

Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Non-verbal Immediacy Behaviors: A Study of English as a Second Language Classes in Pakistan

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Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating students' perceptions of teachers' nonverbal immediacy behaviors in ESL classes of Pakistani universities. In order to examine students' perceptions of their teachers' nonverbal immediacy behaviors, quantitative data was collected through questionnaires followed by qualitative analysis of interviews. A sample of 51 students was taken from a public sector university in Pakistan. 38 nonverbal behaviors of teachers were listed by the researcher which prompted the students to consider these behaviors as contributing to their: motivation, or de-motivation, or not contributing to either at all. Findings revealed that nonverbal behaviors that were perceived as motivating reflected immediacy while behaviors which reflected no immediacy or were non-immediate were perceived as de-motivating. Findings suggest that students feel more motivated towards learning English when the teacher utilizes behaviors such as eye contact, body gestures, listens patiently to students, has relaxed body position/facial expressions, sits/stands close to students, and move around in classroom while teaching. Whereas teacher's tensed face, frowning at students, moving, or acting nervously in a class, tense body position, in a rush/hurry, and having tough/ stern impression were regarded as non-immediate and so de-motivating nonverbal teachers' behaviors.

Keywords: Nonverbal Behavior, Immediacy, Motivating, De-Motivating, Perceptions, ESL.

Introduction

Pakistan is a multilingual country known for its richness in regional languages. English language is a major foreign or/and second language. A legacy of the British, English has left a strong impact on the lives of the people and politics of the Pakistani society so much so that it has become a 'status symbol' and 'language of the elite' in Pakistan (Usman, 2008). It is the official language of Pakistan and a part and parcel of Pakistani education system. English is taught from elementary schools and is extensively used in media and for business purposes (ibid). In most of the private and in some public schools, all subjects are taught in English. The National Education Policy (2008) describes English as an international language which makes

this language more important to be learned in order to become successful members of the global village (Usman, 2008). In addition to domestic necessity, also the fact that English is a lingua franca and a language to communicate with the foreigners, it has attained quite a prestigious status that has rendered both its teaching and learning inevitable for Pakistani people.

In the specific context of Pakistan, teachers are normally perceived as the transmitter and authority of knowledge (Cortazzi & Jin, 1997). Their teaching tends to be in a quite authoritative way, almost similar to the way they have been taught. They tend to avoid communicating closeness, warmth, and liking in their relationship with their students. In other words, mostly teachers in Pakistan communicate detachment in their classrooms. On account of large power distance between students and teachers, students tend to be more face-saving and reluctant in communication. Liu's (2001) study shows that Asian students' (including Pakistanis) modes of oral participation in classrooms are strongly influenced by the teacher's communicative behaviors. Comparatively, there is less interaction in class between the teachers and students and a student's reticence to speak indicates a mark of respect for the teacher (Zhang, 2007). Non-verbal aspects of/in teaching are ignored, even though 75 to 90% of messages are conveyed non-verbally (Chaudry & Arif, 2012). In the absence of any previous research work on teacher's nonverbal behavior, more specifically, on the influence of *individual* non-verbal immediacy behaviors upon students' motivation (to learn English), it is a topic worthy of attention and exploration in Pakistani system of education (ibid). Thus, the study aims to achieve the following objectives.

Objectives

- 1) To explore the teachers' motivating non-verbal immediacy behaviors in Pakistani ESL classes.
- 2) To explore the teachers' de-motivating non-verbal immediacy behaviors in Pakistani ESL classes.

To achieve the afore-mentioned objectives, the following research questions have been formulated.

Research Questions

1. Which aspects of teacher non-verbal immediacy behavior do Pakistani ESL learners perceive as motivating?
2. Which aspects of teacher non-verbal immediacy behavior do Pakistani ESL learners perceive as de-motivating?

Thus, this study bears significance in terms of its implications for the language classrooms and teachers' training and development programs.

Literature Review

The body language of a teacher is the most important thing in the class [...] it is the way you use your eyes, the distance you stand from your students, the way you touch or refrain from touching them. All of these unnoticeable things in the class carry important signals which create a profound effect on your students' feelings of welcome and comfort with you (Stevick, 1982: 6).

Nonverbal Behavior

Non-linguistic cues in conversation such as hands gestures, eye contact, head movements, bodily postures, lips movement (smile), and other symbols which accompany oral discourse is called "nonverbal behavior" (Hickson & Stacks, 1993: 5). It sends distinct and clear messages and 'can be a more explicit and candid means of determining intent than merely the spoken word alone' (Rosa, 2000: 1 as quoted in Negi, 2009). It includes all visual, auditory, and physical aspects---body language, facial expressions, physical appearance,

gestures, movement, postures, voice/vocal clues (without verbal content), attire, and patterns of behavior in interpersonal interaction (for example, touching, personal space etc.). During communicative encounters, and within interaction, nonverbal effect is encoded as well as decoded (Saechou, 2005). In addition to verbal messages, receiver develops his opinion about sender of the message on the basis of non-verbal cues (ibid). An individual relies heavily upon the message sent via non-verbal channels to ascertain that the perceived actions match the message sender words, thus showing that nonverbal messages are equally important as the verbal ones (ibid). Hence, in a classroom, the effective use of non-verbal elements by a teacher might serve as cues for interactional and relational functions, such as immediacy (McCafferty & Stam, 2008). Nonverbal immediacy may bear even more significance because of the necessity to teach a foreign language, communicatively. Teacher support, in the guise of teacher immediacy and teacher involvement, is viewed as an extremely effective element in English language classes (Wen & Clément, 2003). Several scholars have shown that nonverbal behaviors facilitate L2 or foreign language learning (Allen, 2000; McCafferty & Stam, 2008) by providing a positive and relaxed atmosphere for effective communication, which is necessary for learning L2 (Ozmen, 2011).

Teacher's Immediacy

Immediacy and liking are two sides of the same coin. That is, liking encourages greater immediacy, and immediacy produces more liking. (Mehrabian, 1971:77)

Immediacy means how people infer a communicator's behaviors from implicit cues as mentioned above. Immediacy implies positive attributes, communicates closeness, and is related to perception. Teacher's immediacy has been described by majority of the researchers as one of the most significant form of teacher's behaviors affecting learners (Moore et al., 1996), particularly in an English language classroom where learners' learning depends a great deal on teacher's teaching (Wen & Clément, 2003). The situational demands of a classroom develop sensitivity among learners to all non-verbal and verbal behaviors exhibited by teachers (McCafferty & Stam, 2008). Students have the ability to derive significant social information regarding their teachers even from the subtle and briefest nonverbal cues (Babad, 2009). An effective communicative performance, which is important to be successful in L2 learning is demonstrated in an individual's motivation to communicate (Zorn, 1991). To explore this notion further, the above-mentioned research questions have been formulated.

Methodology

A mix method approach (both questionnaire and interviews) for the data collection was employed with a sample of 51 postgraduate students, studying in a public sector university of Pakistan, named as Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, by using convenient sampling method. Such an approach combines objectivity of the quantitative measures resulting from closed-ended questions along with the rich description arising from open-ended questions and interviews. According to Dörnyei (2001: 47), combining the "two paradigms" within a single research design enhances the positive attributes of both the methods, overcoming some of their shortcomings. Looking for correlations between quantitative and qualitative data, and then interviews of some of the participants following the initial data collection helped in triangulating the results and confirmed the findings.

The pencil and paper based self-reported questionnaire was used in the study on the basis that the Likert scale form of questionnaire is a quite widely used ones in academic institutions for the purposes of teachers' and course evaluation, and so the students being presumably more acquainted with this type of survey. Also, motivation, being something internal to an individual, cannot be observed directly, hence a persons' behavior can be described better with the aid of instruments such as interviews and questionnaires (Madrid & Canado, 2001).

The questionnaire was partially designed by the researcher while most of the questions were developed from the questions and ideas used in previous studies, listing 38 teachers' nonverbal behaviors, after an extensive review of the relevant literature, to be evaluated by the participant-students in terms of motivators, de-motivators, and 'no affect' categories. Questionnaires were administered and data was collected after explaining the purpose/main features of the study. This was followed by interviews of 6 willing participants selected randomly from the main sample.

Results

For the purpose of analysis of the data, simple descriptive statistics were employed. On account of this study being a small-scale one, descriptive statistics were used accompanied by a certain number of quotations of respondents' answers to effectively enliven the report (Moser & Kalton, 1971). The descriptive analysis of all the 38 questionnaire items were computed as follows (see Table 1):

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the variables

Variables	Items	Mean	Median	Mode	Std.Deviation	Variance	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Physical proximity	TTH	2.26	2.50	3.00	0.876	0.768	3.00	1.00	3.00
	TPS	2.24	2.00	3.00	0.796	0.635	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TTS	1.70	1.00	1.00	0.886	0.786	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TST	2.56	3.00	3.00	0.760	0.578	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TTC	2.56	3.00	3.00	0.760	0.578	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TMC	2.52	3.00	3.00	0.814	0.663	2.00	1.00	3.00
Body movement	TLS	2.50	3.00	3.00	0.707	0.500	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TSD	1.90	2.00	2.00	0.707	0.500	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TSB	1.98	2.00	2.00	0.742	0.551	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TPL	2.74	3.00	3.00	0.527	0.278	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TLC	2.56	3.00	3.00	0.643	0.415	2.00	1.00	3.00
Gestures	TNH	2.64	3.00	3.00	0.692	0.480	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TSH	2.20	3.00	3.00	0.903	0.816	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TGS	2.74	3.00	3.00	0.664	0.441	3.00	1.00	3.00
	TAG	1.56	1.00	1.00	0.674	0.456	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TWS	1.84	2.00	1.00	0.888	0.790	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TPT	2.84	3.00	3.00	0.509	0.260	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TAS	1.34	1.00	1.00	0.626	0.392	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TUH	2.88	3.00	3.00	0.385	0.149	2.00	1.00	3.00
Body position	THP	1.70	2.00	2.00	0.677	0.459	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TRB	2.84	3.00	3.00	0.467	0.219	2.00	1.00	3.00
	TTB	1.30	1.00	1.00	0.614	0.378	2.00	1.00	3.00
Appearance	TMN	1.26	1.00	1.00	0.527	0.278	2.00	1.00	3.00
	THI	1.56	1.00	1.00	0.760	0.578	2.00	1.00	3.00

The codes and variables mentioned in the above table (1) are expanded as follows:

TTH:	The teacher touches on the forearm/hand/shoulder when talking to students (you or any other).
TPS:	The teacher pats the shoulder of students when talking to them (you or any other).
TTS:	The teacher avoids touching students when talking to them (you or any other).
TST:	The teacher sits close to the students when talking to them (you/any other/all).
TTC:	The teacher stands close to the students when talking to them (you/any other/all).
TMC:	The teacher moves closer when talking to students (you/some/all).
TLS:	The teacher leans forward/backward/sideways when talking to the students (You or any other).
TSD:	The teacher sits behind desk while teaching.
TSB:	The teacher stands behind desk/podium while teaching.
TPL:	The teacher stands in front of the class when teaching.
TLC:	The teacher moves around the classroom while teaching.
TNH:	The teacher nods head when talking to students (you/any other/all).
TSH:	The teacher shakes head when talking to students (you/any other/all).
TGS:	The teacher gestures while talking to the class.
TAG:	The teacher avoids gestures while talking to students (you/any other/all).
TWS:	The teacher is serious when talking to students (you/any other/all).
TPT:	The teacher listens patiently to students when talking to students (you/any other/ all).
TAS:	The teacher is always in a rush/hurry while in class.
TUH:	The teacher uses hands/arms to gesture while talking to/teaching students.
THP:	The teacher keeps his/her hands in his/her pocket.
TRB:	The teacher has a very relaxed body position when talking to the class.
TTB:	The teacher has a very tense body position when talking to the class
TMN:	The teacher moves or acts nervously or restlessly in class.
THI:	The teacher has an informal appearance/dress.
TAW:	The teacher smiles at the individual students in class.
TOS:	The teacher smiles when students interact and ask questions.
TTT:	The teacher is silent on students' misbehaviours.
TCT:	The teacher is cheerful when talking to the students (you/any other/all).
TCF:	The teacher has a cold facial expression when talking to students (you/any other/all).
TSW:	The teacher seems tough/stern when talking to students (you/any other/all).
TTW:	The teacher has a tensed face when talking to students (you/any other/all).
TRF:	The teacher has a relaxed face when talking to students (you/any other/all).
TFW:	The teacher frowns at the class while talking.
TAT:	The teacher face is animated when talking to students (you/any other/all).
TLL:	The teacher looks at the board or notes when talking to class.
TME:	The teacher maintains eye contact with the class when talking to it.
TCI:	The teacher maintains eye contact with individual students when talking to them.
TET:	The teacher avoids eye contact while talking to students (you/any other/all).

Frequencies and Distributions of Motivators and De-motivators by students' responses in a rank order

The 38 questionnaire items, representing different dimensions of teacher's nonverbal immediacy behaviors, were separately tabulated in a rank order from strongly perceived motivating to strongly perceived de-motivating behaviors (Tables 1-38). However, due to space and word limitations, only some of these

variables (total 12) are individually discussed below (Table 2-13) along with interview responses under their respective tables to draw some suitable conclusions. These 12 variables for presentation here are chosen systematically as: 4 each from the topmost, middle, and the bottom most (most frequently, middle range, and least frequently occurring variables respectively) categories¹.

All the interviewees are identified with alphabets (A-F) for the reasons of anonymity.

Table 2: The teacher maintains eye contact with the class when talking to them (M= 3.00)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 3.00	50	100.0	100.0	100.0

As is visible in the Table 2, the response rate for this item of the questionnaire is 100%. Out of the total 50 respondents, an overwhelming majority i.e. 50 out of 50 students indicated this item as a highly motivating aspect of teacher’s behavior for them. This confirms the high significance of this item in class for students’ motivation. The same fact verified by all the 6 interviewees, and indicated here by two representative quotes i.e.

[Teacher’s eye contact] shows confidence and grabs attention of the students. (A)

Whole class keeps attention towards the teacher. (B)

Table 3: The teacher uses hands/arms to gesture when talking to/teaching students (M=2.88)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
2.00	4	8.0	8.0	10.0
3.00	45	90.0	90.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Again, almost all of the respondents i.e. 45 (90%) exhibited their agreement on this item as a more motivating factor of teacher’s behavior, while only 1 (2%) indicated the item as ‘de-motivating’. Very few i.e., 4 (8%) opting for ‘no effect’, found the item as of no importance for their motivation. 4 out of 6 interviewees stated their views regarding this item as;

Gestures bring extra energy and power in what teacher is delivering. (D)

[Gestures] show the confidence of teacher and makes lecture seem interesting. (B)

The 2 interviewees were of the opinion that balance in gestures motivates while exaggeration in it can even divert students’ attention. This answer may account for the 2% who termed hands/arms gesturing as de-motivating.

¹ The statistics of the remaining variables in tabulated form can be provided on demand.

Table 4 : The teacher listens patiently to students when talking to students (you/any other/all) (M=2.84)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
2.00	2	4.0	4.0	10.0
3.00	45	90.0	90.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 4, containing the students' evaluation of the item in question, reveals that out of the total respondents, a great majority i.e., 45 (90%) considers such act as 'motivating', whereas very few students 3 (6%) and 2 (4%) see it as 'de-motivating' and of 'no effect' respectively. Students can confidently ask/say anything, was the justification given by interviewees who figured this item as motivating.

Table 5: The teacher has a very relaxed body position while talking to the class (M=2.84)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
2.00	4	8.0	8.0	12.0
3.00	44	88.0	88.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 reflects that extremely few 2 (4%) out of the total respondents opined the above nonverbal expression either as 'de-motivating' or of 'no effect' (4 or 8%), while once again, the vast majority i.e., 44 (88%) favored it as 'motivating'. Those marking the item as motivating said in their interviews that;

[With relax body position teachers] can deliver their lecture more appropriately. (C)

Students also feel relax while taking lectures. (E)

Table 6: The teacher maintains eye contact with individual students when talking to them (M=2.38)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	11	22.0	22.0	22.0
2.00	9	18.0	18.0	40.0
3.00	30	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Mixed responses, compiled in the above Table 6, can be seen based on the students' feedback to this item. 30 (60%) students feel, as said by 3 of the interviewees, that;

Teacher is giving attention and importance to me. (B)

Individually teacher grabs the attention of each student. (D)

Thus, they encircled this item as 'motivating'. Whereas some students thought e.g. that;

It makes me conscious and hence diverts my attention. (A)

Thus, this could be the reason for marking this item as de-motivating by 11 (2%) participants. 9 (16%) indicated this behavior as having no effect on their motivation.

Table 7: The teacher smiles at individual students in class (M=2.32)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	14	28.0	28.0	28.0
2.00	6	12.0	12.0	40.0
3.00	30	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

For this behavior, a great number i.e., 30 or 60% of the total participants recorded their perceptions as motivating, 14 or 28% considered it de-motivating, while 6 or 12% found it neither motivating nor de-motivating i.e., of no affect. When asked from the 6 interviewees who all considered this item as motivating, they said that;

[Smiling] creates friendly environment. (C)

[It] gives friendly feeling. (E)

I can openly share my views and I get the feeling that my part in communication matters. (F)

Table 8: The teacher face is animated when talking to students (you/any other/all) (M=2.30)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	11	22.0	22.0	22.0
2.00	13	26.0	26.0	48.0
3.00	26	52.0	52.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

It is evident from the data in the Table 8 that a good majority of respondents i.e. 26 (52%) favored this item as 'motivating' though a handsome number (11 or 22%) also termed it as 'de-motivating'. 13 (26%) perceived it as making no difference on their motivation.

Table 9: The teacher touches on the hand/forearm/shoulder when talking to students (you or any other) (M=2.26)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	14	28.0	28.0	28.0
2.00	12	24.0	24.0	50.0
3.00	24	48.0	48.0	100.0
Total	82	100.0	100.0	

The above Table 9 represents that 24 (48%) participants considered this behavior as motivating, as according to one of the interviewees;

I feel teacher is giving me attention and importance which brings me confidence. (A)

14 (28%) perceived the behavior as de-motivating, while 12 (24%) felt it of ‘no effect’ on their motivation.

Table 10 : The teacher has a very tense body position while talking to the class (M=1.30)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	39	78.0	78.0	78.0
	2.00	7	14.0	14.0	92.0
	3.00	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The data in Table 10 suggests in a quantified form that a considerable number i.e., 39 (78%) of the respondents felt the behavior de-motivating, while a very low number of respondents i.e., 4 (8%) of them opined that the behavior is motivating. 7 (14%) responded “no effect” to suggest that such behavior has no impact on their motivation.

Tense position of the teacher makes me tense as well (F), was an explanation given by one of the interviewees perceiving the behavior as de-motivating.

Table 11: The teacher moves or acts nervously or restlessly in class (M=1.26)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	39	78.0	78.0	78.0
	2.00	9	18.0	18.0	96.0
	3.00	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Teacher’s behaving nervously or restlessly in class is also an important nonverbal behavior impacting students’ motivation. This is revealed from the above table 11 which indicates that a very high proportion i.e., 39 (78%) of the participants perceives that they get de-motivated by such behavior. Whereas only 2 (4%) replied it otherwise i.e., motivating. 9 (18%) favored the option ‘no effect’ to indicate no impact of the behavior on student’s motivation. According to 3 interviewees, such a behavior of teacher is quite disturbing and shows his/her non-seriousness.

Table 12: The teacher frowns at the students while talking to them (M=1.22)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	40	80.0	80.0	80.0
	2.00	9	18.0	18.0	98.0
	3.00	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

An equally unavoidable gesture is teacher’s frowning at students. Table 12 provides that almost all participants (40 or 80%), except for 10, considered teacher’s frowning an extremely de-motivating gesture. Of these 10 respondents, a considerable proportion i.e., 9 (18%) indicated the gesture as of no importance for their motivation, while just 1 i.e., 2% marked it as motivating. We can assume that this one participant might have marked it as motivating either unintentionally i.e., attending the question in hurry or might not

have understood the term ‘frowning’. According to 5 interview respondents such behavior makes them hesitant to say anything even if they want to.

Table 13: The teacher has a tensed face when talking to students (M=1.20)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	39	78.0	78.0	78.0
	2.00	9	18.0	18.0	96.0
	3.00	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total		50	100.0	100.0	

The data in Table 13 gives evidence to the fact that a vast majority i.e., 39 (78%) of the respondents felt the behavior de-motivating, while an extremely low number of respondents i.e., 2 (4%) of them opined that the behavior is motivating. 9 (18%) responded “no effect” to suggest no impact of the behavior. According to 4 interviewees, tense face shows teacher confusion and lack of command on the subject.

Findings

The descriptive statistics and interviews provided answers to the research questions which can be explained in light of the results as follows:

Research question 1 (Motivating non-verbal immediacy behaviors)

Which aspects of teacher non-verbal immediacy behavior do Pakistani ESL learners find motivating?

Regarding the research question 1, the findings show that teacher’s frequently perceived strongly motivating non-verbal immediacy behaviors in rank sequence are teacher’s; eye contact, hands and arms gesture, listening patiently to students, relaxed body position, relaxed face, gestures, standing in front of class during lecture, cheerfulness, nodding head, sitting and standing close to students, moving around the classroom, moving closer to students, smiles when students interact, and leaning forward/backward and sideways while talking to students. These 15 out of 22 items having a mean value above 2.50 on a 3-point multi-item scale accounts for 68% of the strong motivators’ descriptions. Whereas teacher’s; making eye contact with individual students, smiling at class, animated face, touching students, is silent over students’ misbehaviors, patting students, and shaking head, having a mean value below 2.50 but above 2.00 were perceived as relatively less motivating behaviors.

Research question 2 (De-motivating non-verbal immediacy behaviors)

Which aspects of teacher’s non-verbal immediacy behavior do Pakistani ESL learners find de-motivating?

The research question 2 relates to teachers’ behaviors that students perceived as de-motivators in classes. According to the findings, the teacher’s most frequently perceived strongly de-motivating non-verbal behaviors rank wise are: teacher’s tensed face; frowning at students; moving or acting nervously or restlessly in class; tense body position in class; in a rush/hurry; and his/her tough/ stern impression. These 6 out of 15 more de-motivating items had a mean value below 1.50 and accounted for 40% of the de-motivator descriptions. Whereas relatively less frequently perceived less de-motivating non-verbal behaviors having a mean value below 2.00 but above 1.50 are: teacher’s informal appearance/dress; avoiding eye contact, gestures and touching students; has hands in pocket during lecture; has cold facial expression; is serious while talking to students; and sits/stands behind desk or podium during teaching.

Discussion

The findings reveal that students' motivations are affected by the students' perceptions of their teachers and their behaviors (Allen et al., 2006). Instructor's involvement with an individual learner carries the most powerful influence on learners' perceptions of their instructor. We can see that among nonverbal immediacy behaviors, maintaining eye contact with the class emerged as relatively more important to students' motivation whereas teacher has a tensed face emerged as a relatively more de-motivating category. Rifkind and Harper (1993) argue that during any conversation, face, particularly surrounding the eyes, conveys the most immediacy. Gaze and eye contact are regarded as affiliative messages which enhance liking (Saechou, 2005).

In terms of broader variables, 'gestures' (M=2.33), 'body movement/orientation' (M=2.33) and 'physical proximity' (M=2.30) are perceived as the most motivating behaviors in the present study. These findings are consistent with those by Murray (1983), Babad et al. (2004) and Hus et al., (2007). Murray (1983) conducted a research on teachers' expressiveness and its connection with teaching effectiveness. While examining students rating of the teachers, Murray (1983) found that the two nonverbal behaviors of teacher which showed the largest differences were; moving around while lecturing and body gestures. These behaviors communicated enthusiasm and elicited and maintained students' attention to lecture material (ibid).

Similarly, in a study by Babad et al. (2004), while analyzing lecturers' various nonverbal behaviors during lecturing to their classes, lecturers rated highly were the ones very expressive in their hands, as well as in body orientation toward their students. They performed continuous shifts in their nonverbal behaviors, thereby increasing students' interest. Almost similar findings were concluded by Hsu, et al., (2007) in terms of teachers' nonverbal immediacy affecting students. Hsu, et al., (2007) concluded that teachers' nonverbal immediacy indicators (i.e. proximity: such as touching, patting student on the shoulder) and gestures are effective predictors of students' willingness to communicate (WTT) in that study.

WTT become more likely when instructors demonstrate these nonverbal behaviors while teaching English. In another study by Gueguen (2004) on the impact of teacher's touching on learners, the results showed that touching is an element of encouragement which produces the behavior expected by the individual (teacher here) who touches.

The model for Interpersonal Teacher Behavior (see Figure 1 below)² conceptualized by den Brok and Cakiroglu (2007) based on the systems approach to communication³ (Watzlawick et al.1967, as cited in Saechou, 2005) also supports the non-verbal immediacy concept (based on the idea that a teacher's non-verbal behaviors establish feelings of liking, pleasure and arousal. Especially, of our concern is the sector CD (Helpful/friendly) which includes actions (i.e. proximity) that are perceived as teacher being more helpful/friendly hence more cooperative and less dominant. This section of the model might provide some explanation for the variable "Physical proximity" as being perceived as the most motivating (2nd highest) category in the present findings.

² Though the study is conducted on school children, but the model shows relationship between teacher's behaviors and students' perceptions.

³In the systems approach of communication, in interpersonal behavior, the focus is on the individual involved (the pragmatic aspect). Such a pragmatic orientation is featured in our conceptualization of interpersonal relation by means of focusing upon the perceptions of learners of their teachers' behaviors.

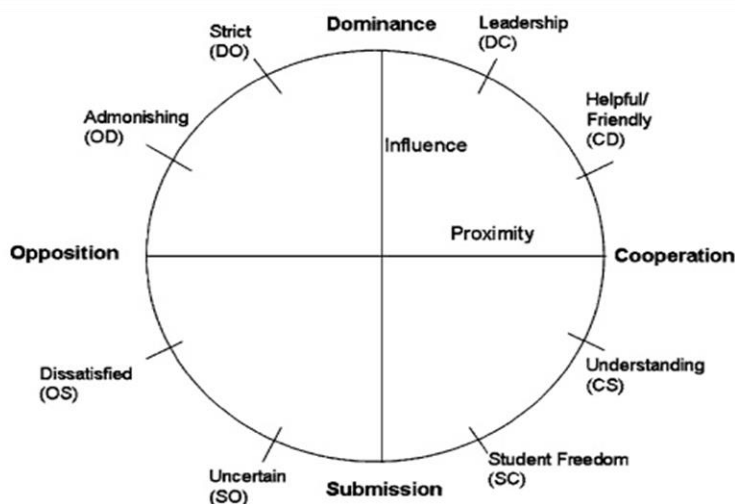


Figure 1: The model for Interpersonal Teacher Behavior

Nonverbal immediacy draws students' attention (Zhang & Sapp, 2008). Kelley & Gorham (1988) argues that students paid closer attention when immediacy was enhanced in these research studies. This means that teacher's immediacy might indeed arouse learners' interest and hence attention. When learners perceive their instructors are offering clear expectations, strategic help, and contingent response, they are more likely to exert more effort and be more persistent. In short, they are more motivated to learn (Hsu, 2010). As shown in the previous chapter, students used different words (while explaining teachers' behaviors) in their interviews for perceived immediate motivating behaviors such as; teacher is giving 'importance', 'attention', 'respect', 'equal treatment'; showing 'interest to talk', 'friendly behavior'; inviting 'questions and expression of ideas/opinions'; creating 'confidence to communicate', 'friendly environment'; students 'feel comfortable while communicating' and 'can openly share their views', 'feels my importance in communication'.

All these words signal inclusion, warmth, teacher's availability/accessibility/approachability, positive regard between people and communicate interpersonal involvement (Andersen, 1985, 1999). These words reveal feelings of pleasure and psychological nearness of the students towards teachers. "The referents of implicit behaviors are emotions and attitudes or like-dislike" (Mehrabian, 1981: 3). Students' exact words in their interviews i.e. "I feel comfortable while communicating", I have a 'scary feeling when try to say something' shows the approach-avoidance tendency of immediacy as the manner in which a student feels comfortable or is apprehensive of teachers while interacting with them (Richmond et al., 1987; Weiner, 1992).

In the present findings, behaviors perceived as most de-motivating are almost the same as given by Sanders & Wiseman (1990) such as, "low eye contact, a distal position, and the absence of smiling and touch" (p.342). The behaviors perceived as (seemingly less or nonimmediate) de-motivators might have led to such perceptions by the participants on account of their communicating detachment and hence conveying lack of expressiveness and enthusiasm (Sanders & Wiseman, 1990). Teachers are perceived to have been projecting coldness, dislike, avoidance, and interpersonal distance; the ones not frequently showing non-verbal immediacy behaviors (Kearney et al., 1988). The respondents' perception of detachment can be noticed from the words that interviewees used for explaining behaviors they labelled as de-motivating i.e. behavior shows 'less teacher's attention', 'not interested in talking to me'; I 'can't talk even if I want', 'cannot ask anything easily/openly'; it 'lowers/lose my confidence'; I feel 'uncomfortable in communication'; I have a 'scary feeling when try to say something'. These responses reveal the students'

feelings of psychological distance between the students and teachers which might obstructs communication and hence L2 use which is quite important element in L2 learning. Understandably, when an individual is motivated to communicate, it gives rise to more opportunities of being successful in learning a language (Hsu, 2010).

Conclusion

This study made an attempt to extend the current research on teacher's nonverbal immediacy behaviors by examining individual teacher's nonverbal immediacy behaviors through students' perceptions. The specific questions and corresponding findings yield significant clues as to the students' perceptions of teachers' nonverbal immediacy behaviors. There will be more likelihood of students getting engaged (cognitively and emotionally) in class when the relevant teacher displays non-verbal immediacy behaviors. However, what was not very obvious in this study was what happens in such situations when teacher immediacy behaviors are incongruent, for instance, when one behavior is demonstrated more than the other.

Nevertheless, this research is more of a steppingstone which provide insight into hitherto unexplored area of individual nonverbal immediacy behaviors as motivating or de-motivating behaviors from students' perspective and from which there is a possibility that other more specific, research can build. Since, the data pool was fairly small and the data is analyzed relatively simply, future research involving larger samples possibly from different cities might be required to determine to what extent outcomes alter when more representative samples are employed. Further, examining the phenomenon in a more natural and real instructional setting (i.e. by direct observation) may help in availing more practical outcomes, such as true or real motivation or/and learning. It might also furnish us with more accurate and valid results relating to the influence of teachers' non-verbal immediacy on students' motivation and by extension learning.

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