

Nonverbal Communication Practices and Understanding of *Lughatul Fasli* among Primary School Arabic Teachers

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Abstract

Human communication is classified into two types, namely verbal communication, and nonverbal communication (NVC). These two modes of communication support each other. However, the relevance of NVC's involvement in communication is sometimes neglected. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of NVC practice of Arabic teachers in "*lughatul fasli*" (LF), the most important NVC channel used by teachers in LF, students' understanding of LF, and the relationship between the level of teacher NVC practice in LF and students' understanding of LF. The study used a cross-sectional survey study design and used the questionnaire as an instrument of study. The sample consisted of 416 out of 3433 year-five students from elementary schools in Rembau district, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. The sample is chosen using a stratified random sampling procedure. The obtained data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation test inference statistics. The findings revealed that teachers employ NVC in LF frequently ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.47$). Students have a moderate-high understanding of LF ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 0.57$). The relationship between these two variables was determined to be significant and positive, with coefficient values of $r = 0.74$ and $\text{sig} = 0.01$ ($p < 0.05$). In this light, NVC practices in LF should be increased and prioritized to boost communication between teachers and students. Therefore, students' positive attitudes towards Arabic as a foreign language will encourage interest and drive them to learn Arabic.

Keywords: nonverbal communication; verbal communication; *lughatul fasli*; Arabic teacher; primary school.

Introduction

Verbal and non-verbal communication are two crucial instruments in human relationships. Both are used to communicate knowledge and ideas (Sutiyatno, 2018) as well as to aid each other (Hashim et al., 2018). Whenever humans interact or speak using verbal communication,

non-verbal communication will accompany the conversation in an intentional or unintentional state. To perform their tasks efficiently and professionally, teachers must be able to communicate effectively. This skill is crucial since it has to do with how information is conveyed so that students may understand and effectively apply it. According to Hassan and Mohd (1999), the interaction and relationship between teachers and students make teaching a communicative activity. A teaching activity related to communication skills is the process of disseminating particular knowledge and abilities so that students can learn and master them successfully. Dazali and Awang (2014) state that communication skills are one facet of teaching abilities and are a crucial component that every teacher should possess. Communication skills are one part of teaching skills that every teacher needs to possess (Dazali & Awang, 2014). To address their demands throughout the teaching and facilitation process (PdPc) or in social interaction, teachers must be prepared to develop communication skills.

Communication will be dull, less effective, and unattractive if nonverbal communication is not used correctly and accurately. For example, if a teacher says to his students, "You're good!" without a joyful facial expression, a smile, or any lovely motions with his hands, the students will be puzzled and unmotivated. Even verbal praise from the teacher can be misinterpreted as disrespectful or intrusive. When there is a conflict of interpretation, nonverbal communication is more trusting than verbal communication (Huang 2011). Mehrabian (1981) observed that humans use only 8% words or verbal communication, 23% vowels, and 69% body language when communicating, also affirmed this function of nonverbal communication. Similarly, Dobrescu and Lupu (2015) discovered that nonverbal communication accounts for 92 percent of human communication while spoken or written communication accounts for only 8 percent.

However, research on NVC in the practical communication of *lughatul fasli*, or the language of class control, has received little attention. *Lughatul fasli* refers to the simple speech used by Arabic teachers to convey guidelines in the Arabic PdPc process. *Lughatul fasli* is derived from two Arabic words: *lughah*, which means language, and *fasli*, which means class. *Lughatul fasli* translates as "classroom language" (Sapawi, 2015). Previous research Muhammed (2015) and Hasan, et al.(2019) concentrated on the types of *lughatul fasli* derived from oral verses uttered by Arabic teachers. While the study Sapawi (2015) points out nonverbal communication in relation to how to deliver good *lughatul fasli*, namely through employing suitable body language and voice tone, Body language and voice tone, on the other hand, do not accurately reflect the role of nonverbal communication in the *lughatul fasli* overall. Body language and voice tone are simply two of the many types of nonverbal communication channels available.

NVC has several advantages for students and assists teachers in managing the classroom during PdPc sessions. NVC is one of the most successful strategies to keep students focused on teaching in class. When students are not paying attention in class or are being boisterous, the teacher will employ NVC channels such as gazing directly at the students who are listening and raising the tone of their voice, causing the students to remain quiet and focus on teaching without utilizing verbal communication (Pan, 2014). Many scholars believe that if teachers use NVC properly, the connection between teachers and students can improve (Wang, 2012). A positive relationship between teachers and students is essential for ensuring that PdPc operates smoothly and harmoniously (Negi, 2009). This study aims to identify the level of Arabic teachers' NVC practises as a whole and the main channels used in LF communication. This understanding of non-verbal communication is expected to add value

to the practise of LF among Arabic language teachers during the PdPc process and, at the same time, increase students' interest in learning Arabic as a foreign language or second language.

Literature Review

Nonverbal Communication (NVC)

Nonverbal Communication (NVC) is derived from the English language. Nonverbal communication can be translated into a variety of terms in Malay, including nonverbal communication, nonverbal language, and nonverbal messaging (Halias et al, 2017). Verbal communication refers to human communication that occurs through language intermediaries. Nonverbal communication is communication that occurs through intermediate nonverbal messages. The majority of NVC scholars define KNV as "wordless communication" (Istifci & Demiray, 2011; Muridan, 2013; Pan, 2014; Sutiyatno, 2018).

Messages delivered via NVC can be understood by the recipient via a variety of channels and means, such as facial expression, body language (kinesics), eye contact (oculesic) (Zeki, 2009), time (chronemic), touch (haptic), distance (proxemic), paralinguistics, and so on (Komariah 2017; Mehrabian 1971; Negi, 2009). When we speak verbally, we do not intentionally use these NVC channels. For example, in the context of education, when we direct a student to leave the class, we will use the statement "You go out," and then we will deliberately use the hand to gesture the exit to the students, thus raising verbal communication. NVC abilities are viewed as a factor that can make teachers' instruction more successful since it has a significant impact on student learning based on the definition of NVC and its usefulness in teaching. Al-Syalhub (2005) found that Prophet Muhammad used NVC to facilitate his teaching, with the aim of adding clarity and strengthening words, attracting attention, instilling understanding, and summarising explanations by referring through demonstrations. This was based on a hadith of Prophet Muhammad that was related to teaching. Al-Syalhub (2005) even reaffirmed the idea that teachers should use body language to enhance their lessons. According to Stella Muchemwa (2013), using NVC in the classroom can assist teachers organise their classes as well as make themselves more attractive to students. According to Halias' (2016) research, Arabic instructors who use NVC in the classroom can boost their students' engagement, interest, and academic success.

Most previous researchers have emphasized the importance of verbal communication when it comes to communication (Huang, 2011; Pan, 2014; Sutiyatno, 2018; Zeki, 2009). Even in the context of in-class instruction, many teachers underestimate the importance of NVC in the classroom, contributing to students' failure to accomplish the goals of teaching and knowledge acquisition (Pan, 2014). A disproportionate reliance on NVC versus verbal communication in communication education will result in a breakdown. According to Wang (2012), one of the main causes of the lack of teaching efficiency among English college instructors in China is the neglect of NVC in PdPc. As a result, both channels of communication should be given equal consideration (Halias, 2016).

When there is a discrepancy or confusion, the message given by NVC is more reliable by a student than the teacher's spoken communication. According to Bambaeroo & Shokrpour, (2017), NVC is more reliable in human communication than verbal communication since there are many NVC channels that may be used to grasp the information, messages, emotions, and feelings of the message sender. Furthermore, NVC frequently arises spontaneously and is uncontrollable. As a result, when someone says "I'm healthy," but their facial expressions, body language, and voice indicate otherwise, the message's listener will

believe NVC signals more than verbal communication (Komariah, 2017). In fact, Samovar and Porter (2004) reported that in face-to-face interpersonal communication, only 35% of messages are understood verbally, while the remaining 65% are understood by NVC (Wang, 2009).

The NVC teacher also has an impact on the student's motivation during PdPc and school sessions. If the teacher employs the proper NVC, the student's motivation will improve, making it easier for the teacher to continue teaching in the classroom. On the other hand, if the teacher's ability in both communications is not appropriately utilized, the student's motivation will suffer (Negi, 2009). Observations done by Zeki (2009) of 65 third-year university students revealed that nonverbal signals such as eye contact, facial emotions, and body movements utilized by lecturers are a source of inspiration and focus for students in the classroom.

NVC is essential, especially when it comes to language teaching (Pan, 2014). NVC is recommended for teachers of foreign languages and second languages to maintain communication with (Aladdin, 2012; Horwitz, 2008; Negi, 2009). Teaching a language that focuses too much on content such as grammar and vocabulary while ignoring NVC in conversation would cause students to become bored and skip classes (Huang, 2011). Non-language signs such as facial expressions, hand motions, head nods, grins, and eye reflections are examples of NVC in LF. Mukhtar and Damit (2015) discovered that trainee teachers use NVC in body movement to help students quickly understand the LF phrases or expressions used by teachers.

Consequently, a teacher's knowledge of NVC should be considered and emphasized. The success of teaching and learning in the classroom is dependent on teacher-pupil communication in the classroom. "*Lughatul Fasli*," or the language of class control, is one of the communications utilized by teachers in Arabic teaching. Essentially, this communication includes two types of communication: verbal communication and NVC. The emphasis on NVC must also be applied and practiced precisely and correctly for the interaction between teachers and students to flow smoothly and efficiently. As a result, a favorable approach towards Arabic learning.

This study is based on previous researchers' theories and studies on the role of NVC in human communication and the importance of LF as a form of brief communication in Arabic education. Mehrabian (1981) implicit communication theory served as the foundation for this study. According to this theory, human communication is divided into two categories: explicit and implicit. Explicit relates to verbal communication, whereas implicit refers to NVC, a type of communication that excludes grammar and is more concerned with emotions, feelings, and attitudes (Mehrabian, 1981). NVC plays an important role in human communication in general as well as in teacher-student communication.

Sticking to this theory and past studies on the importance and role of NVC in communication, the level of practice of teacher NVC in LF as a brief communication in Arabic teaching should be identified. Next, analyze the impact of NVC practices in each type of teacher's LF on students' attitudes towards Arabic. Indirectly, LF is an effective medium for motivating students to learn and master Arabic as a second or foreign language.

Lughatul Fasli (LF)

Lughatul fasli, also known as a class-controlling language (Muhammed, 2015), is a straightforward communication method used by teachers to impart topic content (Mukhtar & Damit 2017; Hasan, et. al 2019) The phrase "*lughatul fasli*" is used by Arabic teachers in

Malaysia in the context of Arabic education. The phrase "Lughatul Fasli" is made up of two words: "Lughah" (language) and "Fasli" (class). When combined, it has the meaning of class language. LF is a medium that teachers and students can use to improve interaction effectiveness in Arabic language learning (Muhammed, 2015). Sapawi (2015) identified six types of LF; (1) speech and greeting (التحيات و الترحيبات), (2) instruction (الوامر), (3) questioning (الأسئلة), (4) praise and affirmation (التعزيزات و الاثبات), (5) correcting the student's error (تصحيح الأخطاء), and (6) simple expression (العبارات المتداولة). Later, Mohamad Ziyad Mukhtar & Damit, (2017) discovered another sort of LF utilized by Arabic teachers, namely a prohibition (النواهي).

Previous studies focused solely on verbal communication in terms of clarity of voice, precise pronunciation, and consistent practise (Sapawi, 2015; Mukhtar & Damit, 2017; Mukhtar & Damit, 2015; Hasan et.al, 2019), and NVC's focus on LF is lacking in things like touch, facial expressions, bodily motions, and other factors. As a result, this research focuses on LF, and the type of communication used by teachers in Arabic PdPc. This research is based on Mehrabian's (1981) communication theory, which splits communication into two types; explicit (verbal) and implicit (nonverbal). For effective communication, both of these types of communication must be combined (Jasmi & Tamuri, 2007; Halias, 2016). Students will answer vocally while taking notes and concentrate on the teacher when a teacher enters a class with an audible voice, a smile, soothing body language, and neat clothes. This concentration and focus are caused by the forceful voice and loud intonation that communicate the demand for attention. Smiles express warmth, while body movements and neat clothes show a teacher's appeal, giving students the confidence to continue learning in class.

Methodology

A cross-sectional survey study approach was used in this study. This study focused on the nonverbal communication practices of Arabic teachers in practical LF. The questionnaires employed in this study were chosen to review effective data information (Kerlinger, 1973) while also minimizing the use of time when collecting data. The population of this study consisted of 3433 fifth-grade students from 23 primary schools in the Rembau area of Negeri Sembilan. Fifth-year students were chosen as a sample due to their maturity and five years of studying Arabic, which resulted in more consistent and appropriate responses. The sample size was estimated to be 351, according to Krejcie & Morgan (1970). To improve the accuracy of the data analysis results, the total sample size was increased to 416 participants. This increase is consistent with Cohen, Manion & Marrison (2007) and Fah (2012) recommendations that survey research include more samples than the minimum suggested amount. This action is conducted to ensure that the sample chosen appropriately represents the population.

The stratified random sample approach was used in this study to divide the study population into subpopulations (strata) based on the kind of school. The students are organized into four groups: group A, group B, group C, and group D. Each group consists of a regular school and a school with fewer students. This phase is intended to guarantee that the sample is not confined to schools with a large student population or to regular schools. Based on the population ratio in each group, samples from each group are picked at random.

The questionnaire was adapted from McCroskey & Richmond (2003), Halias (2016), and Suboh (2019). The questionnaire is divided into three sections; (a) demographic information; (b) 40 question items measuring the teacher's degree of NVC practice in LF; and (c) 24 question items measuring the student's level of understanding of the LF. Sections b and c are rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument has been validated

and tested for reliability. The instrument validation technique is carried out by two experts. A pilot study was also conducted on 30 people in a school in the Seremban District, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. Cronbach's alpha reliability value of 0.92 is high. The study also adhered to the Malaysian Ministry of Education's (MOE) data collection regulations and was approved by the MOE on February 12, 2020 (Reference: MOE.600-3/2/3-eras (6653)).

The test findings were quantitatively analyzed. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics using IBM's Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) version 20 for Windows. Nunnally & Bernstein's (1994) mean score was employed in this study, as stated in Table 1.

Table 1

Score mean interpretation (Nunnally & Bernstein , 1994)

Mean	Interpretation
1.00-2.00	Lower
2.01-3.00	Medium lower
3.01-4.00	Medium higher
4.01-5.00	Higher

Findings And Discussions

Teacher NVC practicing in LF.

Table 2 shows the average values of the ten NVC channels used by Arabic teachers in LF are very high (M=4.02, SD=0.47). The mean value, standard deviation, and interpretation of each NVC channel practiced by the teacher in LF begin with the physical appearance with the highest mean (M=4.51, SD=0.60). Followed by facial expressions (M= 4.32, SD=0.51), kinesics (M=4.13, SD=0.65), chronemic (M= 4.13, SD=0.61), paralinguistics (M=4.10, SD=0.65), oculesic (M= 4.06, SD= 0.70), environment (M=3.89, SD=0.72), proxemic (M=3.88, SD=0.72), olfactory (M=3.87, SD=0.83), and the least is haptic (M=3.30, SD=0.90).

Table 2

Mean distribution, standard deviation and mean interpretation of each NVC channel (N=416)

NVC Channel	M	SD	Interpretation
Physical appearance	4.51	0.60	High
Facial expressions	4.32	0.51	High
Kinesics	4.13	0.65	High
Chronemic	4.13	0.61	High
Paralinguistics	4.10	0.65	High
Okulesic	4.06	0.70	High
Environment	3.89	0.72	Medium High
Proxemic	3.88	0.73	Medium High
Olfactory	3.87	0.83	Medium High
Haptic	3.30	0.90	Medium High
Total NVC Channel	4.02	0.47	High

The mean values for physical appearance, facial expression, kinesics, chronemics, paralinguistics, and oculesics range from 4.06 to 4.51, indicating that this channel is highly used. This high level shows that Arabic teachers commonly use these six channels when

practicing LF in teaching communication. While the mean value of the environmental, proxemic, olfactory, and haptic channels range from 3.89 to 3.30, this implies that these NVC channels have a moderately high level of practice. This indicates that Arabic language teachers use all NVC in the teaching and learning process, as suggested by Malaysia's Ministry of Education. However, the findings of the study contrast with the study of Sapawi (2015), who revealed that there are three NVC channels involved in the delivery of LF to students, including kinesics, facial expressions, and paralinguistics. According to Haneef et al. (2014), NVC in communication typically happens without noticing it. We often miss that NVC also transmits a certain message and meaning when KV is uttered or spoken.

The findings of this study support the implicit communication theory introduced by Mehrabian (1981). This theory states that every word a speaker sends goes through two types of communication: explicit and implicit. The difference between implicit and explicit communication is that implicit communication is nonverbal and explicit communication is verbal. Explicit communication in LF is when a teacher says something like "إِجْلِسْ، لَا تَتَكَلَّمْ، نَعَمْ". Implicit communication is the NVC pathway that goes along with the word. The fact that this kinesic channel has a high mean value shows that teachers use NVC and that NVC exists in LF. Although LF is a simple form of conversation with simple words and phrases, it is still accompanied by different NVC channels. In addition to what is said directly, these NVC channels also send out information that is suggested.

The findings of the high frequency of teacher NVC practices in the LF are based on research and observation from the student's perspective. This shows that when teachers use LF in face-to-face contact, students not only try to understand it by listening, but they can also see the NVC channels the teacher is using. Istifci & Demiray (2011) express that a good listener not only hears what the speaker says but also sees what the speaker means by what he or she does with their face, hands, and body. This is because NVC lines are used to talk to each other, not just words. Hearing is often thought of as a passive skill, but it can be an active skill if you watch the speaker's moves at the same time. If you don't connect a word to something, like an action, an item, or a feeling, it will just be a sound that doesn't mean anything (Perry, 2001).

These findings show that students in LF tend to be highly sensitive to teacher NVC. Because Arabic is used as a foreign language, this sensitivity illustrates the importance of the teacher's NVC when using this simple LF communication. Students attempt to understand the lexical through messages provided by NVC due to a lack of lexical language. NVC plays an extremely crucial role in foreign language learning. Metacommunications, such as the NVC channels that follow each spoken message, are incredibly powerful and critical. According to Istifci & Demiray (2011), NVC messages or clues will be used by message recipients to interpret or comprehend verbal messages provided by the speaker. In fact, depending on the messages displayed on the messenger's NVC, the message's recipient is more likely to understand a word uttered. Besides the fact that students' capacity to understand the language is limited, the inclination of the message's recipient towards the NVC message makes it particularly significant for students of a second or foreign language.

The student's understanding of LF

Table 3 shows the mean average value of the six subconstructs below the student's relatively high level of comprehension of LF ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.57$). Details of mean values, standard deviation, and interpretation for six sub-constructs with the highest position of the LF command ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.60$). Next, LF questions ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.78$), LF praises ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.70$), LF welcome expressions ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.82$), LF bans ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.75$), and

LF correction errors ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.70$). The interpretation of LF-type questioning to LF error correction is moderately high. There is one type of LF with a high interpretation and five subconstructs with a medium-high interpretation in total.

Table 3

Mean distribution, standard deviation, and mean interpretation of each subconstruct of the student's understanding of LF

Subconstruct of Understanding	M	SD	Interpretation
Instructions	4.11	0.60	High
Questioning	3.99	0.78	Medium High
Praises	3.98	0.70	Medium High
Greeting Expression	3.87	0.82	Medium High
Prohibition	3.86	0.75	Medium High
Correction of errors	3.73	0.70	Medium High
Student's understanding of LF	3.92	0.57	Medium High

The student's level of comprehension of LF demonstrates that the role of the teacher's NVC improves student understanding. The outcomes of this study are also corroborated by Sapawi (2015) study, which claims that Arabic teachers employ many methods to provide knowledge to students when utilizing LF, such as body language, facial expression, stress, and voice intonation. These findings are also consistent with Muhammed (2015) study, in which trainee teachers took the initiative to employ NVC channels such as body language or kinesics to provide comprehension to students rather than using translation strategies.

The findings of the study illustrate the importance of NVC in the brief communication of LF as a foreign language. Because Arabic is a foreign language, the presence of NVC significantly aids in their comprehension and ensures that conversation does not stall. In line with the findings of Dahl & Ludvigsen (2014), kinesics or body language made it easier for foreign language learners and native speakers to understand the language spoken by the speaker. At the same time, the Wahid and Pangat (2016) study revealed that Chinese students used nine nonverbal communication strategies, or NVCs, to maintain ongoing communication during the Malay language PdPc. Students must have NVC to understand and interpret the words they hear, especially while speaking in a foreign language.

Teacher NVC practicing in LF and the students' comprehension of LF.

The Pearson correlation test findings for the association between the level of teacher NVC practicing in LF and the students' comprehension of LF are shown in Table 3. The results demonstrate a strong and significant association between the range of NVC teachers' knowledge of LF and the level of student comprehension of LF, with a correlation value of $r = 0.74$ and $\text{Sig} = .001$ ($p < 0.05$). The relationship implies that the level of NVC in the LF of the teacher influences the level of comprehension of the LF of the students, and vice versa. As a result, teachers' NVC practice influences their comprehension of LF.

Table 4

Pearson Correlation Test Results Relationship Between teacher's NVC Practice Level in LF and Student's Level of Understanding of LF

Correlation	Understanding		Interpretation
	r	Sig.	
NVC teacher in LF - Understanding of LF	0.74	.001	Strong

The study's findings indicate that there is a relationship between teachers' NVC in LF and students' understanding of LF who use Arabic as a communication method. This finding is consistent with Kelly (2001) study, which discovered that the speaker's NVC influences children's knowledge of mastering their mother tongue. Similarly, Kelly et al. (2004) discovered that the NVC, or more precisely, the kinesics channel, has a significant relationship with various speech comprehension tasks in the language comprehension stage. This clearly demonstrates the importance of NVC in understanding the language, whether it is the mother tongue or the second. Because NVC not only assists students in understanding the message's content, but it also assists students in dealing with ambiguous communication.

The research of Mahmud and Yaacob (2007) and Halias (2016), which discovered that teachers' NVC had a stronger link with student accomplishment than verbal, is consistent with this finding. This result is consistent with that of Ahmad et al. (2010), who discovered that students agree the lecturer's NVC has an impact on their learning satisfaction and directly affects their understanding from both a cognitive and affective perspective (Macedonia & Knosche, 2011; Burrough, 2007). The NVC utilised by teachers demonstrates that there is an improvement in students' grasp of LF at the same time. The process of reinforcement, confirmation, explanation, and class control is proceeding successfully, as evidenced by the significant correlation between the two variables (Hsiao & Fisher (2002). Good communication will foster a close, cordial relationship and have an impact on how pupils feel about the subjects being taught (Chesebro, 2010).

Conclusion

This study examined Arabic teachers' nonverbal communication in practical LF and LF understanding among fifth graders in primary schools in Seremban District, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. This study found that the NVC practice of Arabic teachers in practical LF is at a high level. This shows that Arabic teachers have awareness and practice good communication when practicing LF in Arabic classes. While the understanding of LF among students is at a moderately high level. Both variables are strongly correlated and positive. Teacher NVC communication should support practical LF to engage students in Arabic. Teachers must combine seven types of LF with correct and suitable NVC signals in addition to expressed LF. Effective teacher-student interaction aids Arabic language learning as a foreign language. This study supports the implicit communication theory, which uses NVC as implicit communication to improve instruction. The study also showed how important it is to build students' attitudes towards learning Arabic. Thus, future studies should improve classroom communication using important and minimal channels.

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