

# AN ANALYSIS OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN ACADEMIC PRESENTATION

## ANALISIS KOMUNIKASI NON VERBAL PADA PRESENTASI AKADEMIK

Yudi Juniardi<sup>1</sup>, Dina Rachmawati<sup>2</sup>, dan Rendi Pata Serpa<sup>3</sup>

Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa  
Jalan Ciwaru Raya No.25, Cipare, Serang, Banten 42117  
Pos-el: yjuniardi@untirta.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, dina@untirta.ac.id<sup>2</sup>, pataserpa@gmail.com<sup>3</sup>

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**Abstract:** The research aims to investigate the use of non-verbal communication in academic presentation and to describe the reasons of the use of non-verbal communication by students of the in academic presentation at English department, University of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa. Qualitative method was employed in this research particularly case study design. The participants were three students of fourth semester of English department who were taking public speaking subject. To collect the data, three techniques were employed; observation, questionnaire, and interview. The researcher used observation to find out the types of non-verbal communication in academic presentation. The questionnaire and interview were used to answer the reasons toward the use of non-verbal communication in academic presentation. Afterwards, the data were further analyzed by using qualitative data analysis method of Miles, Huberman, & Saldana theory. The data analysis showed that: gesture was non-verbal communication which the most frequently used by the students. Moreover, students preferred to use gesture and eye contact: The former was used to help conveying the communicative more easily, the later was used to make the presentation more interesting. It can be stated that non-verbal communication is helpful for the students in making presentation performance.

**Keywords:** academic presentation; non-verbal communication

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui penggunaan komunikasi non-verbal dalam presentasi akademik dan untuk mendeskripsikan alasan dari penggunaan komunikasi non-verbal dalam presentasi akademik di jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa. Responden penelitian ini adalah tiga mahasiswa semester empat jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris yang mengambil mata kuliah public speaking. Metode kualitatif telah digunakan dalam penelitian ini khususnya studi kasus. Untuk mengumpulkan data, tiga teknik telah digunakan; observasi, kuesioner, dan wawancara. Peneliti menggunakan observasi untuk mencari tahu tipe dari komunikasi non-verbal dalam presentasi akademik. Sedangkan, kuesioner dan wawancara digunakan untuk menjawab alasan-alasan terhadap penggunaan komunikasi non-verbal dalam presentasi akademik. Setelah itu, data telah dianalisis menggunakan teori dari Miles, Huberman, & Saldana. Analisis data menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi non-verbal yang paling banyak terjadi adalah gerak isyarat. Selain itu, siswa lebih suka menggunakan gerak isyarat dan kontak mata mereka untuk membantu menyampaikan pesan dan sebagai pelengkap untuk membuat presentasi lebih menarik. Dapat dikatakan bahwa komunikasi non-verbal dapat membantu siswa dalam menyampaikan pesan kepada pendengar di dalam presentasi. Selain itu, gerak isyarat sering digunakan oleh pembicara untuk melengkapi atau menambahkan makna pada pesan yang mereka coba sampaikan.

**Kata Kunci:** komunikasi non-verbal; presentasi akademik.

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is an act or process of transferring words, sounds, signs, or behaviors to express or exchange information and ideas (Brown, 2000). According to Brown (2000:261) “communication is divided into two types, verbal and non-verbal communication.” Verbal communication seems to be more systemic since people pay more attention to the words and sounds they utter. On the other hand, most forms of non-verbal communication tend to be less structured since people communicate without words. As Latha (2014: 160) said that: “there are some essential of non-verbal communication skills, non-verbal communication is less structured than non-verbal communication, it is unplanned, intent, spontaneous, and it blends with speech.” In other words, it refers to a form of communication without using the words to express oneself (Latha, 2014). People use non-verbal communication when the words they employ cannot describe what they are going to tell.

There are five types of non-verbal communication, as Brown (2000: 262) said that: “non-verbal communication can be categorized into: facial expressions, eye movement, gesture, posture, and eye contact.”

### 1) Facial expressions

Facial expressions convey a wealth of information. The particular look on a person's face and movements of the person's head provide reliable cues as to approval, disapproval, or disbelief.

### 2) Eye Movement

Observation of eye movement can provide instructors with an indication of a student's mindset and thoughts.

### 3) Gesture

Gesture reveals how people are feeling. People tend to use gesture more when they are enthusiastic, excited, and energized. People tend to gesture less when they are demoralized, nervous, or

concerned about the impression they are making.

### 4) Posture

Posture is another widely used as to a persons' attitude. Leaning toward another person suggests a favorable attitude toward the message one is trying to communicate. Leaning backward communicates the opposite. Standing erect is generally interpreted as an indicator of self-confidence, while slouching conveys the opposite.

### 5) Eye Contact

The eye contact play an important role in nonverbal communication and such things as looking, staring and blinking are important nonverbal behaviors.

To communicate well, some factors contribute to the way people deliver their presentation; one of the factors is non-verbal communication. Lock (2014: 45) stated that: “non-verbal communication plays a vital role in the success of any presentation. It has the power to engage the audience with crystal clear message or to confuse the audience, leaving the audience doubting what the speaker has said.” It can be inferred that besides the content of presentation, the speaker also must have enough skill in using non-verbal communication. It is because non-verbal communication helps presenter conveying meaning or communicative message. Moreover, non-verbal communication can increase trust, clarity, add interest to the presentation when yielded properly.

Furthermore, Pearson (2011: 33), categorized the non-verbal communication into: repeating, emphasizing, complementing, and substituting.

### 1) Repeating

Repeating occurs when the same message is sent verbally and nonverbally. For example, when someone frowns at his or her friend's note while he or she asks his or her friend what is written in the note.

2) Emphasizing

Emphasizing is calling an attention to a key part of messages. When someone put an accent on it, it means that she or he create emphasis, making the item stand out by amplifying it. In addition, emphasizing is the use of nonverbal cues in order to strengthen someone's message. Hugging a friend and telling him that you really care about him is a stronger statement than using words.

3) Complementing

Complementing is a duplication of the message in two parties. It is also not substitution of one channel for the other. The verbal and nonverbal codes add meaning to each other and expand the meaning of either message alone. Tone of voice, gestures, and body movement can indicate someone's feeling which goes beyond his or her verbal message.

4) Substituting

Substituting occurs when non-verbal communication substitutes for verbal communication. Substituting is the replacement of words with non-verbal communication. There are times when non-verbal communication is just better. Sometimes there are things that are the best left unsaid.

The functions mentioned above show that people have to pay attention to the use of non-verbal cues in order to avoid misunderstanding. So that, the interaction they make going smoothly as they expect.

Non-verbal communication is a phenomenon that usually occurs in classroom activity since teacher and the students communicate to do the teaching and learning activities. It is supported by Fillmore and Snow (2005) in Richard-Amato and Snow (200: 50) that communication with students is essential to effective teaching. So that, teacher can measures the students' understanding and then analyze the problem that they have.

Communication between teacher and students can be committed by

organizing an oral presentation which carries a particular issue related to the subject or called academic presentation. Academic presentation is a kind of public speaking which involves individual or group. This subject relates to the development of in scientific form using acceptable language and proper pronunciation, along with paying attention to the following aspects: conversational ethics, the use of visual aids and body language. Moreover, Lucas (2007: 55) stated that oral presentation is form of assessment that teachers frequently use in the classroom. It involves explaining something to audience, usually in a classroom, but sometimes in a work setting. Thus, the academic presentation is the process of presenting a topic to an audience which is focus on a certain subject even a certain topic and it is held formally as the requirement to accomplish a specific study.

Moreover, in classroom activity during the presentation, non-verbal communication was frequently used whether by the teacher or the students. In some occasions, it helps them clarifying the meaning of their speech, and is more convincing for the audience, so that; they will pay more attention to the presentation. For example, when the students deliver their presentation, some of them will maintain their eye contacts when telling an important point in order to know the audience response and create a good interaction between speaker and the audience. On the other hand, based on the pre-observation, some students are not aware of the use of non-verbal communication while conducting presentation. So, the presentation delivery seems to be passive and unclear.

Based on the description above, the study was done to fulfill the objectives that can be stated as follows: (1) To find out the types of nonverbal communication in academic presentation. (2) To describe the reasons toward the use of non-verbal communication in academic presentation. Afterwards, the problems of this study were formulated as follow: (1) What types of

non-verbal communication are used by the students of English education department in academic presentation? (2) Why do the students of English education department use non-verbal communication in their academic presentation?

## **METHOD**

To address the issue, qualitative research method was employed in particularly case study. Qualitative research is a form of interpretative inquiry of a phenomenon that happens to a certain individuals or groups. This is in line with Creswell (2009: 4) who proposed that qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Furthermore, case study is preferred to be employed in this study because it describes an intervention and the real-life context in which the phenomenon occurred. As stated by Yin (2002: 1), “case study is the preferred strategy when the focus is on the contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.”

The site of this research was University of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa. The research participants of this study were three students of fourth semester of English education department of University of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa who were taking Public Speaking subject. They were chosen purposively, due to the consideration of their good academic performance. As its name suggests, the samples have been chosen for a specific purpose of a study (Cohen, et al 2007).

### **Data Collection Technique**

To gain the data needed to answer research questions, several techniques and instruments were employed. The explanation concerning the use of these techniques can be seen as follow:

#### **1) Observation**

The observation was used to answer the first research question. In the observation, the

researcher was interested in founding out the types of non-verbal communication used by the students of English education in their academic presentation. The observation was a non-participant observation in which the researcher would not engage and participate in the teaching-learning activity. This is supported by Cohen et. al (2007: 259) who explained that non-participant observers stand aloof from the group activities they are investigating and eschew group membership.

To collect the data during observation, observational checklist was developed as an instrument in order to find out the types of non-verbal communication that used by the students in their academic presentation. The observational checklist (see appendix 1) consist of 5 items which designed to reveal the types of non-verbal communication. Each item was divided into six categories based on Brown (2000: 262). The categories are explained below:

1. Facial expressions.
2. Eye movement.
3. Gesture.
4. Posture.
5. Eye contact.

Considering the importance of the observation for the study, recorded video recording was used. According to Yin (2002) the recorded video will help to convey important case characteristics to outside observers. For that matter, the video recorder was placed in the back of classroom to capture the academic presentation that missed by the observer. In the academic presentation which was observed by the researcher, students were required to present free topics for 5 minutes.

#### **2) Questionnaire**

Questionnaire was employed to answer the second question. Based on the question proposed in the first chapter, the data needed was students' reasons toward using non-verbal communication in academic presentation. Cohen Et. al (2007: 317), stated that questionnaire is widely use in

useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured numerical data, and often being comparatively straight forward to analyze. For that reason, questionnaire was considered suitable to the reasons of students' use non-verbal communication in academic presentation. The questionnaire that was developed is open-ended questionnaire in which the participant answered the questions in depth and a lengthier response. It is in the line with Cohen et al (2007: 101) who explained that: "questions in questionnaires offer respondents spaces for free response. Hence, it can help to gain the 'gem' of respondents' thoughts, as which they really want to share."

To collect the data from open-ended questionnaire, the researcher distributed the questionnaire sheet as an instrument which has two questions that revealed students' reason toward the use of non-verbal communication in their academic presentation.

### 3) Interview

Interview was employed to triangulate the data and to gain in-depth answers about the reasons toward the use of non-verbal communication in academic presentation. The interview was a semi-structured interview in which some students who frequently used non-verbal communication was asked to elaborate their opinion concerning their reason toward the use of nonverbal communication in academic presentation. Thus, a semi-structured interview was used to triangulate and gain in-depth answers about the reasons toward the use of nonverbal communication in academic presentation.

To collect the data from semi-structured interview, voice recording was used as an instrument. Four questions were addressed to the participants that were revealed their reason toward the use of non-verbal communication.

In this research, there were three concurrent flows activity to analyze the data in qualitative data analysis: (1) data

condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/ verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) those activities were explained below:

### 1. Data Condensation

Data condensation refers to the process in which collected data is sorted out. As suggested by Miles and Huberman (2014) data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and or transforming the data that appear in full corpus (body) of written-up field notes, interview transcripts, documents, and other empirical material. The process of condensing collected data from each source was elaborated further.

- a. Collected data from observational checklist was sorted out which data is relevant to the study. To do that, the types of non-verbal communication were categorized by the researcher appropriate to the students act during their academic presentation. Then, it was calculated using the following formula to get the percentage from each types of non-verbal communication, as follow:

$$P = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$$

P = The percentage of the types of non-verbal cues  
 n = The total number of each types of nonverbal cues  
 N = The total number of all nonverbal cues

- b. Collected data from the questionnaire was simplified by sorting out which data is relevant to the study.
- c. Collected data from the interview was transcribed. The transcribed data was simplified by sorting out which data is relevant to the study.

### 2. Data Display

The next procedure after data condensation was data display. In designing displays, both extended text and other display such table and chart was used. It is decided in

consideration to Miles and Huberman (2014: 13) who stated that display should be designed to assemble organized information into an immediately accessible, compact form so that the analyst could see what is happening and either draw justified conclusion or move on the next step analysis that the display suggest may be useful.

In this procedure, the result from previous analytic activities was reported. The result of the observational checklist was reported in form of score totals and frequency counts expressed in percentages. From the percentage, the researcher was finding out the nonverbal cues that are most often used by the students. So, the table and pie chart that describes the result was made. As with the questionnaire and the interview, the data was displayed as transcription.

### 3. Conclusion Drawing or Verification

The third procedure of analysis activity was conclusion drawing or verification. In conclusion drawing, interpretation was made from the presented data. As miles and Huberman (2014: 13) noted that the qualitative analyst interprets what things means by noting patterns, explanations, causal flows and propositions. In this procedure, the use of non-vebal communication and its reason was interpreted and explained.

In doing this research, confirming the readers that the researcher they are reading is right and credible is right and credible is an important thing to do. According to Heigham and Croker (2009: 260) credibility is involved in establishing that the results of the research are believable. Due to, the data was validated in the process called triangulation. Heigham and Croker (2009: 264) stated trustworthiness as a set of standards that demonstrates that a research study has been conducted competently and ethically. For this research, several techniques were employed to find out the types of non-verbal communication and its' reason toward the use of it in academic presentation.

The types of non-verbal communication were identified by using observational checklist along with critical friend or a 'peer debriefier' for cross checking. In using a critical friend, Heigham and Crocker (2009: 269) stated the researcher should serves a person who serves as an intellectual watchdog for the researcher as he modifies design decisions, develop possible analytical categories, and build an explanation for the phenomenon of interest. Thus, the researcher asked a friend of English education department of Sultan Ageng Tirtayaa University to be his critical friend or 'peer debriefier' to confirm the trustworthiness of his research.

Furthermore, the reason toward the use of non-verbal communication were identified by employing open-ended questionnaire and were cross checked by employing semi-structured interview. In conclusion, this research included more than one sources at different times to validate the findings.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Question 1

The observation was intended to find out the types of non-verbal communication in academic presentation. Data analysis of observation revealed that there were five types of non-verbal communication that developed by Brown (2000: 262), there were facial expression, eye movement, gesture, and eye contact (see appendix 1). The further explanation for the types of non-verbal communication that frequently used by the students as follow:

**Table 1**  
**The Types of Non-verbal Communication**

No.	The Types of Non-verbal Communication	Total used	Total of Percentage
1.	Facial Expressions	12	10%
2.	Eye Movement	19	14%
3.	Gesture	76	58%
4.	Posture	3	3%
5.	Eye Contact	21	16%
<b>Total</b>		<b>131</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on table 1, it can be inferred that most of the students (58%) used gesture when delivering presentation. Second, eye movement (16%) was also often used by the students. Third, eye contact used only 14%. Fourth is facial expression (10%). The last, posture used only 3% by the participants. Thus, the findings seem to suggest that gesture was dominantly employed by the participants during their academic presentation. By doing so, the participants wanted to convey their excitement feeling in delivery their presentation. It is because gesture reveals how people are feeling and they tend to use gesture more when they are enthusiastic, excited, and energized. Brown, (2000). In short, the participants in this study were excited and enthusiastic in doing their academic presentation.

### Research Question 2

Some instruments such as questionnaire and interview were employed in order to identify the reasons toward the use of non-verbal communication in academic presentation. The data analysis of open-ended questionnaire and interview revealed that that mostly the participants felt that they used non-verbal communication properly while doing the presentation because it can help them conveying the message easily and help the audience understanding material. The findings seems to suggest that the participants knew about non-verbal communication and its function. It is in lined with Lock (2014: 45) that: "non-verbal communication plays a vital role in the success of any presentation. It has the power to engage the audience with crystal clear message and helps presenters in conveying meaning or communicative message. Thus, it is reasonably to say that the participants of this study were aware of the function of the non-verbal communication during the presenation and they were able to use the non-verbal communication properly.

## CONCLUSION

This research showed that non-verbal communication occurred in the students' academic presentation. The data analysis showed that the most occurred non-verbal communication was gesture. Moreover, they preferred to use gesture and their eye contact to help conveying the message and as the complement to make the presentation more interesting. It can be stated that non-verbal communication did help the students delivering message to the audience while presenting because most of them used gesture properly which aimed to complement or to add meaning to the messages they tried to deliver.

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