

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NON-VERBAL BEHAVIOUR IN TEACHER-LEARNER INTERACTION IN GFL CLASSES

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**Abstract.** *Introduction.* Non-verbal communication (NVC) is the first language that adults encourage kids to acquire. It is one of the most important areas of study in educational institutions, as it is impossible for a teacher to convey information effectively without using non-verbal cues. When learning a foreign language, a person should be able to interact with others through both verbal and non-verbal cues.

*Aim.* The present research aims to emphasise the importance of non-verbal behaviour in teacher-learner interaction in GFL classes and to analyse the various NVC methods and motivations that GFL teachers employ in classrooms.

*Methodology and research methods.* Nine non-verbal communication-related statements were assessed by interviewing 34 GFL teachers teaching in Jordan, at the German-Jordanian University of Applied Sciences in Madaba, the University of Jordan and the Language Generation Centre in Amman.

*Results and scientific novelty.* The study found that GFL teachers used non-verbal behaviour both consciously and unconsciously and considered eye contact an essential tool that can be used in class. Teachers regulated the course of their lesson with their posture and used their tone of voice as an important tool for ending classroom disruptions. Moreover, they used facial expressions and physical gestures to express and clarify their emotions, and they believed that non-verbal cues were crucial for effective teaching from both the teacher's and the learner's viewpoints. They also regarded proximity and distance as very important tool in teacher-learner interaction.

*Practical significance.* By examining how NVC techniques are used in the classroom and their results from the teachers' perspective, the current study contributes to the body of knowledge previously accessible on NVC and foreign language training. This would provide a more practical understanding how to use these instruments outside of research. Teachers who have implemented these NVC techniques in their classrooms may be able to shed some light on the applicability of NVC in different settings that have not been covered in other research articles. This paper is a documentation of NVC techniques that German instructors use in their classes and are considered effective in class. It also discusses the many justifications for which teachers might employ NVC in the classroom. It provides an answer to the matter of whether teachers intentionally or unintentionally use NVC techniques in the classroom.

**Keywords:** body language, non-verbal behaviour, teaching, interaction, German as foreign language.

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## ЗНАЧЕНИЕ НЕВЕРБАЛЬНОГО ПОВЕДЕНИЯ ПРИ ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИИ УЧИТЕЛЯ С УЧЕНИКОМ В КЛАССАХ С ИЗУЧЕНИЕМ НЕМЕЦКОГО ЯЗЫКА КАК ИНОСТРАННОГО

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**Аннотация.** *Введение.* Язык невербальной коммуникации – первый язык, который осваивают дети, а взрослые помогают овладеть им. Это одно из важнейших направлений в учебных заведениях, так как педагогу невозможно эффективно передавать информацию, не используя невербальные подсказки. Изучая иностранный язык, человек должен уметь взаимодействовать с другими с помощью как словесных, так и невербальных сигналов.

*Цель статьи* – подчеркнуть важность невербального поведения при взаимодействии учителя с учеником в классах с изучением немецкого языка как иностранного и проанализировать различные методы и стимулирующие факторы невербального общения, которые преподаватели используют на своих занятиях.

*Методология и методы исследования.* Девять невербальных утверждений, связанных с коммуникацией, были оценены путем опроса 34 преподавателей немецкого языка как иностранного, преподающих в Иордании, в Немецко-иорданском университете прикладных наук в Мадабе, Университете Иордании и в языковой школе Language Generation Centre в Аммане.

*Результаты и научная новизна.* Исследование показало, что преподаватели немецкого языка как иностранного использовали невербальное поведение как сознательно, так и бессознательно и считали зрительный контакт важным инструментом, который можно использовать в классе. Преподаватели контролировали ход своего урока, поддерживая правильную осанку и используя свой тон голоса: это были важные инструменты для прекращения срывов в классе. Кроме того, они применяли мимику и физические жесты, чтобы выразить и прояснить свои эмоции, и они считали, что невербальные сигналы имеют решающее значение для эффективного обучения с точки зрения как учителя, так и учащегося. Они также рассматривали близость и дистанцию как очень важный инструмент взаимодействия между учителем и учеником.

*Практическая значимость.* Благодаря изучению использования методов невербального общения в классе и их результаты с точки зрения учителей текущее исследование вносит вклад в совокупность знаний, ранее доступных по невербальному общению и обучению иностранному языку. Это обеспечит более практическое понимание использования этих инструментов. Учителя, которые в своих классах внедрили методы невербального общения, могут пролить некоторый свет на их применимость в различных условиях, которые не были освещены в других исследовательских статьях. В настоящей работе описаны методы невербального общения, которые учителя немецкого используют в своих классах и считают эффективными. Дается ответ на вопрос о том, намеренно или ненамеренно учителя используют методы невербального общения в классе, и обосновываются многочисленные обоснования их применения.

**Ключевые слова:** язык тела, невербальное поведение, преподавание, взаимодействие, немецкий язык как иностранный.

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## LA IMPORTANCIA DEL COMPORTAMIENTO NO VERBAL EN LA INTERACCIÓN PROFESOR-ALUMNO DURANTE LAS CLASES DE ALEMÁN COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

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**Abstracto. Introducción.** El lenguaje de la comunicación no verbal es el primer idioma que aprenden los niños donde los adultos intervienen para ayudarles a dominarlo. Esta es una de las directrices más importantes al interior de las instituciones educativas, ya que es imposible para un maestro transmitir información de manera efectiva sin utilizar señales no verbales. Al aprender una lengua extranjera, una persona debe poder interactuar con otros utilizando señales tanto verbales como no verbales.

**Objetivo.** El propósito del artículo es resaltar la importancia del comportamiento no verbal en la interacción profesor-alumno durante las clases de alemán como lengua extranjera y analizar los diversos métodos y factores estimulantes de la comunicación no verbal que los profesores utilizan en sus clases.

**Metodología, métodos y procesos de investigación.** Se evaluaron nueve declaraciones no verbales relacionadas con la comunicación mediante una encuesta realizada a 34 profesores de alemán como lengua extranjera que dictan clases en Jordania en la Universidad Alemano-Jordana de Ciencias Aplicadas de Madaba, en la Universidad de Jordania y en la escuela de idiomas “Lenguaje Generation Centre” de la ciudad de Ammán.

**Resultados y novedad científica.** El estudio encontró que los profesores de alemán como lengua extranjera utilizaban comportamientos no verbales tanto consciente como inconscientemente y consideraban el contacto visual como una herramienta importante a utilizar en el aula. Los profesores controlaban el curso de su lección manteniendo una postura correcta y usando su tono de voz: estas eran herramientas importantes para detener las interrupciones en el aula. Además, utilizaban expresiones faciales y gestos físicos para expresar y aclarar sus emociones, y creían que las señales no verbales eran fundamentales para un aprendizaje eficaz tanto desde la perspectiva del profesor como la del alumno. También consideraron la proximidad y la distancia como una herramienta muy importante para la interacción entre profesor y alumno.

**Significado práctico.** Al examinar el uso de técnicas de comunicación no verbal en el aula y sus resultados desde la perspectiva de los profesores, el presente estudio contribuye al conjunto de conocimientos previamente disponibles sobre comunicación no verbal y enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. Esto proporcionará una comprensión más práctica del uso de estas herramientas. Los profesores que han implementado técnicas de comunicación no verbal en sus aulas pueden abrir el camino respecto a su aplicabilidad en una variedad de entornos que aún no han sido tratados en otros artículos de investigación. Este artículo describe los métodos de comunicación no verbal que los profesores de alemán utilizan en sus clases y que encuentran efectivos. De este modo, se responde a la pregunta en cuanto a que si los profesores utilizan intencionalmente o no técnicas de comunicación no verbal en el aula, y se discuten numerosos fundamentos para su uso.

**Palabras claves:** lenguaje corporal, comportamiento no verbal, enseñanza, interacción, alemán como lengua extranjera.

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## Introduction

Non-verbal cues are necessary for good face-to-face communication [1]. In fact, the origin of human communication shows that people initially communicated solely through non-verbal cues – for instance, using a menacing gaze, domineering conduct, territorial conduct, or humbling gestures [2]. NVC is a skill that is partially learned at birth, and it gets better with experience. Infants communicate non-verbally with their environment before they begin to speak, such as through crying or laughing. Preverbal children only use non-verbal means of communication with others [3]. Non-verbal communication is, in fact, the first language that people teach and acquire.

Adults' verbal and non-verbal behaviours are both related; non-verbal behaviour supports verbal communication. For illustration, when people are speaking to one another, their hands frequently move automatically. This holds true for both interpersonal interactions at work and in the classroom. NVC and non-verbal conduct should not be ignored as a result [4].

The use of NVC in education is continuously at the forefront of development. It seems inconceivable that a teacher could impart knowledge without using non-verbal cues. NVC can, however, occasionally obstruct communication between the speaker and the listener. Consequently, educators should consider how they use non-verbal cues in the classroom [2].

When a teacher is in front of a class, they are communicating with the students in different ways than when they are communicating with the students online, where they can only see each other through a screen [5]. NVC is crucial in classroom interactions because education requires constant communication between students and teachers [3].

Non-verbal communication is important to foreign language teachers. Lessons captured on camera with non-verbal behaviour are unmistakably lessons, even without audio. This can be seen in teachers' movements and students' interactions [6]. In this study, we are examining non-verbal communication and its influence in the classroom. We raise the question: How crucial is it for instructors at the German-Jordanian University of Applied Sciences in Madaba, the University of Jordan, and the Language Generation Centre in Amman (Jordan) to communicate with their students through non-verbal cues and body language?

## Literature Review

### ***The concept of non-verbal communication***

*Any circumstance in which at least two people speak or write to one another is considered communication* [1]. The mediator between the sender and the receiver is communication.

H. Ellgring identifies three types of behavioural communication: communicative, interactive, and informative [7]. Communicative behaviour occurs when the sender intentionally delivers a specific message to the recipient, such as by indicating a direction, with a gesture of the hand. Informative behaviour denotes the meaning of the behaviour that is intended to be understood by the listener in a similar way. For example, blushing can be interpreted as shyness or anger. Interactive behaviour is the type of behaviour that results from the dynamic interaction of elements, such as dodging someone on the street.

According to H. S. Rosenbusch, the main function of communication is to transmit messages. In a classroom, NVC has the function of gaining the attention of others or clarifying certain statements. It encompasses the extra-verbal elements that speakers use to communicate with one another. These elements can be gestures, facial expressions, certain movements and so forth. NVC is understood as a direct mutual communicative tool between the people [3]. Non-verbal behaviour is acquired implicitly, starting from birth and humans gain more control over it over time.

*Body language and non-verbal communication* are not interchangeable terms. In communication, there are three terms used to distinguish its varieties: non-verbal vocal communication or paralinguistic, non-verbal non-vocal communication, and verbal communication. Non-verbal vocal communication includes intonation and speech accompaniment. Non-verbal non-vocal communication encompasses the concept of body language and includes elements such as facial expressions, gestures, posture, body tension, gaze behaviour, breathing, dynamics, and energy and artefacts [8–10].

According to R. E. Riggio et al., communication science distinguishes between visible communication behaviours and audible communication behaviours. Visible behaviours include facial expressions, posture and body orientation, whereas audible behaviours include, for example, intonation and speaking rhythm [4]. Studies have shown that in communication, only 7% of understanding is determined by content, whereas 38% is determined by intonation and 55%, by body language. This means that 93% of our communication is non-verbal. If body language and intonation do not match the content, the content will not be understood. This leads to the importance of using NVC in class [11]. In addition, according to J. Košinár, verbal communication constitutes one-third of a conversation, the other two-thirds are NVC [10].

G. Keller mentions that because non-verbal behaviour explains and clarifies verbal utterances, the non-verbal and verbal behaviour should match. If they are

incongruent, the non-verbal behaviour often has more weight than the verbal statements [12].

Elements of non-verbal behaviour are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation. When you laugh, different parts of your face change, you shake your head or bend your body and so on [11, 27]. Compared to verbal language, non-verbal behaviour is difficult to control; indeed, one has hardly any control on the physical responses in any difficult situation or when suffering from stress [3].

H. Ellgring further distinguishes between conscious and unconscious signals. Conscious signals are sent by the sender with intent, verbal messages are done consciously. Unconscious signals, such as the involuntary raising of an eyebrow in response to shock, are conveyed without conscious intent by the sender. Teachers often consciously use non-verbal signals in class when verbal expressions are not sufficient or not possible. In such cases, teachers use non-verbal signals to provide additional explanations [7]. Conscious non-verbal cues vary from culture to culture. In western cultures, a hand with three raised fingers denotes “excellent”, and it is used to signify that a student has performed admirably. In contrast, this gesture would be interpreted as a threat or a sign that the student has done something utterly wrong in Middle Eastern societies.

### ***Non-verbal behaviour in foreign language lessons***

There is a distinction between teachers who intentionally use non-verbal cues in the classroom and those who do so unintentionally. Consciously employed non-verbal behaviour enhances learning in the classroom. Teachers, for instance, can purposefully alter the environment of the classroom by changing their tone of voice since students can tell when they are in a certain mood [10]. Eye contact can also be used consciously. For example, students look away when they want to evade the attention of the teacher. If a student asks a question, the teacher consciously directs his/her gaze at him/her and answers the question [3].

According to M. Argyle et al., it is difficult to determine whether non-verbal signals are recognised consciously or unconsciously [9]. Both verbal messages and non-verbal signals, such as pointing at something with a finger, are often recorded consciously by both the sender and the recipient. Most non-verbal cues are transmitted subconsciously by the sender but consciously perceived by the recipient. Or perhaps the signals would be picked up unconsciously by the sender and the receiver. Alternatively, the signals could be sent deliberately by the sender but received subconsciously by the recipient. Additionally, recipients could intentionally utilise gestures to develop a comprehension of the sender’s non-verbal cues even if the sender himself/herself is not conscious of his/her significance.

Students and the teacher are in constant communication during a class, and non-verbal communication is a significant component of the instruction. During the explanation phase, either the teacher positions himself/herself to face the speaker or the students position themselves to face the teacher [3].

Non-verbal behaviour can be transmitted over six channels. The first of these channels is the auditory channel, in which one hears the accentuations, volume or voice of the speakers. The second channel is the visual channel, where the sense of sight captures the speakers or hearers movements, like the movement of the hands or head, as well as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, and posture. The tactile channel refers to touch stimuli, such as a touch on the shoulder. The olfactory channel refers to smell perception, while the thermal channel provides information about physical temperature of the partner. Finally, the gustatory channel involves the sense of taste [4].

Above all, learning a foreign language should improve one's ability to interact with others in a practical way. Hence, it makes sense to include and, in fact, give increased focus to non-verbal language in foreign language courses in addition to verbal language as the primary mode of communication. The analog indications of non-verbal language serve to either support or contradict the verbal language, and signs can be further separated into digital signs of verbal language and non-verbal analog signs [3]. The use of non-verbal cues to clarify spoken words is referred to as metacommunication in this context.

Metacommunication is seen as being extremely beneficial in the field of German as a Foreign Language (GFL) because students can give feedback using NVC. Additionally, challenges or obstacles that arise when learning GFL can be solved because students can understand spoken messages better when employing non-verbal symbols [3]. Non-verbal language is considered a method of decoding difficult verbal messages. However, the use of non-verbal signals in heterogeneous German classrooms will not be helpful since intercultural differences make even NVC difficult. On the other hand, one can assume that the use of non-verbal signals in homogeneous German groups is helpful since there are fewer misunderstandings in the interaction.

Because NVC affects how the teacher and student interact with one another, non-verbal behaviour also has a significant influence on the teaching of foreign languages. For instance, a student who thought some of the teacher's information was inaccurate made a certain gesture in a foreign language session [6]. The teacher understood the facial expressions of the learner and used gestures and facial expressions to correct the mistake without interrupting the lesson. In addition, both the teacher and learners can use gestures and facial expressions to fill in a missing word or to correct a mistake non-verbally. If the learner's sentence is missing the third person, the teacher can lift three fingers to show the learner that the noun in the third person is missing. However, this works only in a homogeneous learning group in which the learners belong to the same culture group.

### ***Encouraging non-verbal behaviour among learners***

The use of non-verbal cues encourages teacher-learner communication and enables the teacher to control student disruptions. Cooperation between the teacher



and the students as well as among the students themselves is hampered by this non-verbal language [11].

Teachers are able to mediate classroom communication; they can interrupt and stop others from speaking. For instance, making eye contact with a student who is speaking while the teacher is listening is regarded as a positive and respectable indication of encouragement. On the other hand, looking away while a person is speaking is understood as disrespect and signals disinterest. Teachers frequently focus on the active students and ignore the others, or they glance at the disruptive and inactive students and ignore the others, leaving the others feeling ignored or rejected. This is because it is difficult for teachers to make non-verbal eye contact with the 10 to 50 students in a class. To avoid such issues, teachers should conduct some exercises at the start of the lesson. Such exercises will allow them to make eye contact with all their students during the greeting phase.

Often times, students will not answer teachers' solicitations of answers, which would make any teacher anxious, at which point they involuntarily look around or move on to another question. It would be better for teachers in his/her situation to cultivate a calm and broader perspective. Teachers should observe their exchange of gazes more frequently and be sure that their gazes are distributed evenly among all learners. They should also pay attention to whether their gaze is directed at a person or into empty space.

NVC affects relationships between teachers and students as well as the atmosphere in the classroom. An uncomfortable and unfavourable classroom environment leads to an unpleasant learning environment, whereas a nice and cozy environment supports an agreeable learning experience. If teachers respond swiftly and effectively to students' actions, non-verbal cues from the teacher have a substantial impact on the students' drive to study [13, 14].

Various studies have shown that teachers' non-verbal behaviour affects their students' mood, learning ability, feelings and emotions, and social behaviour, and vice versa [15, 3]. For example, a dour face does not express happiness, whereas a smiling face expresses contentment. The smiling face of the teacher at the start of the lesson gives the students a positive feeling. This first positive interaction encourages the students to begin the lesson in high spirits [3].

Another study by C. Caswell and S. Neil showed the impact of teacher language use on classroom discipline and student response [5]. Threatening behaviour expresses aggressiveness, dominance and generates anger and anxiety. Teachers who display threatening behaviour are perceived as lacking self-confidence and insecure, whereas those who are loud express threatening behaviour. Teachers may lose their attractiveness in front of the students. Instead, the teacher should remain calm, sympathetic, and friendly [3].

In the study by C. R. Seligman et al., attractive students with a personable voice were considered intelligent by the teacher and received better grades than the other students [16]. Furthermore, J. E. Bates found that students who frequently communicated with the teacher through non-verbal behaviour (i.e., through eye



contact and a smiling face) received the same active positive response from the teacher. These students were then rated more positively, which, in turn, had a positive effect on the classroom interaction [17]. Thus, teachers should analyse and pay attention to learners' non-verbal signals. Students should be able to express their feelings and emotions either verbally or non-verbally. Not being able to do so, hampers their ability to learn and their interaction with the teacher.

Joy, which arises in a positive environment, has been found to support the learning process [18]. Eliciting a feeling of shock and surprise, interrupts any cognitive processes [19], which causes a student to become more attentive, and helps the student to be vital and stimulated, and in some cases even confused [18, 19]. Sadness is a negative emotion; a sad person exhibits few gestural or mimicked expressions, struggles to maintain eye contact, and rarely moves in the room and would speak in a low tone of voice [20, 21]. Grief prevents interactions and has a negative effect on the classroom climate. Anger is the most dangerous emotion because it disrupts communication [21], and takes hold of the social and interpersonal behaviour [19]. An angry teacher who suffers from stress often shows quick and inadequate reactions and creates the feeling of being under pressure [18, 21]. As for fear, there are two types: trait fear and state fear. Trait fear deals with the permanent attribute of the person, whereas state fear is situation-dependent and caused by specific people, place, or object. People who are fearful lose control over a situation and are restless and nervous [19]. In a classroom, there can be other examples of emotions such as disgust, aversion, and repugnance. These emotions occur more frequently among teachers of science and technology [18, 22]. Eliciting interest also plays a significant role in interactions with students [23]. As it is considered a positive emotion, in which one feels satisfaction and self-confidence [24], it is an important emotion for positive classroom interactions. In contrast, boredom in class is perceived as a negative feeling by both teachers and learners. Many factors may explain boredom, such as an uninteresting lesson topic, a one-sided lesson design or the teacher's personal character. If boredom is the main obstacle in facilitating interaction in the classroom and it minimises learning performance, teachers should choose non-boring instructional methods [25].

## Materials and Methods

This paper assumes that non-verbal behaviour is an important tool for German teachers in facilitating teacher-learner interaction in GFL classes. To test this assumption, we formulated statements about non-verbal communication that would be confirmed or disapproved by interviewing 12 GFL teachers. These interviews were conducted in 2018 [26] and later interviews were done in 2021 in at the German-Jordanian University of Applied Sciences (GJU) in Madaba, Jordan. Further 6 GFL lecturers from the University of Jordan (UJ) participated in the research in 2021, as well as other 16 German language teachers from the Language Generation Centre (LGC) in Amman, Jordan. These three institutions were chosen because the authors could access them to conduct the interviews.

The following statements about non-verbal communication used in German classrooms (S1 to S9) were formulated according to past conclusions from the studies mentioned above.

S1: Teachers play a central role in the lesson.

S2: Teachers use non-verbal behaviour both consciously and subconsciously.

S3: Eye contact is essential.

S4: Teachers' posture is inevitable in the class and regulates the flow of the class interaction.

S5: Tone of voice is the best tool to stop disruptions in the classroom.

S6: Physical gestures clarify emotions.

S7: Facial expressions provide emotional feedback in class.

S8: Proximity and distance are important in teacher-learner interaction.

S9: The emotions of the teacher and the learners play a significant role in successful teaching.

To test these statements, interview questions were developed and used to interview GFL teachers at GJU, UJ and LGC [26]. All participants were informed of the objectives and methods of the research; their written consent of participation was solicited. The interviews, which were partly conducted face-to-face and partly online via Zoom and on the phone, lasted an average of 45 minutes per person. The interviews were anonymised, manually analysed, and compared to the findings of the previously mentioned studies. Table 1 below presents the statements that the current work examines in addition to the main questions that were asked to the interviewees regarding each statement.

Table 1

The statements and their related questions

Statements	Questions
S1: Teachers play a central role in the lesson	1. With the widespread use of the Internet and online learning, how important do you think the teacher and their role in the classroom is? 2. Which traits, in your opinion, are crucial for a teacher's personality?
S2: Teachers use non-verbal behaviour both consciously and subconsciously	1. Do you use non-verbal behaviour consciously or unconsciously during class? 2. For what purposes do you consciously use the non-verbal behaviour (if you consciously use the non-verbal behaviour)?
S3: Eye contact is essential	1. What possible uses for the gazes during interactions between teachers and students? 2. To what extent do you think eye contact is crucial for expressing emotions? 3. Are you able to understand students' non-verbal cues? Provide examples please? (eye contact) (These three questions deal with the subcategory (eye contact))
S4: Posture is inevitable in the class and regulates the flow of the class interaction	1. In your opinion, what role does posture play in the teacher-learning interaction? 2. As your experience has shown, which movements in the classroom are optimal in promoting teacher-learner interaction?
S5: The tone of voice is the teacher's best tool to stop disruptions in the classroom	1. Voice and intonation play an exceptional role in attracting students' attention. To what extent do you confirm this statement?

S6: Physical gestures clarify emotions	1. What role do hands play in communication? 2. Can the gestural signals lead to misunderstandings? Please, provide an example.
S7: Facial expressions express emotions. Facial expressions provide emotional feedback in class	1. To what extent are facial expressions important in the classroom in order to achieve teacher-learner interaction? 2. What are the emotions that can be expressed using the face?
S8: Proximity and distance are important in teacher-learner interaction	1. How can the closeness and distance between the teacher and the students facilitate interaction? (This question deals with the subcategory (spatial distance)) 2. How can the closeness and distance between the teacher and the students increase interaction?
S9: The emotions of the teacher and the learners play a significant role in successful teaching	1. What role do teachers' emotions like "joy", "surprise", "sadness", "anger", "fear", "interest" and "disgust" play in classroom communication?

## Results and Discussion

The nine statements about non-verbal communication were verified given that there was enough agreement between the data obtained from the interview and the nine statements.

For S1, all interviewed teachers agreed with the statement that the teacher plays a central role in the classroom. In addition, two teachers from GJU [26] believed that the teacher should be humorous and competent and should consider the heterogeneity of the students in the classroom.

For S2, all interviewees use non-verbal behaviour both consciously and subconsciously depending on the situation. In situations, where they consciously use non-verbal behaviour, they had certain goals, such as attempting to explain something further. The responses confirm H. Ellgring's findings about the communicative behaviour, where teachers use gestures to explain more as opposed to only using verbal language [7].

For S3, almost all the interviewees consciously use eye contact in their interactions, this is consistent with the findings of H. S. Rosenbusch, where it is stated that if a student asks a question, the lecturer consciously looks at the student and answers the question [3]. The teachers confirmed that eye contact helps in expressing emotions and it is impossible to avoid eye contact in class. They went on to explain that encouraging conversation and upholding classroom discipline both depend on eye contact. This confirms the statements of Bates that using eye contact and smiling positively impacted teacher-learner relationship [17].

For S4, all the interviewees agreed that their straight posture is unavoidable in class and regulates the flow of the interaction. They disclosed that they use certain movements to show dominance in the classroom, as found by C. Caswell and S. Neil, as well as by C. Timpner and R. Eckert [5, 11].

For S5, all the interviewees agreed that their tone of voice is their best tool for preventing disruptions in the classroom. This claim is consistent with that of G. Keller [12].

For S6, all the interviewees stated that they use gestures to attempt to explain something better, discipline their students, and use fewer words. These functions of physical gestures, as well as their importance, were identified by S. Molcho and were mentioned and confirmed by C. Timpner and R. Eckert [8, 11].

For S7, almost all the teachers affirmed that they use facial expressions to express emotions intentionally in class. This hypothesis was consistent with the finding of P. Ekman and W. V. Friesen [28].

For S8, half of the interviewees said proximity and distance are important for teacher-learner interaction. They believed that closeness and distance depend on what is being taught in the classroom. The other half of the interviewees believed that the teacher should not get too close to students. This contradicts the finding of H. S. Rosenbusch that closeness creates a beneficial and pleasant relationship with students [3].

Finally, for S9, all the interviewees said they use non-verbal behaviour to express emotions such as joy, interest, anger, and surprise. Almost all of them felt that they do not express fear and disgust through non-verbal behaviour because these emotions are not common in the classroom. They added that emotions of joy and interest create a positive atmosphere in the classroom, thereby promoting teacher-learner interaction, which confirms the finding of D. Ulich and P. Mayring [18]. Almost all the interviewees agreed that eye contact is used to express emotions.

All the interviewees confirmed the importance of the teacher's non-verbal behaviour for teacher-learner interaction in the classroom, confirming the finding of H. S. Rosenbusch [3]. Half of the interviewees agreed with the results of mentioned studies that illustrated the negative effects of the teacher's excessive use of non-verbal behaviour. They explained that excessive teacher movement in class can disrupt interaction. This is consistent with the findings of J. Brophy and C. Evertson that teachers' overuse of non-verbal behaviour confuses students [15].

Finally, all the interviewees emphasised that non-verbal behaviour is particularly important for foreign language teaching. They explained that non-verbal behaviour entails less speaking on the part of the teacher, which saves time and effort, and that the teacher can hold monolingual lessons in the target language, which has a positive impact on student performance. They concluded that non-verbal behaviour fosters better understanding of the new language that students will ultimately use in their day-to-day lives. These findings are largely consistent with the mainstream view on the significance of non-verbal behaviour in securing an efficient learning environment that helps to improve classroom culture, students' interactions and their love for the subject matter. Using non-verbal behaviour, a teacher can utilise plenty of effective teaching techniques that assist him/her in delivering the information and get the students engaged in the classroom, hence reaching the optimal level of student-teacher interaction where both the teacher and the student are important [28].

## Conclusion

This study outlined the various non-verbal actions that German language teachers believe are crucial for teacher-learner interaction as well as the various motivations that underlie their use in the classroom. It showed that the elements of non-verbal behaviour and their role in teacher-learner interaction enable the teacher to explain lesson topics efficiently, as the students would remember new concepts better and interact more during class. Non-verbal behaviour was also found to increase teacher control over the classroom and reinforce discipline. The findings of this study that non-verbal behaviour promotes teacher-learner interaction thus confirmed the findings of earlier studies. All the 34 interviewees in this study also strongly agreed that teachers' non-verbal behaviour in the classroom is both inevitable and necessary. They likewise agreed that emotions can also be an important factor in teacher-learner interaction, as students can understand teacher's intentions and feelings through the use of non-verbal behaviour, thus facilitating interaction.

It can thus be concluded that the teacher's non-verbal behaviour in teaching, promotes teacher-learner interaction and that non-verbal behaviour in German lessons plays a significant role in arousing student interest.

This survey of teachers cannot be considered representative yet. An extended quantitative study could relate the findings of this study to other institutions that teach GFL to give more weight to the results.

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