

# Lecturer Eye Contact on the Students' English Learning Motivation: Motivated or Demotivated

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## Abstract

This study aims to describe the effect of lecturer eye contact on student learning motivation and the students' perception on it during their interaction in EFL classroom. It employs a descriptive method in cluster random sampling taking 30 students of English Education class. The data sources of this study were observation, questionnaire, and interview and analyzed descriptively. The observation results that students are more likely to pay attention to the material, more enthusiastic in learning and more respectful to the lecturers having and keeping an eye contact in the teaching and learning process. The result of the questionnaire shows that the lecturer eye contact significantly affects the students' learning motivation indicated by the mean score of the questionnaire, that is 3.71 falling into high category. These two findings are supported by the data gained from the interview in which most students argued that lecturer eye contact has many positive impacts on their learning. An excessive eye contact of the lecturer to the students, however, can become a hindrance to draw students' focus on the materials presented. Therefore, the lecturer eye contact to nurture students' learning motivation should be considerably sufficient and not excessive.

*Keywords:* Eye contact, learning motivation, perception.

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## 1. Introduction

Teaching as an academic process carried out by lecturers effectively communicates three (3) inseparable things, namely knowledge, skills, and attitudes presented in two accomplishing ways of communication, both verbal and non-verbal. Verbally, the lecturers deliver teaching and learning materials to facilitate students' understanding with clear, simple, interesting, effective and productive language instruction framed with good linguistic competences, namely Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics and nonlinguistic competences as well (Muhayyang, 2010). The comprehensive lecturer verbal talk is often unconsciously combined with non-verbal communication, they are facial expressions, body language, posture, eye contact, voice, distance, and proximity. Therefore, both lecturer verbal and non-verbal communication behaviors that contain academic messages are a major factor that should be maximized to organize and nurture the students' learning motivation in English as a foreign language.

In regard to the non-verbal communication behaviors of lecturers in the classroom, Hsu in Richmond and Mc Croskey (2006) assumed that communication is one way to strengthen the positive attitudes of language learners within a very comfortable learning environment designed. One of those abovementioned nonverbal communication behaviors that plays an important role to foster and nurture the students' positive attitude in teaching and learning process is eye contact. Eye contact is a state of direct vision between people in talking which is critical to psychological needs and helps monitor the effects of interpersonal communication built with one another. Through eye contact, lecturers can tell students a message comprising of word for word through the gaze that students will pay attention to.

Furthermore, if the lecturer delivers teaching materials while looking at the students, the students will tend to pay attention too. Some studies show that 50-60 percent of people perceive other people in conversation in which the speakers used 40 percent and the listeners were approximately 70 percent of vision (Setianti, 2008). In addition, Khalifah (2009) said staring sharply, approaching a student, or shaking students' head, for instance, who is making a

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mistake is usually quite effective to avoid and solve the occurrence of disruptive behaviors. A good lecturer will pay attention to students through eye contact. It takes into account that every student needs attention and appreciation from anyone around in the classroom. Maintained eye contact can continuously foster and nurture students' conative domain, such as attitude, interest, self-confidence in learning to go with the flow of designed learning activities. Looking at each student's eyes attentively as a sign that they are being cared for, that what the lecturer says will be of great benefit to them which is believed to be a magnet to attract the attention of every student (Sanjaya, 2010). Eye contact is, therefore, an important channel of interpersonal communication, helping to lead the direction of communication and its signals of interest to others. Besides that, the contact between lecturers and students will further increase the credibility of the lecturer steadily building the way for communication and demonstrating interest, care, warmth of her as well.

Based on the description above, the researchers take into account that it is necessary to examine the effect of eye contact on students' learning motivation by addressing two research questions, namely (1) to what extent does lecturer eye contact affect students' learning motivation? and (2) how do the students perceive the lecturer eye contact in the teaching and learning process? If the above objectives are achieved, this research will provide some theoretical benefits to the development of education issues in terms of the interpersonal communication skills performed in teaching and learning processes of any subject matters taught.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Nonverbal Communication*

This part covers some fundamental theories which become the umbrella of this research, they are definition of nonverbal communication and its functions, eye contact, and learning motivation described in the following lines.

#### **a. How nonverbal communication is defined**

Nonverbal communication is a communication process conveying messages without using words. Using gestures, body language, facial expressions, eye contact, the use of objects such as clothes, haircuts, etc., symbols, as well as ways of speaking such as intonation, emphasis, voice quality, emotional style, and speaking style are the examples of nonverbal communication. The collection of cues, gestures, voice intonation, attitudes and so on allowing someone to communicate with each other is also considered as nonverbal communication. The interesting point about nonverbal behavior is regarded to the Mehrabian study in Basuki (2010) finding that the level of confidence in people's speech, only 7 percent came from verbal language, 38 percent from the clarity of voice, and 55 percent from facial expressions.

In relation to subject matter presentation, the ability of the lecturer in employing nonverbal behaviors in the classroom must be creatively adapted to the conditions of the students as to bridge the material presented can be meaningful to students. Mulyana in Basuki (2010) said that one of the basic human needs is the need for symbolization or the use of symbols to convey certain messages which is used to designate something else based on the agreement of a group of people. When a lecturer, for instance, raises a thumb at a student, it can be mutually agreed that it means good or good, meaning that the student is judged to be able to carry out the lecturer's direction well. Correspondingly, as a lecturer, the hand gestures used in front of the class, varied body movements, and clear and loud voice intonations will help increase students' interest and motivation to learn. Nonverbal behavior can, in short, provide reinforcement for both lecturers' and students' academic and social interaction, in the delivery of the subject matter.

#### **b. Nonverbal Communication Functions**

The functions of nonverbal communication are five, that is repetition, substitution, contradiction, accentuation, and complement described in brief as follows:

- 1) Repetition: nonverbal behavior can repeat verbal behavior. For example, someone nods their head when they say "Yes," or shakes their head when they say "No," or indicates the direction (with their forefinger) to go to find a toilet.
- 2) Substitution: nonverbal behavior can replace verbal behavior, so without speaking a person can interact with other people. For example, a busker comes to someone's car and then without saying a word the person shakes her hand with her palm pointing forward (as a substitute for "No"). These nonverbal cues that replace words or phrases are called emblems.

- 3) Contradiction: nonverbal behavior can contradict or conflict with verbal behavior and can give other meanings to verbal messages. For example, someone praises a friend's achievement while pouting her lips.
- 4) Accentuation: Nonverbal behavior can reinforce, emphasize or complement verbal behavior. For example, using hand movements, slower tone of voice when giving a speech called as an affect display cue.
- 5) Complement: nonverbal behavior can regulate verbal behavior. For example, when the lecture is about to end, a student looks at her watch two or three times so that the lecturer immediately closes her lecture.

## 2.2. Eye Contact

Based on the study above, facial expressions derived from eye contact are the dominant nonverbal communication as an indication of one's self-confidence playing an important role in conveying social messages and feelings; people often look in the eyes of others to predict how that person is feeling. Through eye contact, a person can also check whether or not other persons are paying attention to or having an agreement with in the conversation taking place. In some contexts, meeting the eyes often evokes strong feelings that approach the opposite sex of the interlocutors involved measuring mutual attraction with each other.

In some cultures, an eye view is often interpreted as a statement of the seriousness of attention, listening, seeing, understanding, daydreaming, dreaming, confused, angry, love, sad, seductive, sensual, dominating, letting go, and indifference, all of which must be interpreted in certain socio-cultural context. For example, in some nonverbal skills training in Japan, the curriculum always includes how to adjust the frequency of the eyes of the audience in a public meeting (seminars, symposia, and workshops). Too little view is said to be less friendly, less respectful, and less attentive. The direction of one's eyes can show when and where one's attention is headed (Hattori in Liliweri, 2002).

According to Wright in Sitompul (2009), a person makes an eye contact when having such kind of actions: 1) looking for information, 2) showing attention and interest, 3) inviting and controlling interactions, 4) dominating, threatening and influencing others, 5) providing feedback at the time of speaking, and 6) expressing attitudes. Furthermore, he said eye contact can be said to be a means of learning simply revealing that : 1) the lecturer teaching with sparkling eyes and looking at the student shows a feeling of pleasure towards the students, 2) the lecturer's eye contact is defined as an attention to the students, 3) the lecturer's eye contact makes the students feel that she is underestimating themselves, 4) the lecturer is getting angry with the students, 5) the lecturer who does not make an eye contact means no attention to the students, 6) the lecturer who does not make an eye contact means that she does not listen to the students, 7) the lecturer who keeps looking at the student means supervising the students, 8) the lecturer is more concerned with students who have higher achievement or lecturer's favoritism. Additionally, he assumed that the lecturer's goals for making an eye contact with students are for 1) inviting interaction, 2) showing concern and interest, 3) unpaying attention or being uninterested in the students, 4) threatening students, and 5) expressing attitudes, such as anger, underestimating, and so on. In line with these points above mentioned, eye contact can, in large extent, aid in a more effective learning process as it has a positive impact on remembering information.

Furthermore, the messages communicated by the eye vary depending on the duration, direction, and quality of the eye's behavior. If eye contact is shorter, we may think people are not interested, shy, or busy. Conversely, once people keep an eye contact quite longer toward something or someone, they may probably have a deep interest, warmth, get impressed, or have their heart touched, and any other positive feelings and thoughts appeared. Among several other studies, Knapp in Sullivan (2014) categorized the following four functions of eye communication briefly described as follows:

- a. Finding feedback  
Eye is frequently used to seek feedback from others. When talking to other people, someone looks at the other person seriously, as if they are asking for that person's opinion.
- b. Inviting other people to talk  
It is to inform other speakers that the channel of communication is open in which someone is able to talk and to possibly have turn-taking as a consequence. In the lecture hall, for instance, when the lecturer addresses a question and then looks at one of the students, she clearly expects any student to respond her questions without saying anything.
- c. Indicating the nature of the relationship  
It is to hint at the nature of the relationship between two people. Basically, positive relationship is commonly characterized by an intently focused gaze and the negative one is usually characterized by avoiding an eye contact.

This is an interesting point to take into account as the same eye movement may suggest subordination or superiority. A boss, for example, tends to stare at her subordinates when speaking or otherwise does not want to see him directly. Likewise, subordinates may look directly at their superiors or vice versa, just stare at the floor.

d. **Compensating for the increased physical distance**

An eye movement can compensate for increasing physical distance. By making eye contact, the physical distance that separates the two people will psychologically be overcome. In addition, someone catches the eye of another person at a party, for example, they become psychologically close even though the physical distance between them is considerably far. Not surprisingly, eye contact and other expressions of psychological closeness, such as self-disclosure, are positively related; if one increases, so will the other.

### 2.3. *Learning Motivation*

Motivation by Harmer (1991) is defined as the "internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action" (impulse from within oneself to achieve something). When someone has a goal to be achieved, especially if the goal is attractive, then that person will be motivated to do anything to achieve her goal. In other words, motivation is the reason that encourages someone to initiate and provide direction in the process of achieving a goal. In the context of teaching and learning process, each student can relatively have different both short and long learning goals from other students due to learning motivation.

In conjunction with the dissimilar oriented learning goals, it takes into account the availability of two kinds of motivation of a student, that is extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Harmer, 1991). Extrinsic Motivation comes from outside a person making him pursue a sequence of action to gain a goal oriented. Conversely, intrinsic motivation occurs within a person to achieve her goals. These motivations are considerably important factors that determine the success or failure of a foreign language learner because they directly relate to what happens in the classroom during the teaching and learning processes. Students' enthusiasm for learning will be greatly influenced by what happens in the classroom as a result.

When the interaction between lecturers and students takes place in teaching and learning process, one of the main determining factors that affect the student's extrinsic motivation is lecturer's attitude. It reflects her relatively ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving towards her students in which it becomes a big mirror of her personality as well of how she makes some great efforts in the class. That is the reason why a lecturer needs to establish good verbal and nonverbal communication with students. Treating students fairly can also help increase motivation to learn because they feel they are given the opportunity to be part of the class, for example by giving equal attention to all students.

### 2.4. *Perception*

Perception is a process preceded by five senses indicating a stimulus received by the individual through the receptor. Those senses are a link between the individual and the world outside that is differently sensed, organized, and interpreted so that the individual realizes and understands what is sensed (Uma, 2013). Gibson, et al in Uma (2013) defined perception as a cognitive process that is used by individuals to interpret and understand the world around them (towards objects). He also explained that perception is the process of giving meaning to the environment by individuals. Therefore, each individual give meaning to the stimulus differently even though the object is the same. The process of interpreting this stimulus is usually influenced by individual experiences and learning processes. The way the individual sees a situation is often more important than the situation itself. In other words, perception is a process that involves the entry of messages or information into the human brain which becomes an integrated state of the individual towards the stimulus it receives and interprets in a different way due the slight differences of learning experiences.

## 3. **Methodology**

This research employs mixed method with QUAN-QUAL type aiming to provide a clear and accurate picture of an individual, event, or process. It involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data to determine the extent to which lecturer eye contact affects students' learning motivation and qualitative data to describe the students' ways of perceiving lecturer eye contact in English teaching and learning process. To collect the data through questionnaire, observation, and interview, the researchers randomly chose 30 students of English Education Study Program, Faculty

of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar. Questionnaire using a Likert scale was to find out the effect of lecturer eye contact on students' learning motivation and analyzed quantitatively; observation with field notes was to see directly the eye contact that occurs between lecturers and students in the teaching and learning process in the classroom; and semi-structure interview was to know how the students perceive the lecturer eye contact and to support data attained through questionnaire. The results of both observation and interview data were analyzed qualitatively.

#### 4. Findings and Discussions

This part covers the answers to the two research questions put forward previously, namely (1) to what extent does the lecturer eye contact effect the students' learning motivation? and (2) how do the students perceive the lecturer eye contact in the teaching and learning process? The findings of these two questions are described in the following lines.

##### 4.1. Teachers The effect of the lecturer eye contact toward students' learning motivation

Quantitative data collected by distributing questionnaire consisting of 10 items found that the lecturer eye contact highly effected the students' learning motivation that was obviously indicated by the gained mean score of the questionnaire which is 3.71 falling into high category that can be seen in the table 1.

**Table 1.** The Range Score of Student Motivation

No	Motivational Scales										N = 30	Total score	Mean score	Category
	SA		A		Un		D		SD					
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%				
1	10	33.3	14	46.7	6	20	0	0	0	0	30	124	4.13	Very high
2	4	13.3	21	70	5	16.7	0	0	0	0	30	119	3.96	Very high
3	10	33.3	16	53.3	3	10	1	3.3	0	0	30	126	4.20	High
4	12	40	15	50	3	10	0	0	0	0	30	129	4.30	High
5	6	20	15	50	7	23.2	2	6.7	0	0	30	118	3.93	High
6	4	13.3	10	33.3	15	50	1	3.3	0	0	30	107	3.57	High
7	6	20	7	23.3	9	30	7	23.3	1	3.3	30	100	3.33	Moderate
8	1	3.3	6	20	14	46.7	7	23.3	2	6.7	30	93	3.10	Moderate
9	1	3.3	8	26.7	8	26.7	12	40	1	3.3	30	94	3.13	Moderate
10	1	3.3	4	13.3	10	33.3	12	40	3	10	30	102	3.40	Moderate
<b>Total</b>												<b>3, 71</b>	<b>High</b>	

The Table 1 shows that the mean score of the questionnaire is 3.71 simply meaning that the motivation of students is in high category. Based on the result analysis of the questionnaire given, the students' answers are described as follows:

##### Item 1

*Lecturer keeping an eye contact with students in teaching and learning process means paying attention to students.*

The result shows that 33.3% of students strongly agreed, 46.7% of them agreed, 20% of them got undecided, and none of them disagreed with the above statement. The finding reveals that the lecturer's eye contact was an indicator of paying attention to students during teaching and learning process.

##### Item 2

*Lecturer eye contact implies that she/he asks for a response from students when asking questions, for instance, in teaching and learning process.*

The result shows that 13.3% of students strongly agreed, 70% of them agreed, 16.7% of them got undecided with the statement above. The finding takes into account that the lecturer eye contact simply means waiting for any responses from the students in the teaching and learning process. Additionally, it obviously figures out that most students are able to interpret their lecturer nonverbal communication behavior reflected through her eyes inviting them do something to meet their lecturer's willingness.

Item 3

*Lecturer eye contact can encourage students to actively participate in teaching and learning process.*

The result shows that 33.3% of students strongly agree, 53.3% of them agreed, 10% of them were undecided, and 3.3% of them disagreed with the above statement. This finding simply indicates that most students strongly perceive the lecturer eye as one of learning motivation factors that strongly encourage them to actively do and pursue some sequences of action toward something or someone as a result.

Item 4

*Lecturer eye contact encourages students to pay attention to the explanation of the material presented.*

The result shows that 40% of students strongly agreed, 50% of them agreed, and 10% of them felt undecided, and none of them disagreed with the statement above. The finding implies that the lecturer eye contact encouraged students to pay attention to the description of material presentation provided for making students learn and absorb a large amount of comprehensible information as to develop the cognitive, affective, and conative domains of theirs.

Item 5

*Lecturer having an eye contact with students makes them feel appreciated.*

The result shows that 20% of students strongly agreed, 50% of them agreed, 23.3 % of them felt undecided, and 6.7% of them disagreed with the above statement. The finding definitely describes that lecturers' attention through eye contact can have a positive impact on the condition of students' psychological and social aspects during classroom interaction as they are being appreciated for their involvement in such kind of formal academic atmosphere framed by some sequences of learning and teaching activities designed.

Item 6

*Lecturer eye contact makes students feel more confident and enthusiastic in the teaching and learning process.*

The result shows that 13.3% of students strongly agreed, 33.3% of them agreed, 50% of them were undecided, and 3.3% of them disagreed with the statement above. This finding obviously reveals that some students do not believe that their self-confidence and learning enthusiasm can be triggered and nurtured by the eye contact of lecturer steadily kept sharing during teaching and learning interaction in the classroom. It takes into account that the eye contact, in large extent, may put the students into an uncomfortable feeling of involvement and expression which possibly reduce their self-confidence as a result.

Item 7

*Students feel neglected if the lecturer never keeps an eye contact during the teaching and learning process.*

The result shows that 20% of students strongly agreed, 23.3% of them agreed, 30% of expressed doubted, and 23.3% of them disagreed with the statement. The finding certainly figures out that the students sometimes feel neglected or even disappeared in the classroom if the lecturer never keeps an eye contact with during the teaching and learning process. It may come on the surface as the eye contact as part of non- verbal behavior of teacher means of communication is necessary to consider as it reveals a great attention and genuine affection given in a very special spot of their heart to anyone involved in both formal and non-formal interaction.

Item 8

*Lecturer who always shares and keeps an eye contact with students make them feel depressed in the teaching and learning process.*

The result shows that 3.3% of students strongly agreed, 20% of them agreed, 46.7% of them got undecided, 23.3% of them disagreed, and 6.7% of them strongly disagreed with the statement above. This finding clearly indicates that the students get any doubt to express what they actually feel if the lecturer always looks at students in the teaching and learning process made students feel depressed. As many as but most of them expressed doubts about having an opinion, namely

#### Item 9

*Students will feel annoyed if a lecturer draws her attention to them through an eye contact.*

The result shows that 3.3% of students strongly agreed, 26.7% of them agreed and got undecided respectively, 3.3% of them strongly disagreed with the above statement. This finding certainly confirms that the students are getting hesitated to say that the eye contact shared by their lecturer puts them into an annoying sense of feeling during the phases of teaching and learning in the classroom. It makes sense that they have and keep a great sense of trust and respect to their lecturer either inside or outside of classroom.

#### Item 10

*Lecturer eye contact makes students get nervous and prefer to be silent during teaching and learning process.*

The result shows that only 3.3% of students strongly agreed, 13.3% of them agreed 33.3% of them felt doubted, 40% of them disagreed, and 10% of them strongly disagreed with the statement above. This finding obviously describes that the lecturer eye contact will never make the students feel anxious and silent in classroom interaction designed by their teacher.

Furthermore, the data gained through direct observation with some fieldnotes reveal some important notes as follows:

- a. The lecturers maintaining an eye contact looked more friendly and had a great affectionate care to the students.
- b. Most students preferred attentively listening to the lecturers keeping an eye contact while lecturing to the ones who do not.
- c. One of the lecturers admonished students through eye contact with no words spelt.
- d. The lecturers directly gazed into the students' eyes expected to give an answer to the questions addressed. Conversely, they sometimes looked away to those students who are unable to give any expected responses.
- e. Some students ignoring the eye contact with the lecturers do not draw their attention to the material presented.
- f. The students show a great respect of theirs to the lecturers having an eye contact rather than the ones who only take their eyes into whiteboard, laptop and books. Consequently, most of the students are getting busy with their smartphones, talking to friends, or doing other unexpected things during the teaching and learning process.

The data obtained above convincingly take our mind that the lecturer eye contact has a significant effect on students' learning motivation once the teaching and learning is taking place in the classroom. The use of eye contact simply caters some indicators, they are (1) a lecturer has a great concern for her students making them feel attentive and appreciated of their existence, (2) a lecturer is always waiting for the students' reaction or responses toward something questioned implying the students' active participation, (3) it looks like a magnet tracking the students' desire to learn in which they attentively listen to lecturer's teaching and learning material delivery, (4) it demonstrates interest, care, warmth and credibility actively creating, nurturing and sharpening the occurrence of interpersonal communication both lecturers and students, and (5) it builds a good trust and respect of students to lecturers leading them find their self-confidence and learning enthusiasm. Those three clues might, in short, come on the surface since the lecturer eye contact is able bridge a good channel of communication both lecturers and students (Khalifah, 2009; Sanjaya, 2010; Knapp in Sullivan, 2014; & Wainwright in Sitompul, 2009). Besides those positive effects of lecturer eye contact, Sitompul (2009) argues that eye contact can also be something unpleasant for others in interaction. In the context of teaching and learning process, the eye contact of lecturer may signal a threat to students as the lecturer can show her anger making students find psychological impacts such as anxiety, annoying, and depression.

#### 4.2. Student's perceptions of the lecturer eye contact in teaching and learning process

The result of interview shows that the students positively perceived the lecturer eye contact as they thought it necessary to accomplish the lecturer verbal behavior in the classroom. Their own positive views reasonably indicated the importance of the lecturer eye contact making them feel appreciated, get focused in learning, increase their learning interest and participation, create a very conducive learning atmosphere, and build intimacy between them either inside or outside of classroom. On the contrary, some students also negatively thought it since it psychologically intervened them during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The psychological

interferences the students might feel are attentional distraction, underestimation, unpleasantness, and other negative feeling appearances. Both ways of students perceiving their lecturer eye contact in the classroom interaction can be seen in the following extracts.

Extract 1 (Aq, 27 Juli 2021)

*“Penting bu karena melalui kontak mata, mahasiswa merasa **lebih diperhatikan dan biasa lebih fokus**”* (It is important ma'am because through eye contact, students feel more cared for and usually more focused).

Extract 2 (Hd, 27 Juli 2021)

*“Menurut saya, kontak mata seorang dosen memengaruhi kefokusannya mahasiswa terhadap proses penerimaan materi perkuliahan, karena dari kontak mata tersebut mampu membuat mahasiswa **merasa diperhatikan dan dihargai**, mahasiswa mencoba memberikan hal yang serupa pula, memperhatikan dan menghargai dosen sekalipun materi yang diterima kurang dipahami”* (In my opinion, a lecturer's eye contact affects students' focus on the process of receiving material, because it can make students feel cared for and appreciated, they try to give the same thing, pay attention and appreciate the lecturer even though the material received is not understood).

Extract 3 (An, 27 Juli 2021)

*“mahasiswa **merasa diapresiasi serta dosen mampu memahami langsung keaktifan mahasiswanya di dalam kelas**”* (students feel appreciated and lecturers are able to directly understand the activeness of students in the classroom).

Extract 4 (Pd, 27 Juli 2021)

*“Kontak mata antara dosen dan mahasiswa sangat membantu saat proses belajar di kelas, karena dengan kontak mata, **suasana belajar jadi lebih serius dan tidak membosankan**”* (Eye contact between lecturers and students is very helpful during the learning process in classroom, because it makes the learning atmosphere become more serious and not boring).

Extract 5 (Im, 27 Juli 2021)

*“mahasiswa merasa kalau mereka diperhatikan oleh dosen sehingga **minatnya untuk ikut proses belajar mengajar meningkat...**”* (students feel that they are cared for by lecturers so that their interest in the teaching and learning process increases...).

Extract 6 (Hd, 27 Juli 2021)

*“Dampak positifnya itu tadi **terjalinnnya keakraban antara dosen dan mahasiswa**”* (The positive impact is the establishment of intimacy between lecturers and students).

Those above extracts empirically proved that the lecturer eye contact has some significant influences on students learning motivation in English as a foreign language classroom. It takes into account that the students having a seat for the course feel pleasure to go with all the lecturer instruction as the lecturer eye contact becomes a means of information, attention and feedback seeker to every student (Wright in Sitompul, 2009). In short, it clearly figures out that the lecturer eye contact positively plays its roles as another way of building a good interaction both lecturer and students in the classroom since it is to find out feedback, invite other to talk, reflect the nature relationship building, and adapt the increased physical distance (Knapp in Sullivan, 2014).

However, some students negatively perceive the use of eye contact as one of unplanned nonverbal languages coming along with the lecturer verbal behaviors. It may come on the surface as they think the lecturer eye contact may make students uncomfortable and awkward, unhappy because of the effect of low self-confidence and lack of seriousness in learning, disrupt concentration due to excessive eye contact, cause misunderstanding between lecturers and students which is interpreted as a sign of attraction or displeasure between each other. These data can be seen in the extracts below.

Extract 7: (Aq, July 27, 2021)

*“kadang mahasiswa **jadi risih atau canggung** dengan adanya kontak mata dosen yang berlebihan”* (The students sometimes become uncomfortable or awkward with the lecturer's excessive eye contact).



Extract 8: (An, July 27, 2021)

“...terkadang membuat mahasiswa **nervous, grogi** selama proses belajar mengajar” (...It sometimes makes students nervous, nervous during the teaching and learning process).

Extract 9: (Af, July 27, 2021)

“Dampak negatif kayaknya lebih ke **psikologinya** mahasiswa. Ada biasa teman yang **tidak suka** dilihat sama dosen, lebih memilih duduk di belakang. Tapi memang rata-rata temanku yang begitu, itu yang tidak PD orangnya, atau yang agak nakal sama malas. Mungkin takut ditanya-tanya sama dosen atau disuruh menjawab” (The negative impact lies on the psychological condition of students. There are some friends who don't like to be seen by lecturers prefer to sit at the back. Overall, my friends who are in such kind of condition, are those who do not possess high self-confidence, or who are a bit naughty and lazy. Maybe they are afraid of being asked questions by the lecturer or being invited to answer).

Extract 10: (Im, July 27, 2021)

“... mungkin ada **mahasiswa yang tidak terlalu senang** kalau terus diperhatikan oleh dosen sehingga mungkin mereka **merasa tertekan** sehingga mereka agak segan dan takut untuk mengajukan pendapat, sehingga mereka cenderung pasif di kelas” (... maybe there are students who are not too happy if they are constantly noticed by the lecturer so they may feel pressured so that they are somewhat reluctant and afraid to express their opinions, so they tend to be passive in class).

Extract 11 (Pd, July 27, 2021)

“...namun tidak selamanya kontak mata mampu membuat suasana kelas menjadi nyaman. Kontak mata yang berlebihan bisa **membuat kelas menjadi tegang**, saat ujian lisan misalnya” (...but eye contact does not always make the classroom atmosphere comfortable. Excessive eye contact can make the class unrelaxed during oral exams, for example).

Extract 12 (Hd, July 27, 2021)

“...bisa **memunculkan berbagai kesalahpahaman** dari kontak mata itu, salah satunya adalah **pihak dosen atau mahasiswa bisa sampai jatuh cinta**, merasa sangat disayangi atau bahkan merasa disentimeni sama dosen. Kadang muncul salah paham. Misalnya **merasa disentimeni atau bahkan merasa tertekan** oleh kontak mata itu jadi mahasiswa jadi susah berpikir dan bertindak” (...eye contact can lead to various misunderstandings, one of them is that the lecturer or student can fall in love, feel very loved or even feel underestimated to the lecturer. Misunderstanding sometimes arises. For example, feeling underestimated or even feeling pressured by eye contact, so students have difficulty to think and act accordingly).

The two findings above lead to the a contradict point of view on how the lecturers keep an eye contact during the stages of teaching and learning in the classroom. Some of the students positively came along with and others dislike due to the negative side appeared. Due to this different perception, a suggestion is come up to avoid misunderstanding regarding to its uses in classroom interaction. Most students suggested that lecturer eye contact with students should be maintained but it should not be excessive to avoid unwanted things that could hinder the achievement of the target learning objectives. Therefore, they suggested that the lecturer eye contact should be evenly distributed, not fixated only on certain students as to make all students feel cared for and appreciated by the lecturer. These suggestions can be seen in the following extracts.

Extract 13: (Aq, 27 July 2021)

“Kontak mata yang dilakukan dosen selama proses belajar mengajar dalam tahap **yang sedang-sedang saja** karena kadang ada mahasiswa yang merasa kurang nyaman kalau terlalu sering diperhatikan sama dosen” (The eye contact made by the lecturer during the teaching and learning process is in a moderate stage because some students sometimes feel uncomfortable if the lecturer pays too much attention to them).

Extract 14: (Hd, 27 July 2021)

“Saran saya **kontak mata bisa dilakukan secukupnya saja** misalnya hal penting yang harus diingatkan pada mahasiswa tentunya membutuhkan kontak mata” (My suggestion is that eye contact can be done in moderation, for example, important things that must be reminded to students certainly require an eye contact).

Extract 15: (An, 27 July 2021)

“Sebaiknya dosen **jangan keseringan melakukan kontak mata** terhadap mahasiswanya dalam proses belajar mengajar karena bisa menimbulkan kegugupan terhadap mahasiswa. Terkadang justru bisa mengganggu mahasiswa dalam proses belajar mengajar Mam” (Lecturers should not often make an eye contact with students in the teaching and learning process because it can cause nervousness. It can actually disturb students in the teaching and learning process, Mam).

The description above implies that the eye contact as part of non-verbal behavior of the lecturer unconsciously taken place accomplishing her verbal behavior should be accordingly maintained and kept in the classroom. It is so reasonable as it may occur insured feeling of students coming along with their great effort of receiving some comprehensible input from the lecturer starting from the early stage until the end of teaching and learning processes. Therefore, it is suggested that the lecturer eye contact with every student should be even, not excessive to feel cared for and appreciated.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion elaborated, the researchers draw two main conclusions as follows:

- a. Lecturer eye contact significantly affects student learning motivation proved by the results of the participants' responses in the questionnaire which show that their motivation falls into high category.
- b. Most students think that lecturer eye contact is important in the teaching and learning process because it has many positive impacts on student learning motivation. However, eye contact is not always considered pleasant for all students as the excessive eye contact can become learning barriers for them.

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