

Body Language in Education and Effective Recommendations to Pre-Service Teachers in Classroom Management

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Abstract: Communication with people is achieved through words. While using words and body language in verbal communication, sign language is used with the deaf and dumb. Sending messages to others can be with our words, sometimes only with our body language. As educators teaching in different branches, we need words and body language to communicate with students influentially. Correct use of body language ensures that the message is conveyed to students more effectively and rapidly. In this study, pre-service teachers will be advised about the importance of body language, the experienced educators' opinions about body language and its necessity in classroom management will be shared. According to experienced teachers, the correct use of body language facilitates the teachers' class management skills. Hence, this article focuses primarily on why teachers should be good senders and receivers of nonverbal communication. The study was qualitative research, and a google-form interview technique was used. We demonstrated ten experienced teachers' views from the researchers' workplace about the significance of the usage of body language based on 3 open and 2 close ended questions.

Keywords: Body Language, Classroom Management, Non-Verbal Communication, Pre-Service Teachers

1. Introduction

People live in different areas in the world and the way of life, and the traditions of people directly affect the communication between them (Celik & Yildiz, 2019). In interpersonal communications, both verbal and nonverbal messages are used simultaneously. In these conversations, verbal messages constitute only a small part of the message exchange. The nonverbal messages sent by facial expressions, hand gestures, body positions, and the rise and fall of the voice cover a larger portion of the messages used in communication. A good listener considers not only what the person he is communicating with, but also what he does with his face, hands, arms, and body. Sometimes it's hard to understand people's feelings. You can't ask themselves, because most of the time they don't want to say how they feel. Since it cannot be learned what these people are feeling by getting inside their heads, we try to understand how they are feeling at that moment by looking at their facial expressions and body symptoms.

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To be able to understand bodily symptoms, it is necessary to gain sensitivity to these symptoms. Body language has the same expressive power as a spoken language with verbal language. What is required is to know the language of this possibility of expression well. If we apply the famous communication theorist Marshall McLuhan's expression for mass communication to nonverbal communication, "the body is the message" (McLuhan, 2008).

It has been proven that people trust body language more than words that comes out of mouths. In our daily lives, politicians, teachers, and senior managers know how to use body language fruitfully and even receive special training on this subject. While expressing their feelings and thoughts, people who support their verbal communication with body language and use body language correctly can make themselves reliable people. We can impress the audience with body language. Body language is a type of nonverbal communication. In classroom management, it is important what kind of message our body language gives to students. The educator needs to know body language in terms of where to stand in the classroom, how frequently to move, how far the distance between legs should be, how to use arm movements, facial expressions, and mimics efficiently. Teachers need to know the basic techniques of using body language to be successful in classroom management and maintain discipline in the classroom productively. In this context, it is necessary to teach or remind some techniques to teacher candidates before they teach their subject. In this study, we will share the opinions of new and experienced teachers on the use of body language and give some recommendations to pre-service teacher candidates.

2. Literature Review

The ultimate goal of education is to develop competencies of learners and the message is conveyed to learners by words and gestures (Daskan &Yildiz, 2020). Body language is the aspect of teaching that attracts the students' the most attention. It is not important what to say, but how you say it is necessary. Body language is nonverbal communication, that is, behavior. Educators, psychologists, and sociologists define body language or nonverbal communication as the silent way of communication without words. It includes facial expressions, eye contact, touch, and tone of voice. Moreover, body language also means clothing, posture, and spatial distance (Miller, 2005). In addition, Goman (2009) adds that non-verbal behavior, in other words, body language, is the primary factor in teacher effectiveness in motivating students to complete their studies. Cheyer and Julia (1999) say "People interact with each other, pets and sometimes physical objects every day, with spoken words, tone of voice, pointing and gestures, facial expressions, and body language." Marshall (2013) reminds us that seventy percent of daily speech is conveyed through body language, twenty percent is voice, and only ten percent is the meaning of words. According to Antes (1996), gestures are an integral part of daily communication, sometimes accompanied by verbal language, sometimes standing alone. Borg (2009) states that "we communicate with our eyes more than any other part of our anatomy" (p.37). Mehrabian (2017) says that sounds and words are influential in students' listening and learning the lesson. Features such as hand-arm movements and facial expressions, reassuring and stable tone of voice, the richness of words in speech ensure that the task is taken well in the classroom. In his research, Mehrabian found the importance of the body 55%, the voice 38%, and the words 7% in communication.

2.1 Teachers as Good Senders and Receivers of Nonverbal Communication

Higher education requires mandatory teacher training in order for them to acquire a certain pedagogic level, and what constitutes a good education system is founded on the instructors, who play a critical role and are at the heart of the educational process (Ulker et al., 2022; Yildiz, 2017). Celik and Yildiz, (2017) emphasize that “A committed teacher is never satisfied with what she or he already has; rather always seeks for the new ideas and ways to contribute to the students” (p.93). Therefore, a successful communicator hears, looks, feels, and smells not only what the person or people with whom he communicates say, but also what s/he conveys through nonverbal communication cues such as his face, hand, arm, body, the color he uses, the distance he keeps, the tone of the voice because of each communicative expression he carries the wordless part with him. Body language is a form of communication that has meaning and value. By learning what this language expresses, one can control his movements and easily understand the person's mood in front of him. Body language helps understand the emotions, desires, fears, and worries behind what is said. In education, teachers are not only personalities who give lectures, but also people who give meaningful messages to students and guide them as models to do correct and good works. Mart (2013a; 203b) and Celik et al. (2022) emphasize that teachers can directly affect the development of children, so the knowledge, skills, and awareness of teachers play an important role in the development of children. For this reason, teachers' dress code, posture, speech, tone of voice, gestures and facial expressions, whether they keep their words or not, and attitudes and behaviors in response to students' wrong actions are potent in the teacher's classroom management communication.

2.1.1 Nonverbal Communication in Teaching is Important

Terms used in oral communication are variable. Bodily responses are automatic. Therefore, it conveys emotions directly and is very difficult to control. People first communicate with body language. Then they use verbal expressions as support. According to Tosun and Yildiz, (2015) “The duty of the teacher is to vaccinate the honesty and trust as a moral value because through teaching diligently you can convince students” (p. 41).

1. Words are not always enough to convey the message;
2. Nonverbal signals are more productive;
3. Nonverbal messages are more realistic;
4. Nonverbal messages are more memorable;
5. Nonverbal signals can comfortably express feelings that are too irritating to be expressed in words;
6. Moral values can be delivered easily by actions rather than words.

2.2 Stress and Body Language in Class Management

It's easier to see what our body says and how it reacts under pressure and stress. Stress is an inconvenience that every person can encounter in every profession. It is natural for teachers to get stressed in classroom management. The body reacts involuntarily when stressed. For example, your arms may ache, your chest may be tight, or you may hit your feet hard on the ground. Your students may think that something is wrong with your actions or that you are bored. This behavior of teachers is far from professional according to body language. Knowing and applying some techniques is essential, as the teacher's command of body

language in all circumstances will help the lessons to be processed efficiently. If the teacher is not psychologically disturbed, everyone in the classroom will feel comfortable following the suggestions given below.

2.2.1 Do Not Sit at the Table or in The Chair Unless Necessary

It is essential that young teachers do not sit in a chair for classroom control unless they have a physical illness, except that they take class attendance before starting the lesson. Because when the teacher makes eye contact with the student, it can be understood whether the student is following the lesson or not. An educator sitting in his chair cannot be expected to have a productive lesson and be aware of his students. For this reason, it is the right thing for teachers not to sit down but stand unless they must. Standing and speaking in front of an audience can be physically challenging and especially unconventional. While teaching standing, you can get tired and transfer your body weight from one leg to another or cross your legs. But even these actions can create a perception in the audience that you are indecisive, uncomfortable, or even need a toilet.

2.2.2 Do Not Move Too Much While Teaching but Stand Firm in Front of the Board to See Every Student.

Teachers sometimes misunderstand being active while teaching. For instance, the teacher walks in almost every direction in the classroom. Movement in the classroom is important, but only as needed. However, the teacher should take a firm position while standing. This stance gives the teacher a more confident, powerful air. Try to stay comfortable and flexible by keeping the legs slightly wider than hip-distance. The legs should not be tense, and the teacher should not lock his knees. Humpback is prevented by keeping the back and head upright. This stance is an indication that the teacher is in control with self-confidence and able to influence the listeners.

2.2.3 Walk Around the Classroom from Time to Time and Stop and Talk While Speaking.

The teacher should not stand still while lecturing. Legs should be firmly on the ground, and the speaker should occasionally walk in the classroom, and the head, arms, and feet should be in harmony while speaking. If the classroom is not wide enough to walk, you can walk in front of the board and go to the right and left corners. Walks in the classroom should not be meaningless. Too much of anything can make students uncomfortable, either. Wandering too much in the classroom can be distracting. This situation can create a tense atmosphere in classroom management. You can walk from one end of the classroom or stage to the other. In the transitions of your speech, emphasis can be placed on the words. When you change the subject after a few minutes, walk again. This movement will ensure the continuity of the subject and the commitment to the narrative on the audience. As you learn these moves, you won't believe how powerful they are. Your perspective will change, and you will gain full control over students.

2.2.4 Keep Your Palms Facing the Students

Your face must be in a smiling format, and it will be more influential in student control if your palms are facing the students while speaking. Good gestures begin with your palms facing the audience. Your arms should make circular movements in harmony with each other. The arms should be wide when speaking

and should not meet each other. Your arms should move outward and not cling to your body. Your hands and arms should be away in the air about 40-45 cm in front of the body.

2.2.5 Do Not Touch Your Face and Head Too Much While Talking

Do not put your hands on your head too much while talking. Sometimes the hands may go towards the face, the nose may itch, it is normal, but when this happens constantly, it causes discomfort to the audience. Keeping your face open, smiling and having your hands turned towards the students are influential. Therefore, your movements should be on balance, and your hands should not go to the head or face too often. Speakers are usually tense in the first minutes of their speech, so they use their hands involuntarily. If someone already uses his hands too much as indicators in the air while talking, keeping balance can be challenging. In this state, the best thing is to control your movements by using the energy from your tension and adding passion to your speech. Use your hands or fingers while giving examples. For example, you can count first, second, third and draw students into the conversation by asking their opinions. This attitude will also be efficacious in class management.

2.2.6 Never Cross Your Arms, and Do Not Lean on Anything

Do not lean against a table, wall, or any other place. Sometimes, the instructor teaching the subject may lecture depending on something or covering his arms. The meaning of these gestures is a sign that you are weak and closed to the ideas of others. Therefore, never cross your arms before or behind you for operative classroom management.

2.2.7 Do Not Hold an Object That You Can Play with Your Hands

Teachers can carry pens or phones in their hands or their pockets, and it is normal for them to use them from time to time. However, holding a pen or phone too often and playing with these tools will negatively affect the student audience listening to you. It may distract students or cause them to unintentionally use their phones or pencils. All these movements may make you think that you are bored or not confident in yourself. This body language can cause you to break away from your students in terms of classroom management and make classroom management inextricable. Sometimes teachers may think of banging on the wall or table to attract attention. This way is wrong. Knocking anywhere on the table creates tension in the classroom and cools the student off rather than drawing attention.

2.2.8 Look at More towards the Back and Middle Rows Than Front

The student sitting in the back and the middle is often out of sight and can devote himself to other errands. He can play with his phone or talk to his friend. In class management, the teacher should centre the class and look backwards, forwards, in the middle, backwards and forwards as in the 'W' pattern.

Do not focus on just one student while watching students. In this case, other students may think that you are just teaching that person. In addition, the student you care for may be uncomfortable, bored, embarrassed, and distracted—instead, glance at all students in the classroom. Move your gaze to different corners in the class. To do this, apply the W pattern and follow the pupils with your eyes frequently in this pattern.

2.2.9 Remember to Smile, Do Not Seem Like a Wall and Do Not Act Like a Robot

The best favor to do to students is the smile you give them. Smiling is something that anyone can achieve quickly. Smile at your students and make them feel happy to be in the classroom with your eyes. Students will not want to be there if they are not satisfied with you. Teachers are not born with good body language, but they can get through this with practice and experience.

3. Methods

This research is qualitative, and participants were asked to answer three closed-ended and two open-ended structured questionnaire questions on google form.

3.1 Aim

The study aims to find the correlation between body language and classroom management. Nonverbal communication has an enormous role in class management. The research mainly concentrates on the contributions of body language to effective classroom management.

3.2 Participants

These research questions were shared with teachers working in a private education institution in Iraq via social media. The number of teachers participating in this study was 10, and the participants between 20 and 51 of which shared their opinions in the survey. Nine of the participants were male, and one of them was female.

3.3 Data Collection

This study employed a qualitative structured research method to investigate the role of nonverbal communication on effective class management. Three closed-ended and two open-ended structured questionnaire questions on the google form were prepared and asked to the respondents to reply online. The data were collected from participants through a survey designed by the researchers and in the result section collected data were briefly summarized.

4. Results

Five questions were asked to the participants and their replies have been shown in order.

First question: 'Is using body language in effective classroom management a recommendation or a necessity?' Teachers' opinion as it is.

Teacher 1: I guess; it is a necessity.

Teacher 5: It is a necessity. It reinforces communication.

Teacher 7: Your body always talks, then it is a recommendation.

Teacher 10: It is absolutely a necessity.

Second Question: ‘Should teacher candidates entering the teaching profession take body language lessons?’ To this close-ended question teachers’ opinion as it is.

Teacher 2: It could be very effective for them to take these lessons, but people generally do not have the opportunity to take these lessons.

Teacher 3: Absolutely, yes.

Teacher 8: Of course, they should.

Teacher 9: Yes, it will be very helpful.

Third Question: ‘Does using body language in lectures make it easier to teach?’ To this question, teachers’ opinion as it is:

Teacher 4: It makes easier to teach and easier to understand speakers' opinion.

Teacher 5: It certainly facilitates learning, and students understand much better. Moreover, they get more attracted to the lesson.

Teacher 6: Yes, definitely it does.

Teacher 9: If you think methodologically, it’s not easy because how to use and when to use your body language is totally different thing while teaching.

Fourth question: ‘Is body language a feature of human nature, or an acquired phenomenon?’ To this open-ended opinion question teacher reply as it is below:

Teacher 4: It is normally part of human nature, but people need to learn to use it more effectively.

Teacher 5: It depends. Some people use it spontaneously, some needs to discover this ability through some support.

Teacher 8: I think, it is acquired because some people have got poor body language use and they need special courses.

Teacher 10: Both somehow. It comes from human nature but being a teacher has other responsibility that is why teachers acquire body language by practicing.

Fifth question: ‘Do you personally think you use body language in your lessons?’ About this question teachers’ opinion as it is.

Teacher 2: Certainly, I use it very much.

Teacher 6: Yes, a lot. I never sit on the chair or on the table for example.

Teacher 7: Yes. For me, it is a must and I manage students by my posture and active hand movements.

Teacher 9: Yes. It is because of my job.

5. Conclusion

From the collected data that teachers shared their opinion above, it is apparent that body language is necessary for education. People who commit themselves to teaching should have body language courses. However, they may acquire that over time. In conclusion, sending messages to others happens with our words, and now and then, it is conveyed with only our non-verbal communication. As instructors educating students in various branches, we use words and non-verbal communication to manage them persuasively. Proper utilization of non-verbal communication guarantees that the message is passed on to learners more viably and quickly. In this context, it is recommended that pre-service teachers take body language courses to manage classes successfully in their future service.

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Appendix

Body Language in Education and Effective Recommendations to Pre-Service Teachers in Classroom Management

Dear colleague.

It is advised that teachers use body language for effective class management. In this study, we would like to collect the teachers' views about body language in terms of class management. Your reply will be anonymous, but the data collected will be publicized for the researchers and the pre-service teacher candidates. Would you mind replying to the interview questions patiently?

Thank you for your participation.

Demographic Questions

Gender: Male: Female:

Age: 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-more

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, PhD

Your teaching experience in education?

1-3 years, 4-7 years, 8-10 years, 11-more

Survey Questions

Please reply to the interview questions in patience!

1. Is using body language a recommendation or a necessity in effective classroom management?
2. Should teacher candidates entering the teaching profession take body language lessons?
3. Does using body language in lectures make it easier to teach?
4. Is body language a feature of human nature, or an acquired phenomenon?
5. Do you personally think you use body language in your lessons?