

## AN OBSERVATION OF NONVERBAL IMMEDIACY BEHAVIOURS OF NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE LECTURERS

Ali BIÇKI<sup>1</sup>

**Özet:** Eğitim bilgini öğretmen tarafından aktarıldığı ve öğrenci tarafından alındığı bir sistem değil, bilginin taraflar arasındaki iletişim sürecinde üretildiği bir eylemdir. Bu iletişim sürecinin öğretmenin duyuşsal, kavramsal ve duygusal alanlarda öğrencilerle iletişimi gerekir. Bu iletişim ancak öğrencinin öğretmeni samimi/yakın bulduğu durumlarda daha başarılı olabilmektedir. Öğretmen samimiyeti/yakınlığı ve öğrenci Sözel olmayan iletişim ve yakınlık algısı arasında doğru orantılı bir ilişki olduğu bilinmektedir. Öğrenme ve öğretmen yakınlığı arasında ters at nalı şeklinde bir bağıntı olduğu bulunmuştur. Ayrıca samimiyet/yakınlık algısının kültüre bağlı olarak şekillendiği ve kültürel yakınlık belirten davranış normlarına uymayan öğretmenlerin uzak algılandığı ve dolaylı olarak bu durumun güdülenme, duyuşsal öğrenme kaybına ve öğrenme algısının düşmesine yol açtığı bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmada bir yerli ve bir yabancı üniversite öğretmeni yakınlık belirten davranışlar açısından değerlendirilmiştir. Yerli öğretmenin kişiliğe bağlı olmayan kültürel nedenlerle yabancı hocadan daha samimi olarak algılandığı bulunmuştur.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Öğretmen yakınlığı, sınıf içi iletişim, sözel olmayan iletişim

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**Abstract:** Teaching is an interactive process in which learning is not exported by the teacher and received by the learners, but is created interactively between both parties. The interaction requires the teacher actively, affectively, and cognitively engages the learners. This engagement is perceived to be positive when the teacher is perceived to be immediate. Research on the issue has revealed that there is a positive curvilinear correlation between student learning and teacher immediacy. As well, perceptions of immediacy are found to be pan-culturally shaped and failure to meet cultural nonverbal immediacy norms means that the teacher is perceived to be non-immediate, which in turn leads to loss of motivation, affective and perceived learning. In this study, we cross compared two lecturers; one native, one non-native, in terms of immediacy behaviours. The results suggest that the native lecturer is perceived to be more immediate in terms which are not personal but cultural.

**Key words:** Teacher immediacy, classroom communication, nonverbal immediacy

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<sup>1</sup> Öğretim Görevlisi, Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi, İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü Çağ Üniversitesi, Mersin.

## **1. Introduction**

Communication in general is the process of sending and receiving messages that enable humans to share knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Although we usually identify communication with speech, communication is composed of two dimensions - verbal and nonverbal. Nonverbal communication has been defined as communication without words. It includes apparent behaviours such as facial expressions, eyes, touching, and tone of voice, as well as less obvious messages such as dress, posture and spatial distance between two or more people. "Everything communicates," including material objects, physical space, and time systems. Although verbal output can be turned off, nonverbal cannot. Even silence speaks.

No matter how one can try, one cannot not communicate. Activity or inactivity, words or silence all have message value: they influence others and these others, in turn, cannot not respond to these communications and are thus themselves communicating. Children first learn nonverbal expressions by watching and imitating, much as they learn verbal skills. Young children know far more than they can verbalize and are generally more adept at reading nonverbal cues than adults because of their limited verbal skills and their recent reliance on the nonverbal to communicate. As children develop verbal skills, nonverbal channels of communication do not cease to exist although become entwined in the total communication process.

### **Humans use nonverbal communication because:**

1. Words have limitations: There are numerous areas where nonverbal communication is more effective than verbal (when explaining the shape, directions, personalities are expressed nonverbally)
2. Nonverbal signals are powerful: Nonverbal cues primarily express inner feelings (verbal messages deal basically with the outside world).
3. Nonverbal message are likely to be more genuine because nonverbal behaviours cannot be controlled as easily as spoken words.
4. Nonverbal signals can express feelings inappropriate to state: Social etiquette limits what can be said, but nonverbal cues can communicate thoughts.
5. A separate communication channel is necessary to help send complex messages: A speaker can add enormously to the complexity of the verbal message through simple nonverbal signals.

### **1.1 The Functions of Nonverbal Communication**

Nonverbal communication in fact constitutes most of what we intend to communicate. Indeed, early researchers went as far to claim that verbal communication achieved only 7% of the message conveyed. Mehrabian (1971,1974) in his research concluded that listeners' perception of the

attitude of a speaker were influenced 7% by the verbal message and 38% by the vocal tones which were used, summing up to 93% percent of communication to be done through nonverbal channels. They may have overestimated the percentage of nonverbal communication, yet most researchers agree that verbal communication makes up to 35% of the message conveyed. The functions carried out by nonverbal communication as listed by Capper (2000) are as follows:

(i) **Regulatory function:** When we engage in conversation with people of different linguistic, sociocultural etc. backgrounds keeping the conversation on track requires lots of effort. Nonverbal clues serve a great deal here to regulate conversational behaviour.

(ii) **Interpersonal function:** Nonverbal communication serves to express attitudes and emotions in interpersonal relations (also known as 'affect displays').

(iii) **Emblematic function:** Largely the use of gestures to convey a specific message.

(iv) **Illustrative function:** Nonverbal communication used to indicate size, shape, distance, etc.

(v) **Adaptive function:** Used as a means of reassurance, self-comforting; often involving unconscious acts such as playing with hair, beard stroking, playing with a pencil or cigarette, etc.

### **1.2 Types of Nonverbal Communication**

It is important for teachers to understand the distinctions between the various forms of nonverbal communication. The following is a basic introduction to the areas most relevant to the classroom.

#### **1.2.1 Gestures**

Gestures are perhaps the most readily noticeable manifestation of non verbal communication, their purpose is to consciously convey a (culturally) specific message, succinctly and unambiguously. We should also mention the (in)appropriateness of certain gestures, and of the unique ways in which cultures may differ greatly in performance of gestures with the same basic meaning (for example, beckoning, or waving goodbye). Differences also exist in consciously used facial 'gestures' to show frustration, anger, embarrassment or confusion.

#### **1.2.2 Head movements**

As with so much nonverbal communication, interpretation will depend on one's own cultural norms; Turkish persons nodding in conversation are likely to indicate comprehension and evidence of listening as it is to indicate agreement, which appears to be its primary (though not only) function in English. English also uses head-nodding as a turn-taking

signal (Argyle, 1983). In the classroom, activities such as giving directions, explaining processes and procedures, will provide suitable opportunities.

### **1.2.3 Facial Expression**

Teachers' facial expressions can affect how the students feel about the classroom environment. The teacher who has a dull, boring facial expression when talking is perceived by the students not interested in them and the subject matter. This type of teacher is likely to have more classroom disruptions because the students become bored with the teaching style. Teachers must have pleasing facial expressions, ones that show they are not only interested in the subject matter but also in their students. Positive facial expressions are often accompanied by positive head movements (Andersen, 1979; McCroskey and Richmond, 1992, 1996, 1998; Richmond, 2002)

Smiling is associated with liking, affinity and immediacy. The teacher who smiles and has positive facial affect and is perceived as more immediate than who does not. Students would react more positively to the teacher who smiles a lot than to the teacher who frowns or does not smile much. The author of this thesis has interviewed some language teachers and teachers of other disciplines in Turkish state schools. Especially older teachers believed that Turkish students will not respect teachers that do smile a lot, and thought it necessary to be very formal in the classroom. However, the observations and personal experiences proved just the opposite. Students liked teachers who are smiling, communicated with them more and there was a more positive relationship between them and the students (Bıçkı and Gökaya 2004)

### **1.2.4 Eye Contact and Gaze**

As with eyebrow movement, eye contact and gaze play an important role in enabling conversation management, providing vital feedback when engaged in face to face floor holding, turn taking and yielding, and in closing sequences. Parallel to this function is the importance of eye contact and gaze in affect displays, (jealousy, nervousness, fear); in establishing status (dominance or deference); intimacy and so on (Capper, 2000).

Eye contact and gaze are rather delicate forms of nonverbal behaviour across cultures, and mastering cultural differences could be quite challenging. Especially in high-contact cultures along the Mediterranean rim eye contact and gaze are to be handled with care as lengthened – timing is vastly variable across cultures – gaze may lead to serious clashes. Teachers exceedingly using eye contact and gaze for classroom management should be alert that they might embarrass many students unwillingly.

### **1.2.5 Kinesics, Body Language**

Teacher's movement and preferred body posture and classroom position tells more to the students than anything else. This relates to questions on the side of the students such as: "Is she using a book as a shield?" "Does he have an open, confident posture?" "Is he using the pen/board marker/chalk as a security blanket?" "Does he react differently to boys and girls?" "Does she tower over students or go down to their level?" "How would I feel if my desk (defensive barrier) were removed?" (Capper, 2000)

### **1.2.6 Proxemics**

Closely related to kinesics, proxemics is the preferences of space use in conversational interaction. Edward T. Hall's categories can lend insight. Hall (1966) specifies four distance zones which are commonly observed by North Americans: **Intimate distance** - from actual touching to eighteen inches. This zone is reserved for those with whom one is intimate. At this distance the physical presence of another is overwhelming. Teachers who violate students' intimate space are likely to be perceived as intruders. **Personal distance** from eighteen inches to four feet. This is the distance of interaction of good friends. This would also seem to be most appropriate distance for teacher and student to discuss personal affairs such as grades, conduct, private problems, etc. **Social distance** exists from four to twelve feet. It seems to be an appropriate distance for casual friends and acquaintances to interact. **Public distance** outward from twelve feet a speaker becomes formal. Classes of teachers who maintain this distance between themselves and their students are generally formal, and some students may feel that the teacher is cold and distant. **The vertical distance** between communicators is often indicative of the degree of dominance a sub ordinance in the relationship. People are affected by literally looking up at or looking down on another person.

After a conversation about proxemics with an American lady who has been living in Turkey for around 10 years she told me that in America people were always stepping back when they were talking to her. The reason is that she was using Turkish distances of conversation which are considerably shorter than American counterparts, and that meant violation of personal space leading to discomfort. Teachers' use of proxemics may help establish power or distance in the class. The only caution is to use the right distance: social distance during lecture, and personal distance during one-to-one conversations.

### **1.2.7 Haptics: Uses of Touch**

Perhaps more subtle, and arguably more common, is the use of touch to reassure or empathize; to get, redirect or hold attention; to guide; to encourage; or to express intimacy. Touching someone, even whom you personally know, is a delicate matter, which has to do with culture, age, gender etc. Mediterranean cultures – Spanish, Italian, Greek and Turkish – are high contact cultures wherein touching is an indicator of intimacy, whereas North-American, British and Japanese are non-contact cultures in which interactants rarely touch each other. A worthy point would be that cross gender touches are even more delicate even dangerous in most cultures, especially in ones where gender differences are great, such as Muslim cultures.

### **1.2.8 Vocal Intonation and Cues**

The proverb “It is not what we say that counts, but how we say it” reflect the meaning of vocal intonation. An unconscious bias of the listening public is a widespread positive prejudice in favour of man with low, deep voices with resonant tones, such as those qualities possessed by most male newscasters. Studies have also reported the use of vocal cues as accurate indicators of overall appearance, body type, height, and race, education, and dialect region. Paralinguistic cues often reveal emotional conditions. Difference in loudness, pitch, timbre, rate, inflection, rhythm, and enunciation all relate to the expression of various emotions.

Experimental findings suggest that active feelings, such as rage, are exemplified vocally by high pitch, fast pace, and blaring sound. The more passive feelings, such as despair, are portrayed by low pitch, retarded pace, and resonant sound. In addition, stress is often vocalized by higher pitch and words uttered at a greater rate than normal. The reverse (lower pitch, slower word pace) is likely during depression.

This powerful nonverbal tool can readily affect student participation. Generally, to correct answers the teacher respond with positive verbal reinforcement enhanced by vocal pitch or tone, expressing the acceptance and liking of the students’ answer (often accompanied by a smile or other forms of nonverbal approval).

Vocal behaviour is also capable of arousing stereotypes about either a teacher or a student. For example, a teacher who has a very nasal speaking voice is often perceived as having a variety of undesirable personal and physical characteristics. Female teachers with very tense voices are often perceived as being younger, feminine, more emotional, easily upset, and less intelligent. Male teachers with the same vocal characteristics are often perceived as being older, more unyielding, and cantankerous. (Capper, 2000)

### **1.2.9 Backchannelling, Silence and Breathing**

While not strictly verbal, vocalizations are invaluable to the communicative process; their inappropriate use (for example, L1 backchannelling behavior in L2) may be distracting and may lead to a negative impression.

Quiet time may be defined as the silence occurring between speech or utterances, and how much quiet time is acceptable varies considerably across cultures. While some cultures value lively and open self-disclosure, with few if any prolonged silences, Japanese generally feel more comfortable with longer periods of silence, do not feel the need for volubility or immediate self-disclosure, and often consider talkativeness to be shallow, immature and possibly disrespectful (Kitao and Kitao 1989).

Moreover, turn-taking and conversational behaviour shaped culturally may be perceived as non-immediate. For instance, while American's have "no gap, no overlap" rule in conversing, Turks have "high involvement" style characterized by overlapping utterances. It would be quite common for a Turkish person to break in a conversation, start talking just before last word is uttered, and take the turn. In a sense, asking Turkish students to talk just after the other stops talking in conversation might be perceived "unnatural" and non-immediate.

Finally, breathing is itself a form of nonverbal communication, often underestimated and unnoticed, usually involuntary, but a sigh, a yawn or a gasp can undermine even the most elaborately and convincingly composed verbal message.

### **1.2.10 Environment**

#### **Objects and the classroom**

Environmental research has clearly indicated that communication differs greatly from one physical environment to another. The physical environment of the classroom is determined in the large measure by the objects in that classroom. Some of them are intrinsic for the classroom itself, while others are objects that the inhabitants bring with them. Such objects may have a significant (either negative or positive) effect on classroom communication.

#### **Dress**

Although most people are only superficially aware of the wear of others, clothing does communicate. Often dictated by societal norms, clothing indicates a great amount of information about self. It identifies sex, age, socioeconomic class, status, role, group membership, personality or mood, physical climate, and time in history. Much empirical evidence supports the view that one who is well dressed – and dressed accordingly –

is likely to be much better accepted by not known people than if not well dressed thus increasing interpersonal effectiveness.

### **Physical Attractiveness**

Body type communicates a variety of meanings, particularly as it relates to physical attractiveness.

### **Time**

Though this has not been adequately studied, per se, it seems safe to say that teacher's use of time has nonverbal communicative value. Consider an elementary teacher who tells his students that math is as important as history, yet devote much more classroom time to history. His students can probably tell which subject he really thinks is more important. There are also a non written norms related to how long students are expected to wait for late instructors, and it varies according to rank. Since students are accustomed to classes running for a certain amount of time, they tend to expose nervousness when their expectancies are violated.

## **2. Nonverbal Communication and Teacher Immediacy**

### **2.1 Teacher Immediacy**

The studies conducted to observe immediacy behaviours of teachers during instructional communication have found that immediacy behaviours are associated with more positive affect as well as increased cognitive learning, and more positive student evaluations of teachers (McCroskey and Richmond, 2000). McCroskey and Richmond (2000:86) suggest the following communication principle:

The more communicators employ immediate behaviours, the more others will like, evaluate highly, and prefer such communicators; and the less communicators employ immediate behaviour the more others will dislike, evaluate negatively, and reject such communicators. We prefer to call this idea the "principle of immediate communication".

The importance of immediacy for teachers is embodied in this principle. More established immediacy leads to more cognitive learning and positive attitudes both towards the teacher and the school. The rest of this chapter will then deal with aspects of immediacy and their possible effects and outcomes in the language classroom.

It wouldn't be naïve to hypothesize that immediacy helps a great deal in the classroom. Similarly, Richmond (2002:65-66) shares the same view and lists five generalizations drawn from research on teacher immediacy:

1. Teacher immediacy behaviours can be used effectively to get students to do what we want them to do, so long as we are truly



engaging immediacy behaviours and we continue to use nonverbal and verbal immediacy behaviours throughout the course.

2. Students are drawn to teachers they trust and perceive as competent and caring. Students avoid teachers that they do not trust or perceive as competent, caring and responsive.
3. Teacher immediacy behaviour gives the teacher positive forms of behavioural control, rather than using coercive or antisocial teacher strategies.
4. Immediacy in large part determines the amount power and affect (liking) that a teacher has with students.
5. Students usually comply with, rather than resist, reasonable teacher requests, if the teacher is liked respected, and admired by her/his students.

Mahrebian (1971) introduced the concept of immediacy. He stated the concept of immediacy as: "People are drawn toward persons they like, evaluate highly, and prefer; they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer." (Quoted in Richmond, 2001: 66). It is also noted that immediacy has both verbal and nonverbal aspects, and both can have an impact on learning and classroom atmosphere.

### **2.1.1 Nonverbal Teacher Immediacy**

People cannot always avoid things they do not like nor can they express verbal dislike at all times. However, we communicate our feelings through our nonverbal behaviours. For instance, if someone is saying something nice about us we are more likely to stand closer, have more eye contact, listen more attentively and perhaps even touch. On the contrary, if something unpleasant is being told about us, we are likely to lean away from that person, have little eye contact (or hostile lengthened eye contact), remain silent, and not touch. These are abbreviated forms of approach or avoidance behaviour.

These abbreviated forms of nonverbal behaviour imply the degree of psychological closeness between people. More approach like nonverbal behaviour implies that the person is immediate or wants to build immediacy. The more we use avoidance like behaviours, the more we are perceived as nonverbally non-immediate or/and unapproachable.

In sum, nonverbal behaviours are quite affective on interpersonal relationships. Teachers as we are, we may either frown the students or have them communicate their feelings freely. Yet, as was clarified before teachers should not sacrifice their status in the classroom for building immediacy and rapport between themselves and the students (Studies on student perceptions

report that students find *too friendly* ‘ineffective’. Richmond (2002) draws Avoidance – approach continuum to summarize the point:

**Table 1 Avoidance – Approach Continuum (Adapted from Richmond, 2002:67)**

<b>Avoidance – Approach Continuum</b>		
Physical Hostility or violence	Verbal Hostility	Aggression → Neutrality → Immediacy → Intimacy

The avoidance end of the continuum denotes that we do not want to communicate by any means with verbally or physically abusive person. The approach end is only reserved for a few persons, such as mother, beloved, best friends etc. The point that people feel themselves most comfortable at communicating is immediacy (that why you find yourself telling your problems to a stranger you just met on the bus). At the neutral point, we just evaluate the person; if he/she is found to immediate communication goes on, if found non-immediate or keeps neutral conversation is over (Richmond, 2002).

### **2.1.2 Verbal Immediacy**

What people say makes us feel either closer or more distant from them. Verbal immediacy is built around verbal messages that show openness to the other, friendship and care for the other, or empathy with the other. Such simple phrases as the use of plural pronouns “we or us” rather than singular ones “you, you and I” can increase the feeling of immediacy. For instance, when denoting verbal immediacy to student instead of “you should do this” saying “let’s see what we can do” is better.

Clearly, verbal messages constitute a great deal of the message we are trying convey in given conversation. Yet, nonverbal messages hold great value in successful communication. Although immediacy is accomplished through both verbal and nonverbal messages, Richmond (2002) claims that the nonverbal component is far more important in most cases. Especially in such as classroom communication where the sender and the receiver are face to face nonverbal communication determines what is meant. This is because nonverbal messages are often alone, not necessarily accompanied by verbal messages. On the other hand verbal messages are almost always accompanied by nonverbal messages, and when there is conflict between verbal and nonverbal messages – when verbal suggests immediacy while nonverbal message is contradictory – receivers tend to take nonverbal negative message disregarding the verbal.

In sum, verbal and nonverbal immediacy are tied together with strong ropes. Verbal and nonverbal messages should be in parallel if we are to build rapport and immediacy between us and the students. Moreover, even when conveying negative messages – that is non-immediacy – verbal and nonverbal messages should fit in each other otherwise our behaviour would not be taken seriously, which would be a great hindrance to teaching.

### **2.2 *Nonverbal Immediacy Behaviours***

Mehrabian (1981) indicates that immediacy in the interaction between two people "includes greater physical proximity and/or more perceptual stimulation of the two by one another" (p. 14). Immediacy is thus characterized in part by reduced physical or psychological distances in teacher-student interaction. Hesier's (1972) study of teachers' proxemic positioning revealed that teachers who sat at, on, beside, or behind the desk were rated by students as low in both affection and inclusion and teachers who moved in front of the desk or among the students were more likely to be perceived as warm, friendly, and effective. Research has provided solid evidence that more immediacy is communicated when people face one another directly and that people assume closer positions to those they like than to strangers or those they dislike (Aiello & Cooper, 1972; Andersen, Andersen, & Jensen, 1979; Byrne, Baskett, & Hodges, 1971; Mehrabian 1968, 1967; Mehrabian & Friar, 1969; Patterson & Sechrest, 1970 in Richmond 1992). Although the point at which physical proximity and, to an even greater extent, interpersonal touch become uncomfortable differs among individuals, the lack of recognition resulting from psychological distancing can negate any verbal attempts to establish interpersonal bonds (Richmond, Gorham and McCroskey 1987).

Even when close physical proximity is not possible, direct eye contact can provide psychological closeness between teachers and students and has been shown to be an important component of both interpersonal immediacy generally and the teacher's immediacy in particular (Andersen, 1979; Andersen, Andersen, & Jensen, 1979). Mehrabian (1981) notes that "considerable evidence has been accumulated showing that more eye contact is associated with greater liking and more positive feelings among interactants" (p. 23).

Beyond increasing physical and/or psychological proximity, immediacy is also characterized by behaviours that contribute to perceptual stimulation during interpersonal interaction. Smiling is one nonverbal behaviour that has been associated with such perceptual stimulation indicating both liking and arousal (Mehrabian, 1981).

Perceptual stimulation is also related to body movement: A physically active teacher provides both visual and auditory sensory arousal. Subjects in Rosenfeld's (1966) study of approval-seeking increased both gestural activity and head nodding when seeking positive affect. Beebe (1980 in Richmond, Gorham & McCroskey 1987) summarizes studies by Mehrabian (1971) and Seals and Kaufman (1975 in Richmond, Gorham & McCroskey 1987) that indicate clear differences between the kinesic patterns of effective and "average" teachers. Effective teachers moved more; student attitudes were positively correlated with increased activity by the instructor. A relaxed body posture also has been found to be related to teacher immediacy to be influential in eliciting opinion change and to be less likely when people dislike one another (Richmond, Gorham & McCroskey, 1987).

### **3. Teacher Immediacy and Student Learning**

There is a substantial body of literature on positive effects of nonverbal immediacy and student learning almost all of which positively correlate learning with positively-perceived teacher immediacy and student learning. However, we should note that out of three domains of learning, namely *perceived learning*, *affective learning* and *cognitive learning*, cognitive learning is the least and affective learning is the most affected one (Witt, Wheelless & Aiken, 2004). Moreover, very high levels of immediacy is also useless in that student perceive it to be superficial (Richmond, 2002). To summarize the existing research on this topic, a team of researchers Witt, Wheelless & Aiken did a meta-analysis of 81 studies that encompassed 24,474 students. Their findings include the following, among others:

A synthesis of the first 23 years of immediacy and learning research lends credence to the view of many instructional communication scholars—that even though students like more highly immediate teachers and think they learn more from their courses, actual cognitive learning is not affected as much as they [students] think it is...p. 201.

As well, Comstock, Rowell, & Bowers (1995, in Love 2001) concluded that highly immediate teachers do not produce the most significant increases in student learning leading to an inverted U curvilinear pattern of correlation between learning and teacher immediacy. In other words, moderate amount of teacher immediacy is most effective in increasing student learning and motivation to optimal levels.

Perceptions of immediacy are relatively less studied in situations where the lecturer and students share different cultural backgrounds. Love (2001) cites two significant studies (Neuliep, 1995; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990) conducted in America. Both studies reveal that perception of immediacy has a positive pancultural effect on learning and students perceive lecturers of the same background to be more immediate than others. Neuliep (1995) also notes that African-American students perceive their African-American teachers as more immediate than do Euro-American students who had Euro-American teachers. The impact of this immediacy varied significantly, including a negative relationship between strictly Euro-Americans' perception of immediacy and learning-loss, suggesting a possible expectation of immediacy behaviours by African-American students (Love, 2001). Though these studies provide some hints they do not clarify cases of non-native instructors teaching home countries of the students. As social power relations and stereotypic perceptions do also effect such cases research is needed on this topic.

#### **4. Research Questions**

There is clear correspondence between nonverbal communication and lecturer effectiveness. One who uses nonverbal communication effectively in the classroom is often deemed to an effective teacher. As well, nonverbal communication has quite distinctive cultural realizations ranging from speech act realizations, to communication and discourse style (eg. high-involvement versus no-gap-no-overlap styles). In this limited study we aimed at observing the following research question: *Are there any meaningful differences between non-native and native lecturers' instructional styles in terms immediacy relating to nonverbal communication?*

#### **5. Participants, Measurement and Procedures**

The two lecturers observed are both teaching at Çağ University ELT department. The native lecturer is a male and has a more sociable out-of-classroom style. The non-native lecturer is a female and looks more reserved out-of-class which may be a result of the students' communication apprehension. Both are senior lecturers in their early sixties.

The instrument used was *Nonverbal Immediacy Scale* developed by Richmond, McCroskey and Johnson (2003) with reliability estimates of .90. No modifications were found necessary. Non-participant observations were done in the same classroom with the same students thus reducing

environmental interference. Both lecturers were observed during interactive activities to avoid speech event mismatch.

Data was gathered both during the classroom observation and through 20 min. video recordings of the lessons. The video recordings were observed extensively in terms of verbal and non-verbal immediacy behaviours.

## **6. Limitations**

The study was conducted with only two persons and within a limited time of observation. Increasing the number of participants is utterly needed; however, finding pairs of non-native native lecturers in the same department is very unlikely. Therefore, the findings of this research should not be generalised to the total population but should be not as an entry level preliminary research for forthcoming analyses.

## **7. Findings**

The results of the observation sheets revealed that the native lecturer is far more immediate than the non-native lecturer. Indeed, there are some cultural differences that play a great role in the perception of immediacy. Especially the communication style employed differs greatly: while Ms. Smith (pseudonym) employed “no overlap” style, Mr. Kemal’s communication is characterized by frequent overlapping and high-involvement. Besides the students often spoke altogether, which is a natural feature of Turkish classrooms, in Mr. Kemal’s class. On the contrary, the students preferred to address their classmates and were slightly reluctant to speak directly to Ms. Smith.

Another distinctive feature is frequent code-switching in Mr. Kemal’s class. Nevertheless, we should note that the class was actually translation so code-switching is expected, but the functions carried out by code switching were more than translation, but also humour, elaborations, error correction and so forth. This may be considered to be an advantage for native lecturers, but there is no evidence on the part of the students to consider Mr. Kemal more immediate since he shares the same tongue. The students’ expectations are met with Ms. Smith’s class so, although we can claim that shared mother tongue is effective on perceptions of immediacy, it is no more effective than verbal part of communication which on the highest estimate in research 30%.

Both lecturers are active during the class and keep eye contact, but Ms. Smith occasionally uses gestures and often ties her hands at her back which with a rough guess would be perceived non-verbally non-immediate. Moreover, a tense body posture and lack of vocal variety adds to the

negative side. On the other hand, Mr. Kemal has more vocal variety, which may be a result of his literature and since he was reading a paper animatedly, accompanied with a variety of gestures. We may venture to say that Mr. Kemal is more immediate than Ms. Smith on these aspects.

The basic differences are proxemics, kinesics and gestures, and tone of voice. On other aspects (haptics, environment etc.) both lecturers seemed to employ the same behaviour patterns. Mr. Kemal kept a smaller distance – so did the students – while Ms. Smith had a bigger one, yet she did not on any occasion move away or tried to keep that distance. On these grounds we may claim that this is due North American distance preferences.

### **8. Conclusions**

Culturally speaking Mr. Kemal holds great advantage since he is a member of the speech community, but we should note that the students seem to be evaluating both lecturers regardless of their language backgrounds. This also supported in the literature we have noted above, while Middle Eastern societies are high context, high involvement speech communities North American's are low context and no-gap no-overlap ones. Tacitly aware of the language differences the students answered accordingly to vocal behaviours.

The problem is in non-verbal communication strategies persons tend to apply their own cultural (or speech community) norms in interpreting non-verbal messages of foreigners. This led another distinctive feature to be noted that the students' preference of seating in classroom. While they occupied the front rows in Mr. Kemal's class, they preferred the middle seats in Ms. Smith's class. Indeed, this supports the questionnaire's findings; seeing as, if considered non-immediate persons tend keep the distance.

On the very beginning of the lesson, Ms. Smith had to wait in silence for the students to settle down, and it took them a while to do so. A group of boys kept chatting for some time during the lecture part, which we may roughly guess that supports the findings.

Richmond, McCroskey and Johnson (2003) note that there are significant gender differences in perception of non-verbal immediacy. While males tend to pay less attention and rate less, females are more sensitive to non-verbal clues, and so was the case in both classes with a difference that in Ms. Smith's class some male students kept on chatting for a while during the lecture part. The issue of gender differences of Turkish students perception of non-verbal immediacy and their responses to opposite and same sex should be more elaborately scrutinized in future research.

This study is strictly limited in that only two lecturers were observed and students' perception of immediacy is only observed by the writer. In order to get more valid and reliable results the study might be carried out on larger scale including self-reports of the observed lecturers, and reports of the students on their perception of their lecturers' immediacy.

To sum up, while some differences in nonverbal immediacy behaviour could be accounted for in terms of personality, most difference seem to be stemming from cultural norms. The students do not have any problem in interpreting verbal immediacy behaviours while they miss cultural norms shaping nonverbal immediacy. We may, though hasty, conclude that native lectures will always be perceived more immediate than non-natives.

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## **9. Appendix**

### **Nonverbal Immediacy Scale-Observer Report (NIS-O)**

When using this instrument it is important to recognize that the difference in these observer-reports between females and males is not statistically different. Hence, it is unnecessary to employ biological sex of the person completing the instrument in data analyses involving this instrument. It is recommended that the COMBINED norms be employed in interpreting the results employing this instrument. However, sex differences of the target persons on whom the instrument is completed may be meaningful. This possibility has not been explored in the research to date (September, 2003).

**DIRECTIONS:** The following statements describe the ways some people behave while talking with or to others. Please indicate in the space at the left of each item the degree to which you believe the statement applies to (fill in the target person's name or description). Please use the following 5-point scale:

1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Occasionally; 4 = Often; 5 = Very Often

- \_\_\_\_ 1. He/she uses her/his hands and arms to gesture while talking to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. He/she touches others on the shoulder or arm while talking to them.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. He/she uses a monotone or dull voice while talking to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. He/she looks over or away from others while talking to them.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. He/she moves away from others when they touch her/him while they are talking.
- \_\_\_\_ 6. He/she has a relaxed body position when he/she talks to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 7. He/she frowns while talking to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 8. He/she avoids eye contact while talking to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 9. He/she has a tense body position while talking to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 10. He/she sits close or stands close to people while talking with them.
- \_\_\_\_ 11. Her/his voice is monotonous or dull when he/she talks to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 12. He/she uses a variety of vocal expressions when he/she talks to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 13. He/she gestures when he/she talks to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 14. He/she is animated when he/she talk to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 15. He/she has a bland facial expression when he/she talks to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 16. He/she moves closer to people when he/she talks to them.
- \_\_\_\_ 17. He/she looks directly at people while talking to them.
- \_\_\_\_ 18. He/she is stiff when he/she talks to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 19. He/she has a lot of vocal variety when he/she talks to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 20. He/she avoids gesturing while he/she is talking to people.
- \_\_\_\_ 21. He/she leans toward people when he/she talks to them.
- \_\_\_\_ 22. He/she maintains eye contact with people when he/she talks to them.

- \_\_\_\_\_23. He/she tries not to sit or stand close to people when he/she talks with them.
- \_\_\_\_\_24. He/she leans away from people when he/she talks to them.
- \_\_\_\_\_25. He/she smiles when he/she talks to people.
- \_\_\_\_\_26. He/she avoids touching people when he/she talks to them.

**Scoring:**

**Step 1.** Add the scores from the following items: 1, 2, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, and 25.

**Step 2.** Add the scores from the following items: 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, 18, 20, 23, 24, and 26.

**Total Score** = 78 plus Step 1 minus Step 2.

Norms:

Females	Mean = 96.7	S.D. = 16.1	High = >112	Low = <81
Males	Mean = 91.6	S.D. = 15.0	High = >106	Low = <77
Combined	Mean = 94.2	S.D. = 15.6	High = >109	Low = <79

**Source:**

Richmond, V. P., McCroskey, J. C., & Johnson, A. E. (2003). Development of the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale (NIS): Measures of self- and other-perceived nonverbal immediacy. *Communication Quarterly, 51*, 502-515.