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Irina A. Antipova

Student at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Communicative Studies

Kuban State University

Russia, Krasnodar

Tatiana V. Volkodav

Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology and

the Department of English Philology

Kuban State University

Russia, Krasnodar

TEACHERS' BODY LANGUAGE: THE POWER IS IN THE PALM OF THEIR HANDS

***Abstract:** This study examines the influence of the teacher's sign language on the student in educational environment. The article examines such aspects as the history of sign language, the importance of non-verbal communication, a group of gestures, as well as the function of popular gestures of teachers and their influence on students' information perception.*

***Key words:** body language, kinesics, teacher's gestures, sign language, non-verbal communication.*

Introduction

The body language has always been used by people in social interaction [3]. The main means of pedagogical communication is, no doubt, speech. The teacher or the professor of higher education is expected to have a high linguistic culture, a rich vocabulary, possess expressive possibilities and intonational expressiveness of speech, have a clear diction.

However, the teacher communicates with children not only with the help of words, but also using various non-verbal means. Information in communication is translated not only through speech. Gestures, facial expressions, a glance or posture can be even more expressive and effective than words alone. Nevertheless, the inadequate use of non-verbal language can have the opposite effect.

Body language in history

Specific gestures, such as the "manual rhetoric" of Roman speakers, as well as the general transportation and deportation of the whole body, have been the objects of study from classical times. In the fourth century In Greece, people of the highest class cultivated a vertical, "firm" attitude and a leisurely pace, taking long steps. In classical Rome, strictly moderate and limited gestures were considered a sign of a moderate and self-controlled nature - the requirements of an exemplary Roman aristocrat and speaker [2].

The importance of non-verbal communication

Nonverbal communication is often more subtle and more effective than verbal communication, and can convey meaning better than words. Quiet speech is important in a person's daily interactions, and this affects the chances of failure or success in personal and professional social gatherings.

Research shows that when we communicate feelings and attitudes, only a small percentage of our overall message comes from the words we use: 55% of our message comes from body language (especially from movements of the small muscles around the eye which can convey shock, disbelief, doubt or disgust); 38% of our message comes from tone of voice; only 7% of our message is conveyed by the words we use [8].

Information is transmitted through a complex combination of appearance, posture, movement of limbs, vision and facial expressions. On the other hand, the effect of most body languages acts lower than the addressee's understanding,

i.e., the recipient receives the deep consequences of the problem without knowing it. Thus, people who have the ability to use these skills can direct others in a certain direction to achieve their goals, and it is for this reason that most human interactions are associated with non-verbal communication. Body language can reveal people's attitudes and feelings to others, and in many cases can be even more effective than verbal messages [5].

Groups of gestures

In the book “The Definitive Book of Body Language”, Allan and Barbara Pease offer such groups of gestures for decoding non-verbal behavior as hand-to-face gestures; gestures barriers (hand barriers and foot barriers); gestures «stroking and patting the head»; property gestures; mirror gestures; courtship gestures [12].

«Hand to face» gestures (scratching the tip of the nose without special need, rubbing the cheek, ear or and, around the eyes) are considered negative, indicating the speaker’s negative feelings and thoughts. People often use these gestures in situations where they don’t want to see, hear or speak on a specific topic. One of the “professional” negative gestures is the “pointing” gesture, which implies the unquestioning demand of the teacher. As a rule, this gesture is used when a teacher or educator is communicating with children. Alan Pease calls it «one of the most annoying gestures that a person uses during a conversation». He recommends replacing it with the “palm extended up or down” gesture [12, C. 43].

The mirror postures and gestures, on the contrary, indicate mutual understanding, the desire for constructive communication of partners. Using the mirror gestures, we can inform the interlocutor about our agreement with him. Many teachers practice these gestures unconsciously, but often they have to face a situation when people, having learned about the existence of mirror gestures, begin to use them in an incorrect way. Excessive mechanical copying of

gestures can provoke an insult or cause some discomfort in the process of communication. Therefore, mirror gestures should not be an exact repetition of the movements of the partner; their goal is to emphasize the "connection" to the interlocutor.

Non-verbal communication research findings

In his article "The impact of the teachers' non-verbal communication on success in teaching" Nasrin Shokrpour attempts to determine the impact of non-verbal communication of teachers on students' learning progress using the results of the research on the correlation between the quality of teaching and the teachers' use of non-verbal communication. The study found a close relationship between quality, quantity and functions of using non-verbal communication by teachers during training. The correlation between the academic staff's communication skills and the students' academic success was 0.572, indicating the significant and positive relationship between the mentioned factors [11].

The correlation coefficient among the teachers' non-verbal communication skills, their verbal communication and the students' academic achievement was 0.81 which reveals the significant relationship among these factors [1]. There was a significant relationship between non-verbal communication, as one of the communication skills, and the efficacy of educational departments ($p=0.54$). Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the lecturers' communication skills and increase in the students' motivation to learn and their academic success ($p=0.60$, $p=0.54$) [9, C. 193-206].

Researching the factors affecting improvement in educational communication, Mortazavi found various effective means of communication in the educational field including pictorial communication, the Internet and computer relations, relationship with the learning environment, attention, etc., among which the latter and non-verbal communication are the most effective on



both teacher and learner [7, C. 155–164]. The more teachers use verbal and non-verbal communication, the more effective their education and student performance. In non-verbal communication, other models were used, e.g., emotional intelligence, teamwork, supportive, creative, purposeful, and balanced communication using speech, body, and images. They all proved to be effective in the learning process and student performance [10, C. 51–59].




Current research


The purpose of the study is to determine the attitudes of students to various non-verbal signals they receive from teachers in educational environment. How do certain gestures affect students? What gestures do professors use? What do different gestures mean?

Through observation and interviews with students, we identified six common gestures and postures of university teachers (Table 1)

Table 1. «Common Gestures and Postures of University Teachers»

№	Gesture	Picture	Meaning
1	'Palms up' gesture		Gesture of openness and truthfulness, recognition of the authority of the interlocutor, trust in him. The best hand gesture for effective communication.
2	Arms crossed on chest		A person is not going to open his soul before you and does not expect anything like this on your part.

3	Hands are hidden (behind the back, in the pockets)		<p>1. Hands in pockets can talk about human concentration. 2. Also, this gesture can mean boredom. 3. A person is not honest with you. This gesture may mean that a person is deceiving you.</p>
4	Hands clenched in front of the face		<p>A person is trying to hide his negative attitude.</p>
5	Hand rubbing		<p>This gesture is an obvious sign of satisfaction with what has already happened or should happen.</p>

6	Hands clenched over the lower abdomen		The defensive posture shows a feeling of insecurity, estrangement and restraint.
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The second stage of the study includes a survey, attended by 120 students aged from 17 to 28 years old. The respondents were asked to fill in a 6-item questionnaire on gestures. They were instructed to write the meaning of each gesture (pictures from Table 1) and describe the feelings it evokes when used by the teacher.

Research results

The results of the study are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 «The survey findings»

Gesture	Gesture meaning	Respondents' feelings
1	90% of the respondents perceive this gesture as positive. In their opinion, the teacher who uses this gesture is ready for an open dialogue, he is sincere and honest. The remaining 10% believe that this gesture means a teacher is lost, indecisive.	70% of the respondents have positive feelings, e.g., joy, interest, calm, trust, willingness to listen to the teacher. 20% experience anxiety, belittling and depression. 10% are neutral, or have no definite feelings about the gesture.
2	100% of the respondents believe that this gesture has a negative meaning. This gesture means that the teacher is self-contained, closed, tensed, hostile and constrained.	40% have a feeling of mistrust, caution, discomfort. 35% feel fear or pressure. 20% experience a feeling of concentration and tension. 5% feel guilty and lost.
3	80% believe that the teacher is	50% feel relaxed, calm, or not anxious

	<p>relaxed, is in a good mood, emphasizes his style, shows his power or success.</p> <p>15% give it the meaning of stealth, cunning and arrogance; disrespect and self-confidence.</p> <p>5% believe that the teacher is cold and lost.</p>	<p>about it.</p> <p>40% feel light tension, the desire to leave.</p> <p>10% of the respondents are neutral or indifferent to it.</p>
4	<p>60% believe that this gesture means the thinking process. The teacher who uses this gesture explains a serious topic, therefore, he is thoughtful and focused.</p> <p>40% believe that the teacher seeks to hide his emotions, or he experiences anxiety and tension.</p>	<p>75% of the respondents have positive feelings about the gesture; they are ready to listen to the teacher; they are focused and attentive.</p> <p>25% feel anger, awkwardness and tension.</p>
5	<p>According to 90% of the respondents, this gesture means deceit and cunning. The teacher who uses this gesture is satisfied with his actions.</p> <p>10% of the respondents believe that this gesture means that the teacher has an interesting idea or expects something good to happen.</p>	<p>85% of the respondents experience stress, alertness and danger.</p> <p>The remaining 15% feel interested and curious.</p>
6	<p>95% of the respondents believe that the teacher is constrained, not confident, tensed.</p> <p>5% believe that the teacher is calm and attentive.</p>	<p>90% of the respondents feel calm, relaxed and detached.</p> <p>5% have a sense of interest.</p> <p>5% feel tension and distrust.</p>

Conclusion

The skills of non-verbal communication of the teacher have a huge impact on the assimilation of knowledge by students. The more the teachers uses both verbal and non-verbal communication means, the more effective the student's performance is. Non-verbal communication skills are an excellent complement for verbal communication. Teachers should take into account that gestures express feelings and attitudes both to the subject and material, and to students. When using negative gestures, not only the relationship with the students worsens, but also their academic performance in the subject.

Teachers' gestures can play a crucial role in the success of their students. Using non-verbal language, teachers attract students' attention, motivate

students, and even instill in students a love of learning, since they subconsciously receive non-verbal signals from the teacher.

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