The Role of Non-Verbal Communication in Teaching English Speaking Skills: Students' Voices

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to determine the various forms of nonverbal communication employed by English teachers of a private senior high school in Palembang and their role in teaching speaking skills. This study employed a qualitative approach with observation and interview became the instruments to collect the data. The participants consisted of six eleventh-grade students who were selected based on the variation of their speaking ability: two students with high, two with medium, and two with low ability. The researchers applied thematic analysis that identified and interpreted patterns in data sets. The results showed that teachers used four primary forms of nonverbal communication: body posture (open, erect), hand gestures (active, illustrative, highlighting vital themes), eye contact (long, short), and facial expressions (smiling, joyful). This nonverbal communication played a role in increasing students' confidence, motivation, understanding, and interest in speaking English. Friendly facial expressions and illustrative hand gestures increased students' confidence, while cheerful facial expressions and hand gestures that emphasized important points enhanced learning motivation. Brief eye contact, open posture, and illustrative hand gestures helped improve comprehension. In addition, upright and relaxed posture and active hand gestures also contributed to increasing students' interest in learning. In short, English teachers needed to effectively employ nonverbal communication to provide a supportive and engaging learning environment.

Keywords: non-verbal communication, teaching English speaking skill

Introduction

In English language learning, speaking skills are among the essential productive aspects of communication. This skill involves not only the ability to make sounds but also an interactive process that demands fluency, good grammar, and appropriate vocabulary selection. According to Rao (2019) Speaking is the most important skill in language learning because effective communication skills are needed in real life. In addition, speaking skills in English are also affected by various factors, including psychological factors such as anxiety, shyness, and fear of mistakes. Nonverbal communication is one element that is crucial to speaking abilities. The term "nonverbal communication" has described a method of communicating without the use of words but rather through facial expressions, eye contact, body language, and voice intonation. Loseva (2016) Stated that non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, eye contact, and hand gestures could be an effective means of conveying messages. Furthermore, Uchihara and Clenton (2023) Emphasized that the assessment of speaking skills in English included aspects of grammar, vocabulary, and fluency, as well as pronunciation, all of which could be supported by the appropriate use of non-verbal communication.

In the context of education, non-verbal communication has a significant role in improving the effectiveness of the learning process. According to Bambaeeroo and Shokrpour (2017), the more teachers use verbal and non-verbal communication, the more effective students' academic progress becomes. In addition, Peper et al. (2021) found that the lack of good use of non-verbal communication can impact students' attention and responsiveness in learning. Therefore, good utilization of non-verbal communication by teachers could help build more effective interactions with students, thereby improving their speaking skills in English. Several previous studies examined the forms nonverbal communication played in language acquisition. The results of Perez et al. (2023) showed that non-verbal elements such as facial expressions, body language, voice intonation, and touch could be used as a training system and feedback tool to assist educators in implementing non-verbal communication effectively. Another study conducted by Koh and Hulbert (2023) found that in an online learning environment, electronic nonverbal communication has a significant relationship with student engagement and motivation. This demonstrated that in-person and technology-based learning benefits greatly from nonverbal communication (Apriani et al., 2022; Apriani et al., 2021).

Based on the pre-observation conducted in this study, it was found that teachers at a private senior high school in Palembang actively utilized various non-verbal communication strategies during speaking lessons. The most commonly used forms included smiling and cheerful facial expressions, brief and strategic eye contact, an open and upright posture, and active hand gestures to emphasize key points. These non-verbal cues were particularly effective in boosting students' confidence, reducing anxiety, and increasing engagement in the speaking activities. The students perceived that when teachers used non-verbal communication effectively, it helped them understand lesson material more easily and encouraged them to participate more actively. However, excessive or prolonged eye contact was noted to sometimes cause nervousness among students, especially those with lower speaking proficiency. These findings indicate that while non-verbal communication is a powerful teaching tool, it must be applied strategically to maximize its positive effects.

Despite the existing body of research on non-verbal communication in education, a research gap remained in understanding how students with different speaking proficiencies perceived and responded to non-verbal communication strategies used by teachers. Previous studies have largely focused on general classroom interactions without considering the varying levels of students' speaking abilities. This study aimed to bridge this gap by examining the role of non-verbal communication in teaching speaking skills through the perspectives of students with high, medium, and low speaking proficiency. Furthermore, this study contributed to the field by providing insights into the specific non-verbal strategies that are most effective in enhancing speaking skills in an Indonesian senior high school setting. The findings offered valuable recommendations for English teachers to refine their teaching approaches and create a more supportive and engaging learning environment.

The role of nonverbal communication in developing English speaking abilities had been the main emphasis of this study at a private senior high school in Palembang. Based on the preliminary study conducted, it was found that teachers often used non-verbal cues such as hand gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact in teaching, and students felt that the use of these gestures helped them understand the lesson. Therefore, this study aimed to further investigate the non-verbal communication strategies used by teachers as well as students' perceptions of the impact of non-verbal communication in learning speaking skills. Based on this background, it was anticipated that this study would further knowledge of the significance of nonverbal communication in learning English, especially in developing students' speaking skills. Thus, the results of this study were expected to benefit students, teachers, and other researchers who are interested in this field.

Theoretical Framework

Concept of Speaking Skills in English Language Learning

Speaking skill is one of the productive skills in English learning that integrates linguistic, cognitive, and affective aspects. Based on the review in the given document, speaking is an interactive process that involves the production and reception of information. Arini and Wahyudin (2022) and Syafryadin et al. (2020) define speaking as the ability to produce sounds that aim to share information and ideas and are used to express meaning in interactions with others. In addition, Nakhalah (2016) states that speaking is the active use of language to convey meaning and serves as a medium for language learners to understand, practice, and master a new language. Speaking is also included in productive skills, as stated by Fathonah et al. (2023), who mention that speaking skills contribute significantly to communication between speakers and listeners. The product of speaking skills is a language message that aims to convey meaning, per the opinion that productive skills include the ability to speak and write efficiently to produce something. Therefore, speaking in English involves not only the pronunciation of words but also aspects of grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and intonation. Furthermore, nonverbal communication plays a significant role in enhancing the efficacy of spoken message delivery, as covered in the research on the function of nonverbal communication in learning English.

Factors Affecting Speaking Skills

According to Derakhshan et al. (2016) Speaking skills are influenced by four main aspects: linguistic, cognitive, affective, and cultural. These aspects play an important role in determining the effectiveness of students' speaking ability in English language learning. In the context of this study, non-verbal communication is a supporting factor that can positively contribute to or hinder students' speaking skills. The following is a more complete explanation of each factor based on the contents of the uploaded documents:

Linguistic Aspects

Linguistic aspects include language components such as grammar, vocabulary, and proper pronunciation. Good mastery of grammar and vocabulary allows students to express ideas more clearly and structurally. In addition, correct pronunciation is very important so that the message conveyed can be well understood by the listener. This study discovers that facial expressions and hand motions, as examples of nonverbal communication, help clarify the meaning of words and phrases, especially for students who still have limited vocabulary. This aligns with the opinion of Sreena and Ilankumaran (2018), who state that speaking skills depend not only on linguistic competence but also on other supporting elements such as non-verbal communication.

Cognitive Aspects

Cognitive aspects refer to students' ability to think logically and process information quickly. This ability determines how well students can organize ideas and provide responses in conversation. Based on the results of the study, the teacher's hand gestures and posture are very helpful for students in understanding abstract material, especially when explaining complex concepts. This aligns with the research of Saleem et al. (2022), which shows that non-verbal communication provides visual reinforcement that helps process information more effectively. In addition, the proper use of non-verbal communication allows students to capture information more accurately without relying entirely on verbal explanations.

Affective Aspects

Affective aspects involve psychological factors such as confidence, anxiety, and motivation, which greatly affect students' speaking performance. This research shows that positive facial expressions and supportive gestures from teachers play an important role in creating a comfortable and supportive classroom atmosphere. Friendly facial expressions, such as smiles, have been shown to reduce students' anxiety and increase their confidence

in speaking. This aligns with Wang's (2009) Findings, which state that non-verbal communication can increase interpersonal trust in the learning environment. However, this study also finds that too much eye contact can cause anxiety for some students, so teachers need to adjust the intensity of eye contact to ensure it has a positive impact without causing pressure.

Cultural Aspects

Cultural aspects refer to students' understanding of social norms and communication expressions in various cultural contexts. Mastery of English requires not only linguistic skills but also an understanding of polite expressions, gestures, and intonations commonly used in native-speaking cultures. Diep et al. (2022) State that culture plays an important role in oral communication and is indispensable for establishing effective cross-cultural communication. According to this study, nonverbal cues like open posture and eye contact help students understand communication norms in English-speaking cultures better. However, prolonged eye contact, which is considered natural in Western cultures, makes some students feel uncomfortable. This suggests that different cultural perceptions of non-verbal communication need to be considered in language learning.

The Role of Non-Verbal Communication in Language Learning

Non-verbal communication has a very important role in learning English-speaking skills. One of its main benefits is that it helps improve students' understanding of the material presented. According to Saleem et al. (2022) most ESL students feel that facial expressions, body movements, posture, and eye contact are very helpful in understanding the teacher's instructions. This aligns with the opinion of Haneef et al. (2014), who state that the appropriate use of non-verbal communication can clarify verbal messages and improve students' understanding. For example, when a teacher teaches new vocabulary, the use of gestures and facial expressions helps students associate the word with its meaning, thus accelerating the learning process.

In addition to improving comprehension, non-verbal communication also plays a role in building students' confidence in speaking English. Wang (2009) Explains that non-verbal communication is one of the important aspects of interpersonal interactions that can affect a person's confidence level. This is reinforced by Houser and Frymier's (2009) Research finds that teachers who effectively use gestures, facial expressions, posture, and eye contact increase students' confidence. Conversely, a mismatch between verbal and non-verbal communication leads to uncertainty, thus reducing students' confidence to speak. Therefore, teachers need to ensure that the non-verbal communication they use supports the verbal message so that students feel more comfortable and confident in communicating.

Nonverbal communication helps pupils become more confident, draw attention to themselves, and become more motivated to study. Frzaliyeva (2022) Reveals that effective facial expressions, eye contact, and gestures from teachers affect students' motivation in learning English. This is reinforced by Wahyuni (2018) Who states that non-verbal communication contributes 50% to the communication process and can increase students' interest and motivation in learning. For example, a teacher who uses hand gestures when explaining concepts or changes their facial expression to match the content of the material makes the lesson more interesting and interactive. Conversely, a teacher who speaks in a flat tone without supportive facial expressions might find it difficult to maintain students' attention in class. Not only that, but non-verbal communication is also more effective in conveying emotions and meaning than verbal communication. Colman (1994) Asserts that non-verbal communication is more reliable in conveying one's feelings. In English learning, a student who feels anxious might not directly express their discomfort, but body language such as avoiding eye contact or sitting in a closed posture can be an indicator of such feelings. By understanding these non-verbal cues, teachers can provide more appropriate emotional support, such as offering encouragement or calming feedback to make students feel more confident. Overall, non-verbal communication plays a very important role in

learning English-speaking skills. The appropriate use of facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and posture helps improve students' understanding, builds their confidence, attracts attention and motivation, and conveys emotion and meaning more effectively. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of and optimize the use of non-verbal communication to make learning more effective and enjoyable for students.

Types of Non-Verbal Communication in Language Learning
In language learning, non-verbal communication plays an important role in helping students understand the material and improving communication effectiveness. Based on research that has been conducted, several types of non-verbal communication have a significant impact on language learning, namely facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and body posture.

Facial Expressions
Facial expressions are one of the most effective forms of non-verbal communication in conveying emotion and meaning in conversation. According to facial expressions are the main tool in communicating feelings, both consciously and unconsciously. In language learning, teachers' facial expressions help students understand the emotions contained in a word or sentence. For example, when a teacher shows a happy expression while saying the word "happy," students can more easily understand and associate the word with the feeling of happiness. In addition, facial expressions are also used to provide feedback to students, such as a smile to provide encouragement or a serious expression to indicate that there are mistakes that need to be corrected.

Gestures
Gestures are movements of the hands, arms, or head that are used to convey a message or complement verbal communication. Kosmas and Zaphiris (2018) Found that teachers' use of gestures increases student understanding and engagement in the classroom. Gestures help explain abstract concepts, emphasize important information, and attract students' attention. For example, when explaining the concept of "big" and "small," teachers use their hands to show the difference in size, making it easier for students to visualize the meaning. In addition, gestures also provide social cues to students, such as raising hands to ask for attention or pointing to students who are asked to speak.

Posture
Posture illustrates a person's attitude and readiness to communicate. Vinayagamoorthy et al. (2006) They found that teachers' open and positive posture increases students' engagement in English discussions. An upright and open posture shows confidence and openness, while a closed posture, such as crossing arms or slouching, gives the impression of a lack of confidence or lack of interest. In language learning, a teacher's friendly and open posture creates a more interactive classroom atmosphere and supports student participation.

Eye Contact
Eye contact is an important element in non-verbal communication that increases confidence and interaction in language learning. Jongerius et al. (2020) State that sufficient eye contact increases student engagement and strengthens communication links between teachers and students. In language learning, eye contact signals that a student is noticed and heard, thus increasing their motivation to speak. In addition, good eye contact also helps teachers assess students' level of understanding, as students' eye expressions often reflect whether they understand the material or are having difficulties. All things considered, nonverbal cues, including body posture, eye contact, gestures, and facial expressions, are crucial to language acquisition. Effective use of non-verbal communication helps improve students' understanding, builds their confidence, attracts attention, and creates a more

comfortable and interactive learning atmosphere. Therefore, educators need to be aware of the importance of non-verbal aspects in teaching and optimize them to improve the effectiveness of language learning.

All things considered, nonverbal cues, including body posture, eye contact, gestures, and facial expressions, are crucial to language acquisition. Effective use of non-verbal communication helps improve students' understanding, builds their confidence, attracts attention, and creates a more comfortable and interactive learning atmosphere. Therefore, educators need to be aware of the importance of non-verbal aspects in teaching and optimize them to improve the effectiveness of language learning.

Research Analysis Framework

This research focuses on how non-verbal communication contributes to the teaching of English-speaking skills at a private senior high school in Palembang. The study utilizes an educational communication theory approach that highlights how non-verbal communication supports language learning. Thus, this research aims to:

   a. Examine how instructors teach speaking skills using nonverbal communication techniques.
   b. Examine how students perceive the contribution of nonverbal communication to the development of their speaking abilities.
   c. Confirm the results of earlier research on the value of nonverbal communication in English language acquisition.
   d. By employing this methodology, the study seeks to validate the significance of nonverbal communication in enhancing students' speaking abilities and offers suggestions for teachers to maximize their classroom communication tactics.

Material and Method

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method. The case study was chosen because it allowed an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of non-verbal communication in gaining proficiency in speaking English at a Palembang private senior high school. As stated by Creswell (2018) Case studies were used to organize contemporary phenomena through "how" or "why" questions. This method aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the role of nonverbal communication in speaking learning.

This research applied a case study approach with a purposive sampling technique. Shaheen et al. (2018)) stated that purposive sampling allowed the selection of participants who had rich information about the phenomenon under study. In this study, maximum variation was applied as described by Nyimbili and Nyimbili (2024) To collect data from various perspectives. Six eleventh-grade students were selected based on their speaking skill level (high, medium, low), which was determined by the teacher of the subject.

The subjects of this study were six eleventh-grade students of a private senior high school in Palembang who were selected based on the purposive sampling technique by considering the variation in their speaking ability. This approach was expected to provide a more comprehensive insight into the use of non-verbal communication in speaking learning. Data collection was conducted through non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Observation was used to examine the types of non-verbal communication used in classroom interaction. Flick (2022) Defined observation as a research method that involved the systematic recording of behavior or phenomena in a natural context. In this study, observation was conducted using a checklist as proposed by Aiken (1996) To document students' and teachers' non-verbal activities during learning. Video recording was also used to improve the accuracy of observation. The observation instrument covered various learning stages, including pre-activity, while-activity, and post-activity. The checklist included four key aspects of non-verbal communication: facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and gestures. Indicators were used to assess how teachers applied non-verbal cues in different teaching scenarios such as brainstorming, discussions, group work, and summarizing lessons.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were used to gather information from students regarding their perceptions of non-verbal communication in speaking lessons. Ryan et al.. (2009) stated that interviews were often used in qualitative research to explore participants' experiences and perspectives. The semi-structured interview technique, as explained by Blanford (2013), provided flexibility for researchers to explore answers in more depth based on participants' responses. In this study, interviews were conducted in person and recorded for further analysis. The interview instrument focused on four main indicators: (1) improving students' self-confidence in speaking English, (2) increasing students' motivation to speak English, (3) helping students improve comprehension, and (4) increasing students' interest in learning.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques. Naeem et al. (2023) Explained that thematic analysis was a method used to identify and report patterns in data. The steps of analysis followed the stages proposed by Cresswell (2012), namely data collection, transcription, coding, and identification of main themes. Data obtained from observations and interviews were grouped according to the primary conclusions that had surfaced. Methodological triangulation was used to guarantee the research's validity and dependability. Benz and Newman (2008) Defined triangulation as a combination of various approaches in one study to increase the accuracy of analysis. In this study, triangulation was conducted by combining data from observations and interviews. Cresswell (2012) Emphasized that methodological triangulation allowed the validation of findings by comparing results from different data collection methods, thus increasing the credibility of the research. With this approach, this study had offered a strong and thorough examination of how nonverbal communication had contributed to the development of English speaking abilities in a secondary school context.

Results

After analyzing the data obtained from the observation and interviews, four nonverbal communication styles were identified by the researchers as being employed by instructors at a private senior high school in Palembang to teach English speaking abilities. Themes and codes were identified through thematic analysis, which were obtained from the observations and interviews, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

The themes and codes for the forms of non-verbal communication strategies used by teachers in teaching English speaking skills.

Themes	Codes
1. Facial Expressions	a. Students stated that the teacher had used smiling facial expressions when teaching in class. This was also confirmed during the observation, where the teacher had smiled while teaching speaking in class.
	b. Students confirmed that the teacher had used cheerful facial expressions when teaching English speaking skills in class. This was evidenced during the observation, where the teacher had shown a cheerful facial expression that appeared very friendly.
2. Eye Contacts	a. Students explained that the teacher had used prolonged or constant eye contact. The researchers had witnessed directly during the observation that there had indeed been constant eye contact made by the teacher with students in the classroom.
	b. Students claimed that the teacher had made brief eye contact with students when teaching English speaking skills in class. This was also indicated when observations were made in the classroom, where the teacher made brief eye contact with students.

3. Postures	a. Students said that teachers had often used an open posture when teaching in class. This was demonstrated during the observation, where the teacher had shown an open posture, which gave a professional impression. b. Students claimed that the teacher had performed an upright body posture. This was shown directly by the teacher during the observation, where the teacher had really shown an upright posture in class.
4. Gestures	a. Students confirmed the teacher's hand gestures that illustrated something that was being explained. This was evidenced during the observation when the teacher used hand gestures to illustrate something that was being explained. b. Students stated that the teacher had used hand gestures to emphasize important points. This was shown during the observation when the teacher often used hand gestures to highlight important points to the students. c. Students claimed that active hand gestures could help them in class, as demonstrated by the teacher who had used active hand gestures to follow what was being explained.

Based on the results, it showed that teachers used various forms of non-verbal communication strategies to improve students' English-speaking skills. These strategies included facial expressions, eye contact, body posture, and hand gestures. Each of these forms of non-verbal communication played an important role in creating an engaging and supportive learning environment.

First, the research revealed that facial expressions were one of the most frequently used non-verbal communication strategies by teachers. Students reported that their teachers often used smiling facial expressions while teaching, which was also confirmed through classroom observations. In addition, teachers showed cheerful facial expressions, creating a friendly and supportive atmosphere that motivated students to be more active in speaking.

Secondly, eye contact was also a key strategy observed in the classroom. Students noted that teachers maintained long or constant eye contact, which helped create a sense of connectedness and increased student attention. Classroom observations confirmed this finding, where teachers consistently interacted with students through direct eye contact. However, there were also moments when teachers only made brief eye contact, which helped in effectively managing classroom interactions and ensuring that all students felt included.

Third, teachers' posture was found to be an important aspect of classroom nonverbal communication. According to students, their teachers often adopted an open posture, which showed professionalism and a friendly approach. Observations supported this assertion, where teachers consistently maintained an open posture during lessons. In addition, students highlighted that teacher maintained an upright posture, which exuded confidence and authority, reinforcing the importance of speaking skills in lessons.

Fourth, hand gestures were identified as another important non-verbal strategy that helped improve students' English-speaking skills. Students recognized that teachers often used hand gestures to illustrate the concepts being explained, making the lesson more interesting and easier to understand. Observations confirmed that hand gestures were used effectively to emphasize key points, ensuring that students understood key aspects of the lesson. In addition, students felt that active hand gestures were helpful in their learning process, as teachers dynamically used hand gestures to reinforce oral explanations.

Overall, the results of this study showed that non-verbal communication strategies, including facial expressions, eye contact, body posture, and hand gestures, played an important role in supporting students' English-speaking skills. These strategies helped create a positive and interactive classroom environment, making learning more effective and enjoyable.

After analyzing the data obtained from the interviews with six students, the researchers found the role of non-verbal communication in teaching English speaking skills. The themes and codes obtained from the analysis of the qualitative data are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2.

The Role of Nonverbal Communication in Teaching English Speaking Skills was Explored Through Themes and Codes.

Themes	Codes
1. Improving students' self-confidence when speaking English	a. Students claimed that the facial expressions could increase their confidence to speak English. b. Most students argued that the use of eye contact could increase their confidence to speak English. c. Most students argued that the use of posture could increase their confidence to speak English. d. Most students confirmed that the use of gestures could increase their confidence to speak English.
2. Increase students' motivation to speak English.	a. Most students confirmed that the facial expressions could increase their motivation to speak English in class. b. Some students stated that the eye contact could increase their motivation to speak English in class. However, some students argued against that. c. All students said that the gestures could increase their motivation to speak English in class.
3. Helps improve comprehension.	a. Students explained that the facial expressions could improve comprehension. b. Most students confirmed that eye contact could improve comprehension. c. Most students claimed that posture could improve comprehension. d. Most students said that the gestures could improve comprehension.
4. Increase students' interest in learning in class.	a. Most students argued that eye contact could increase their interest in learning. b. Most students confirmed that posture could increase their interest in learning. c. Most students claimed that gesture could increase their interest in learning

Non-verbal communication plays an important role in the learning process, especially in teaching English speaking skills. The teacher's use of facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and gestures had a significant impact on students' learning experience. Based on the results of the study, there were several main themes that illustrated how non-verbal communication contributed to improving students' speaking skills. These themes included students' increased confidence, motivation in speaking English, comprehension of the subject matter, and enthusiasm for studying in the classroom had been observed.

First, the utilization of nonverbal cues such as posture, gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions had been observed to play a role in increasing students' confidence when

speaking in English. Some students claimed that facial expressions increased their confidence when speaking. In addition, most students argued that the eye contact and posture used by the instructor also added to their confidence. Moreover, many students confirmed that the use of gestures in learning also helped to increase their confidence in speaking English.

Secondly, non-verbal communication also contributed to increasing students' motivation to speak English. Most students stated that the teacher's facial expressions increased their motivation to speak in class. In addition, some students stated that eye contact increased their motivation, although there were some who argued otherwise. Interestingly, all students agreed that the use of gestures in learning increased their motivation to speak in English.

Third, non-verbal communication helped improve students' understanding of the learning materials. Some students explained that the teacher's facial expressions helped them understand the content better. Most students also confirmed that eye contact helped them understand the material. In addition, the majority of students stated that the teacher's posture while teaching contributed to improving their understanding. Meanwhile, the use of gestures was also considered very helpful in improving students' understanding of the material presented.

Fourth, non-verbal communication increased students' interest in learning in class. Most students thought that eye contact made by the teacher increased their desire to study had been evident. Furthermore, the majority of students said that their interest in learning had been influenced by the teacher's posture during instruction. Additionally, several students stated that their desire to participate more actively in class had been positively impacted by the use of gestures in instruction.

In conclusion, non-verbal communication had an important role in teaching English speaking skills, especially in increasing students' confidence, motivation, understanding, and interest in learning.

Discussion

Non-verbal communication plays a very important role in the learning process, especially in teaching English-speaking skills. Teachers used various forms of non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and gestures, to create a more interactive learning environment and support the development of students' speaking skills. This study found that non-verbal communication contributed to four main aspects of teaching speaking skills, namely increasing confidence, increasing motivation, aiding comprehension, and increasing students' interest in learning. This finding was in line with the research conducted by Frzaliyeva (2022), Saleem et al. (2022), and Koh and Hulbert (2023) Which showed that non-verbal communication could support English language teaching more effectively.

First, non-verbal communication was proven to significantly increase students' confidence in speaking English. The study results indicated that facial expressions and gestures were the two most influential non-verbal elements in fostering students' confidence. Friendly facial expressions, such as smiling and maintaining a cheerful demeanor, helped create a more welcoming classroom atmosphere. This, in turn, reduced students' fear of making mistakes and encouraged them to participate more actively in speaking activities. Moreover, gestures played a crucial role in reinforcing verbal messages and making communication more engaging. Teachers who used encouraging hand movements, nodding in approval, and open body language helped students feel more supported and motivated to express themselves in English. This aligns with Koh and Hulbert (2023)Who emphasized that extrinsic motivation, such as striving for good grades or completing tasks, is strongly influenced by non-verbal communication from teachers. Additionally, non-verbal communication contributed to building students' self-efficacy by reducing anxiety and promoting a sense of security in the learning environment. When teachers maintained positive body language, such as leaning slightly forward to show attentiveness or using

gestures to emphasize key points, students felt more valued and encouraged to take risks in speaking English. Overall, effective non-verbal communication served as a powerful tool in boosting students' confidence, making them more willing to engage in English-speaking activities, and ultimately enhancing their language proficiency.

Secondly, non-verbal communication played a significant role in increasing students' motivation to speak English. The findings of this study showed that positive facial expressions, especially smiles and cheerful expressions, contributed to creating a supportive and encouraging classroom atmosphere. When teachers displayed warmth and enthusiasm through their facial expressions, students felt more comfortable and confident in speaking English. This aligned with Frzaliyeva (2022), who stated that students' enthusiasm for learning English was significantly influenced by nonverbal cues such as gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions. Additionally, the use of engaging gestures further increased students' motivation to speak. Hand movements that emphasized key points, as well as illustrative gestures that helped clarify explanations, made lessons more dynamic and interactive. These non-verbal cues not only captured students' attention but also reinforced their understanding of the material, making them more eager to participate in discussions. By incorporating expressive gestures, teachers created a lively and stimulating learning environment that encouraged students to practice speaking English with greater enthusiasm.

Third, non-verbal communication played a crucial role in enhancing students' understanding of learning materials. This study aligned with Saleem et al. (2022) Found that 70-80% of ESL students believed facial expressions, gestures, posture, and eye contact significantly aided comprehension. These non-verbal cues reinforced verbal explanations, making abstract concepts clearer and improving overall learning engagement. To maximize understanding, appropriate facial expressions, balanced eye contact, and open postures created a more comfortable and inclusive classroom atmosphere. Purposeful gestures, such as hand movements and pointing at visual aids, helped clarify complex ideas. As a result, students showed improved comprehension, retention, and confidence in class discussions. The strategic use of non-verbal communication not only enhanced learning but also fostered a more interactive and supportive environment.

Fourth, non-verbal communication played an important role in increasing students' interest in learning. This study found that teachers' gestures and posture significantly influenced students' interest in the lesson. Active hand movements, illustrative gestures, and emphasis on key points helped maintain students' focus and interest in the learning process. In addition, an open and upright posture conveyed enthusiasm and professionalism, creating a comfortable learning atmosphere that encouraged participation. Research by Koh and Hulbert (2023) Also confirmed that non-verbal communication contributed to increasing student interest in the classroom. To sustain students' interest, teachers optimized the use of expressive gestures, maintained an open posture, and used body language that reflected enthusiasm for the material. These strategies helped create a more engaging and interactive classroom environment, enhancing students' overall learning experience.

Based on the results of this study, one may have reached the conclusion that teaching English-speaking skills required a great deal of nonverbal communication. Teachers who were able to use facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and gestures effectively could increase students' confidence, motivation, understanding, and interest in learning. These findings supported previous research and provided additional insights into how non-verbal communication could be optimally used in English language learning.

In classroom applications, teachers need to pay attention to how they use eye contact so as not to make students feel awkward or pressured. In addition, positive facial expressions and active gestures could help create a more supportive and engaging learning environment. By integrating appropriate non-verbal communication strategies, teachers could have increased the effectiveness of English teaching as well as provided a more enjoyable learning experience for students.

Conclusion

The study's findings demonstrated the importance of nonverbal communication in speech instruction at a private senior high school in Palembang. Teachers used four main types of non-verbal communication: facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and gestures, which effectively supported the learning process. Friendly facial expressions created a positive atmosphere, eye contact-built connections with students, open postures reflected enthusiasm, and gestures helped clarify material. More than just a tool, non-verbal communication was proven to increase students' confidence and motivation in speaking English, clarify understanding of abstract concepts, and encourage interest and active participation in learning. Thus, the teacher's adept use of nonverbal communication was a crucial component in creating an interactive learning environment and supporting the development of students' speaking skills.

Acknowledgement

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