable. Instructors generally avoid eye contact to ignore students when they misbehave. They do not make eye contact when explicit correction ought not to be utilized at that time. Additionally, teacher avoids eye contact when student is excited to speak.

The interview results show that instructors use nodding for three main purposes: (1) to give feedback, (2) to approve, and (3) to motivate students. When instructor confirms students are correct, they feel motivated and proud of themselves. Thus, their affective filter goes down and they start to participate in the lesson more.

Generally, instructors put gestures and mimics into the same category, and there are similar reasons of using gestures and mimics. These increase students' participation and attention span to the lesson. These elements make the lesson enjoyable and students feel that they are alive and like in a movie. That's why, a relaxed classroom atmosphere emerges. On the other hand, gestures and mimics can be a reason of distraction for some students.

As is understood from the interviews, the fact that teacher sends messages to students about their self-confidence by their posture is noteworthy. It affects voice and it conveys messages about teachers' energy and mood. Thus, students and classroom environment are affected by it as students interpret teacher's posture in both positive and negative ways. Students' participation will increase and an interactive atmosphere will arise. It is also used while instructor helps or monitors students during in-class activities.

Distance is another important element to mention. Instructors' perception is that distance between teacher and students ought to be close enough to communicate. Also, they consider that violating personal space is disturbing. Barry (2011) supports the idea saying that "personal distance is controlled by both students and instructors" (p.8).

Instructors state that it varies under different circumstances such as activities, age and proficiency level of students.

There are different reasons why instructors move in the class. The most common reason is to monitor students. While instructor is observing, students feel teacher's interest and more relaxed. They, especially shy students, have an opportunity to ask questions in a confident way. When instructors want to warn them, it is useful to make them feel instructor's presence. Moving in the class during the activities changes students' energy; specifically in morning classes it is beneficial to wake students up and engage them in the lesson. One of the instructors gives an example; she says that "if you sit down and do not move around, students think that you are a flower in a pot. However, if you walk around, they will say that there is an energy in this class". Students do not have a chance to sleep and they are encouraged to participate in activities.

The influence of clothing and ornaments is so prominent that each instructor has different ideas about it. To begin with, neat and formal clothing means that instructors attach a lot of importance to the quality. It means that students are significant to himself / herself. They are also used as a warm-up activity. Since it can be interesting for students, a conversation about them starts. As a result, Ünal and Altay (2013) state that "there is a teacher clothing style adopted by most of the societies" (p.419), and it ought to be balanced.

As a consequence, it is seen that observation results and perceptions of instructors mostly coincide with each other on usages of NVC elements in a language class. In spite of this matching, instructors give various instances for the NVC elements. Researcher might not have observed all the examples given the observation time. All in all, it seems that non-verbal communication is mostly used by instructors in language classes in EFL context.

6. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

Language teaching depends on the students' needs and institution's objectives. These features lead institutes to a specific methodology. Taking into consideration of these, this university that we carry out this research adopts Communicative Approach. "For a better understanding in the target language, students and instructors should not only undergo training in language, but also a socializing experience" says Erton (p.84). In Communicative Approach, we, as instructors, ought to follow this value system. In order to communicate in the target language, students need both verbal communication and non-verbal communication abilities. Şenel (2007) supports NVC usage in class stating that:

"Non-verbal communication receives attention in English language classes as one of the effective ways of teaching / learning process. By gestures, mimes and eye contact, teachers of English provide students with not only meaningful learning, but also cultural values of the second language" (p.124).

It has been discussed and explained that there are a wide range of non-verbal communication elements to be used in language classes and NVC takes various functions. Students with low L2 proficiency level are to use them to immerse themselves into the language learning environment easily. It is also beneficial for instructors to use them to empower the interaction between themselves and students. NVC enables students to

decrease debilitating anxiety and to motivate them extrinsically as it reduces the ambiguity of messages in class.

This study is vital to raise instructors' awareness about the essential role of NVC in language classes. For further research, it is suggested that the number of participants is increased. It can be aimed to make a study with both students and instructors to compare their perceptions. Needless to say, it will enlighten each company about the gist of communication.

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