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Non-Verbal Communication in Language Teaching to Facilitate Students' Understanding and Promote Oral Interaction

[Artículo Investigación]

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Abstract

The present study focuses on the inclusion of conscious non-verbal communication as a technique to facilitate students' understanding of the target language. This experimental research comes up after a process of observation, carried out in a public school in the north of Córdoba, where it was found that beginner language learners struggle to grasp what was being communicated by the teacher. In order to give solution to this problem, the researcher decided to explore the impact that intentional non-verbal cues might have on the language classroom in both the teacher and the students. To make this investigation valid there were chosen a sample population of eight participants, seven students and one English teacher, which become objects of observations for a pair of weeks. Then, interviews and questionnaires were administered; and finally, a rigorous analysis based on the triangulation perspective allows coming up with this finding: The adoption of certain facial gestures, body movements and vocal sounds not only help learners to understand the target language but also to increase rapport between the



teacher and the students and to develop the learners' communicative competence. Due to this great impact, the researcher considers that nonverbal communication plays a highly important role in the field of language teaching and learning, and he suggests teacher trainers to include in their training programs, sessions related to the use of aspects of non-verbal behaviors in the teaching of English since by doing this they will be making an essential contribution to the development of the language teaching process in the region.

Key words: *non-verbal communication, human interaction, interpretation of messages, stimulating meaning, gestures, behaviors, oral cues, kinesics, paralanguage, technique.*

Resumen

Este estudio se enfoca en la inclusión del lenguaje no verbal de manera consciente como una técnica que facilita a los estudiantes la comprensión del lenguaje objeto de estudio. Está investigación experimental surgió de un proceso de observación, llevado a cabo en una escuela pública situada en el norte de Córdoba, donde se encontró que los estudiantes presentaban dificultad para entender el mensaje que estaba siendo comunicado por el profesor de lenguas. Para dar solución a esta problemática, se decidió explorar el impacto que la comunicación no verbal utilizada de manera intencional podría tener en los estudiantes y el profesor dentro del salón de clases de lengua extranjera. Para validar esta investigación se seleccionó una muestra representativa de la población compuesta por siete estudiantes y un profesor de inglés, los cuales fueron observados por varias semanas. Luego, se les hicieron entrevistas y aplicaron encuestas para hacer un riguroso análisis basado en perspectiva triangular de datos, la cual permitió reportar

el siguiente hallazgo: La adopción de ciertos gestos faciales, movimientos corporales y sonidos vocales no solo facilita a los estudiantes comprender la lengua objeto de estudio, además contribuye a crear una buena relación en el salón de clase y también ayuda a desarrollar la competencia comunicativa. Debido a este gran descubrimiento, el investigador considera que la comunicación no verbal utilizada de forma intencional juega un rol importante en el campo de la enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras, por lo tanto sugiere a los maestros formadores incluir dentro de sus capacitaciones, apartes relacionado con el uso de aspectos de la comunicación no verbal en la enseñanza del inglés ya que con esto se estaría haciendo un aporte significativo en el desarrollo del proceso de enseñanza de esta lengua dentro de la región.

Palabras claves: Comunicación no verbal, interacción humana, interpretación de mensajes, estimular significado, gestos, comportamientos, claves orales, kinésica, paralenguaje, técnica.

Introduction

During years thousands of investigations have been carried out in order to contribute in the discovery and establishment of principles to ensure effective teaching and learning of languages. Despite the significant advances reached in this field thanks to those researches there is much to explore yet, as the role non-verbal communication might play on the exchange of information in the language classroom.

According to Molina (2013, p. 87) any language can be learned if the conditions necessary for that to take place are successfully met. One of these requirements is language com-

prehension. In respect to this, Krashen (1982) states that the teachers' duty in the language classroom is to provide learners a comprehensible input. A possible way of doing that is by combining verbal and non-verbal communication. It means, using wordless messages to support oral speech.

This research takes place after observing in a public school in the north of Córdoba that most language teachers fail to provide an effective input. As a result, they have to switch to L1 very often in order to help learners understand the messages they intend to transmit. It also makes students demotivate toward the class and feel frustration due to the fact that they are not able to intervene in the communication process successfully. Therefore, the researcher wants to know if the intentional use of nonverbal behaviors make the input clear, and support learners in the understanding and oral production of the target language.

The following research questions are set in order to find a solution to the problem above described:

- To what extent the conscious use of non-verbal cues might facilitate the understanding of the English language in beginner language learners?
- How might the teacher and the students use non-verbal communication in the exchange and interpretation of the English language in the classroom?
- What impact does the use of some non-verbal communication have in the English language class?

Similarly, In order to maintain consistency in this research, there are respectively defined the objectives this project aims to achieve:

General Objective

- To explore the use of nonverbal communication as a strategy to help beginner learners understand the target language in the classroom.

Specific Objectives

- To determine the pedagogical implications for the teacher and the students of using intentional nonverbal communication in the exchange and interpretation of messages.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of explicit nonverbal communication in the development of the communicative competence in the language class.
- To promote among language teachers to use nonverbal communication consciously to convey meaning during classes.

As a concluding remark, this project makes an essential contribution to the language teaching process since it shows that the inclusion of certain gestures, postures, and vocal sounds help learners to understand the target language, if they are applied accordingly. Besides, this study is also worth because it compares and describes the differences in term of students' attitude towards the English class when the teacher avoids or uses intentionally non-verbal communication during the lesson. Finally, this work is important for the reason that there have been few attempts in the region to inform that the synchronization of

speech and visual movements facilitates learners comprehend, recall and replicate linguistic content of the target language to a much greater degree than with only using the acoustic channel (Pillar, 2011. P.3).

Theoretical Framework

As time passes by, Non-Verbal Communication (NVC) gets more attention in language teaching and language learning research. This can be evidenced in the great amount of information found in the web related to the topic. Despite of this, researchers and educators have asserted that there are still a lot to examine in this field. Based on this premise, the researcher of this project pretends to summarize and interpret what it is found in the existing literature and define how this theory could help to find a solution to the problem that led this investigation.

Since the field NVC embrace a growing range of areas. For the implementation of this enquiry, it will be only revised the information related to the use of NCV with pedagogical purposes. That is to say, those elements of NVC which can be included in the language class such as kinesics and paralanguage in order to facilitate the teacher and learners exchange and understanding of the information transmitted in class.

Additionally, it is important to mention that most of the theories which guided this research are linked to investigations carried out by the worldwide researcher authority in NVC, Fernando Poyatos.

Non-Verbal Communication

In search of finding a precise definition of what NVC is, it was found that the concept of

NVC is one of the most ill-defined in semiotics (Sebeok, 1977 qtd. In Poyatos, 2002, p.XVII). For this reason, it has been complex for researchers to agree in just one interpretation that encompass all this term means. Although, the attempts made by scholars to describe NVC are different, the focus is alike.

First, Malandro, Barker, & Barker (1989) declared that NVC is the process by which non-verbal behaviors are used, either singly or in combination with verbal behaviors, in the exchange and interpretation of messages within a given situation or context (qtd. in Peng, 2011 p.506). Then, Burgoon, Buller & Woodall (1989) defined NVC as the unspoken dialogue which involves the messages conveyed beyond words (qtd. in Yongming & Si, 2010, p.114).

Afterwards, Poyatos (1983, p.69) affirmed that NVC is:

The emissions of signals by all the nonlexical, artifactual and environmental sensible signaling system contained in the realm of a culture, whether individually or in mutual constructing and whether or not those emissions constitute behavior or generate personal interaction (qtd. In Poyatos, 2002, p.XVII).

And Janak (2009, p.101) stated that NVC is the process of one person stimulating meaning in the mind of another person or persons by means of nonlinguistic cues e.g. facial expressions, gestures, etc.

The list of educators trying to define NVC goes on, but these four definitions given above are enough to say that NVC is the use of wordless communication with the purpose of supporting the verbal message in human interaction.

In other word, NVC is based on vocal, gesture or movement codes that assist the spoken messages.

Classification of Non-Verbal Communication

Even though there are many classifications of NVC, not all of them agree on. For the implementation of this study it was favored the classification of NVC made by Malandro et al (1989) (qtd. in Peng, 2011, p.509) which divide NVC in the following nine types:

1. Body types; shapes and sizes;
2. Clothing and personal artifacts;
3. (Kinesics (body movement and gestures and posture);
4. Facial expressions and eye behavior;
5. Environment;
6. Proxemics including human territory and body contact;
7. Paralanguage (voice characteristics and qualities);
8. Olfactics (taste and smell); and
9. Chronomics, including schedule of each course and time that teachers gives to students to prepare for the questions.

For this study just two aspects of the classification above mentioned were analyzed: Kinesics and Paralanguage. The idea of choosing these two aspects is that they have a salient effect on language teaching (Peng, 2011, p.509).

Kinesics

Following Kellerman and Hurley's point of view kinesics refers to posture, gestures, facial expressions and eye movements (1992) (qtd. in Pillar 2011, p.2). Birdwhistell (1970, p.158) estimates that no more than 30 to 35 percent of the social meaning of a conversation or an interaction is carried by the words. That is why, Abererombic (1995) says that people converse more with the whole body rather than their vocal organs (qtd. in Peng, 2010, p.505). So, as language teaching is an activity of communication, teachers should carry out conscious meaningful kinesics movements to make more understandable the new language.

Paralanguage

The other aspect to focus on is paralanguage. Poyatos (1983, p.129) defines it as a series of vocal/narial voice modifications and independent sounds and meaningful silences. Another definition is given by Janak (2009, p.102) who says that paralanguage is concerned with the non-verbal audio part of speech such as tone, pitch, intonation and pause, etc. Analyzing these concepts, it could be stated that this paralinguistic tool is what helps the spoken language to convey the whole meaning of the words; since it allows learners to grasp more easily the piece of information that the teacher wants them to focus on.

Function of Non-Verbal Communication in Language Instruction

Poyatos (2002) asserts that our non-verbal behaviors can affect what we have said, are saying or are going to say in words, or even non-verbal behaviors. From this overview, it can be stated that NVC have some functions in the exchange of information. Both, Melandro

et al, (1989) (qtd. In Peng, 2011, p.506) and Poyatos (2002, p.61) agree that NVC serves six primary functions: complementing, substituting for, accenting, contradicting, repeating and regulating the verbal message.

- **Complementing.** A complementing non-verbal message changes the meaning or adds extra information to the verbal message. For example, when the teacher say “sorry” and puts one hand up to his/her ear while a student is near the board making an oral presentation, he is adding information in order for the learner to talk louder.
- **Substituting.** Substitution often occurs when barriers to verbal communication exist in the environment and is used for emphasis. For example, a teacher might suddenly raise or lower his/her voice to attract absent-minded students to focus on his/her speaking in class.
- **Accenting.** Accenting is to emphasize a particular point in a verbal message. For example, the teacher would pause before or after an important point in his/her explanation to highlight or accent the point the teacher is about to make.
- **Contradicting.** Contradiction takes place when the verbal language does not match with the non-verbal message. For example, when the teacher says that the exercise is easy to do and he/she puts a smirk on his face or just outright laugh.
- **Repeating.** Repetition is used in order to emphasize or clarify the verbal message. For example, when an English teacher is teaching numbers, he says “two” in English meanwhile he/she puts up two fingers to clear up the verbal message.

- **Regulating.** Regulation serves to coordinate the verbal dialogue between people and manage the flow of communication interaction. For example, the teacher might nod his/her head when a student is answering a question to indicate that he agrees with him/her and that he/she should continue talking.

All the functions above mentioned show the interrelationships between non-verbal system and verbal language. Teachers especially should be fully aware of how NVC act and should work on improving the ability to use these functions in benefit of language instruction. The integration of these aspects of communication might result in the creation of a modern and effective teaching and learning strategy (Panagiotis, 2012, p. 1466).

Non-Verbal Communication in Language Teaching

NVC is important for language teaching for the following reasons: improve teachers’ effectiveness of language teaching, motivate learners and, help students to communicate efficiently.

Allen (1999) points out that “NVC improves the effectiveness of language teaching through the use of behaviors which contribute to the comprehension of the messages in three ways, heightening attention, providing additional context and facilitating recall (qtd. in Yongming, 2010, p.114). In addition, Al Shabii (1993) mentions that a teacher can perform some artificial and exaggerative gesture to take the most advantage if his/her teaching (qtd. in Karimi et al, 2012, p.200). Similarly, Rosa (2000) says that Nonverbal messages can be more explicit means of determining intent than merely spoken word alone (qtd. in Janak,

2009, p.103). Therefore, if language teachers become aware of the importance of NVC in language teaching, they may become more effective on their instructional communication. That is why Panagiotis (2012, p.1474) expresses that NVC acts as a pedagogical strategy that improves the effectiveness of teachers and students' learning capacity.

Moreover, by using NVC learners can increase their level of motivation and overcome their understanding issues. As Janak (2009, p.104) states non-verbal behaviors plays a highly important and essential role on learners' motivation in language classroom since the more the teacher uses non-verbal clues the easier the students can understand the subject matter. Similarly, Allen and Kusaanagi (2000) indicate that the teacher's gestures in the language classes are stimulating and fun for students (qtd. in Karimi et al, 2012, p.200). That is the reason non-verbal cues should be used to engage students and raise their level of extrinsic motivation.

Besides, NVC is a key factor for effective communication. As it is known, human communication is divided mainly in two types: verbal and nonverbal (Karimi et al, 2012 p.188). Although, these types are different in form, they are subtly interrelated. That is why Poyatos (1983, p.132) recognizes that verbal language cannot be studied in isolation if we try to establish a good communicative competence. Thus, since the goal of language teaching is to develop the linguistic competence, the teacher should show the learners how to elaborate and comprehend the messages by paying attention to the nonverbal behaviors; it may certainly enhance effective communication (Janak, 2009, p.104).

For many years NVC was not taken into account for education. It was only since 1917s that researches on this field started to gain great prominences (Panagiotis, 2012, p.1467). Among the scholars that have made important contribution in this area are Rosenthal and Poyatos. The former focused on NVC, particularly its influence on expectations. He discovered that subtle non-verbal clues made by teachers may influence their outcomes. The later formulated the basic triple structure of discourse: Language-paralanguage-kinesics. He exposed that this triple structure has the capacity to operate simultaneously and is indispensable in full face-to-face communication between humans. Therefore, it is the true core of human communication.

Nowadays, NVC has become a focus of interest in language instruction. In the web can be found numerous studies related to this issue; most of them tackle issues like *"The impact of nonverbal communication on learners' attitudes and understanding of lexical items"* (Karimi, 2008), *"The role of teacher's nonverbal communication in the language teaching classroom"* (Janak, 2009), *"The effects of nonverbal communication on English classroom teaching"* (Peng, 2011) as well as, *"The analysis of nonverbal behavior in intercultural communication"*(Yongming, 2010,). It is important to mention that the main researches in the field of NVC have been carried out in foreign countries.

In the region there were found a few investigations about NVC. The first one conducted by Gomez (2012), it was called *"Paralanguage: A contribution to the Teaching of Spanish as a Foreign Language"*. It was focused on a factor related to the language and culture: the im-

importance of non-verbal language, specifically on paralanguage in the communicative interaction and the inclusion of functional tasks that help SFL (Spanish as a Foreign Language Learners) be aware of the importance of that kind of communication in the target language learning. The author assures that Foreign Language Non-verbal Communication must not be taught in an isolated way but in both an integrated and contextualized milieu. Therefore, it is mandatory to integrate both non-verbal and verbal forms in the curriculum of the teaching of Spanish as a Foreign Language. In this way, foreign learners will have the chance to interact in daily real situations.

The second research was carried out by Pinto (2012), it was entitled "*Non-verbal Communication: Kinesics and Proxemics in the Teaching and Learning Process of Foreign Languages*". The author declares that the base of communication is the verbal or non-verbal linguistic sign. The non-verbal sign is that which uses haptic means (that is to say, the study of contact behavior and sensations) or visual in order to represent something in a conventional or systemic way from social learning. It is studied by paralinguistic, proxemics and kinetics. As a conclusion, Pinto suggests that in a foreign language teaching, it is necessary to identify the pedagogical implications of the handling of the non-verbal issues in the assimilation and comprehension of the target language.

The third study about the topic was also carried out by Gomez & Vargas (2013) entitled "*Kinesics and Proxemics: A Contribution to the Teaching of Foreign Languages*". The point of this work is to recognize kinesics and proxemics as important elements in the language teaching and learning process. The authors start defining kinesics as the study of postures, gestures, stance and movement of people

when they communicate. Then, they define proxemics as the study of physical space between the sender and the receiver of a message. After this, they express that both kinesics and proxemics are used and perceived differently across cultures. Finally, they suggest language teachers to help learners be aware those differences if they want their students communicate properly in the target language.

The research studies consulted during the realization of this project assisted the researcher to lay the foundation upon which this study stands. The contrast of different scholars' point of view about the importance of NVC in the field of education provided a great understanding of the subject and guided this work to follow its own line of inquiry: the conscious use of NVC as a strategy to help beginner language learners in the acquisition process of a foreign language. This investigation was fed with reliable investigations in order to make worth contributions for further researches on the topic.

Design

The design of this study presents some features for which it can be considered an experimental research. First, it is interested in studying a cause and effect relation. For this case “the cause” is the inclusion of nonverbal clues in the class; and “the main possible effect” is a better understanding of the target language. Second, it was selected students randomly from different groups. Random selection of learners ensures reliability, that is to say, it does not force to get the results expected.

Moreover, it is important mention that this investigation follows an adaptation of the original view of experimental research since it is focused on a single pilot group. Griffée (2012, p.83) calls it single class type of experimental design. In this sense, this enquiry instead of having two experimental groups just has one to conduct the exploration. To make it work this way, there were implemented two phases with the same group. In the first one, the teacher avoided using nonverbal behavior; in the second one, he used nonverbal behavior on purpose (this was the innovation in the class methodology).

The comparison and analysis of the two faces mentioned above to the light of the data gathered and visual inspection determined the impact of this experiment and allowed the researcher to come up with some valid conclusions.

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in a public school located in the north of Córdoba. It is 120 kilometers far from the capital city of this state. It

is currently one of the biggest schools in the region. It has 3200 students who come from low-income families that live in the neighborhoods surroundings; and 103 teachers of different subjects, among them, 3 graduated teachers of English.

Additionally, the school policies state the amount of hours for teaching English, as following: 1 hour per week from 1st to 5th graders, 2 hours from 6th to 9th graders, and 3 hours from 10th to 11th graders. Despite of teaching English has been established since primary, students start language classes in secondary. Because of the school does not have enough language teachers.

To the development of this research, the school Principal, as well as, the coordinators gave their approval to the researcher and let him used a suitable room to piloting the classes. There were set four class sessions of 45 minutes (two sessions per week). To avoid that the students skipped classes in their normal teaching day during the afternoon, the class sessions were carried out in the morning.

The main participants of this study were seven female students from eight graders. Their age range is between 13 to 14 years old. They were selected randomly from different classrooms for the researcher. The selection was done in this way to impede just choosing gifted and high achievers students. The point was to pick out a representative sample, a mixture of successful and less successful learners.

Regarding the students’ level of English; it was determined that was low. They can be ranked as beginner language learners. They presented difficulties to follow instructions or kept a conversation going. That is probably because they did not take English class in primary

or in any other kind of academic institution. The only place where they have had contact with the English language is the public school where they currently study. They have been attending English classes since 6th grade with an intensity of two hour of classes during the week.

Concerning to the teacher involved in this research, he has been teaching English for five years, three of them in the school where this study was developed. He shows a high level of oral English proficiency. He wanted to participate freely of this project. He is an enthusiastic teacher willing to improve the teaching of English in his place of work. He had had the opportunity to teach in whole secondary grades, and he knew well the seven students selected to be part of this research. He collaborated planning the four classes and tried to use nonverbal communication as much as he could to the fulfillment of this investigation.

Data Sources and Data Collection Procedures

For the collection of data to explore the use of nonverbal communication as a strategy to help beginner learners understand the target language in the classroom, a set of instruments were designed.

Interviews. There were designed two interviews, one for the teacher and another one for the students, which were applied at the end of the last class session. For practical reasons the questions were made in the students' and teacher's L1. Each interview had seven open-ended questions which were asked in a predetermined manner allowing for free-flowing conversation. The objective of these instruments was to gather detailed information about participants' opinions and

impressions regarding the conscious use of NVC in the language class. The answers collected were typed for further analysis.

Observations. There was designed a format that helped to conduct an informative observation. The format was divided in three parts: referential information of the observation, brief description of the class and observer's comments. The researcher intended to play an unobtrusive role in order to make a detailed, nonjudgmental, and concrete description of what had been observed, in this case the students' reaction when teacher used intentional non-verbal communication with pedagogical purposes. These observations were significant to this study because they allowed take field notes to discover the recurring patterns and relationships between what the teacher taught and how the students responded.

Questionnaire. There was also designed a questionnaire for applying to the learners. It consisted on seven questions with structured response categories; where the students went through the statements carefully and ticked from one to five to determine how much they agree or disagree on each statement. The objective of this instrument was to obtain a small amount of information about the learners' point of view of the use of gestures, movements and vocal sounds made by the teacher and themselves in the class. This questionnaire was relevant because it allowed the students expressed their opinions of some aspects of the class without feeling the pressure of revealing their identities or being judged by their answers.

The careful analysis of the answers provided by all the participants, the observations, the field notes and the questionnaire led the researches to give responses to the research questions formulated in this study.

Three main results emerged from the triangulation of data:

1. The Interest of the Students Towards the English Class Grows.

The teacher-researcher observed that the students paid more attention and showed a good attitude towards the English class when the teacher participant used conscious Non-Verbal Communication (NVC). Firstly, the students were asked their opinions regarding the teacher omission of intentional NVC in the class. One of them stated that *“I could not understand part of the content of the class; this made me lose the interest”* (S1). In the same line another learner declared that *“I feel bored when the teacher avoids using NVC because the class becomes monotonous”* (S5).

The perspective of the situation changed when they were asked their opinion concerning the teacher conscious use of NVC in class. A student pointed out that *“to me the class was like a game where I had to pay close attention to understand; and if I did not see what the teacher was doing with his body, I missed the track of what he was saying”* (S6). In addition, another teen said *“to me the class is cooler because one can understand more, I mean, when the teacher made movements or gestures, one inferred that what he wants to say is that”* (S4).

Similarly, the teacher participant indicated that *“I perceived the students were engaged in the class (...) I think there was a good disposition from the students to the class where conscious NVC was used”*.

The questionnaire reinforced all the above stated by the participants. For example, to the

statement: I pay more attention to the teacher when he uses intentionally facial gestures, body movements and vocal sounds, during the time he is speaking in English. 58% of the students strongly agreed; 28% agreed; 14% disagree. Based in these percentages, it could be said that most of the students focused their attention on the class due to the teacher uses of NVC.

In the same questionnaire, in another statement, the students were inquired: I feel excited about the English class when the teacher includes facial gestures, body movements and vocal sounds to complement his speech. 58% of the students strongly agreed, 14% agreed, 28% neither agreed nor disagree. Again the majority of the learners expressed that the teacher uses of NVC make them to enhance their level of motivation towards the English class.

2. The Students Understand Better the Target Language when the Teacher Uses Nonverbal Communication Consciously.

One of the conclusions the analysis of data generated was that the implementation of conscious NVC in the English class led to a better understanding of the language. During the observation of classes it was noticed that when the instructor restrained the use of NVC, the learners had difficulty to follow his instructions or to answer questions related to the topic discussed in class. On the contrary, when NVC was used intentionally, the students were more willing to do the activities and give responses to the questions formulated by the teacher.

In the interview, to the question: what do you like more from the classes where NVC was intentionally used? One student said that *“I felt relaxed. The movements made by the teacher*

helped me to understand almost everything he was saying in English” (S3). Furthermore, when they were asked if they recommend English teachers to use NVC while they teach, another learner highlighted that “I would recommend that teachers use NVC in their classes because it would help us to grasp the idea of what they are saying immediately. That would be the ideal of a language class that we understand the (target) language well” (S7).

The participant teacher was asked his opinion about using consciously NVC in the English class. He answered that *“the use of intentional NVC doubtless assists students in the understanding of sentences, instructions, etc. in English”*. In addition, talking about the impact NVC had on beginner language learners, he claimed that *“the impact on them is positive. Students like seem the teacher gesturing and making movements, and this guaranties better comprehension of what I am talking (...)”*.

Finally, in the questionnaire, to the statement: the facial gestures, body movements and vocal sounds that the teacher makes help me to understand the meaning of words and sentences he expresses in the English language. 72% of the students strongly agreed, 28% agreed. This data also suggest that most of the students benefit when the teacher use NVC since it supports them to understand better the English language spoken in class.

3. Nonverbal Communication Might be Used as a Technique in the Teaching of English.

This study also revealed that NVC can be a useful technique to implement with beginner’s English learners for the following reasons.

First, it facilitated transition of information between the teacher and learners and vicever-

sa. During the observation stage, in the latter two classes, it was clearly noticed that after the teacher used intentional NVC to accompany what he was saying, he got more correct answers in class activities than in the former classes.

Additionally, when students were asked about what they liked the most from the last two classes; one answered: *“To be honest, I liked that I could understand, I mean, there were new words that I did not know but with the movements the teacher made, and how he expressed himself I was able to comprehend what he intended to transmit” (S1)*. Another questions was asked the students to know how much they understood the vocabulary from the classes where the teacher used intentional NVC, a teen girl said: *“From one to ten, I put nine because the mimics help me to get everything better” (S5)*.

In the questionnaire, to the statement: If I use facial gestures, body movements and vocal sounds, this help me to complement my ideas when I intend to express something in English. 58% of the students strongly agreed and 28% agreed and 14% disagreed. This result reinforced that most of the students felt the information interchange also exceled from students to teacher when nonverbal gestures and movements were used for them on purpose to express simple answers or provide information to the teacher’s questions.

Second, the conscious use of NVC increased the teacher’s and the students’ English talking time. Contrasting the observations carried out in the sample classes, it was evidenced that in the last two classes the teacher switched less to the L1 than in previous ones. As one student affirmed: *“(…) in the previous classes there were words what I did not know what they meant, so I asked the teacher for their mea-*

ning, and he told me the meaning in Spanish; but in the last classes he was clear about the meaning of a word with the gestures, hence was not necessary asking him to tell me the meaning in my language” (S4). Regarding the students’ English interaction in class another participant added: “I have tried to talk more in English in the last two classes than in others. I do not know much English but I applied what the teacher advised us, to complement what I want to say with movements, etc.” (S5).

Third, by using NVC the teacher carried out many functions in the language class. In the observations conducted these functions were clearly appreciated, for example, in the third class he used body behavior to added information about the questions he was asking to the students. In the same session he also used hand movements to make emphasis on the intonation patter of yes-no questions. In the fourth class he mimicked to present the new language. Then, he implemented body actions to help students grasp the meaning of sentences, and finally, he used NVC to open the channels of communication with the student, allowing then to start o stop talking.

CONCLUSIONS

The present research aimed at explore the impact of using consciously Non-Verbal Communication in the English class with a sample population taken from a public school located in the north of Córdoba. To attain this goal is was necessary to review the existent literature related to the topic, design instruments to collect information and to profoundly analyze the data gathered. All this process allowed the research to come up with the following findings. First, the participant English teacher

seems to be more effective on transmitting information by using conscious non-verbal behaviors. Traditionally NVC was referred as a complement to the spoken language, but currently, in the field of language teaching, it is being defined as a resource that can bring clarity to the students about what is been talking in the target language. Under this new perspective facial gestures, body movements and vocal sounds tend to be a new technique for adopting in language classes. Undoubtedly, this becomes a new challenge for language teachers since it is their responsibility to learn how to use nonverbal behavior to enhance the quality of classroom teaching (Peng, 2011, p.506).

Second, the participant language learners seem to find a way to develop their communicative competence by using intentionally nonverbal cues. The fact that low level students have a short vocabulary should not be a determining factor for stopping them to express their opinions or give responses to the teacher in class. If students become aware of the advantages of using NVC in the exchange of messages within a given situation and are taught to use mimics to resemble unknown words in English as a strategy to communicate, they will probably be more willing to participate orally in the class. In this sense NVC can be used by students as a scaffolding tool through which they make the transition from a beginner level to an upper level where they are more capable to manage the spoken language.

Third, the relationship between the teacher and the students seems to improve when NVC is used in the language class. During the classes where the teacher omi-

tted conscious nonverbal actions the students showed tensed and bored. On the contrary, once the teacher started to use body movements the classroom climate changed. They became more active and interested in the topic. Related to this experience a student said "the teacher gestures were stimulating and fun". Also McCroskey et al. (2006) stated that NVC "contribute in the development and improvement of interpersonal relationships" (qtd. in Panagiotis, 2012, p.1466). It is like tone of voice, gestures, and movements create a profound effect on the students' feelings of comfort with the teacher. The point is that nonverbal behaviors generate a positive impact, student enjoy the class and are highly motivated to the teacher and subject matter.

Due to nonverbal communication plays a highly important role in the field of language teaching and learning. As a final remark, the researcher wants to suggest teacher trainers to include in their training programs sessions related to the use of aspects of nonverbal behaviors in the teaching of English. By doing that they will be making an essential contribution to the language teaching process, since as it was explained in this study the adoption of certain gestures, postures, and sounds not only help learners to understand the target language, but also to increase rapport between the teacher and the students and to develop the learners communicative competences.

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