Teachers’ Nonverbal Communication in EFL Classroom

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ABSTRACT
The research was aimed at identifying the kinds of nonverbal communication (NVC) used by the teachers at SMAN 1 Pamboang in teaching English as a foreign language, the functions of the teachers’ NVC and the effect of the teachers’ NVC to the students.

The research applied qualitative research design. The subjects of the research consisted of two English teachers and 14 students of SMAN 1 Pamboang. The instruments of the research were classroom observation, teachers’ interview and students’ interview. The data gathered had been analyzed through data analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing.

The results of this research revealed that there were eight kinds of NVC commonly used by the teachers of SMAN 1 Pamboang. Those were the use of gesture, posture, facial expression, eye contact, touch, vocal expression, distance and clothing. It was found that some of teachers’ nonverbal cues were stand-alone and others were combined with teachers’ verbal messages. Those nonverbal cues were functioning to substitute, complement, accentuate, regulate, repeat and contradict the teachers’ verbal messages. The result of data analysis also showed that there are positive and negative effects of the teachers’ NVC to the students. The proper use of hand gesture when teachers explained the material, smiling, approaching the students at their seat to help them, the proper use of eye contact, touch and vocal expression were very contributive on building the positive relationship between teachers and students, creating a good classroom atmosphere and helping students accepting and understanding the lesson better. On the other hand, using too much hand movement, shouting, staring at students and being too serious when teaching, can create a tense learning atmosphere. Thus, the students feel uncomfortable, nervous, scared and difficult to engage in teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Nonverbal Communication, Teachers, Students, EFL teaching.

INTRODUCTION
Communication is an integral part of human life. People communicate to express their ideas, needs, thoughts, feelings, and knowledge so that an effective communication is needed to understand what people saying and build a relationship with the people around them. Communication takes various forms, one of them is oral or speech. However, when people speak, they normally use their hands, head, eyes, facial expression, bodily postures and symbols to communicate. The impact of these nonlinguistic cues in conversation is called nonverbal communication (Negi, 2009).

Nonverbal communication (NVC) is very important considering people tend to use more NVC in sharing their feeling or emotion than verbal ones. Mehrabian (1971,
1972) had claimed that 7% of message relating to feelings and attitudes is conveyed through words or verbally and the rest 93% is conveyed nonverbally. Therefore, nonverbal signals are crucial to be understood in face to face interactions in order to interpret what someone exactly intended and how well are the words being received. Having greater understanding of nonverbal communication will enhance the quality of life and also give ability to relate to others with a greater degree of understanding, empathy, sympathy and compassion (Calero, 2005).

In teaching and learning process, understanding NVC is very important for the teachers. Teacher’s nonverbal behavior may convey many messages and can create positive or negative classroom atmosphere. Teacher’s appearance, gesture and posture, face and eye contact, voice, touching and proximity will play important role in the students-teacher relationship and it may further affect the students’ motivation and understanding in learning. Richmond (2002) stated that when the teacher improves affect through effective nonverbal behavior, the students tend to listen more, learn more, and have a more positive attitude about school; Effective classroom communication between teacher and student is the key to a positive affect toward students’ affective and cognitive learning.

One of the most commonly used of NVC by the teacher in the classroom is gesture. Using hand gesture like thumb up or hand clapping as a reward after students’ performance will make students feel more appreciated for their works. On the contrary, the teacher who is too strict and rarely smiling to the student will create a tense classroom atmosphere. It makes students nervous and hard to be engaged in learning process. Students will enjoy more the learning if teacher shows the friendliness by smiling, as Hsu (2010, p. 198) stated, “The student-teacher relationship is actually improved by smiling; smile is the best bridge to communicate with students; Students tend to be more relaxed in the process of learning when teachers carry a smile on their faces”.

In sum, If the teacher’s NVC is vivid and alive, it will be helpful for the students’ understanding and motivation in learning English and it is also much easier for students to engage in teaching and learning process. However, nonverbal communication tends to be neglected or poorly understood and controlled by most teachers (Andersen, 1986; Kožić, Žunac, & Bakić-Tomić, 2013). By neglecting it, effective communication in the classroom is not possible which is considered essential for better understanding of classroom instructions. Therefore, the researcher was interested to conduct a study relating to teachers’ NVC. It was crucial to know the NVC used by EFL teachers in classroom context. The result of the study was expected may this research gives contribution to the existing knowledge related to the teachers understanding towards NVC and raises teachers’ awareness of the importance of NVC in EFL teaching. the researcher had formulated three research questions as follows:

1. What kinds of NVC are used by English teachers in SMA Negeri 1 Pamboang?
2. What are the functions of NVC used by the teachers in SMA Negeri 1 Pamboang?
3. What are the effects of the teachers’ NVC to the students?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Studies
Some researchers had conducted studies underlying nonverbal communication in educational environment.

Hsu (2010) conducted a research that investigated teachers’ nonverbal behaviors in relation to students’ motivation for learning English. She concluded that the teachers’ nonverbal behaviors are associated positively and significantly with students’ motivation. Teachers with a smile on their face, is an effective predictor of students’ motivation for learning English. It increases the degree of prediction when teachers demonstrate a relaxed body position, have gestures, and use a variety of vocal expression while teaching English.

Annisah (2013) in her research “The Analysis of Nonverbal Communication Used by Teacher in the Classroom Activities” identified the kinds of Nonverbal Communication used by an EFL teacher and the reason why she used them in EFL Classroom. She concluded that the kinds of Nonverbal Communication used most frequently by the teacher are gesture, body movement and posture, facial expression and eye contact. The teacher applied Nonverbal Communication (NVC) to explain some unclear verbal messages.

In addition, Haneef, Faisal, Alvi, and Zulfiqar (2014) in their research “The Role of Non-Verbal Communication in Teaching Practice” stated that teachers made the learning environment active and interesting through their non-verbal communication whereby students felt alerted in the classrooms and participated in the learning process, which consequently enhanced the level of their motivation, retention, and understanding if the teacher use their body language properly in the classroom. It was concluded that non-verbal communication plays more than 70% role in the field of teaching. This way is more effective to motivate and facilitate the student toward learning. Student can easily understand through symbols and gestures rather than the words.

Based on those researches, it can be concluded that nonverbal communication plays important role in classroom teaching and has positive impact on students’ discipline, understanding and motivation in learning English. In this research, the researcher investigated not only the kinds and the functions of NVC used by teachers at SMAN 1 Pamboang but also to find out the effect of teachers’ NVC based on the students’ perspective.

Some Pertinent Ideas

Nonverbal Communication
According to Adler and Rodman (2006), Nonverbal Communication is oral and nonoral messages expressed by other than linguistic means.
Nonverbal communication is concretized in a group of messages that are not expressed in words and that can be decoded, creating meanings that can accompany, contradict, replace, complete, or accentuate the message transmitted through words” (Dobrescu & Lupu, 2015, pp. 543-544).

Perception
Kotler (2000) stated that perception as the process how someone elects, manages and interprets the entry of information to create a description of the meaningful whole process of meaning giving or mean of the environment.

METHOD
Design
This research is qualitative research. “Qualitative research is the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual data in order to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006).

Data Sources
This research was conducted in SMA Negeri 1 Pamboang, Majene, West Sulawesi. The subject of the research was the teachers and students of SMAN 1 Pamboang. The study applied purposive sampling technique to select the teacher participants. From four EFL teachers of SMA Negeri 1 Pamboang, it was chosen two of them while 14 student participants were chosen randomly.

Instrument and Procedure of Collecting Data
The data were collected through classroom observation and interview. The researcher did classroom observation of the teachers’ teaching process. The classroom observation by using video recording was done for four classroom meetings. The researcher then interviewed the teachers to find out the function of the teachers’ NVC and interviewed the students to find out the effect of the teachers’ NVC to the students.

Data Analysis
After collecting the data using the instruments and following the procedures above, the researcher analyzed the data through the model from Miles and Huberman (1994) which consists of three concurrent flows of activity, those are Data Reduction, Data display, and Conclusion Drawing/ verification

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
1. The Kinds and Functions of Teachers’ Nonverbal Communication
Based on the classroom observation, the teachers performed eight kinds of NVC. Those are gesture, posture, eye contact, facial expression, touching, voice, distance and appearance. Some nonverbal cues were used to substitute the words and others were not stand-alone but they were used to combine and follow certain verbal messages.

a. Gesture
The teachers used gestures in their teaching activity. They mostly performed hand gestures to complement or reinforce their verbal messages when explaining
the material. The hand gesture makes their verbal messages better and more attractive. Besides that, they also use hand gesture to accentuate their verbal messages for many times. The teachers tried to accentuate the important parts of her verbal messages. Based on the teachers’ statement, gestures are used to make students interested to the learning material and understanding the lesson easier. This is in line with Kusanagi (2005, p. 386), She stated that “gestures provide more redundant or complementary input to the speech...when a gestural explanation succeeds, students understand the new language well, and as a result their better understanding may increase their motivation and learning”. Not only in explaining the material, the teachers used gestures to facilitate turn-taking and classroom management.

b. Posture

The teachers performed relaxed body postures when they were explaining the material. Especially for teacher 2, her relaxed body posture was usually combined with smile on her face which indicating her friendliness.

c. Facial expression

Teacher 1 showed various facial expression during her teaching activity. It was found that she expressed her anger, seriousness and disappointment when the teacher found that students were not discipline. However, she sometimes shows her smile and sometimes laugh with her students to make the students relax to study. On the other hand, the teacher 2 rarely showed an angry expression. During the process of teaching and learning, the teacher mostly showed her smile and laughed with her students. According to her, the teacher’s smile is very important for the students. It can create good classroom atmosphere for students to study. In this case, the teacher tried to get closer and show her friendliness to the students by smiling so that the students can be relax and enjoy the learning process. It was supported by Wainwright (2010, p. 156), he suggested that “smile lively and expressive facial expressions evoke positive responses from others, providing information about us which words cannot supply”

d. Eye contact

Both teachers did eye contact with their students during their teaching activity. They did eye contact with their students when they talking to them. The teachers mostly used eye contact to seek information. The teachers often asked a question to find out to what extent the students understood the material and to invite them speaking up. Besides that, the teachers did eye contact to control the student’s behavior. Teacher 1 was found staring to a student to reprimand the students who was not doing assignment. She mostly used the eye contact to complement or strengthen her verbal messages. Similarly, Teacher 2 also used eye contact to reprimand her students. The teacher preferred staring to some students who were very noisy while she explained the material. She stared to the students to signal them to be quiet. The teacher 2 was success to calm down the students without using any words. In this case, it can be assumed that eye contact can be functioned to discipline the students.
This is in line with Huong (2002, p. 33) who stated “If a teacher increases the use of gaze, she is able to reduce disruptions and maintain class order”.

e. **Touch**

The kinds of touch performed by the teachers referred to functional-professional category. Both teachers mostly used touch to complement their verbal messages. When she monitored the students doing their exercise, she saw a student who didn’t do anything at his seat, the teacher 1 tapped a student’s shoulder. The teacher was angry. It is similarly done by teacher 2. When a student was too noisy and did not pay attention to the teacher, the teacher came close to him and touch his shoulder. In this case, the function of the touch referred to negative affect. Although they did it softly, but they touched the students as a warning.

However, touch was also performed as positive affect. Teacher 2 explained the assignment to a student who is confused while touched the student’s shoulder. She also did it when she gave advice to the students. Based on the teacher’s interview, it was found that the teacher’s touch was functioned as positive affect where the teacher touched the student to show her affection, support, and friendliness. This is supported by Bunglowala and Bunglowala (2015) and Wainwright (2010). They suggested that touch is an efficient way of breaking down communication barriers; touch with care, handshakes, hugs, pats, arm around shoulders and guiding hands on the arm or back may suggest warmth, openness and a willingness to engage.

f. **Voice (paralanguage)**

Voice (paralanguage) or vocal expression can be as important as the words themselves. In this case, teacher 1 uses more various vocal expression during the process of teaching and learning than teacher 2. Teacher 1 tend to use a loud voice or even shout when she tried to discipline or to calm down the students. The function of the teacher’s vocal expression is to express her emotion. This is in line with the findings of Kožić et al. (2013), they found that an elevated tone of voice was used in situations when the student teachers tried to calm those pupils who did not behave well. In contrast, teacher 2 rarely used loud voice or shouted. She tended to use gentle voice and monotone vocal expression during teaching.

However, teacher 1 and teacher 2 used vocal expression to accentuate their verbal messages. They stressed and paused their words to accentuate and highlight the important part of their explanation. Besides that, both teacher often used intruding sounds or stammer. Both teachers use the sounds when they were thinking or trying to remember what to say. The teachers used the sound very often in each meeting.

g. **Distance**

Both teachers used two kinds of distance. They used public distance when they explained the material and used personal distance for some purposes. They used personal distance (approaching students) when they checked the students’ preparation and monitored the students doing assignment. According to the teachers’ interview, approaching students is important for the teachers to monitor the students’ work and help the students.
Besides that, teacher 2 also came closed when she tried to reprimand the students. Although the teacher was angry, she preferred approaching and talking softly to her student than shouted at him or reprimanding him in front of the class. She used the personal distance to control the students’ behavior but she tried to not exposing the students’ mistake to all students.

h. Appearance /Clothing

It was found that both teachers dressed neatly and did not use too much accessories. According to the teachers’ interview, using too much accessories will distract the students’ attention in the process of teaching and learning. Moreover, they stated that teacher is a role model for students who should provide a good example and the students are more interested to the teacher who dressed neatly in the classroom. It is supported by the finding of Rasyid (2015, p. 41), he stated that appearing physically neat and clean will reflect the teacher’s clear, modest, thoughtful and managerial mind, so that the teacher’s presence in the classroom will highly be welcomed, expected and respected by the students.

2. The Effects of Teachers’ Nonverbal Communication to the students

Based on the students’ perception, the researcher identified some positive and negative effects of the teachers’ nonverbal communication.

a. The Positive Effects of the Teachers’ Nonverbal communication

1) The teacher’s gesture can help the students understand the material easier

Based on the analysis of students’ interview, most of students like the teacher who uses gesture in explaining the material especially hand gestures. The hand gestures are mostly used by the teachers to accentuate and complement their verbal messages. These kind of hand gesture is very helpful for the students in understanding the teachers’ explanation. This is in line with the research findings of Zeki (2009), he found that the gesture that is acted by teacher is very important for students’ understanding and motivation; it helps them understand the topic better.

2) The teacher’s cheerful and vibrant face makes students enthusiastic in learning.

All of the students agreed that their teachers’ facial expression affects their motivation to study. The teacher who shows a vibrant face during the process of teaching and learning, make the students more enthusiastic to study.

3) The teacher’s smile makes students relax and enjoy in learning.

They also enjoy the process of teaching and learning if the teacher shows her friendliness by smiling. Teacher’s smile can create a friendly atmosphere to study so the students are not nervous. Yuanyuan (2014) also claimed that a good English teacher should take the warm smile into classroom teaching. A warm smile could give students comfortable studying surroundings. Teachers and students can keep their relationships under a happy and comfortable atmosphere.
4) The teacher’s eye contact shows the teacher’s attention and appreciation to the students.

Some students like if their teacher making eye contact with them while they are speaking. It shows that the teacher attends and appreciates of what the students are talking. It is because the teachers who look at their students are perceived as more animated, more interested, and more immediate (Richmond, 2002).

5) The teacher’s touch shows affection and encouragement

Both teachers used touch in the process of teaching and learning. The students stated that they had been touched by their teacher on their head and shoulder. These teachers’ touches are responded positively by the students. The students feel encouraged in learning process if the teacher touches their shoulder when she gives advice and motivated words. Sometimes, the teacher also pat the students’ arm to warn the students who did a mistake. However, the students still feel that the teacher’s touch as her affection to the students. It is supported by Bunglowala and Bunglowala (2015). They suggested that touch plays a significant role in giving encouragement, expressing tenderness and showing emotional supports. It can be even more powerful than words sometimes, especially for establishing a link to students or conveying emotion.

The teachers and students also did handshaking. The students hold and kissed their teacher’s hand in the end of each meeting. Besides of showing respect and gratitude, the students stated that the handshaking shows politeness between teacher and students. Hand holding indicate the existence of a special bond or relationship between two people. It reflects a friendly greeting or a sign of respect (Wainwright, 2010)

6) The teacher’s voice can discipline the students and helps student accept the lesson well.

It was found that both of the teachers used the various vocal expression in teaching such as controlling the loudness level of voice, pausing and stressing their words. Some students like the teacher whom use a loud voice in teaching. It makes students listen and accept the lesson well. They tend to feel sleepy if the teacher explaining the material by using monotone or dull voice. In addition, some students agreed that the teachers’ voice can discipline the students who are too noisy and create a quiet atmosphere to study.

7) The students feel more courageous to ask about the lesson when the teacher approaches them.

It was found that the teachers approached their students for many times. Some students like if the teacher walks around the class and approaches the students one by one. They can use the chance to ask the teacher about the material or assignment. It is very helpful for the students. They also feel closer to the teacher and it encourages them to interact with the teacher. It is because how a teacher using distance or space with the students, communicates how they perceive each other. The teacher who rarely approaches students or allows them to approach her or him is perceived by students as unfriendly, unreceptive, unapproachable, and
nonimmediate. This does not help improve student-teacher relationships (Richmond, 2002).

b. **The Negative Effects of Teachers’ Nonverbal Communication**

1) **The teacher’s hand gesture in explaining material can distract the students’ focus.**

   Some students stated that the use of gesture can distract the students’ focus. The teacher who use repeated hand movement too often can make the students losing track of what the teacher are talking.

2) **The students feel unappreciated if the teacher appoints them by using index finger.**

   The students also feel unappreciated when the teacher appointed them using her index finger. Instead of using index finger, some students prefer the teacher using her palm or thumb and calling their names.

3) **Students feel nervous if the teacher shows serious face all the time.**

   The teacher who shows strict and serious face too often, may create a tense classroom atmosphere. The situation makes the students feel nervous and it affects the students’ acceptance to the lesson.

4) **Students feel nervous and awkward if the teacher looking at them while speaking.**

   Most of students feel embarrassed and awkward if the teacher looks at their eyes while they are speaking. They even cannot focus on what they are talking about and feel uncomfortable.

5) **The students feel scared and frustrated if the teacher shouts at them.**

   Most of the Students feels frustrated and scared if the teacher discipline the students by shouting at them.

6) **The students feel uncomfortable if the teacher approaches them when teaching.**

   Some students feel uncomfortable and cannot focus to study if the teacher approaching them when teaching. They also feel nervous and shy if the teacher comes closed while they are doing assignment. This is in line with the research findings of Rasyid (2015), he stated that coming closed to students when teaching, was rated by the students to be a territory invasion. Therefore, the teachers should keep a distance which allows the students to feel secure, pleasant, and enjoyable.

**CONCLUSION**

1. The kinds of nonverbal communication performed by the teachers at SMAN 1 Pamboang is gesture, posture, eye contact, facial expression, touch, voice or vocal expression, the use of distance and appearance.

2. The functions of nonverbal communication used by the teachers at SMAN 1 Pamboang are to substitute, complement, accentuate, regulate, repeat and contradict their verbal messages.
3. There are seven positive effects of nonverbal communication used by the teachers at SMAN 1 Pamboang. Those are 1) The teacher’s gesture can help the students understand the material, 2) The teacher’s cheerful and vibrant face makes students enthusiastic in learning, 3) The teacher’s smile makes students relax and enjoy in learning, 4) The teacher’s eye contact shows the teacher’s attention and appreciation to the students, 5) The teacher’s touch shows affection, encouragement, and politeness, 6) The teacher’s voice can discipline the students and helps student accept the lesson well, and 7) The students feel more courageous to ask about the lesson when the teacher approaches them.

4. There are six negative effects of nonverbal communication used by the teachers at SMAN 1 Pamboang. Those are 1) The teacher’s hand gesture in explaining material can distract the students’ focus, 2) The students feel unappreciated if the teacher appoints them by using index finger, 3) Students feel nervous if the teacher shows serious face all the time, 4) Students feel nervous and awkward if the teacher looking at them while speaking, 5) The students feel scared and frustrated if the teacher shouts at them, and 6) The students feel uncomfortable if the teacher approaches them when teaching.

SUGGESTION
1. For the teachers, this research investigates the positive and negative effects of teachers’ nonverbal communication to the students. It covers students’ perception on what teacher should do and should not do while teaching. The teacher should consider using nonverbal communication that is expected by the students. It is meant to create a better classroom atmosphere for students and to minimize the gap between teachers and students in the process of teaching and learning.

2. For the next researcher, the further studies are suggested. The findings in this research need to be investigated and proven quantitatively in terms of the effectiveness of teachers’ nonverbal communication on students’ motivation and achievement in learning English.

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