

LINGUADIDACTIC BASIS OF GENERAL BODY LANGUAGE

Xamrayeva Safargul Xasanovna

safargulhamroyeva@gmail.com

+998 94 726 9280

Termiz State Service University of Economics master student

Abstract

In English teaching, with the constant reform of teaching methods, body language as a kind of nonverbal language plays a very significant role in the interaction between teachers and students. It not only can express the speakers' intention more accurately and effectively, simplify the teaching instruction, stimulate the students' interest, optimize the purpose of English teaching and enhance teaching effectiveness, but also can help improve the students' ability of listening, speaking, reading and so on. This paper aims at helping English teachers understand the application of body language in teaching, and encouraging them to try using body language in classes in order to assist their teaching. The English teachers in new times should use body language properly in their class teaching and bring its function in language teaching into full play to achieve the best teaching effects.

Key words: *body language, English teaching, nonverbal language*

As is known to all, classroom teaching is one kind of communicative activity between teachers and students. Some students are absent-minded, which may lead to the failure of communication in classroom. Apart from the students' subjective reasons, the teachers also have responsibility for this phenomenon. Teachers need to work hard to capture and sustain the attention of students in order to engage them to focus on the lessons. Actually, in some cases, nonverbal communication is more important than the verbal one in the communication between teachers and students. Such as known to all, volume, speed and tone of voice will stimulate the students' response directly. Human body language, as a nonverbal communication, including gestures and facial expressions, is actually often used to communicate in countless subtle and complex ways. In class, most of students are often more attentive to what teachers do than what they say. To arouse students' interest in learning English and to help them learn better, teachers have to try their best to think of as many ways as possible to motivate students' enthusiasm, and body language is one of them.

Teachers accompanied by gestures and facial expressions could create visual effects. It helps teachers express their own ideas and viewpoints more accurately and vividly to draw the attention of students. When teachers add body language to English teaching, students will be interested in learning English. What's more, students can learn to maintain long-term memory. This is a wonderful magic that body language has.

In one word, body language is helpful for English teaching. In this article, the theoretical study and application of body language will be discussed.

Definition of Body Language

Body language is a term for different forms of communication using body movements or gestures instead of, sounds, verbal language, or other ways of communication. Body language is the process of communicating what you are feeling or thinking by the way you place and move your body rather than by words (Hornby, 2006). Although we may not realize it when we talk with others and send messages to the people around us, we make ourselves understood not only by words, but also by facial expressions and body movements. We call it body language, which studies the meaning of all parts of body. It includes many nonverbal behaviors, e.g. eye contact, gestures, postures, facial gestures, touch, and so on. It can deliver different information, making a set of system which is the same as language signal (Yu Aihong, 2002). For example: A smile and handshake indicate welcome, waving one's hand means "goodbye", nodding the head is a way to show agreement while shaking it means disagreement. Body language is a kind of nonverbal communication and it forms parts of category of paralanguage, which describe all forms of human communication that are not verbal language.

Features of Body Language

1. Intuitional feature

Teachers use their facial expressions to afford information or give some commands in the classes. Using body language in English teaching can help teachers to deepen students' understanding and impression. Visual body language can arouse students' interests in English studying. For example, when the teacher teaches the word "cry", he or she can show a crying face. Teachers can get a more intuitional teaching result if they use body language properly.

2. Communicative feature

We cannot forget the importance of body language when teachers communicate with students. Students need to learn the communicative English, so they should be more active in the classroom teaching. Because traditional teaching method cannot arouse students' interests, we can create a comfortable and interesting atmosphere by the means of body language and put students in the central position in English learning. If teachers use their body language comfortably, they can assist the communication between with their students.

3. Suggestive feature

Actually sometimes students understand the English knowledge by guessing from teachers' body language. The students have rich imagination and they can get much information from teachers' body language. For example, when teachers design a communicative scene, they can take advantage of the vivid body language to help them imagine, which can give them a good context. In this way, can the students understand the text easily.

In a word, body language has proper features for English teaching. A qualified teacher should learn to use body language in English teaching. Body language can become a perceptible tool in the future education.

NECESSITIES AND IMPORTANCE OF BODY LANGUAGE IN ENGLISH TEACHING

English teaching is a very important part of the school education, and body language plays a positive role in cultivating the students' characters in school education. Body language is a significant means through which people get to know each other and communicate with each

other. To be brief, body language is a kind of language through gestures, manners and countenances, which include eye contact, facial expression, and gestures and so on. As mentioned above, our nonverbal communication occupies almost 50 percent of our daily communication while words themselves take up only 7 percent. Our bodies put forward messages so often that sometimes we communicate a lot more than we realize (Chen & Watts, 1992). The foreign language teachers are expected to perform actively in class, for example to dance joyfully, make vivid gesture as an actor. They are no longer expected to be kind and cultivated or just stand stubbornly on the platform (Guo Xuehua, 1999). In the current situation, there are three main aspects which is the need of body language in English teaching.

A. Limitation of Students in English Vocabulary and Expressive Ability

The English vocabulary is so abundant that the student cannot remember all of them. And students just can only grasp the words which are used frequently. According to the students' present level and practical situation, body language is required. Body language is one of rich expressive languages in the teaching language, especially in English teaching. Using body language suitably not only can avoid using Chinese to explain English, but also can promote teachers and students to communicate. In this way the teaching effectiveness will be enhanced. For instance, when a teacher wants his or her students to look at the blackboard, he or she just have to point at the blackboard, then the students will understand the order without difficulty despite the fact that they do not catch the key word "blackboard" clearly. Another example, when explaining the form "have done" such as "Have you found a job yet?" The teacher can use a normal speed when reading "we ought to use the form „have done”, and read slowly when giving examples. Then a more effective way is to use hand gestures to emphasize when the teacher says "have done". He or she can reach out his or her index finger, pauses in the air while giving out the example. This action often makes a deep impression on students about the English language points.

B. Less Interest of Students in English Class

For a non-native learner, English learning is very boring. As the proverb goes "interest is the first teacher." No matter in any fields, a person to be successful, first of all, he must spend a lot of time and energy. Second, he must be interested in it. The strong study interest is the prime motive power of leaning activity. It can stimulate and raise students' study interest. Therefore, before each class, teachers should make good preparation to make sure that the students can have strong interest through a series of body language. For example, to teach: "What are you doing?" teachers can design the following body language for the context: let the students make the action of waiting, or dancing together with you. Students imitate the body language with teacher, listen and do warm up in the activities to enter the study condition, which can stimulate students' enthusiastic of learning greatly. In the classroom, teachers' behavior will influence students' leaning concentration. Sometimes teachers in their teaching with the use of body language can stimulate the students' interest.

C. Depressing Atmosphere in English Teaching

English is a foreign language to students and it is difficult to study well so that students cannot hold the interest in it for a long time. And when they cannot understand what teachers teach, they will not listen to the teachers. Then the atmosphere in English class is depressing. Meanwhile, if the sounds only stay in a horizontal line, students will soon lose their interest. And the rise meter can also affect students' mood. Teaching in order to arouse the attention of each student, teachers should glance around at the students. Teachers' body language attracts

the attention of students, help students understand knowledge, and increase their enthusiasm. In this way, can teachers achieve the purpose of improving the teaching results.

In English classes, body language should be frequently used to improve the teaching effectiveness and develop the students' ability.

In conclusion We can see that body language is of helpfulness for English teaching. And if we want to deepen the quality education proceeds, we should clear off the traditional boredom and monotone. English classroom will become a stage for teachers and students. For the purpose that teachers should teach their students in comfortable context. They can change the little classroom into a shop, a hotel, a park, even a hospital. Body language can be a good tool for improving the imaginations of the students and helping teacher express their ideas and language points more vividly. And by the body language, they can express some connotation of language that is difficult to express by mouth.

Teaching quality and effect is the core of education, and the use of body language can improve the teaching quality of English class. As a matter of fact, most students enjoy an active atmosphere of English learning instead of a boring and serious one. Since enthusiastic participation is the foremost factor in language learning an active and relaxed learning environment is even more important than teaching itself. In an active and lively class, the students are more willing to cooperate with teacher and attend class conscientiously. And most students consider that body language can help them memorize teaching contents to a certain degree.

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