

TEACHER'S PROXIMITY IN CONDUCTING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to find out how teacher utilize Proximity in conducting classroom management. The research was held in a junior high school in Lembang. The participants of this study were two teachers of the school chosen, who are English teachers there. One teacher is female and another is male. Both teachers teach 8th grade. Three classes were chosen as the object of observation. This study was conducted using one of the Qualitative Research Design types, Case Study, as the research methodology. The data were obtained through classroom observation and interview. The result of this study shows that teachers utilized nonverbal communication in managing classroom. Among those nonverbal cues, teacher's proximity was one of them. It was found that teachers should apply appropriate distance in certain situation. It was connected with the teachers' characteristics, such as their mobility and understanding of students and the function of the distance. Several recommendations are offered for future researchers. It is expected the analysis to be more comprehensive because the limitation of participants. Last, it is recommended for future research, teacher's proximity can be studied more deeply.

Keywords: classroom management; nonverbal communication; teacher's proximity; distance; mobility

INTRODUCTION

As a teacher, conducting classroom management is a necessity. Classroom management is one of the important factors in order to achieve successful learning process. It is the techniques teachers use to maintain control in the classroom.

Wong & Wong (2014) defined classroom management as all of the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that student learning can take place. While Sternberg & Williams (2002) stated that classroom management is a set of techniques and skills that allow a teacher to control students effectively in order to create a positive learning environment for all students.

However, not all teachers have ability to manage and control the classroom well and smoothly. For the students, lack of effective classroom management can mean that learning is reduced in the classroom. For the teacher, it can cause unhappiness and stress and eventually lead to individuals leaving the teaching profession. Therefore, understanding classroom management is crucial to maintain

the teaching and learning process and to optimize the learning outcomes.

Creating a classroom that is supportive to learning needs good communication between teacher and students. This "concept of communication involves not only the verbal message, but the nonverbal message as well" (Uko, 2006).

Verbal communication is the skill that needed in speaking and delivering information. A good verbal communication skill is required for a teacher in order to deliver the material successfully. Fluency and clearness of the words spoken are influential in the process of delivering information to the reader, in this case the students. Meanwhile, in the classroom, a teacher sometimes uses hand gestures, eye contact, or mimics to help him/her explaining the materials. Those belong to nonverbal communication category.

The application of nonverbal communication in classroom has been analyzed by many researchers. Novianti Patroli (2013) has conducted a research about the use of gestures in teaching English to young learners. Yongming Shi & Si Fan

(2010) analyzed the practice of nonverbal communication in EFL classroom of Chinese students. Dustin York also studied the effect of nonverbal behaviors in the classroom, mostly about gestures and kinesics, and many other researchers. All of the studies conducted mostly showed the positive effects of using nonverbal communication in classroom.

In Indonesian setting, many teachers are still lack of ability to establish effective classroom management, especially using nonverbal strategies. The classrooms are often noisy and hard to handle. It is difficult to conduct the learning process successfully. This mostly happens in fresh graduate teachers, who still lack of experiences. They tend to focus on what they say or deliver the material (verbal), instead of how to say it (nonverbal). Therefore, it is needed to analyze more on how nonverbal communication can be utilized in a classroom.

This research is focused on the application of one of nonverbal communication types, which is Proxemics, in classroom. Proxemics is defined as the use and perception of one's social and personal space, such as in seating and spatial arrangements (Knapp, 1971 in Agnus, 2012). This personal space can be wide or narrow, depends on how intimate the person with another is.

In the classroom, Proxemics can be used by teacher to manage the classroom. The distance between teacher and students may affect the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. In Indonesia, the research on teacher's proximity in the classroom is still not widely practiced, especially in the area where this study is conducted.

Based on the background above, the purpose of this study is: To find out how teacher utilize Proxemics in conducting classroom management.

METHODOLOGY

Research Site and Participants

This research was conducted in SMP Negeri 1 Lembang. The school was chosen because it has sufficient facilities and infrastructures, and is easy to be reached. Moreover, researcher had been a pre-service teacher there. Thus, it was easier to conduct research there since researcher had been familiar with the situation there. The participants of this study were two teachers of the school chosen,

who are English teachers there. One teacher is female and another is male. Both teachers teach 8th grade. Three classes were chosen as the object of observation; two classes, 8B and 8D, were from female teacher and one class, 8G, was from male teacher.

Research Design

This study was conducted using one of the Qualitative Research Design types, Case Study, as the research methodology. Case study research is a qualitative research approach in which the investigator explore a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple source information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007, 73 in Nur, F.A. 2010). Case Study research design was chosen because this study is aimed to find a particular case in a certain area with in-depth data collection techniques.

Data Collection Techniques

In conducting this study, some instruments were used to collect the data. The instruments used are classroom observation and interview.

Classroom Observation

The first instrument was classroom observation. Classroom observation is conducted to see how Proxemics is used by the teacher to run classroom management. The observation was a natural and objective observation, which involves observing the behaviour in a normal setting; no efforts were made to bring any type of change in the behavior of the observed, and the observer as an entity apart from the thing or person being observed. It was conducted four times in classroom at English subject; two times for class 8G, one time for class 8B, and one time for class 8D. The observation was recorded in a form of video using mobile phone application.

Interview

Besides doing observation, there was also interview to support the data collected from observation. The interview was conducted to see how teacher understands about applying Proxemics in order to manage the classroom. The interview was a guided-interview, in

which the questions are set to reach the intended answers. It was conducted at school, in break time, one time for each teacher. The interview was recorded in a form of audio using mobile phone application.

In conducting the interview for this study, there were 11 questions which were asked to the teachers to confirm the data gained from the classroom observation. The questions were divided into three parts; questions related to 1) Classroom Management, 2) Nonverbal Communication, and 3) Teacher's Proximity and Mobility.

Data Analysis

The data was collected through the research instruments above. Those data collected then was analysed to interpret the results of the research. The data from classroom observation was analysed through some steps, which were: transcribing data from the video recording, categorizing data based on Nonverbal behavior and Proxemics, and interpreting data based on the aims and the theory. The data from interviews was also analysed through some steps. The steps were: transcribing data from the audio recording, categorizing data, and also interpreting data based on the aims and the theory. After all the data had been analyzed, the data triangulation was then needed to be conducted, in order to compare and contrast data obtained from each of the data collection techniques, whether all the data from all sources were likely to lead to the same conclusion.

This chapter has presented the research site and participants, research design, data

collection techniques and data analysis that was used in conducting the research.

RESULTS

In order to try to answer the research question above, a data collecting process was conducted. The data were collected through classroom observation and interview. Below are the findings from each instrument.

Classroom Observation

The first instrument is classroom observation. As mentioned in Chapter III, the participants were two English teachers; one female teacher that will be referred as teacher A, and one male teacher that will be referred as teacher B. The observation was conducted four times, for three different classes. The classes were 8B and 8D, from teacher A, and 8G, from teacher B. From the classroom observation, both teacher A and B showed some nonverbal behaviors. The observation was categorized into several parts of classroom activities, which are lecture, group works, and individual works/test. Below are the lists of nonverbal behaviors that occurred in the classroom, including proxemics.

Teacher A

Figure 1 lists the result of observation of Teacher A's strategies in classroom. Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6 show how the nonverbal strategies were conducted by the teacher.

Teacher's nonverbal strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hand gestures, such as pointing, raising hand, etc.- Eye contact- Facial expressions, such as smiling- Proximity, including mobility in the classroom
Teacher's proximity: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Explaining material from the front of the class.- Walking around when students were doing task. Teacher reached every row in the classroom.- Approaching students when they asked about the task individually.

Figure 1. Observation on teacher A in class 8B and 8D

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Picture 2. Teacher's hand gesture; raising hand to invite students' participation.



Picture 3. Teacher's proximity; checking on student's work.



Picture 4. Teacher's hand gesture; pointing at student to participate.



Picture 5. Teacher's proximity; explaining material from in front of the class.



Picture 6. Teacher's proximity; checking on student's work at the back rows.

Teacher B

Figure 7 lists the result of observation of Teacher A's strategies in classroom. Figure 8

and Figure 9 show how teacher B conducted classroom management using nonverbal strategies.

Teacher's nonverbal strategies:

- Pointing
- Eye contact
- Facial expressions, such as smiling
- Proximity, including mobility in the classroom

Teacher's proximity:

- Explaining material from the front of the class.
- Walking around when students were doing task. Though, teacher B did not reach until the back row in the classroom.
- Approaching students when they asked about the task individually.

Figure 7. Observation on teacher B in class 8G



Picture 8. Teacher's proximity; explaining material from in front of the class.



Picture 9. Teacher's hand gesture; pointing at student to participate.

Interview

The data from interview supported the data gained from the classroom observation. Hence, the discussion below presents the data from interview result, in order to answer the research question of this study about Teacher's Proximity in managing classroom. This research employed guided-interview, in which the questions are set to reach the intended answers. It was aimed to see how teacher understands about applying Proxemics in order to manage the classroom. It was also aimed to strengthen the data from classroom observation to be analysed more deeply.

The interview session was conducted on May, 19th 2017. As stated in Chapter III, there were 11 questions which were asked to the teachers to confirm the data gained from the classroom observation. The questions were divided into three parts; questions related to 1) Classroom Management, 2) Nonverbal Communication, and 3) Teacher's Proximity and Mobility.

For the first part, there were three questions related to Classroom Management; the importance, difficulty, and characteristics of good Classroom Management. The questions are:

1. *What is the importance of Classroom Management for you?*
2. *Have you ever had difficulty managing your classes? If so, what difficulties do you often face?*
3. *In your opinion, what is good Classroom Management like?*

From the first part of question, teacher A and B mostly had similar opinion. For question number 1, teacher A answered:

For me, Classroom Management is important to control students' behavior in teaching and learning process so that students are disciplined, orderly, and follow the lesson with fun so that the learning objectives are achieved well.

Teacher B also answered:

Classroom Management is important to control the class so that students are disciplined, and follow the lesson well. Teaching and learning process will be fun so that the learning objectives are achieved well.

For the second question, both teachers said that they had difficulties in managing classroom. The difficulties are mostly about *noisy, not conducive, and unruly class.*

Then, for the third question, in their opinions, a good Classroom Management is:

- *Planned well learning, by making good lesson plans and learning scenarios.*
- *Implement learning in an orderly, disciplined, and fun way to achieve learning objectives. Each class is unique; it needs understanding, skill and patient in teaching. Learn from experienced teachers to understand individual students and their respective class characters.*
- *Evaluate from every teaching and learning activity.*

The second part of interview question was related to Nonverbal Communication, consisted of two questions, those are:

4. *Do you use nonverbal communication in the classroom? If so, what do you use most often? (E.g. hand gestures, eye contact, etc.)*

5. *What is the benefit you get from using the nonverbal communication in classroom?*

For the fourth question, both teachers answered that they *most often use eye contact, facial expression, and hand gestures/touch*. Teacher A gave examples in how she uses nonverbal strategies, such as:

- *Greet students with smiles, pleasant facial expressions.*
- *Touch the shoulders of students while asking about learning difficulties.*
- *Thumbs up to praise and appreciate students' work.*

For the fifth question, teacher A answered that the benefit of using nonverbal communication is that *it creates fun and intimacy between teachers and students*. While teacher B said *it makes easier to deliver the material with the help of nonverbal communication*.

The last part was related to Teacher's Proximity and Mobility, consisted of six questions. This part was the main point that was aimed to answer the research question. The questions are:

6. *In your opinion, does the distance between teachers and students in the classroom affect classroom management? If so, how much does it affect you?*
7. *From your experience, is there any difference when the distance between teachers and students is near or far?*
8. *How is your mobility in the classroom? How often do you move in the classroom?*
9. *Under what circumstances do you feel the need to move in the classroom? And in what situations does it take close or distant distances to the students?*
10. *What is the use of teacher's mobility in each of these situations?*
11. *Why do you feel the need to move in the classroom?*

For the sixth question, both teachers answered that *the distance between teacher and student can affect classroom management*. Teacher A added that *the effect is quite large*.

For the seventh question, teacher A answered that *there are differences in terms of distance. The difference (if the distance is near):*

- *Learning atmosphere is more fun and not stressful.*
- *Children/students are not afraid to ask questions or try to answer, and do classroom exercises.*

For the eighth and ninth question, they said that they *quite often do mobility in the classroom*. The situations are *at the time when the child or student is doing the exercises or group work*.

For the tenth question, teacher A said the use of mobility and proximity *is to ask about the difficulties that students face*. Teacher B added that *when the distance is nearer, it is easier to explain to the students the material*.

For the last question, teacher A said that:

I feel the need to do mobility in the classroom to control the students, help the students in doing the work, etc. So that all students feel cared for and the class becomes conducive. Hope the learning objectives can be well achieved.

While teacher B answered that:

I feel the need to do mobility in the classroom to check on the students' work, help the students, and answer the questions more clearly.

ANALYSIS

From the data collected, it can be seen that teachers utilized nonverbal communication in managing classroom. Among those nonverbal cues, proxemics or proximity was one of them. Proximity was used quite often through classroom activities.

Teacher's nonverbal communication creates a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere for them and this enables them to have self-confidence which also leads to an increase in the participation and contributions to the lesson. When students participate in the lesson, they are more likely to ask questions which also increase their understanding of the topics. Teachers are recommended to be aware of the importance of the nonverbal communication and use it in favour of students to create a more motivating, comfortable, confident environment in class for a better classroom management.

From classroom observation results, it was shown that in certain situations, teachers

utilize proximity naturally. When the students were doing group work or individual work, teacher walked around to check on students' doing. In that activity, the distance between teacher and students was nearer, compared to when teachers were doing lecture or explaining material. Teacher's proximity in those activities affected the teaching and learning process. By doing that, teachers were able to control the classroom and make the class more conducive.

It is shown that teacher's proximity can draw student's attention more easily. However, in the present study, it was found that teachers also should apply appropriate distance in certain situation. It was connected with the teachers' characteristics, such as their mobility and understanding of students and the function of the distance.

The interview results, moreover, showed that teachers considered nonverbal communication, especially proxemics or proximity, important in managing the classroom. Distance and mobility in the classroom affected the teaching and learning process.

When the distance between teacher and students are nearer, the learning atmosphere is more fun and not stressful. Students are not afraid to ask questions or try to answer, and do the classroom exercises and tasks. However, in other situations, such as explaining material or lecture, teacher needs to reach out every row of the class. Thus, standing in front of the class or in the middle of the class will be the most suitable proximity strategy in that situation.

The need to do mobility in the classroom is to control the students, help the students in doing the work, answer the questions more clearly, etc. So that all students feel cared for and the class becomes conducive. By utilizing proximity and mobility, it is hoped that the teaching and learning process can be successful and the learning objectives can be well achieved.

DISCUSSIONS

This study was aimed to answer a research question, which is "How does teacher use Proxemics in conducting classroom management?" This question was directed to find out teachers' strategies in managing

classroom by using proximity. This was not only on how teachers utilize proximity, but also on why they apply proximity and for what purposes. Based on the analysis of the findings and the discussions in chapter IV, the conclusions can be drawn as follows.

Regarding on how teachers utilize proximity in the classroom, this study revealed that both teacher A and B used proximity strategy in certain situations. As stated in Chapter II, in this study the focus of proximity being discussed was on distance and mobility.

Both teachers utilized proximity, in terms of distance and mobility, quite often. Teacher's proximity was utilized in certain activities. Some activities need short distance or near proximity, such as in doing group work and individual work. However, in other situation, such as lecture or explaining materials, the front or middle position of the classroom is best suited, in order to reach out every corner of the classroom, so that all the students will get the same attention from the teacher.

Teacher's proximity strategy aims to make students more comfortable in learning process, and the class can be controlled well and will be more conducive. Good teachers master learning materials and are able to manage classroom or conduct classroom management well. If necessary, consult with counseling teachers to address problematic students in learning. Therefore, teacher needs to understand the class' and students' characteristics in order to apply this strategy successfully, so that the learning objectives can be achieved well.

Our findings are useful for raising teachers' awareness of what works and what does not. They also provide practical and proven approaches that can be implemented with students. However, each student is different and teachers may find the present research useful in analyzing their own practices and devising tailored management approaches for their students.

If teachers have an awareness of their students' strengths, weaknesses and needs, they are better equipped to develop teaching and learning strategies and, subsequently, behaviour management strategies that are appropriate and effective.

For future research, teacher's proximity can be studied more deeply. For example, in

different situations such as group discussions, how close or far the distance between teacher and students can affect the process of discussion.

Moreover, experts categorized Proxemics into three fundamental areas as cited by Agnus (2012); those are Distance, Space, and Modes of behavior and perception. The further research can continue the study about Space and Modes of behavior and perception, in order to enhance this study of Distance.

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