



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i7/17690>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i7/17690

Received: 10 May 2023, **Revised:** 11 June 2023, **Accepted:** 24 June 2023

Published Online: 07 July 2023

In-Text Citation: (Baharudin & Abdullah, 2023)

To Cite this Article: Baharudin, H., & Abdullah, N. H. (2023). The Arabic Teachers' Level of Nonverbal Communication Practise in "Lughatul Fasli." *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13(7), 333 – 344.

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Vol. 13, No. 7, 2023, Pg. 333 – 344

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



www.hrmars.com

ISSN: 2222-6990

The Arabic Teachers' Level of Nonverbal Communication Practise in "Lughatul Fasli"

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Abstract

Verbal communication and non-verbal communication (NVC) are the two main categories of human communication. It is necessary for these two forms of communication to interact. However, NVC in lughatul fasli (LF) as a straightforward method of communication between professors and students in the class is less frequently explored. Thus, the purpose of this study was to determine the extent of NVC usage among Arabic language instructors as a whole and the primary channels for LF communication. Therefore, this study was conducted with the aim of identifying the level of NVC practises among Arabic language teachers as a whole and the main channels used in LF communication. This study was a quantitative study that used a cross-sectional survey research design. A questionnaire instrument was used to collect data involving 416 out of 3433 fifth-year students in a primary school in Rembau district, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. The sample was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. The data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the study show that the level of teachers' NVC practise in LF is high (mean = 4.02, SD = 0.47), which means that teachers often use NVC in LF. There are six key channels that teachers in LF use, according to the findings: 1) physical appearance, 2) facial expression, 3) kinesics, 4) chronemics, 5) paralinguistics, and 6) oculesics. In relation to that, the practise of NVC in LF needs to be improved and given attention to ensure that communication between teachers and students is more effective and efficient. This is important to form students' positive attitudes towards Arabic as a foreign language, which will generate their interest and motivation towards learning Arabic.

Keywords: Nonverbal Communication, Verbal Communication, Lughatul Fasli, Student Attitude, Primary School

Introduction

Communication is a very important thing in human life. Human society will not advance and develop as it does now without communication. When discussing communication, it is typical and expected that the discussion will only be focused on speech or verbal interaction. However, ideas and knowledge are sent to a person when humans communicate using two different types of communication: verbal or verbal communication and non-verbal or non-verbal communication (Sutiyatno, 2018). Hashim et al (2018) asserted that these two

communications are mutually dependent on each other. Whenever humans interact or speak using verbal communication, non-verbal communication will accompany the conversation in an intentional or unintentional state.

The conversation between two people will be dull, less effective, uninteresting, and tedious without appropriate and precise nonverbal communication. Students will be perplexed and unmotivated, for instance, if a teacher congratulates a student by stating, "You are good!" without making a happy face, a smile, or a thumbs-up sign. Even verbal compliments from teachers might be taken the wrong way and come off as rude or unpleasant. According to Huang (2011), several researchers discovered that when there is a disagreement of interpretation, we are more likely to trust someone's nonverbal communication than their verbal communication. This is supported by a study done by an American researcher named Albert Mehrabian, who stated that when humans communicate, they only use words or verbal communication (8 percent), 23 percent vocal communication, and 69 percent body language. This means that 92 percent of human communication is non-verbal, and only 8 percent is verbal (Dobrescu & Lupu, 2015).

However, studies pertaining to NVC practise in *lughatul fasli*, or classroom management language, are less well-discussed. *Lughatul fasli* means a simple language used by Arabic teachers to communicate during the PdP process of the Arabic language. *Lughatul fasli* is derived from the Arabic terms *lughah*, which means class, and *fasli*, which means language. *Lughatul fasli* means "class language," or in English, "classroom language" (Sapawi, 2015). The studies of Muhammed (2015); Hasan et al (2018) focused on the types of *lughatul fasli* taken from the observation of oral sentences spoken by Arabic language teachers. In contrast, Sapawi (2015) talked briefly about non-verbal communication in his study. This topic is related to how to deliver a successful *lughatul fasli* that makes use of proper body language and the right tone of voice. Body language and voice tone, however, do not accurately represent the real significance of nonverbal communication in *lughatul fasli* as a whole. Two examples of the many different kinds of nonverbal communication channels are body language and voice tone.

NVC greatly benefits students and aids instructors in controlling the classroom during PdP sessions. One of the most effective ways to keep students focused on teaching in class is through NVC. When students are not focused in class or are noisy, teachers will use NVC channels such as looking precisely at students who are noisy and raising their voice, which will cause students to be quiet and focus on teaching without using verbal communication (Pan, 2014). Many researchers have stated that the relationship between teachers and students can be better and more positive if teachers use NVC effectively (Wang, 2012). A good relationship between teachers and students is important to ensure that PdP runs in a friendly and harmonious atmosphere (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 PdP process and, at the same time, increase students' interest in learning Arabic as a foreign language or second language.

Literature Review

Nonverbal Communication (NVC)

NVC comes from the English word "nonverbal communication." In Malay, "non-verbal communication" can be translated into several terms such as "*komunikasi bukan lisan, bahasa*

bukan verbal, komunikasi bukan verbal, dan mesej bukan lisan" (Halias, 2016). Human communication that occurs through the medium of language is called verbal communication. Communication that occurs through non-language signals is called non-verbal communication. Most NVC researchers define NVC as non-verbal communication (Istifci & Demiray, 2011; Natashadora, 2013; Pan, 2014; Sutiyatno, 2018).

The message conveyed through NVC can be understood by the recipient of the message through various channels and means. Among the channels used by humans to convey NVC messages are facial expressions, body language (kinesics), eye contact (oculesic) (Zeki 2009), time (chronemic), touch (haptic), distance (proxemic), paralinguistics, and so on. (Komariah, 2017; Mehrabian, 1971; Negi, 2009; Wang, 2012). When we communicate using verbal communication, intentionally and unintentionally, we also use these NVC channels. These NVC channels are also used when we verbally converse, both consciously and unconsciously. For instance, in the realm of education, whether on purpose or not, when we advise pupils to leave the class by saying "you are out," we will point to the exit door to reinforce the verbal communication we utilise.

When talking about communication, most previous researchers have focused on the importance of verbal communication and ignored NVC (Huang, 2011; Pan, 2014; Sutiyatno, 2018; Zeki, 2009). Even in the context of teaching in the classroom, many teachers underestimate the importance of NVC in the classroom, which contributes to the failure to achieve teaching goals and knowledge acquisition among students (Pan, 2014). The disproportionate emphasis on NVC compared to verbal communication in teachers' teaching communication has created a flaw. Therefore, these two types of communication need to be given balanced attention (Halias, 2016). English college teaching staff in China have been reported to have low teaching efficiency after being seen to neglect the use of NVC in PdP (Wang, 2012).

In certain circumstances, the message delivered through NVC is more trusted by students than the teacher's verbal communication, especially when there is a contradiction or confusion. This statement is supported by Bambaerero and Shokrpour (2017), who asserted that NVC is very reliable in human communication compared to verbal communication because there are many NVC channels that can be used to understand information, messages, emotions, and feelings of the sender of the message. In addition, NVC often occurs spontaneously and cannot be controlled because it has become a habit. Therefore, when someone says, "I'm healthy," but at the same time her or his facial expressions, body language, and voice reflect the opposite situation, the recipient of the message will trust NVC signals more than verbal communication (Komariah, 2017). In fact, the importance of NVC is also highlighted by Samovar and Porter (2004), who claim that most experts believe that in face-to-face interpersonal communication, only 35 percent of messages are understood through verbal communication, while the other 65 percent are understood through NVC (Wang, 2009).

The teacher's NVC also has an impact on students' motivation to go through PdP sessions throughout the school session. If the teacher uses the correct NVC, student motivation will increase, making it easier for the teacher to continue teaching in the classroom. On the other hand, if both types of communication are not used properly by the teacher, student motivation will be affected (Negi, 2009). Observations made by Zeki (2009) on 65 third-year university students in his class, revealed that non-verbal cues such as eye context, facial expressions, and body movements used by lecturers are a source of motivation and focus in class.

NVC is very necessary, especially in language teaching (Pan, 2014). Even in the teaching of a second or foreign language, teachers are advised to use NVC as a communication strategy to ensure that communication between teachers and students does not stop or break (Aladdin & Aladdin, 2012; Horwitz, 2008a; Negi 2009). Language teaching that focuses too much on content such as grammar and vocabulary and ignores NVC in communication will cause students to get bored with the teacher's teaching and may cause them to skip class (Huang, 2011).

Therefore, a teacher's competence in NVC should be considered and emphasised. The effectiveness of teaching and learning in the classroom depends on the communication between the teacher and the students. One of the communication methods used in teaching Arabic by teachers is "*lughatul fasli*," or the language of classroom management. Basically, this communication also contains two types of communication, namely verbal communication and NVC. Emphasis on NVC is essential, and it needs to be practised accurately and correctly so that the interaction between teachers and students becomes smooth and effective, which further calls for a positive student attitude towards learning Arabic.

Lughatul Fasli (LF)

Lughatul fasli, or classroom management language (Muhammed, 2015), is a simple language used by teachers to convey the content of the subject (Mukhtar & Damit, 2017; Hasan et al., 2018). In the context of Arabic language education, the term "*lughatul fasli*" is used among Arabic teachers in Malaysia. The word "*lughatul fasli*" consists of the first two words, "*lughah*," which means language, and "*fasli*," which means class. They signify class language when put together.

The practise of LF among Arabic language teachers using fully Arabic is highly encouraged. LF is a medium that can be used by teachers and students to increase the effectiveness of interaction in Arabic language education (Muhammed, 2015). There are six types of LF that have been identified by Sapawi (2015) who studied the National Primary Trainers for primary school Arabic subjects. The study of Mukhtar and Damit (2017) found another type of LF used by Arabic language teachers, which led to a change in the number of LF types from six to seven types. The findings are based on their study of VC of Arabic language teachers that exist in LF.

There are different types of LF in simple communication between teacher and student. Among the types of LF that are identified are (1) greetings (التحيات والترحيبات), (2) instructions (الأوامر), (3) questioning (الأسئلة), (4) praise and affirmations (التعزيات والاثبات), (5) correcting students' mistakes (تصحيح الأخطاء), (6) simple expressions (العبارات المتداولة), (7) prohibitions (النواهي) (Mukhtar & Damit, 2017). The emphasis on LF practise by past researchers (Sapawi, 2015; Mukhtar & Damit, 2017; Mukhtar & Damit, 2015; Hasan et al., 2018) only focuses on verbal communication in terms of voice clarity, correct pronunciation, and continuous practise without relating it to the importance of touch, facial expressions, body movements, touch, and many more.

The emphasis on NVC in LF needs to be noted since LF is also a type of communication used by teachers in PdPc Arabic. In accordance with the communication theory presented by Mehrabian (1981), communication is divided into two types, namely verbal communication (explicit) and nonverbal communication (implicit). The combination of these two types of communication is important to produce effective and efficient communication (Jasmi & Tamuri, 2007; Halias, 2016). For example, when the teacher enters the classroom and greets

with an energetic voice, high intonation, a smiling face, confident body movements, and neat and tidy clothes, students will respond to the greeting verbally while at the same time paying attention and focusing on the teacher. This attention and focus occur due to the energetic voice and high intonation describing the instruction to pay attention. A smile carries a message of warmth. Body movements and neat and tidy clothes reflect the charisma of a teacher who gives confidence to students to continue learning in class.

Conceptual Framework

This study is based on several theories and studies from past researchers related to the role of NVC in human communication and the importance of LF as simple communication in Arabic language teaching. Hence, related theories have been selected to form a conceptual framework as a basic guide for researchers when conducting research. The implicit communication theory introduced by Mehrabian (1981) became the basis of this study. According to this theory, human communication is divided into two categories: explicit and implicit. Explicit refers to Verbal Communication, while implicit refers to NVC, which is an aspect of conversation that does not involve grammar but rather emotions, feelings, and attitudes (Mehrabian, 1981). NVC has a great role in human communication in general and in teaching communication between teachers and students in particular.

In response to this theory and past research on the importance and role of NVC in communication, the level of teachers' NVC practise in LF as a form of simple communication in Arabic language teaching needs to be identified. Next, this study was done to investigate the effect of NVC practise in each type of teacher's LF on students' attitudes towards the Arabic language, indirectly making LF an effective tool to attract students' interest in learning and acquiring Arabic as a second language and a foreign language.

Methodology

This study used a cross-sectional survey research design. Specifically, this study focuses on the nonverbal communication practises of Arabic language teachers in LF. The selection of questionnaires used in this study was made to obtain effective data information (Kerlinger 1973) as well as minimise the use of time when collecting data. There were 3433 participants who comprised the population of primary school students in Rembau district, but in this study, only 416 students were required as a study sample. The determination of the sample size in this study is based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970), who found that at the 95% confidence level for a population of 3931 ($N = 3433$), the minimum sample size required is 351 participants only. However, in order to improve the accuracy of the data analysis findings, the total sample was increased to 416 people. This increase is in line with the recommendations of Cohen et al (2007); Fah (2012), who suggest studies that use a survey design to increase the number of samples from the minimum recommended amount. This action is to ensure that the selected sample can represent the population with the highest degree of accuracy.

Based on the population information, sample selection uses a stratified random sampling technique by segregating the study population into sub-populations based on the breakdown of school types, i.e., normal schools and schools with fewer students. This breakdown of school types was divided into four groups, namely group A, group B, group C, and group D. Each group consists of normal schools and schools with fewer students. This step was taken to ensure that the selected sample is not concentrated only in schools with many students or normal schools. The selection of samples from each group was done randomly according to the ratio of the total population in each group. The sample for this

study consisted of only Year 5 students. The selection of Year 5 students as a sample took into account their maturity and experience learning Arabic for five years, starting from Year 1. Their five years of maturity and experience help them answer questions with more consistent and relevant answers than other students.

Research Instruments

This research instrument uses a questionnaire adapted from the studies of Halias (2016); Richmond et al (2003), who determined 10 NVC channels as constructs in this study. The questionnaire used in this study is divided into two parts and has 40 question items that must be answered by students to evaluate the NVC of Arabic teachers. The two parts are: part (a), which is related to the demographic information of the participants, and part (b), which consists of 40 question items related to the construct of the NVC practise level of teachers in LF. The measurement of these two parts uses a Likert scale starting from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree. This instrument has content validity confirmed by the evaluation of two panels of evaluators and is also reliable with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.92. Before collecting data for the actual study, this instrument was tested in a pilot study at a school in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, involving 30 participants. This study also complies with the data acquisition procedure from the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE) and received approval from the Ministry of Education on February 12, 2020 (reference: KPM.600-3/2/3-eras (6653)).

Findings and Discussion

The practise of nonverbal communication (NVC) in *Lughatul Fasli* (LF) is the main point discussed in this study. Information on the NVC level of teachers in LF was obtained through NVC construct data collected from a questionnaire instrument. There are 10 NVC channels divided into sub-constructs, and each sub-construct has four items. The total number of items related to NVC is 40. Table 1 displays the mean score, standard deviation, and mean interpretation for the mean of the entire NVC channel in LF.

Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviation, Mean Interpretation of the Overall Average of 10 NVC channels (N=416)

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Mean of the Entire NVC Channel	4.02	0.47	High

Table 1 shows the average value for the 10 NVC channels practised in LF is at a high level (mean = 4.02, SD = 0.47). This finding explains that Arabic language teachers practise NVC well when using LF. Teachers take care of their appearance, use facial expressions, and use body language (kinesics) when practising LF in class. NVC channels related to time (chronomic), tone of voice (paralinguistic), and eye contact (oculesic) are also applied when interacting using LF. The remaining NVC channels, such as environment, distance (prosemic), scents (olfactory), and touch (haptic), are also practised by teachers in LF. Details of the mean value, standard deviation, and interpretation of each NVC channel practised by teachers in LF can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Mean, Standard Deviation and Mean Interpretation of Each NVC Channel

NVC Channel	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Physical appearance	4.51	0.60	High
Facial expression	4.32	0.51	High
Kinesics	4.13	0.65	High
Chronomic	4.13	0.61	High
Paralinguistics	4.10	0.65	High
Oculesic	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

Table 2 shows the distribution of mean value and standard deviation of the NVC channels practised by teachers, starting with physical appearance (mean = 4.51; SD = 0.60), which had the highest mean. Facial expression, with a value of 4.32 and a standard deviation of 0.51, was in second place. Kinesics, with a mean value of 4.13 and a standard deviation of 0.65, was in third place. Chronemics with a mean value of 4.13 and a standard deviation of 0.61 was ranked number four, followed by paralinguistics with a mean value of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.65, which was ranked number five. The next NVC channels, oculesic with a mean value of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 0.70 and environmental with a mean value of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 0.72, were ranked sixth and seventh, respectively. While proxemics with a mean value of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 0.72 and olfactory with a mean value of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 0.83 were ranked eighth and ninth, respectively. Channels that were on the last ladder are haptic, with a mean value of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.90.

The channels of physical appearance, facial expression, kinesics, chronemics, paralinguistics, and oculesics had a mean value between 4.06 and 4.51, which means that the practise of these channels was at a high level. This high level leads to the interpretation that these 7 channels are very often used by Arabic teachers when practising LF in teaching communication. The environmental, proxemic, olfactory, and haptic channels had a mean value between 3.89 and 3.30, which means the level of practise of these NVC channels was moderately high. This moderately high level means that teachers still practise the above 4 channels regularly, compared to the previous 7 channels, which were practised very frequently.

Based on the data obtained and analysed from the questionnaire related to teachers' NVC, there are two basic things that can be concluded. First, the level of teachers' NVC practise in LF during PdPc is generally high. This high interpretation means that teachers very often use NVC in simple LF communication according to the students' perspective. Teachers use 10 NVC channels such as physical appearance, facial expression, kinesic, paralinguistic, oculesic, chronemic, environmental, proxemic, olfactory, and haptic in LF. Second, Arabic teachers use LF in the Arabic PdPc, as recommended by the Malaysian Ministry of Education.

In Sapawi's study (2015), there are four ways of delivering LF to students involving NVC: (1) use body language; (2) use facial expressions; (3) speak clearly and clearly; and (4) speak with *nabr wa tanghim* (stress and intonation). In this study, body language is also known as kinesics, which involves the movement of hands, fingers, shoulders, the body, the head, and

so on. While facial expressions are known as facial expressions. Speaking clearly and vividly and practising *nabr wa tanghim* involve paralinguistic channels in NVC. In summary, based on the study of Sapawi (2015), the NVC channels involved in the delivery of LF to students only involve three channels, namely kinesics, facial expressions, and paralinguistics. The practise of body language or kinesics in LF is also mentioned in the studies of (Muhammed, 2015; Hermaniar, 2016).

However, through the analysis of the NVC level of teachers in LF, it was found that the use of NVC in LF by teachers was more extensive. There are seven more channels used by teachers based on the ten NVC channels discussed in the literature review. This finding explains that the use of NVC in LF is actually not limited to only three channels but involves more channels without the teacher realising it. Haneef et al (2014) stated that NVC in communication often occurs without the speaker realising it. Speakers often overlook that NVC also sends a certain message and meaning when VC is done.

The findings of this study also support the theory of "implicit communication," introduced by (Mehrabian, 1981). According to this theory, every message delivered by the speaker will go through two types of communication, namely implicit and explicit. Implicit communication means nonverbal communication, while explicit communication means verbal communication. Explicit communication in LF is represented by expressions and words spoken by the teacher such as *اجلسن, لا تتكلم, نعم*. Implicit communication is represented by the NVC channels that accompany the words. As in the item below, the kinesic channel is the teacher always pointing the hand downwards with a strong and firm tone of voice for the command of the word *اجلسن* (you please sit down!), and putting the index finger to the mouth with a serious facial expression for the tense sentence *لا تتكلم* (you don't talk). The high mean value in this kinesic channel proves that teachers practise NVC and is evidence of the existence of NVC in LF. Although LF is a simple form of communication that contains simple words or expressions, it is still accompanied by various NVC channels. These NVC channels transmit various implicit messages in addition to the written meaning.

The findings about the high frequency of teachers' NVC practises in LF are from the students' perspective. This situation illustrates that when the teacher uses LF in face-to-face communication, students not only try to understand the LF verbally by using listening skills, but they also visually see the NVC channels used by the teacher. Istifci and Demiray (2011) stated that a good listener not only listens to the words spoken by the speaker but also needs to see what the speaker conveys through the face, hands, and body. This is because communication actually happens through NVC channels, not just words. The listening process will often be associated with passive skills, but it will become an active skill if it is accompanied by seeing the speaker's movements visually. Words will be mere sounds without meaning if they are not associated with something such as an action, object, or feeling (Perry, 2001).

This finding also shows the high alertness of students towards teachers' NVC in LF. This shows that teachers need NVC to use simple LF communication because the language used is Arabic. Arabic is a foreign language for students. The lack of lexical items in Arabic causes students to try to understand the lexical items through the messages delivered through NVC. The role of NVC is very important during the PdPc of a foreign or second language. Istifci and Demiray (2011) stated that metacommunication, such as NVC channels that accompany every verbal message, is very powerful and important. The recipient of the message will use messages or hints from the NVC to interpret or understand the verbal message conveyed by the speaker. In fact, usually the receiver of the message will be more likely to understand a word spoken based on the messages seen on the speaker's NVC. According to Istifci and

Demiray, the tendency of message receivers to read NVC messages makes it very important for students of a second or foreign language, considering that the students' skills to understand the language are limited.

Conclusion

This study was carried out to identify the non-verbal communication practises of Arabic language teachers in LF among Year 5 national school students in Seremban district, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. This study explains that the NVC practise of Arabic language teachers in LF is at a high level. This finding means that Arabic teachers have awareness and practise good communication when practising LF in Arabic classes. This study also revealed that the main NVC channel information used by Arabic language teachers when practising LF is the appearance channel, compared to the environment channel. Practical LF needs to be supported by the effectiveness of teacher NVC communication to attract students' interest and a positive attitude towards the Arabic language since language input, especially space and communication opportunities, are limited. In addition to speaking LF orally, teachers need to know and understand how to combine the seven types of LF with accurate and appropriate NVC signals when using them. Effective and efficient interaction between teachers and students will help the learning and acquisition of Arabic as a foreign language. This study strengthens the validity of implicit communication theory, which pays attention to NVC as implicit communication to strengthen explicit communication in teaching. This study also makes a significant contribution to the importance of forming positive students' attitudes towards developing their Arabic language learning abilities. Thus, further studies need to focus on increasing the effectiveness of communication in the classroom through the main communication channels and improving the minimal channels.

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