



# BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

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Facultad de Lenguas

Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas

*Non-verbal communication as a teacher's  
strategy: a case study*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Languages for  
the Degree of  
Licenciado en Lenguas Modernas

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Puebla, Pue.

April, 2016

*Non-verbal communication as a teacher's strategy: a case study*

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***LICENCIATURA EN LA LENGUAS MODERNAS***



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*April, 2016*

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

In this title section I want to express gratitude to all those who support me morally and financially while I was studying in the Faculty of Language (BUAP). To recognize each member of my family, with encourage never let me to give up until this point to finish my of my life, this last step to get my degree.

To my friends, they were a reason to keep going, they helped me find my abilities to do things that seemed impossible.

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis has not been written just to get my degree, but rather to thank everyone who supported me in this last process of the career. In first instance, I want to thank all those who believe in me, my family and friends who help me overcome every obstacle and never leave my dreams.

I am grateful with my teachers, who every day demanded more of me, they bring me confidence in their and confidence in myself.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Learning a Second Language can be a difficult task for some students, especially when you are being educated to become an English teacher and English is a foreign language. English teachers have the responsibility to be aware of this situation. As Ashworth (2000) claims “the rationale for partnership teaching is that all teachers share responsibility for meeting the needs of English Second Language (ESL) students” (p.85). Also Ashworth (2000.p.85) adds that English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers usually work in the mainstream classroom to support the second-language development of individual pupils by collaborating with the classroom teacher to develop a suitable curriculum approach.

Taking into account the role of the teacher, it is evident teacher’ influence in students learning. It is important to mention a tool that can help teachers to be closer to students, and this tool is the use of non-verbal communication (Liu, 2001. p.31). The author argues that non-verbal communication is an integral part of classroom communication, and functions to express, conveying interpersonal attitudes, present personality, and amplifying verbal communication. Having mentioned these, non-verbal communication expresses more than just words, especially inside of a basic level of foreign language classroom, where some students pay more attention to teacher’s movements and gestures than to his speech in order to understand what he is saying. McCafferty & Stam (2008. p. 26) allege that non-verbal dimension of teacher-student relationships can meaningfully shape classroom experiences. And,

McCafferty (2008, p.26) argues that decades of research in communication studies have confirmed the impact of teachers' non-verbal messages on students learning and their attitudes.

For this reason, this research focuses on the use of non-verbal communication as a tool to make the interaction between teacher and students clearer in the first levels of English as a Foreign Language classrooms in the Faculty of Languages of the BUAP.

This study is centered on the basic levels because in these cases, students have their first contact with a foreign language, it means students are going to enter a new environment; thus for some students, who may not have enough vocabulary yet, that makes it more difficult to understand teachers' explanations. Therefore, teachers may implement the use of non-verbal communication in the class in order help students perceive what they are talking about. In this way, students can also feel closer to the teacher. For this reason, this study was conducted in an English class as a Target Language 2 at the Faculty of Language BUAP.

The instruments used for this research were observations. They were enlightened with diaries and note-taking during the observation. The purpose of the observations was to prove the impact of non-verbal communication and its effectiveness.

## **1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The importance of this study relies on obtaining information about the impact of non-verbal communication, not only on the interaction between teacher- students but also on how it influences the acquisition of a second language in general. According to previous research, in Basic English language learning, “non-verbal communication” plays a paramount role and represents a vital tool to help students to understand what teachers say. Movements, general body language and facial expressions work as implements to support teachers’ speech. Also, if non-verbal communication is used by the teacher inadequately the results may impact the goals of the course.

## **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In Target Language 2 at Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI), it is central the interaction between teacher-students, because it provides the communication and at the same time it takes place learning. Furthermore, when the level of second language acquisition is basic, students are guided by teachers’ use of non-verbal communication in order to understand what teacher is trying to teach them. For that reason, this research is focus on how the non-verbal communication influences in the interaction between teacher and students.

#### **1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore the relevance of the non-verbal communication in the interaction teacher-students in order to illustrate how non-verbal communication may assist in the understanding of English in basic levels of learning. The specific objective is to identify the most common non-verbal communication types used by the teacher and analyze how successful students perceive them to second language learning.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions are addressed:

1. What are the most common types of non-verbal communication used by an English teacher in a basic ESL classroom?
2. What are the effects of hands movements as non-verbal communication in students in this classroom?
3. What are the effects of facial expressions and eye contact as non-verbal communication in the students?

## **1.6 DELIMITATIONS**

This research deals with the use of non-verbal communication in basic levels in the faculty of language (BUAP), this research was conducted in Target Language 2, observing, exploring, taking notes and writing journals about observations in only one group. Findings about non-verbal communication in other contexts may be different.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section is focused on the presentation of information about non-verbal communication and the terms and branches related to this topic. It begins with the broader concept of communication and then ends with the types of non-verbal communication that were observed during the development of this study.

#### **2.1 COMMUNICATION**

The etymological root of the term communication means sharing or distributing (Hinde, 1979.p.3). Regarding the concept of sharing information necessarily leads to the broader concept of interaction. According to Robert Wandberg (2001.p.5) communication is sending and receiving messages, it is more than just words. It involves both listening and speaking. It can involve words, gestures, facial expressions, and any other ways in which we express meaning. On the other hand, communication is an involving process, not a set of isolated events. It involves a number of key elements necessary to make it effective. (Hunt, Wiseman & Touzel, 2009.p.76)

Conversely, Hybels and Weaver (1996.p.6) mention that communication is a process in which people share information, ideas, and feelings. It involves not only the spoken and written word, but also body language, personal mannerisms and style, the physical environment and anything that adds meaning to a message.

## **2.1.1 THE ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION:**

Hybels and Weaver (1996) describe the following elements of communication

- Sender- receiver. Where one person sends ideas and the other receives them, and then the process is reversed. In most communication situations, people are sender-receivers—both sending and receiving at the same time.
- Message. The ideas and feelings that a sender-receiver wants to share.
- Channel is the route traveled by a message, the means it uses to reach the sender-receiver.
- Feedback is the response of the receiver-senders to each other.
- Noise is the interference that keeps a message from being understood or accurately interpreted. Noise occurs between the sender-receivers, and it comes in three forms: external, internal, and semantic.
- Setting is where the communication occurs. (ibid.1996, p 7).

All these elements of communication seem to be necessary in any interactional event where a message is being sent. However; the use of verbal or non-verbal means, which may be represented by the channel, does not clearly state the relevance of the route to reach understanding. This differentiation is described as follows.

## **2.2 VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Successful communication depends on the completion of the transaction. An understanding of language will help you express what you really want to say in a clear

and straightforward way. When a message is misunderstood or has not effect on the listener, it may be that the speaker's language is at fault. And no matter how skillful it may be in other ways, any communication that is not understood cannot be successful (Hybels and Weaver II. 1986). "When you say a word, you are vocally representing something whether that thing is a physical object, such as your biology textbook, or an abstract concept, such as peace" (Hybels and Weaver II.1986.p.87), in this sense verbal communication represents reality and our surroundings and the things we want to talk about .

The word is a symbol; it stands for the object or concept that it names. This is what distinguishes a word from a random sound. The sounds that are represented in our language by the letters *cat* constitute a word because we have agreed that these sounds will stand for a particular domestic animal. The sounds represented by the letters *z a t* do not make up a word in our language because these sounds do not stand for anything. (Hybels and Weaver II: 1986.p.89). In this sense, Whorf (1956) suggests that "language helps us determine how we see and think about the world. Language restricts the thoughts of people, who use it and the limits of one's language become the limits of one's world" (p.134). Thus, if language is made up by symbols and body language is represented by signs; verbal as well as non-verbal language constitutes our world and complexly communication.

"Learning a language is not just a matter of learning a sign system: it is also learning a different way of looking at the world" (Whorf 1956.p.134). According to Hybels and Weaver II (1986.P.93) "All language takes place within a particular environment. They also suggest that "language that is appropriate to one environment

might appear meaningless or foolish in another” (Hybels and Weaver II: 1986.P.93). It may explain why non-verbal communication at some point may appear to be more meaningful than verbal language.

## **2.3 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Communication among human beings has been the main strategy to be in contact with themselves. Ever since we, humans, have had the necessity to interact with others, to transmit, receive and share information. “At the beginning of the human race, before the evolution of language, man was communicating the only way in which he was able to do it: non- verbal” (Davis, 2002.p.58). Non-verbal communication then precedes verbal language.

From a more psycho-social point of view, humans need to be close to others. Even if it is only to express information such as: feelings and thoughts. Forming personal relationships with others is a basic human need. Furthermore, learning to communicate effectively is a vital issue in forming healthy personal relationship (Wandberg, 2001).

Wandberg (2001) also argues that Non-verbal communication is communicating without words. On the other hand, Cestero (1999) affirms that using corporal movements like facial gestures, hands movement and body positions, humans communicate most part of their messages. Regrettably, even when non-verbal communication is an integral part of the way humans express themselves; SLA

programs are much less centered in the curriculum designs of the teaching of foreign languages in this aspect.

Even when second language teachers recognize that to communicate correctly and with efficacy the linguistic system is not sufficient; very little attention has been paid to the teaching of non-verbal language to improve the acquisition of a target language. In order to develop an effective and far-reaching communication in a second language, we also need to be communicatively competent. This implies: the knowledge and the use of the pragmatic information, social, situational and geographic, as well as of the communication of verbal and non-verbal systems (Cestero, 1999).

Another important argument that Cestero (1999) takes into account is the cultural background; “non-verbal communication includes all the signs and non-linguistic sign systems, which communicate or are used to communicate, therefore it includes within it the habits and the cultural customs in the broad sense and the denominated non-verbal communication system” (Cestero, 1999.p.11). In other words, cultural background plays a paramount role in the use of non-verbal language, especially, body language. The type of body posture, movements or facial expressions depends on the context in which people interact. In the case of second language learning; students and teachers interact in a classroom, there they grow communicatively, and the use of non-verbal communication is an essential part of their communication.

When we talk about non-verbal language, personality also plays a crucial role in the exchange of communication. According to Davis (2002) “the ways of movements

are more learned than innate and those vary from one culture to another” (p.23). Equally, Krueger (2005.p.2) argues the significance of non-verbal language and claims that there is not one single universal non-verbal language. Non-verbal communication means different things to different people and different cultures and is therefore mainly responsible for misunderstanding.

Talking about the influence of culture in the use of nonverbal communication, Burgoon, Guerrero & Floyd (2010) indicate that people from different nations and various cultural backgrounds have distinct ways of using nonverbal communication. These differences in non-verbal behavior help groups of people create unique identities that often reflect shared values and cultural history.

Besides words and tone, non-verbal cues contribute to the spoken communication process. Body language and nonverbal signals add meaning to messages. Non-verbal language includes hands and arm gestures, eye contact and movement, facial expressions, the position of your body, and your overall appearance. “Your audiences perceive nonverbal language as part of your message, and use it to determine how to interpret your words” (Butterfield, 2009. p.6).

## **2.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Verbal and non-verbal communication operates together as part of the larger communication process. Efforts to distinguish clearly between the two have not been very successful. However, some authors argue that “non- verbal behavior is used

solely to communicate emotional messages, whereas verbal behavior is for conveying ideas” (Knapp and Hall, 2009.p.11). On the other hand, Krueger (2005) claims that verbal and nonverbal communication is interrelated in certain ways. If nonverbal cues are used together with verbal cues they can accompany (by repeating, accenting, augmenting and illustrating) or contradicting what was say things verbally.

Additionally, Calero (2005.p.89) argues that whenever people speak, we combine the things we say with nonverbal message. In every case, our verbal and non-verbal communication is either congruent or incongruent, when it is congruent in agreement with each other, the listener tends to believe or at the least understands what we say. However, if the messages are incongruent, if they disagree, the listener will doubt what we say without fully knowing why there is doubt in his/her mind. Besides, Calero (2005) explains that the individuals in our society who best understand the importance of verbal and non-verbal congruence are professional actors and politicians. Without congruence, both of these professionals would fail in their attempt to persuade and convince voters or an audience of their sincerity. For a professional actor to play a role convincingly he must speak the words and the use of appropriate congruent facial expressions, voice inflection, sound, gestures and posture in order for audience to believe in his portrayal of the character. We see then that the relationship and congruence between verbal and non-verbal language is vital in communication but most importantly provides a huge field of study for second language acquisition processes.

## **2.5 TYPES OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

The following paragraphs describe the types of non-verbal communication.

### **2.5.1 PARALANGUAGE**

It consists of the vocal cues that accompany spoken language. The meaning comes from the way we say the words as much as from what the words mean (Hybels and Weaver II, 1986.p.125). These vocal indications may be illustrated by the pitch, volume and intonation of our language.

### **2.5.2 BODY MOVEMENT**

Also called kinesthesia, is the responsible for a lot of our non-verbal communication. Ekman and Friesen (1986) (cited with Hybels and Weaver, 1986) explore the use of body movements as non-verbal communication and divide body movement into five categories: emblems, illustrators, regulators, displays of feeling, and adaptors.

- Emblems are body movements that have a direct translation into words.
- Illustrators are accents that emphasize or reinforce words.
- Regulators control the back-and-forth flow of speaking and listening
- Displays of feelings show through our faces and our body movements, how intensely we are feeling.

- Adaptors are nonverbal ways of adjusting to a communication situation (pp.127, 128).

Some of these categories of body movement have been explored in the answer to the first research question in this study and are illustrated in Chapter 4.

### **2.5.3 FACIAL EXPRESSIONS**

Most studies of the face and facial expressions are concerned with the configurations that display various emotional states. The six primary effects that have received the most study are anger, sadness, surprise, happiness, fear, and disgust. “Facial expression can also function as regulatory gestures, providing feedback and managing the flow to communicate, not only to express emotions” (Knapp and Hall, 2009.p.9).

On the other hand, according to Jeff Butterfield (2009.p.6) “the human smile is a powerful cue that transmits messages including friendliness, happiness, warmth, and acceptance. If you smile frequently when you are talking with others they perceive you as approachable, appealing, and friendly. They are also likely to react positively to your message and remember what you say. A frown or grimace also sends a powerful message, though it is usually negative”.

In this study, facial expressions are approached as a form of showing emotions and the six primary effects mentioned above.

#### **2.5.4 EYE BEHAVIOR**

Eye behavior shows where we look when we look and how we look during an interaction. These are the primary focus for studies of gazing. Gaze refers to the eye movement we make in the general direction or to another's face. Mutual gaze occurs when interactants look onto each other's eye area. The dilatation and constriction of the pupils is of particular interest to those who study non-verbal communication because it is sometimes an indicator of interest, attention, or involvement. (Knapp and Hall, 2009, p.10).

The part of eye behavior in this study only considers the direction of the gaze.

#### **2.5.5 EYE CONTACT**

According to Butterfield (2009) eye movement sends signals that help regulate the flow of information between people. Your eyes can show interest, understanding, happiness, confusion, anxiety and fear. Make eye contact to establish credibility and show you are engaged with your audience. People trust you when you look directly at them as you speak, and are skeptical if you don't maintain eye contact (p.6).

Additionally, eye contact included also in eye behavior is considered here as a single non-verbal issue.

### **2.5.6 EYE MESSAGES**

We all send many messages with our eyes. Even if we are not aware of our eye movements, we use our eyes to indicate a wide range of information such as our interest in another person, our boredom in a class, or our excitement at getting a gift we want. (Hybels and Weaver II, 1986.p.129).

Eye messages are considered another form of saying things. When we hear the expressions “your eyes also talk” we mean that our eyes can also say things and send messages just based on our eye sight.

In this study, it is important to clarify that eye behavior, eye contact and eye messages are considered into a single issue of non-verbal communication. However, in the cases where one of the three has been most prominent a special interpretation of the observations is explained in detail.

### **2.5.7 GESTURES**

According to Butterfield (2009) “people usually move their arms, hands and fingers when they speak” (p.6). And effective communicators use physical gestures to emphasize important points. When properly used, gestures can enliven and animate what people say and help to communicate enthusiasm and sincerity. If people remain stoical when they speak, others might perceive them as boring and tense.

On other hand, McNeil (1999) mentions that gestures are a vital part of language, it means speech and gestures are intensely linked. The author explains that in a

foreign language class students see facial expressions done by the teacher and immediately perceive agreement or disagreement. He also points out that if the teacher is asking something, gestures help students understand the teacher's purpose (p.32).

### **2.5.8 POSTURE**

Posture is normally studied in conjunction with other non-verbal signals to determine the degree of attention or involvement. Posture also relates to the degree of status relative to the other interactive partner, or the degree of linking for the other interactant. A forward-leaning posture, for example, has been associated with higher involvement. It also communicates more linking and lower status in studies where the interactants did not know each other very well. Posture is also a key indicator of the intensity of some emotional states. For example, a drooping posture is associated with sadness and a rigid, tense posture is associated with anger. The extent to which communicators mirror each other's posture may indicate conversational involvement, which sometimes results problematic between the interactants (Knapp and Hall, 2009.p.9).

Butterfield (2009) remarks the importance that maintaining good posture has. He recommends that "your posture is your body's position when you are sitting, standing or walking, and it communicates your mood, attitude and interest in a topic. When communicating with others sit or stand with an erect posture, which sends a message of confidence and competence" (p.6)

### **2.5.9 ATTRACTIVENESS**

Researchers believe that who is perceived as attractive might be part of brain function rather than learned within a particular culture. Some research studies have found that people who are perceived as attractive get a more positive response from others and have an easier time in life than people who are not perceived as attractive (Hybels and Weaver II, 1986, p.130). However, the concept of attractiveness is a complex issue to be observed and to study because it is deeply rooted into socio-cultural, contextual and situational perceptions.

This concept is included as a type of non-verbal language because according to Hybels and Weaver II (1986) attractiveness also communicates messages and affects communication and interpretation. Nevertheless, this type of non-verbal communication is not explored in the data of this study.

### **2.5.10 CLOTHING**

The viewer responds not only to the clothing itself but also to what it says about the worn in terms of status, affiliation, norms, and conformity (Hybels and Weaver II, 1986). Attire and general accessories worn by interactants in a given communication situation appear to have a powerful effect in the message interpretation and general interaction. The effect may also be affected by colors, types of materials and size. These are also considered types of non-verbal communication.

### **2.5.11 PROXIMITY**

According to Butterfield (2009) in communication “proximity is how physically close you are to you audience” (p.6). Maintaining appropriate and culturally expected proximity in a communicative event is an imperative part of verbal and non-verbal communication. Based on sociocultural norms, people expect you to respect their personal space in order to have a comfortable distance during the interaction. If you intrude on it uncomfortable situations may appear and communication may be affected.

Appropriate proximity affects and is affected by the relationship you have with the listener, the type of communication (intimate, friendly, professional, or public speaking), and noticeably cultural norms. If a person notices signals of discomfort that suggest the other interactant has moved into the listener’s space, the distance between them immediately increases.

In the ESL classroom, proximity is a powerful tool to communicate messages of comfort, discomfort, confidence, fear, power/authority issues and general willingness to communicate.

### **2.5.12 DISTANCE ZONES**

Hybels and Weaver II (1986) describe proximity in a very detailed categorization and claim that these types of distances communicate and send different messages in similar cultures;

- Intimate distance- in the intimate distance range, people are in direct contact with each other or are no more than 18 inches apart.
- Personal distance-in the range of personal distance, people stay anywhere from 18 inches to 4 feet from each other.
- Social distance- when we do not know people very well, we are most likely to maintain a social distance from them that is a distance of 4 to 12 feet.
- Public distance-a distance of more than 12 feet is typically used for public speaking.
- Touch- the closer we stand to one another, the more we increase the likelihood of our touching. We are all familiar with the use of touch in intimate situations (p. 137).

Some of these types of distance zones have been observed during the analysis and are discussed in Chapter 4.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the methodological aspects in this study. Data collection procedures, the type of study, the instrument and the setting are described. The description of participants is also illustrated and the general procedures are explained.

#### **3.1 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Patton (2002) argues that the qualitative method consists of three properties of data collection: in depth, open-ended interview; direct observation; and written documents. The data regarding interviews is mirrored in this study in direct quotations participants expressed about experience, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. The data regarding observation consists of detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviors, actions, and a full range of interpersonal interaction and organizational processes that were part of the observable human experience, the researchers, was able to document in checklists. Documental analysis in this qualitative inquiry is represented in personal diaries/journals; and note taking.

#### **3.2TYPE OF STUDY**

In this case, this is a qualitative study. This method has been selected because I intended to illustrate the manner non-verbal communication works in a specific

educational context where a second language is being learned. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative inquiry employs different philosophical assumptions; strategies of inquiry; and methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. For the author, qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the side where participants experience the issue or problem under study. As mentioned previously, this research is focused on observations, taking into account this as the main tool of the qualitative study. The purpose of the observations was to collect data to explore and analyze a specific teacher's use of non-verbal communication tools to be in interaction with students during the class of English and the effects in students.

Mention that, it is a case study "cases studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time" (Creswell, 2009.p.13).

### **3.3 PARTICIPANTS**

For this study a group of the second level of English as a Target language was selected. The group belongs to the Faculty of Languages in the Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas. This language level was selected because I intended to explore the use of non-verbal communication and its effects in learning during the first stages of learning. The participants for this study were 20 students. Fortunately for gender reasons there were 10 male and 10 female students. Their ages ranged between 18

to 27 years old. At the moment of the investigation they were all in the same classroom studying the second course of English as a Target language in the Faculty of Language BUAP. They all were part of the Minerva Plan, therefore some of them were to obtain their degree as Translators and some of them as English Teachers; an option which is not available anymore in the new Plan of the Licenciatura.

The other participant in this study was the language teacher. This participant was a 50 year-old male. At the moment of the investigation he was teaching English Target Language II, Pragmatics and Culture. He has been teaching in this school for 15 years.

### **3.4 SETTING**

The setting for this study was the Faculty of Languages BUAP, located in the center of Puebla City. The data were collected during the Spring 2013 course in the morning. The Faculty of Languages is divided in three areas; one is the C.E.L.E. (Centro de Lenguas Extranjeras), where there are different language courses of different languages for example; English, French, Japanese, German, Italian and others. Many of these courses are taken by students of the University of Language but also by students of other careers of the same University. Another area is the CEU (Cursos de Extension Univeritaria); in this area the general public can take language courses, the courses are for children, teenagers and adults. And finally, the last area, and where this study took place, is the Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas, which is

divided in two carriers; you may obtain a degree as an English teacher or Translator or as a French teacher or translator.

### **3.5 INSTRUMENTS**

The main instruments in this study were observations. This instrument was chosen in order to be close with the participants and be able to provide illustrative data to prove the issue under study, namely non-verbal communication.

The fruitfulness of this instrument is that it proved to be the most adequate to obtain data because it also allowed to take notes while completing the observation checklists. In general, there are three instruments used in the exploration of the issue:

1. Observation checklist- created from the different references explained in Chapter II. These checklists were completed during the observations. There were three moments of observation, in the beginning of the course, in the middle and at the end (See appendix A and B).
2. Notes during the three observations there were also note-taking moments. These notes were used to provide a richer interpretation of the uses of non-verbal tools.
3. The last instrument to complement the data was a video-recording in order to strengthen the observations and the notes and to find important things that may not have been perceived during the observations. This video was recorded during the first observation. It lasts 20 minutes and 20 seconds, and was recorded on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013. After this, there

were two more videos that were taken into account but could not be properly recorded. One of them was recorded only for 36 seconds and the last one for 2 minutes with 40 seconds. These two last recordings are separated because there were some technical issues at the moment of the recording. However, they are also considered because there were many uses of non-verbal communication since the teacher was reading some topics about horoscopes, and during the story telling there were different moments and tools of non-verbal interaction.

All these instruments were considered in order to answer the research questions in this study, the interpretation of the data and the answer to the research questions is explained in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

The main purpose of this research was to explore the use of non-verbal communication tools used by an English teacher and analyze their effects in the students. A specific objective was to examine how the teacher uses non-verbal tools in order to create a successful second language learning environment in English as a Target Language class of the second level at the Faculty of Languages. In this chapter I present the answer to the research questions addressed in chapter 1.

#### **4.1 ANSWER TO THE FIRST RESEARCH QUESTION**

The first question has a purpose of know what the most common types of non-verbal communication tools used by the teacher were. These tools are described below based on the observation checklists and the note taking. The results obtained from the observations were interesting because it was noted that the teacher integrated in his classes many different types of non-verbal communication tools in order to clarify his explanations. Something that was also relevant is that students themselves showed to be familiar with the use of these tools.

The main types of nonverbal communication found were:

- Eye contact: the teacher stared at students when referring and talking generally and individually to them. Eye contact occurred very frequently

when the teacher was giving explanations. These explanations had to do both with content and with grammar.

- Hands movement: the teacher moved his hands in circles in order to show students continuations. He specially moved his hands to demonstrate forms when he was reading or saying something that could be drawn in the air.
- Clapping: there were different moments when the teacher clapped along the three observations and all of them were just to gain students' attention. As observed, it really worked.
- Facial gestures - smiling: the teacher smiled to students in many different moments. Especially when he was saying a joke or when he tried to make an explanation easier for students. For example; he asked students to repeat focus and since some students mispronounced the word to sound as a bad word the teacher smiled and with the correct pronunciation he gave a funny face and smiled. The teacher usually displayed feelings through facial gestures to show through his faces how intensely he was feeling.
- Point to students with the hand not with a finger: this type of non-verbal tool was a bit strange to observe during the three observations and not just at the beginning. The teacher usually pointed at the students using his whole hand to select a student when he was asking a specific question or when he was asking for their opinion.
- Using the classroom space walking not only in front of the group: the teacher usually walked around the classroom to monitor students' work.

This type of non-verbal communication was perceived by the observer as a form for the teacher to be aware of each student. However, some of the students may have also expressed a certain type of uncomfortable time during the teacher's monitoring at some points. Especially when they were doing something not related to the English class.

- Proximity - keep distance: the teacher usually maintained a regular distance with all students. When walking in front of the classroom he appeared to manage the space in a regular manner. However, he was closer to some of the students when explaining individual questions. Some other general body movements that were commonly found were:
- Emblems: body movements that had a direct translation into words. For example, geometrical figures, sizes, shaking, etc.
- Illustrators: accents that emphasized or reinforced the teacher's words.
- Adaptors: non-verbal ways of adjusting to communication situations. Usually unconscious body movements; e.g. scratching, rubbing, sneezing, coughing, etc.

#### **4.2 ANSWER TO THE SECOND RESEARCH QUESTION**

The second research question has the purpose to know the specific effects of hands movements as a tool of non-verbal communication. In table 1, findings representing parts of the checklists and part of the video-recordings are detailed in

order to illustrate the form hand-movements appeared during the observations. The table shows the teacher's action, students' reaction and an interpretation of the effectiveness of this type of non-verbal tool to interact and communicate during the class.

**Table 1**

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATIO N	TEACHER ACTION	STUDENTS REACTION	EFFECTIVEN ESS
Hands movement	The teacher moved his right hand simulating that he was writing with a marker with the purpose to show students must write in their notebooks.	Students immediately opened their notebooks and some of them took their pen/pencil out and started writing	Students showed a positive reaction to this kind of non-verbal communication
Raise the hand	The teacher raised his righthand and moved his fingers as a signal of repeating after him.	Most of the students repeated after the teacher	The efficacy of this kind of non-verbal tool depended on the attention that students were paying. Because

			the students in the front were aware of teacher's indication but students in the back were not.
Clapping	When the teacher noticed that some students were distracted, he clapped with the purpose to call students' attention	Some students seemed scared at first for the sound, but in later clapping they paid attention again to the teacher.	Students paid attention to teacher's instructions. However, as observed, this type of non-verbal tool may not be positive at all times considering students' fear for strong noises.
Turn the hand	The teacher used this non-verbal tool to:  1. Show students	1. Seven students told the teacher the antonym and the others	The use of this type of tool was somehow effective. Most

	<p>the opposite. When he meant the antonym of a word.</p> <p>2. Ask students to participate in something.</p>	<p>understood teacher's intention.</p> <p>2. Students in the front and in the middle participated and gave different opinions but not the ones in the back</p>	<p>students understood teacher's intention. However there may be a recommendation to pay attention to students in the back.</p>
<p>Show first one hand and after the other</p>	<p>The teacher showed first one hand for indicating a quality and after the other hand for indicating a fail.</p>	<p>Students seemed to recognize the sequence of opposites.</p>	<p>Students reacted positively to this tool.</p>
<p>Shake the hands</p>	<p>The teacher used this tool to indicate that no students wanted participate. He said "no one"</p>	<p>All students answered "no".</p>	<p>Students moved their head saying "no" and also looked at the students closer to them.</p>

Focus a point with both hands in front of the body	To indicate “this”	Students looked at the hands of the teacher and where he pointed	Students reacted moving their head saying that was clear the purpose of the teacher with the used of this kind of tool.
Make circles with both index fingers	This too had two purposes:  1.to indicate “tomorrow”  2.to indicate “repeat”	Students seemed to understand the idea.	This tool appeared to be effective for both purposes.
Move the hand	Teacher move his hand from the middle to his right to indicate sequence: “every month”.	Students seemed to understand the idea	This movement appeared to be efficient to indicate continuity.
Slide the hands (the palms)	The teacher used this tool to indicate	Students understood that	This tool seems to be effective to

	the expression “regular courses”	they had to take course by course without missing any one.	show sequence.
Show some fingers at different times.	The teacher shows first his thumb finger to indicate one thing and the other to say another.	Students noticed that the teacher tried to indicate two different things	This tool seems effective to show to distinguish two different things.

As may be seen in the table, findings regarding the use of nonverbal communication through the hands, takes a special place. The teacher uses his hands in different circumstances, e. g to ask for opinions, to give indications, to gain attention, to show approval to students’ opinions. Most of these uses of non-verbal tools seem to have positive results with students. This may mean that the teacher’s use of non-verbal tools is operative and may also have optimistic results for second language interaction with students. As a consequence, an effective learning where goals may well be achieved as planned for the class is perceived.

### 4.3 ANSWER TO THE THIRD RESEARCH QUESTION

The third research question focused on the use of facial gestures and eye contact. This question has the purpose to illustrate the effects that these facial expressions have in students as uses of non-verbal communication. The answer for this question considered the checklists and the video. Table 2 below describes how the teacher used the tool, the students' reaction and an interpretation of the tool given by the observer. This table considers both facial expressions and eye contact.

**Table 2**

<b>NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>TEACHER ACTION</b>	<b>STUDENTS REACTION</b>	<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>
General facial gestures	Disgusting face to indicate that the meaning of a word was uncomfortable. E.g. clarifying words for the students.	Students reacted smiling but at the same time making a disgusting face to show they got the meaning.	Students understood that the teacher was referring to something not very good.
Eye contact	The teacher looked at the students at the same time he smiled them when they asked something	Students smiled back to the teachers and nodded.	When students were saying something they smiled to the teacher as a response of his gesture to show confidence, as observed in the video.

General smile	The teacher smiled to students when he said something funny	Students laughed and looked back to teacher.	Students laughed as a positive response when the teacher made a joke and moved their heads showing agreement.
Smiling to students	When some students asked something to the teacher he smiled to him/ her directly.	Students looked at the teacher when they wanted to ask something.	Students would nod their heads as a probe of agreement to show the answers are clear and they got the explanation.

General findings regarding facial expressions, gestures and eye contact were also found to be used constantly and for many purposes; just like hands movements. Teacher's smile was frequently used and students most of the time responded at positively creating a progressive and comfortable environment. The teacher made jokes constantly but without attacking students in no form. Most of the jokes were about pronunciation failures and jokes related to other personalities as famous people. Within this category of face expressions it is relevant to mention that the teacher's general facial expression seemed to call for confidence, showing a relaxing, and peaceful expression most of the time.

Regarding eye contact, the teacher seemed to perceive students lack of attention by means of staring at them. He did not only focus on one or some students, or only on one side of the classroom. He generally focused in all students and on the whole group. There were only two specific moments when the teacher seemed to have lost the attention of students in the back and then he just by looking directly at each students' eyes for notice; he called their attention. The teacher also stared at them to indicate that they were supposed to be doing an activity. This stare was not intimidating but involving and encouraging, as observed in the video.

The effectiveness of the use of facial gestures and eye contact seems to have a positive result. Findings indicate that these types of tools improve communication between the teacher and students and work well as an effort to make interaction more meaningful during the class time. These types of non-verbal tools suggest that communication between teacher and students in a second language becomes more efficient with these tools.

#### **4.4 SOME OTHER OBSERVATIONS**

Some other general observations that are significant to mention although not focused were:

1. The teacher walked in the front of the classroom in two occasions and went to the back only once each session. Although he was most of the time in front; he also paid attention to the students in the back with his eyes. It was also observed that two students in the back were

indifferent to the class; they were talking and sending messages or playing with their cellphone. When teacher noticed that he went with them and asked if they had any doubts and they just moved their head saying “no”.

2. An interesting point was recollected from students sitting in the front and in the middle of the classroom, they all were doing the activities that teacher told them. Many of them were looking the unknown words up in their dictionary. When they had a doubt they raised their hands asking for help to the teacher. And, the teacher in those moments went with students and sat down next to them.
3. At the moment when students were participating, the teacher repeated what they would say. This seemed like the teacher wanted the students to know he was following and paying attention to what they were saying. Also, when they were reading, the teacher looked at students and corrected their pronunciation at that specific moment.
4. Another meaningful observation was that the teacher wrote on the board the unknown words and asked students to repeat the words again. After he told the students the translation in Spanish and smiling to them. Another important point is that the teacher went with the two students in the back and explained to them the instructions of the final activity pointing to the book with his finger. Students said “yes” to teacher just moving their heads, they expressed nothing using verbal tools.

5. A final personal opinion is that most of the teacher's non-verbal communication was effective for students. I base my opinion on the fact that most of the times the teacher's purpose seemed to be clearly perceived by the students. This is illustrated in the video by looking at students' face and reactions showed immediately after. Students constantly smiled and moved their head to indicate the explanation or instructions were clear. The entire sessions observed, the teacher smiled to students. This may suggest that the objective of this non-verbal tool was to make students feel comfortable and confident with the teacher and with the class.

In the following chapter I present some general conclusions for these findings, the limitations and some directions for further research.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The main objective of this study was to explore the main non-verbal communication tools used by an English teacher in a basic to intermediate level of target language. The specific objective was to illustrate the effectiveness of these non-verbal tools. In this chapter I present the conclusions of the findings, the limitations and some directions for further research.

#### **5.1 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

The analysis of the data obtained during this research showed significant results regarding non-verbal communication tools. The first issue that was noticed was that non-verbal communication used by teacher seems to be effective for students because they reacted positively to this use. Based on the observations, it was noticed that the uses were clear and precise for students.

The most common non-verbal communication tools used by the teacher were hand movements and facial gestures, for example; when he said a joke he used a variety of facial gestures as expression of disgust. Most of the time, the teacher used hand movements; even if he was reading something, especially to try the students to know if what he meant was clear.

Students' responses to the teacher by using non-verbal communication tools were also effective. Every time the teacher used non-verbal tools, students' responses were

immediate and many times they used themselves non-verbal tools. Sometimes they combine verbal and non-verbal expressions if that was not very clear. The teacher also used again some other things but this time followed with a phrase or a word in Spanish. It is worth to mention that the teacher most of the time tried to talk in English and emphasized with non-verbal expressions. However, sometimes it seemed necessary to talk in Spanish in order to keep the confidence and interaction teacher-students.

Findings in this study suggest that the used of non-verbal communication tools may be innate to humans and they seem to be essential in our interaction. Especially in an ESL classroom these tools seem to complement the teaching- learning processes.

As we know, there are different kinds of used non-verbal communication tools; for this reason, it is necessary to know not only the culture but also in which situations the use of these tools seems appropriate to be used. The data collected in this study show only a situated example of the effectively uses of non-verbal communication as a complement of teaching in a SLT context, where these tools seem to be vital.

## **5.2 LIMITATIONS**

This study is limited because it only presents data collected in a specific classroom. Usually second language classrooms in the Faculty of Languages hold more that thirty students, however in this research the classroom only held twenty students, thus other contexts guarantee variations.

The instruments used in this research were only observation checklists, notes and a video recording. These types of instruments were interpreted only based on the observer's perceptions. Therefore, they may be differently interpreted if observed by people in different cultures. However, I would like to remark that the perceptions and interpretations of the data I did were based solely on the checklists, notes and images of the videos in a serious and responsible manner.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

There are a number of suggestions that may be followed for anyone interested in subsequent research. A suggestion may be for teachers to look for strategies to motivate students in order help them to have a better development in the learning of a second language by means of non-verbal tools.

As mentioned earlier, non-verbal communication expresses something without using words, so it may be necessary, first of all, to have a deep research of the environment in which learning is taking place. To know the culture is vital so that the teacher could develop an effective use of non-verbal communication to help students in their second language learning. Secondly, it may also be necessary to know students' learning styles and to have some knowledge about the activities, which they can integrate most of those styles in order to make the class more active and dynamic. Finally, talking about motivation, teachers may plan their classes with a meaningful purpose for the students and try to use non-verbal tools to complement it; e.g. visuals, mimic, disguise, general body language.

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## APPENDIX A

### Checklist: Observation 1

<b>NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION: “ FACIAL GESTURES”</b>	<b>TEACHER’S ACTION</b>	<b>STUDENTS REACTION’</b>	<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>

**Other observations**

## APPENDIX B

### Checklist: Observation 2

<b>NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION: “ HAND MOVEMENTS”</b>	<b>TEACHER’S ACTION</b>	<b>STUDENTS REACTION’</b>	<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>

**Other observations:**