

## THE USE OF GESTURES IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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### Abstract

*Gesture is a type of non-verbal communication that is very influential in teaching and learning activities and interactions between teachers and students. It is not only can convey the speakers' intention more specifically and adequately, clarify the teaching instruction, encourage the students' interest, maximize English teaching's goal but also can help improve the students' skill in speaking, writing, reading and listening. This study aims to improve students' speaking, writing, reading, listening and interest in English lessons through the use of gestures at SMA Negeri 1 Batang Natal. The method used was descriptive qualitative. The subjects were 2 teachers and 25 students of 11th grade of SMA Negeri 1 Batang Natal. The research instruments used were interviews and observations. The results of this study suggests that the use of movement has positive and negative sides for students. The positive side is that the teacher must be able to use the right movements according to the needs of their students. Creating a comfortable atmosphere and considering the most effective method so that students are activated in the lessons. While negative side was using too many movements or being too serious when teaching would not create a comfortable classroom atmosphere.*

**Keywords:** *Gestures, Non-Verbal Communication, Teaching English*

### INTRODUCTION

Communication is the way of humans to interact with others. People communicate in many different ways. All people in the world can master and use language, which means that everyone has their own language. Without language, it would be difficult for people to communicate with each other. English as an example, in its current development, English is an international language used to connect people all over the world. Furthermore, language is divided into verbal and non-verbal. Generally speaking, most people only know spoken language. While non-verbal languages may be little known. According to Tai (2014), language is the term for various forms of communication that use body movements or gestures instead of voice, spoken language, or other means of communication. Hornby (2006) states that body language is the process of communicating your feelings or thoughts through the way you place and move your body rather than through words.

Learning English is a difficult subject for some students particularly when it is done in area where English is served in limited purpose such as remote areas. There are many students who are reluctant to learn English in the terms that English as foreign language. Therefore, today's education requires students to communicate in English. Teachers should promote English expression in the class all the time. However, because of the limitation of students' vocabulary, teachers need to provide alternative ways to support

English teaching. Gestures can overcome the solution what the teachers mean. It also can improve students' understanding and memories in learning English. When the communication between teachers and students becomes more and more important with the developing of English education, the use of gestures can support teaching and help teachers get better in teaching results.

Practicing English speaking is one of the powerful tips to do communication. Both teacher and students are doing communicative activity in teaching and learning process. Apart from some students are absent-minded, which may lead to the failure of communication teachers also in charge of this case. Teachers need to put in effort to catch and assist the attention of students to focus on the lessons in comfortable classroom atmosphere. Such as in some cases, non-verbal communication is more important than the verbal one because of volume, speed and intonation will enhance the students' response. Levine and Adelman said that communication is a process of exchanging meaning through verbal and nonverbal behavior. Verbal and non-verbal are interrelated because if someone only speaks without using gestures, facial expressions, and other non-verbal parts, it will lead to miscommunication. Non-verbal communication, according to Adler and Rodman (2006), includes oral and non-oral signals expressed by ways other than linguistic means. In addition Non-verbal communication is defined as a series of messages that are not stated in words but can be deciphered, resulting in interpretations that can complement, contradict, replace, complete, or enhance the message transmitted by words. (Dobrescu & Lupu: 2015) Nonverbal communication is used in teaching and learning activities to supplement verbal communication and increase knowledge. In class, most of the students are more pay attention to what teachers do than what they say. Accompanied by gesture as human body language, teacher will create good visual effect and provoke students' interest in learning English.

According to Tai (2014), gesture or body language refers to many forms of communication that rely on bodily motions or gestures rather than sounds, verbal language, or other methods of communication. Gesture or body language is the process of communicating what you are feeling or thinking through the way you place and move your body rather than words. When it comes to engage with other people, body language is crucial (Hornby: 2006). Gestures exists in human conversation because it can happen at any time. Teachers must be patient to understand the method and principle of using gesture properly and appropriately.

The research of the use of gesture has been widely carried out by experts (Devi

2020; Tai 2014; Nihla Afdaliah and Abdul Halim, 2017). These major field was highlighted in these studies was the use of gesture in teaching english, particularly in language, such as kinds of gesture. Likewise, qualitative reseach was quite similar. Several research of gesture were also conducted with qualitative approach (Bunglowala 2015; Anisah, 2013) which focused on teachers' gesture in the classroom activities. However those previous studies had focused more on the learning process in the big cities. Thus, this research will provide new paradigms the use of gesture in remote areas in the field of teaching English.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative descriptive research was used in this study. Qualitative research is a research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from something that is observed (Hancock: 1998). This research was conducted in the SMA N 1 Batang Natal. The subjects of this research were teachers and students. The sampling technique used were purposive sampling is choosen to select 2 teachers considered an expert in their field and r a n d o m s a m p l i n g for 25 students in eleventh grade of SMA N 1 Batang Natal. The object of this research is how to use nonverbal communication, especially gestures in the teaching and learning process at SMA N 1 Batang Natal. The research instruments used were interviews and observations.. The researcher observed the use of movements made by the teacher in front of the class during the learning process. The observations were carried out there times in order to obtain significant differences and got the expected results.

## **RESULT/FINDINGS**

There are concrete applications of gestures in different aspects in Teaching English such as the use of gestures in Listening. Listening composes and plays important role in daily interaction. To understand others and be understood are a basic objective in learning English. The teacher should use gestures properly in order to improve students' listening skill. For example, a teacher can open his or her eyes widely with round mouth opened and says "Amazing" or "Awesome". And also he or she or he can point someone and say "She is very beautiful". As a result, the students will have deep impressions and imaginations about what an amazing place or event and what a very beautiful girl.

The use of gesture in speaking hence the spoken language is one of the significant ways to interact with others. Most of students are ashamed. They have passive attitude, sometimes they can write and read in English but they are ashamed to speak English. The

use of gestures can overcome the solution. Such as when the material is related to meet someone for the first time. The teacher will introduce themselves first by using new sentences and proper gestures like smile and saying hello then they shake hands. While other students can reply the expression by saying "Nice to Meet You". Therefore, a teacher can create a different situation with a comfortable atmosphere during practicing activities.

The use of gesture in reading is related to the discussion of the convenience in reading aloud. By having good pronunciation and intonation will help students to understand the meaning. When having reading aloud, teacher will explain how to raise or low the tone. Such as we use raise and lower tone in question sentence. We use lower tone in statement sentence. At first the students might feel it is difficult or confused but by practicing reading aloud regularly and the use of gesture, it will make them easier to master it. As a famous said that a poem is not a poem until it is read.

Interview and observation were conducted on teachers and students, the researchers interviewed 2 English teachers and observed the teaching and learning process in two classes that were held by 25 students at SMA Negeri 1 Batang Natal. After conducting three observations in 11th grade of SMA Negeri 1 Batang Natal, it was found that the use of gestures improve students' skill in reading, speaking, writing and listening. The teacher at SMA N 1 Batang Natal uses cues to minimize difficulties in understanding learning in grade 11. Some of the difficulties of students in learning English such as lack of reading comprehension and vocabulary which is rarely used in everyday life interaction. So, the teacher must be able to create an active class that is appropriate, easily accepted and digested by students, using language that is familiar or easy to understand and it is hoped that students can hear and memorize vocabulary so that learning objectives can be achieved.

## **DISCUSSION**

The use of gestures is very helpful in teaching English. In order to deepen our quality in teaching process we must change the atmosphere of traditional boredom and monotone into stage comfortable one. We can set the class into hospital, amusement park, hotel so the student can feel and imagine the authenticity of the subject. Gestures can be a platform to express their ideas and point of view in different context which is difficult to express by mouth.

Interview and observation were conducted on teachers and students, the researcher interviewed two English teachers and observed the teaching and learning process in two classes that were held by 25 students by random sampling at SMA Negeri 1 Batang Natal. After conducting observations in 11th grade of SMA Negeri 1 Batang Natal, it was found

that the use of gestures was better for improving students' abilities in reading, speaking, writing, and listening from the teacher more than writing without any action in teaching.

The teacher at SMA N 1 Batang Natal used cues to minimize difficulties in understanding learning in grade 11 . Some of the difficulties of students in learning English were reading, understanding the meaning, and the most problematic is the limited vocabulary of students because English is rarely used in everyday life. So, the teacher must be able to create an active class that is appropriate, easily accepted and digested by students, using language that is familiar or easy to understand and it is hoped that students can hear and memorize vocabulary so that learning objectives can be achieved. Teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Batang Natal were also aware that the use of cues has a significant effect on student achievement.

Gesture has positive and negative sides, the positive side is that students understand more about learning, students are interested in participating in learning, comfortable with active teachers and the negative side is that if you use too many gestures or are too serious when teaching, it would not create a comfortable and peaceful classroom atmosphere.

## **CONCLUSION**

Since the teaching quality and its effect is the core of education. The use of gesture can enhance the quality of teaching itself. Such as relaxed learning condition and vigorous participation will lead the students to be activated and cooperated with the teacher. By using various gestures and combining with the word will help teacher to express their idea efficiently and effectively at class to make sure that students get the information clearly without confusion or misunderstanding. This study described the use of gestures in classroom interactions. The purpose of this study was to improve students' speaking, writing, reading, listening and interest in English lessons through the use of gestures From the above results and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn:

This gesture was used repeatedly in classes. In fact, students used many forms of gestures in the classroom to respond and interact. More specifically, gestures can be tracked, such as some students holding their arms in place, gesturing with their hands, crossing their arms in disguise, listing something, raising their hand, touching their head, part of a bar barrier, touching their head , Rubbing nose, Clenching hands, Handshake gesture, Left hand behind hand gesture, Finger up, Hand grasping wrist gesture, Shake hands, Take something, Cantilever up and down left and right, Press both hands, Put hands on chest, Put hands on forehead, Close with hands Giggling while mouthing,

touching a check, thumbs up, church hand, my gesture, enthusiastic gesture, calm gesture, left hand waving gesture and foot gesture.

Gesture is a type of non-verbal communication that is very influential in teaching and learning activities and interactions between teachers and students. For recent years we need to pay attention to the function and effect of a gesture. Researchers tell us that the effective use of gesture can greatly effect the relationship between the teachers and the students and captive students' proficiency and cognitive ability. A successful English teacher knows how manage gesture to get the best effect. As a result it will improve students' skill in English.

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