

A Study on Lecturer's Gestures in the EFL Classroom Context

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to get the types of lecturer's gestures commonly transpired in the EFL classroom and to get the impact of lecturer's gestures toward students' motivation. To get the answer, lecturer of Cokroaminoto Palopo University became the subject of this study which selected purposively. Then, to obtain the data, classroom observation and semi-structured interview were used as data collection techniques, respectively to find out the types of lecturer's gestures used in the EFL classroom and also to get the impact of lecturer's gestures toward students' motivation. The result of both research questions revealed that there were three classifications regarding on types of gesture commonly transpired in the EFL class; Highly-implemented types of gesture, Medium-implemented types of gesture, and Low-implemented types of gesture. Furthermore, the types of gesture commonly implemented by the lecturer of Cokroaminoto Palopo University was illustrator and it was classified as highly-implemented types of gesture. Meanwhile, regulator-gesture was classified as medium-implemented types of gesture and low – implemented types of gesture was emblem gesture. Another finding was that there were two impacts of lecturer's gestures; positive impact and negative impact. The positive impact of lecturer's gestures was the lecturer can help the students to understand the material easier through his illustrator gesture. However, the negative impact the lecturer's hand gesture in explaining material can distract the students focus.

Keywords: Gestures, lecturer's gestures, EFL classroom, classroom interaction

INTRODUCTION

Nonverbal communication has the essential role in the English foreign language classroom especially in assisting students' language communicative competence. In this case, nonverbal communication becomes a part of how teacher communicate verbally to the students. It also known as a part of interaction in the classroom in which affect students achievement. It is because nonverbal communication becomes the way of the teachers to attract students willingness to learn language skill. Little attention has been given teacher practical teaching techniques that will help English language teachers incorporate this essential element into their classrooms.

The relationship between teachers and students can be improved if teachers make effective use of nonverbal communication. Besides, students' cognitive ability and efficiency in learning will be promoted (Cooper, 1988). When we talk about means of communication, language perhaps is the first which occurs to us. Here, language is referred to as a sign of a combination of sound and meaning. The general trend of communication studies has largely been focused on language.

In fact, communicative means does not just involve verbal channel, it also encompasses varieties of nonverbal forms. In the nonverbal forms, teachers attempt to use their body language, gesture, and facial expression in order to support their speech. Then, it can be stated that teachers who have a good nonverbal communication will directly engage students interest in learning English. English which is known as the international language used in the entire the world especially in Indonesia as a foreign language which categorized as the medium of instruction in the classroom.

Then, to develop their language skill, teachers should creatively interact with the students in a good verbal and nonverbal communication. Because, both dimensions of communication are importance to be applied during the learning process. Nonverbal, as the term suggests, does not involve any use of words or speech. Birdwhistell (1961) Holds that information carried by verbal forms during an interaction accounts for no more than 30% while the rest is all sent through nonverbal means.

The importance of nonverbal communication can also be seen in the division of communicative language ability into language competence and strategic competence in teaching English, among which strategic competence refers to mastery of nonverbal communication in term of body language notably gesture. Samovar, Porter, and Jain (1981) Positively express their view that most authorities believe that in a normal two-person conversation, the verbal rents carry less than 35% of the total social meaning of the situation and that more than 65% is carried on the nonverbal band.

The urgency of this research lies out on twofold, in one hand there only few literatures traced as regard to investigate issue specifically only on lecturer's gestures in the EFL context of Indonesian university, in another hand some of the university students sometimes did not understand on what lecturer has been said in which he/she frequently used English as a medium of instruction whereas they are in the EFL country, as the consequence some of the lectures may be ill-favoured and some others may be preferred for certain students, since they are able to engage more deeply with the lecturers's word as impact of gestures (Clark & Trofimovich, 2017). Then, by seeing the phenomena, the researcher is interested in conducting a research on lecturer's gesture especially in the EFL classroom context that occur at the university of Cokroaminoto Palopo. Particularly this research aimed to find out the kinds of lecturer's gestures that commonly used in the EFL classroom and also to find out the impacts of lecturer's gestures to the students' motivation.

GESTURES IN THE CLASSROOM

Before moving further into the types of gestures applied in the classroom, we need to better understand about the nature of gestures. Gesture is considered a part of non-verbal communication as a whole. Gesture as a subset of a broader term, and this is frequently used as a term in the field of applied linguistics and language teaching and yet it is a concept that needs to be explicitly defined. Regarding the etymology of the word *gesture*, it goes back to a Latin verb, which means ‘to bear, to carry; to perform, to accomplish’ (Kendon, 2004). In earlier uses, the word referred to deportment or the way in which a person carried his own body (Kendon 2004). The word in its modern use derives from the medieval word, *gestura*, which means ‘mode of action’ (Kendon 2004). Later and up to the beginning of the eighteenth century the word was used to refer to the expressive use of the body namely, of the hands and face, and that is why the focus on gesture was chiefly in the area of rhetoric (McCafferty & Stam, 2008).

Contemporary studies define gestures as symbolic movements of the arms and hands related to ongoing talk (McNeill, 1992). Gesture, according to Kendon (2004), is name for ‘visible action’ when it is used as an utterance or as a part of utterance. Gestures, according to McNeill (1992), are manual symbols, which are synchronized with linguistic units and parallel in semantic and pragmatic function to the same linguistic units; they can perform text functions like speech and develop together with speech in children.

Having regard to the importance of gestures in the classroom, according to Ekman & Friesen, (1969) there are four types of gestures important for effective communication in a classroom, first is the illustrators, this refers to those types of body gestures or movements when an individual illustrates a point by smiling, pointing or moving hands. The second is regulators, it is the body languages which control turn taking and other procedural aspects of interpersonal communication. The third is Emblems, it refers to those gestures which can be translated in words and are intentionally used to transmit message. And the last is Affect displays, it is another type of body language necessary for language learners to process. These are behaviors that express emotion. Hence all of these types of gestures will be taken into account as the theoretical constructs of this research.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is in the trend of qualitative research. This research was conducted at university of Cokroaminoto Palopo. The subject of this research was the lecturer at university of Cokroaminoto Palopo. The research applied purposive sampling technique to select the participant. The researcher relied on observation and semi-structured interview as data collection technique. Furthermore, this investigation was guided by qualitative data analysis theory as suggested by Miles et al. (2014).

FINDINGS

The types of lecturer’s gestures commonly occurred in the EFL classroom

The first research question is intended to get types of lecturer's gestures frequently occurred in the EFL classroom especially at the University of Cokroaminoto. After conducting observation for four meetings, the researcher found that there were four interchangeable types of gesture commonly transpire in the teaching and learning process. Then, those types of gesture were divided into three categorization of gestures and it was consists of highly-implemented type of gesture (HIGT), medium-implemented type of gesture (MIGT), and low-implemented type of gesture (LIGT). Those categorization types of gesture would be clearly described in order to get the result of the first research question. In general, in a teaching and learning process, lecturer frequently exhibited variety type of gestures where through the use of gesture, they could convey their insights to the students. To get the clear description about types of gesture commonly occurred, the result would be described as follow:

Excerpt I : Illustrate



Figure 1: gesture by moving hands

The above image exhibited that a lecturer explained about the material especially about teaching strategy where in the process of his explanation, he hold his right hand while pointing at his watch. At that time, he said 'when you became teacher, then you have children, wife or husband, then there would be

problem in your neighborhood, then when we came to school, it would be late'. A gesture showed by lecturer is indicated as illustrate something important to students where it is proved by his right hand pointed to his watch. Then, it is called as illustrator gesture.

Excerpt II: Illustrate

Another nonverbal communication of a lecture also appear in a first meeting which still talked about the same material. Then, the gesture of a lecture could be seen below:



Figure 2: gesture by holding head

As shown on the above image that a gesture shown by a lecture was also clasified as illustrate and it was involved as a type of gesture transpired in the process of teaching. In depth, the *lecture lifted his left hand and then point at his brain*. This gesture was done when the lecture illustrate about students' habitual in the beginning of the meeting. Indirectly, a lecture wanted to give advise to students about the importance of pray before starting the process of learning.

Excerpt III: Illustrator

The second meeting was observed on Wednesday, 14 March, 2018 and the English lecture came from Cokroaminoto university as the subject of this study. In depth, the lecture was asking students to discuss in a group. The gesture which captured by the researcher can be seen below:



Figure 3: gesture by pointing

The image above exhibited that the students were discussing in group of four. One of the speakers from the group would present his topic. However, suddenly a lecturer was standing and he was lifting his hand straight. His gesture indicated that a lecturer was asking students to keep quiet. Because, one of the students would talk at that time. It was supported by his speech in which he said “over there, did you listen to your friend, please kept quiet while listening to your friend’s speech”. The type of the gesture above did by lecturer is classified as illustrator where a lecturer was pointing at something. He attempted to convey message by using his hand.

Excerpt IV: Illustrator



Figure 4 gesture by pointing

A lecturer asked a student who wanted to explain his topic in order to raise his student’s voice. Then. The image showed that a lecturer looked at his student and he said ‘Ardi, you friends said that they did not hear you voice, because your voice like as an ant, could you raise your volume?’. At that time, his hand is lifted to the front side while showing his smile expression. It was shown that a gesture above was illustrator in which a lecturer used his natural hand while smiling.

Excerpt V: Illustrator



Figure 5 a lecturer was lifting his right hand while showing his smiling.

Another equal gesture also shown on the above image where a lecturer was lifting his right hand while showing his smiling. At that time, a lecturer said ‘you have to remember that when you were in a discussion forum, then you became a speaker. Indirectly, all students would listened on you, then you should be confidence, do not be shy’. By seeing his speech, it was clear that a lecturer gesture’s is categorized as illustrator. Then, it was also classified as highly-implemented types of gesture.

Excerpt VI: Regulator Gesture

In a first meeting, the researcher did not only find one type of gesture. But, there was also another type of gesture occured in the teaching process where it was happen in a three minutes and forty seconds. For more detail could be described as follow:



Figure 6: Lecturer lifted his right hand to make the turn taking

The image displayed that a lecture was lifting his hand and he was pointing his hand to the student. His nonverbal communication is followed by words and he said **“Ya, silahkan” (yes, please)**. By seeing both gesture and speech, it is indicated that the lecture gave an opportunity to the one of the students to give a question. At that time, one of the students interrupted to the lecture’s explanation and the lecture permitted a student to ask question. The lecture’s gesture is indicated as a sign in giving a chance to the students to speak and it is known as regulator gesture in which it deals with the way in controlling turn taking.

Excerpt VII: Regulator Gesture

After identifying the first meeting, the next meeting was observed on Wednesday, 14 March, 2018. In a second meeting, the lecture started to brainstorm students mind with the previous material that has been learned. For more detail as follow:



Figure 7: gesture by gripping hands

The list of images above showed that the lecturer used his hand naturally as gesture in teaching English. It can be seen at the *the lecturer also gripping the hands. At the time he said anybody one give me explanation about the strategy, Taufik do you want to comment about the strategy an than Taufik said No sir! I don't have idea.*

Excerpt VIII: Regulator Gesture



Figure 8: gesture by moving hands

As can be seen on the image above that a lecturer was waiting students to ask question. In this case, he was silent while waiting students stated their opinion about material conveyed by lecturer.

Excerpt IX : Emblem Gesture

Another meeting was observed on Tuesday, 21 March 2018 where a lecturer asked students to check their task.



Figure 9: Lecturer took off his phone

The eighth image above exhibited that the lecturer took his handphone and stood while saying **“tunggu dulu ya”**. Gesture shown by a lecturer is indicated as emblem gesture in which a lecturer attempted to convey a message to a student and it is followed by his gesture. The gesture that occurred above is classified as emblems gesture in which it is in line with the theory of Ekman & Friesen (1969). In this case, Emblems are nonverbal behaviors that can be translated into words and that are used intentionally to transmit a message.

At that time, a gesture intentionally hold his hand phone because he is called by certain person. Then, intentionally, he took his hand phone and directly gone outside. By seeing his gesture, it was clear that a lecturer was asking permission to the students in order to answer calling from his friend.

Excerpt X: Affect Display



Figure 10: gesture by smiling

As can be seen on the image above that a lecturer was smiling while lift his right hand where his gesture is indicated as affect display. At that time, he said **“sementara saya menjelaskan seperti ini,**

jatuh, buyar dia bilang X buyar pikirannya” when a lecturer state the statement, all students were laughing at it. In this case, the lecture attempted to communicate with the students while showed his emotion. Unconsciously, a lecturer also showed his smiling face. In depth, affect display showed by a lecturer is categorized as low-implemented type of gesture. It was because his gesture only occur for once in a meeting.

Excerpt XI: Affect Display



Figure 4.11 gesture by smiling

As can be seen on the image above that the lecturer displayed his smiling to his students where it was also followed by his students who showed expression of laughed at him. At that time, a lecturer open his mouth while his teeth was visible. It is indicated that a lecturer showed affect display’s gesture. Moreover, he said ‘if you search the internet there are no pictures like that (the students laughed) but you find a lot of words, then I instruct you to draw about the meaning of strategy.

Students’ perception about the impacts of lecturer’s gesture to the students.

This part presents the data regarding with the students perception of the lecturer’s gesture. The interviews were done to find the information about the students’ perception of the gesture by used lecturer. From the researcher identified the effects of lecturer’s gesture to the students. The result of the interview were divided into two part, those are (a) the positive impacts of the lecturer’s gesture and (b) the negative impacts of lecturer’s gesture.

a. The positive impact of the lecturer's gesture to the students' motivation

Based on the analysis of students' interview, it was found that the use of gesture can give the positive impact to the students' motivation. Most of the students agreed that the use of the gesture can help them in learning English. When their lecturer used gesture in teaching, they felt easier to understand the material and make them enjoy to the learning process.

1) The lecturer can help the students to understand the material easier.

When the students were asked whether the lecturer's gesture in teaching are helpful or not, most of the students answered that the use of gesture can help them understanding what their lecturer explained.

2) The lecturer cheerful and vibrant face makes student enthusiastic in learning.

The students were asked whether the lecturer expression affect the students' motivation in learning or not. All of student answered that lecturer's expression affect the students' motivation in learning. The lecturer who always shows cheerful and vibrant face can increase their enthusiasm to the subject.

3) The lecturer's smile makes students relax and enjoy in learning.

All of the students stated that they like a lecturer who always show a smile when they were asked whether the students like the lecturer who always show smile or not. According to the students, a lecturer's smile is very meaningful for the students relax and comfortable in the process of teaching and learning. It can be seen from the statement of ST.

4) The lecturer's eye contact shows the lecturer's attention and appreciation to the student.

Although most of the students feel nervous and uncomfortable to speak when the lecturer looked at them, some students like it. They feel more appreciated and attended by the lecturer

5) The lecturer's touch show affection and encouragement to the students

The students were asked about whether the students had ever been touched by their teacher or not and their feeling about the touch. Some students answered that they had been touched by their lecturer on their heads, shoulders, and their hands. The lecturer touched the students' hands when they did handshake, it expressed the politeness between lecturer and students. The lecturer touched their head or shoulder when she gave advice, encourage students and showed affection. Sometimes, the lecturer also used it to warm the students who did a mistake.

6) The students feel more courageous to ask about the lesson when the lecturer approaches them.

The students asked whether they are comfortable or not if the lecturer was coming close to their seat. Most of students stated that they like if the lecturer approaches the students on by one. The students can use the lecturer also can correct the students answer at the time and it is very helpful for the students.

b. The negative impacts of lecturer's gesture

Beside those positive effects of the lecturer gestures, the result of students' interview also showed that there are some negative impacts of lecturer's gestures to the students.

- 1) The lecturers hand gesture in explaining material can distract the students focus

Almost students agreed that the use of gesture, especially hand gesture can help them in understanding the lesson. However, there was a student said that sometimes the lecturer used too much hand movement and it distracted the students focus on learning.

- 2) The students feel unappreciated if the lecturer appoints them by using index finger

The lecturer who used index finger to appoint his/her students, make students feel unappreciated. Some students said that the use of index finger in appointing someone shows impoliteness.

- 3) Students feel nervous if the lecturer shows serious face all the time

The lecturer who show serious face all the time during teaching, create a tense classroom atmosphere. Most of student feel uncomfortable and nervous, and it affects the students understanding

- 4) Students feel nervous and awkward if the lecturer looking at them while speaking

Some students feel more appreciated and attended by the lecturer if the lecturer looks at them when they are speaking, on the contrary, some students feel nervous and uncomfortable if the lecturer did that. They even cannot focus and be awkward.

DISCUSSION

This study concerned on three main topics: types of gesture commonly appeared in EFL classroom and lecturer reason in using particular gesture, and the impacts of lecturer's gesture to the students. After finding the result of this study, the researcher found that English lecturer in the process of teaching did all gestures as cited in the literarus regarding the types of gestures. In this case, gestures used by lecturer consist of illustrators, affect display, regulator gesture, and emblem. Those kinds of gestures occur in a process of learning and performed by the English lecturers. However, the lecturer frequently used illustrator's gesture during the learning and teaching process. In addition the lecturer frequently used that gesture spontaneously. He used illustrate to convey certain material to the students. Moreover, it is used to provide such an example for students in order to make students more understand about the topic.

In light of revealing other types of gesturers performed by lecturers, previous researches provide more specific classification of gestures into the categories of Communicative Gestures and Performative Gestures. For example Lim (2017) utiizes an approach informed by Systemic Functional Theory. Lim (2017) found that Communicative Gestures are sub-classified as Language Independent Gestures, Language Correspondent Gestures, and Language Dependent Gestures. While the present research contributes on enhancing understanding toward mainstream types of gestures, Lim's (2017) finding was likely generating knowledge on how gestures in the classroom can be studied and the meanings made analysed. Therefore the current research enhance to some extent the richness of types of gestures in EFL classroom.

In an attempt to classify the types of gestures used by the lecturers, thus results in many gestures were emerged in ongoing classroom, it was indicated that most the classroom activity were dominated by non verbal communication. Another research (Maldini, Usodo, & Subanti, 2017) also found substantial amount of gestures in the process of micro teaching as a means of conveying ideas and concepts in learning. During the process of micro teaching, subjects using the four types of gesture that is iconic gestures, deictic gesture, regulator gestures and adapter gesture as a means to facilitate the delivery of the intent of the material being taught and communication to the listener. In addition Gestures were helpful to deliver ideas and concept, it also would affect the listener in communication.

In connection to second research question, semi-structured interview became the second instrument of to address the aforementioned case. In depth, there were several reasons of lecturer in performing certain gesture. First, gesture became a main media used by lecturer in the process of teaching and learning in which to ascertain students understood about the material, lecturer should directly performed certain gesture especially illustrate gesture in the language classroom. In line with this, Matsumoto and Dobs (2017) suggest that gesture is an important element of interactional competence for teaching and learning in L2 classrooms. In fact, Livingstone (2015) established that the gestures used in each interactional context are well suited to the teaching method used.

Secondly, the lecturer frequently used his hand movements as an assistance to point or illustrate something essential. It was proved that gestures helped lecturers to create a more efficient classroom (Roviello, 2004) as well as to make the learning process run well. Thirdly, in increasing students willingness to learn, lecturer also employed his nonverbal communication especially gesture in assisting students psychological problem especially their motivation. It cannot be denied that students are expected to have higher motivation during the process of learning. Castellon (2006) also argued that gesture is an important visual resource that can play a valuable role for language learner in creating effective discourse practices and environments and this would also contribute to the students motivation during the process of learning.

Fourthly, gesture used by lecturer was that to represent the material to be understood easier by students. Castellon (2006) added that gesture and talk are important resources in instructional conversations, especially when the topics are abstract, general, or difficult to express for students learning a second language. In that case, the lecturer was supposed to have his/her own style in teaching certain material to the students. In depth, gesture also became identity for lecturer to teach students in the language classroom. By applying gesture in teaching English, it will influence students' achievement where students will be more active in the language classroom.

The last key point to close the discussion of this section was the impact of lecturer's gestures to the students in learning. as cited in the finding that there are positive and negative impacts of gestures

performed by the lecturer. Overall, the positive impacts of gesturers were mainly to facilitate learning, including to better understand the material, make the students enthusiastic, relaxed and enjoy the class, and becoming courageous because of certain gestures. These findings covered the limitation of Alibali et al. (2014) that in future studies, there has to be a research which concerns on gesturers in connection with effective instructional communication. However the negative impacts of lecturers gestures were also emerged, such as distracting students focus, the students feel underestimated, unappreciated and feel nervous to a certain gestures. For that case a research (Tai, 2014) suggest that the language educators should use proper body language, For example; pay attention to where to raise or lower our tone, when to speak softly

CONCLUSION

Based on discussion the lecturer in this investigation used all of the types of gestures that classified by Ekman & Friesen (1969) in teaching EFL classroom. The researcher found that there were four interchangeable types of gesture commonly transpire in the teaching and learning process. Then, those types of gesture were divided into three categorization of gestures and it was consists of highly-implemented type of gesture (HIGT), medium-implemented type of gesture (MIGT), and low-implemented type of gesture (LIGT). The researcher found many images which were identified as illustrators' gesture, 1 image which was identified as regulators gesture and also 1 image for emblems and two images which were identified as affect display.

There were some reasons about why lecturer performed particular gesture in the EFL classroom. First, gesture became a main media used by lecturer in the process of teaching and learning in which to ascertain students understood about the material, lecturer should directly performed certain gesture especially illustrate gesture in the language classroom. Secondly, lecturer frequently used his hand movements as an assistance to point or illustrate something essential. Thirdly, in increasing students willingness to learn, lecturer also employed his nonverbal communication especially gesture in assisting students psychological problem especially their motivation. It cannot be denied that students are expected to have higher motivation during the process of learning. Fourthly, gesture used by lecturer was that to represent the material to be understood easier by students. Another reason was that every lecturer should have own style in teaching certain material to the students.

There are six positive impacts gesture used by the lecturer at Cokroaminoto Palopo University. Those are 1) The lecturer can help the students understand the material, 2) The lecturer cheerful and vibrant face makes students enthusiastic in learning, 3) The lecturer smile make students relax and enjoy in learning, 4) The lecturer eye contact shows the lecturer attention and appreciation to the students, 5)

The lecturer touch shows affection, encouragement, and politeness, 6) The students feel more courageous to ask about the lesson when the lecturer approaches them.

There are four negative effects of gesture used by the lecturer at Cokroaminoto Palopo University. Those are 1) The lecturer hand gesture in explaining material can distract the students focus, 2) The students feel unappreciated if the lecturer appoints them using index finger, 3) Students feel nervous if the lecturer shows serious face all the time, 4) Students feel nervous and awkward if the lecturer looking at them while speaking.

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