



## **Challenges Tambach Student Teachers of Kiswahili Encounter in the Use of Non-Verbal Cues in Classroom Teaching in Selected Primary Schools in Uasin Gishu and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties, Kenya**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The main objective of this study was to examine the challenges experienced by student teachers when using non-verbal cues. The study was guided by the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The target population involved Kiswahili teachers, student teachers of Kiswahili language and pupils of selected primary schools in Uasin Gishu and Elgeyo Marakwet counties, Kenya. A purposive sampling technique was used to single out Kiswahili teachers for a Focus Group Discussion. Stratified random sampling method was then used to select 234 trainee-teachers and 210 learners. Methods of data collection included: Questionnaire, Focus Group Discussions and Direct Observation. The questionnaire provided quantitative data, which were fed in SPSS version 23.0. Qualitative data obtained from the focus group discussions and observation was fed in NVivo 11. Lastly, the data was presented descriptively and graphically as tables, graphs and charts. The study showed that student teachers faced difficulties such as determining seating arrangement, proper facial expressions, correct tone of voice and eye contact when utilizing non-verbal communication in their classrooms. Hence, this research is anticipated to help improve the teaching and performance of Kiswahili, build a suitable teacher-student bond in the language classroom, further develop the cognitive abilities and heighten the learning capabilities of pupils by using non-verbal communication. That there be deliberate effort to emphasize use of correct non-verbal communication cues during the teaching of Kiswahili language. This is because many of the respondents are not deliberate in choice of appropriate non-verbal cues to employ in the course of their teaching. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education revise Kiswahili language teacher training curricula to include non-verbal communication cues in language teaching, assessment in pedagogy to emphasis on the use of correct non-verbal communication cues in language teaching and teacher preparation at all levels designs practical micro teaching sessions that are meant to inculcate non-verbal communication skills upon student teachers.

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**Key Words:** Non-verbal cues, Trainee teacher.

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### **Introduction**

According to Pan (2014), it is quite challenging as a teacher to stand in front of the classroom maintains a far distance from the learners. Interaction is less between teacher and learners in such a situation. Sitting arrangement as part of proxemics has its own advantage and disadvantage on learners' participation. Pan (2014) explained that the direction and movement of gaze was another useful non-verbal cue in good classroom communication. The study has shown that when the teacher fixed his gaze on the learners, they withdrew their gaze away from the teacher due to shyness.

Lock (2020) explained that body language plays a vital role in the success of any presentation. It has the power to engage with the audience with crystal clear messages but may also confuse them, leaving them doubting on what the speaker has said. Non-verbal language, as it is interpreted in different ways and may have different meanings, can cause miscommunication. Stuart (2016) stated that miscommunication occurs in circumstances where people are unaware of making wrong assumptions which can be caused by nonverbal language.

According to Long, Ming, Chen (2013) Important role when learning a foreign language is motivation. Students who have motivation in the learning process have robust learning motivation and have a positive attitude while learning. (Hariani, Rositasari, & Saraswati, 2018). The learning process in primary school must be done straightforwardly. This leads to the ability and features of the students. Primary school students are classified as young learners. According to (Wahyuni & Tantri, 2020), the young learner has several features. Young students aged between five and twelve years show that young students have a short span of attention. You will also be quickly dull if the lesson is not sufficiently attractive. Most of them also learn indirectly rather than directly from the teachers. In this golden age, 44 young students will learn and absorb new things more efficiently, just like English, which is also one of the new primary school languages.

In Arriescado's (2018) article, she stated that when it comes to presentations speakers must observe and put their body language to good use. She stated that having an expressive face can both be positive and negative. It is positive if the speaker uses facial expressions properly, which can help send the message across to the audience. However, if the speaker cannot control his expressions this might affect the speech being implied. Emotions are universal. People show similar facial reactions for anger, fear, disgust, happiness, sadness, and surprise. She stated that the emotion fear commonly displayed by speakers, which should be avoided. She added that having a poker face can be served as a substitute for hiding fear, however displaying a poker face during presentations can be easily misunderstood by the listeners and some may even feel intimidated.

Arriescado's (2018) further states that similar to facial expressions, fear and nervousness are commonly expressed through the speaker's way of talking. Commonly, speakers stutter and mumble during presentations, which shows fear and this must be avoided. This can affect the audience's attention that may lead them to boredom. Kinnane (2016) stated that some examples on why people have shaky voices is because they are nervous, tired, or overstimulated. To present a great speech, a speaker must know how to speak clearly and loudly enough for the audience to get invested in the presentation.

According to Arriescado's (2018), if the speaker does not know how to pay attention to his posture, it might send a negative message to the audience. For instance, having a slouched back does not reassure the audience that the speaker knows what he is doing. Instead, it indicates that the speaker is either feeling the emotion fear, or is simply not interested in presenting his speech. In this situation, having a straight and good posture will surely give a great impact in every speech for it shall instantly catch the audience's attention. In addition, according to Parvez (2019), a speaker must be mindful of how he sits during a conversation for it enables a speaker to send positive messages. He stated that a speaker should display postures and gestures that indicate openness, alertness, interest, and attentiveness to engage in a better conversation. A speaker must avoid all gestures and postures that indicate the opposite. It is important to know and understand people's body language because studies found that the body language makes up to 93% of all communication which means it can greatly affect the message that the speaker is implying.

There are many possible reasons why students think that reading English text is difficult to learn. First, according to Nurkamto (2000), cited by Juhaendi (2013), most schools in Indonesia, especially junior high schools use a method which makes students passive learners. Second, the use of teaching media to deliver the material to the student has not been too effective. Some of them are still confused in finding the appropriate teaching method and media to be applied in the classroom. During this time, the media that is often used in the learning process is just a tool or media that has been available in the school such as a map, atlas or globe. As a result, the media is less effective or even not suitable with the subject matter, the teacher has to say. This condition causes the English learning process becomes boring, so the students are not motivated to learn and as a result the learning outcomes in English lessons were not as expected beforehand. Whereas according to the development of science and technology, learning can be implemented by utilizing the technological advances either through a computer or internet media.

According to Petan (2020), common facial expressions are the easiest to recognize. Cherry (2019) stated that the look on a person's face can also help to decide if people can trust or believe what any individual says. Facial expressions are one of the most universal types of body language. The expressions used to communicate fear, rage, sorrow, and happiness are similar all over the world. She also suggested that people commonly make assumptions about other people's intellect based on their faces and their expressions.

PowToon is one application that can use to develop learning media. According to Adnyani, Mahayanti, and Suprianti (2019), PowToon can create an animated presentation like PowerPoint in PowToon. Ilya Spitalnik and Daniel Zaturansky found PowToon in January 2012. In this condition, where students have to follow the rule while pandemic, PowToon is applying for the Teacher to develop the learning media. The video developed by PowToon may contain animation and sound, which increases students' interest in the learning process. The Teacher has to make media learning that is suitable for the material in the syllabus. PowToon can be one of the applications that can use for the Teacher. Because PowToon is a free application and many animations insist on the application, teachers can easily design themselves. The Teacher can design an inappropriate way to make media learning for the learning process. According to Semaan and Ismail (2018), PowToon stated that they had gained good benefits while implementing the learning process, especially in English as a foreign language. In Indonesia, PowToon will be beneficial, especially taking into account the current conditions of this pandemic. To make the learning process while School From Home (SFH), PowToon can be chosen to make learning media looking at the result of the previous study gained good result. Besides, Purnamasari & Maolida (2017) PowToon was 45 implemented in the learning process and showed that PowToon helpful in the learning process and can optimize students' skills in designing presentations. The result of the previous study can be concluded. PowToon is an application that can develop easier by the Teacher to make learning media suitable for their students.

Gestures are body signals that focus on hand and head movements. One common gesture among students is resting their heads on their hands. Kuhnke (2007) explained that one of the most misunderstood gestures are those that demonstrate deep thinking, one of which is head resting on hand. Similarly, according to Raypole (2020), this gesture may also signal interest. However, to some people this gesture indicates boredom. Another common gesture as stated by Parvez (2015) is scratching one's head with one or more fingers. An example he gave was when a student is asked a question by a teacher, the common response is to scratch the head which indicates that the student is confused with the topic.

One of the most obvious and versatile nonverbal cues is eye contact. According to Carnevale (2020), eye contact is a must, and it tells someone about a person and what that person is thinking. Giving the speaker 100% attention and having the eyes glued to them the entire time is an effective way to communicate that the listener is invested in what the speaker has to say. Failure to lock eyes with the speaker who is constantly averting their gaze sends a signal that the listener does not care about the speaker or his thoughts, or are rather uncomfortable around them. According to McKay and McKay (2019), several causes of avoiding eye contact are: hiding deceit, meaning a person may purposely hide the truth from someone, masking

emotions because a person may wish to conceal their emotions from others, and insecurity because eye contact invites more interaction. Some other eye gestures are squinting and the raising of eyebrows.

Van Edwards (2017) stated that people often squint when they do not like someone or something someone said. It can indicate suspicion. Raising eyebrows is a gesture of congeniality and an indication that the listener wants to get along and communicate better. To add, Parvez (2015) stated that raising the eyebrows is a signal of fear or surprise, and indicates submissiveness. On the other hand, lowering the eyebrows is associated with the emotions of anger and disgust. It indicates dominance. Another common body language gesture that we come across in our day-to-day lives is the crossing of arms, Parvez (2015) stated. The crossing of arms is a classic gesture of defensiveness which usually manifests as discomfort, uneasiness, shyness or insecurity. When two people are talking and one of them crosses his/her arms, one can safely assume that the other said or did something that the first person did not like.

In order to improve one's communication skills, Natoli (2018) stated that one must pay close attention to what a person is saying. Repeating what someone just said can be helpful when replying. Avoid eye contact, but avoid staring and crossing of arms since it may appear as defensive. She also stated that one must sit down even when the speaker is standing to make them feel comfortable, or sit alongside and angled toward the person rather than directly opposite them to allow the conversation to feel friendly and non-confrontational. Lastly, to avoid fidgeting since it can be distracting to the speaker.

Angry outlook and serious gestures may damage the relationship with the students, but smile is a boon to create rapport with the students. Most people feel warmth through smile and ready to share more with smiling people. As we all know, there is no teaching without reaching, smile is superb tool for learning (Terada, 2018). It is an obvious fact that smiling teachers are perceived by students as friendly and can support them. Showing the pearly white teeth is important make teacher liked by the students as smile builds trust, respect and motivation (Smith, 2016). It is the proven fact that happy workforce is more productive workforce. Smiles produce positive emotions and can feed motivation whereas negative emotions can drain effort and engagement. Smile helps teachers to increase skills, enhance professional development and maximize classroom learning time (Fay & Fay, 2016).

## Research Design and Methodology

The study utilized a mixed method design combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods into its data-gathering technique. Through a pragmatic approach, mixed methods have the potential to provide a middle ground that can examine the capacity for both researchers and participants to use knowledge for playable outcomes (Morgan, 2007). Thereby, treating the two research methods as separate extremes is not appropriate, as this holds implications for the possibility of generalizability.

Pragmatists do not consider the link between the two research methods but focus is on the outcome of the research. Pragmatists say methodology used should be one that is most likely to answer the research questions and address the research objectives. The concern should be on what works. Creswell (2003) further says methods chosen need to meet the needs of the researchers and purposes of research hence pragmatism paradigm best suits mixed research methods. The current study being mixed method design has characteristics of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Therefore, pragmatism was best suited to underpin this study.

## Data Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion

The study sought to examine challenges teacher-trainees encounter in the use of non-verbal teaching methods during the teaching of Kiswahili. The results are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Challenges Teacher-trainees face in the Use of Non-Verbal Teaching Methods**

Statement	ALA		A		R		N		ALN		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I arrange my seating during reading instruction so that I can see your pupils at all times.	53	29.6	102	57.0	16	8.9	8	4.5	0	0.0	179	100.0
When pupils get confused during reading instruction, I find it important to kneel beside them when explaining the concept.	4	2.2	35	19.6	60	33.5	69	38.5	11	6.1	179	100.0
When pupils get confused during reading instruction, do you find it important to	33	18.4	34	19.0	49	27.4	51	28.5	12	6.7	179	100.0

smile when explaining the concept?												
I tend to be aware of the expression on my face during reading instruction.	39	21.8	103	57.5	10	5.6	23	12.8	4	2.2	179	100.0
I tend to be aware of my gestures during reading instructions.	44	24.6	99	55.3	29	16.2	3	1.7	4	2.2	179	100.0
I am aware of my tone of voice during reading instruction.	44	24.6	101	56.4	19	10.6	7	3.9	8	4.5	179	100.0
I make strategic choices of eye contact during reading instruction.	50	27.9	55	30.7	36	20.1	30	16.8	8	4.5	179	100.0
When teaching reading, do you strive to be animated and excited?	28	15.6	77	43.0	39	21.8	18	10.1	17	9.5	179	100.0
I use alternative seating during reading instructions such as sitting on the floor, rugs or pillows.	23	12.8	33	18.4	47	26.3	72	40.2	4	2.2	179	100.0
How often do you look for non-verbal communication cues from your students during reading instructions?	28	15.6	67	37.4	54	30.2	19	10.6	11	6.1	179	100.0
You find non-verbal cues of incorrect answers/ responses are more ineffective than verbal cues during reading instruction.	39	21.8	41	22.9	49	27.4	42	23.5	8	4.5	179	100.0
I find pupils confused by the use of non-verbal communication during reading instruction.	33	18.4	24	13.4	91	50.8	16	8.9	15	8.4	179	100.0
I allow students to make suggestions about where to sit during reading instruction time.	17	9.5	35	19.6	61	34.1	55	30.7	11	6.1	179	100.0

The results in Table 1, demonstrate that out of 183 teachers, 53(29.0%) generally arrange their seating in a manner which enables them to keep eyes on their pupils during reading lessons, while 102(57.0%) of teachers always arrange seating in such a way that allows them to observe the students' activities. Though, 16(8.9%) of them somehow rarely and 8(4.5%) never go through this process. Furthermore, regarding the importance of stooping next to students during the explanation of some concepts, 4(2.2%) almost always consider it necessary, 35(19.6%) always find it important and 60(35.5%) sometimes shown to take this step. 69(38.5%) of the respondents, on the other hand, never regard this as an important factor while 11(6.1%) almost never regard this as important. This confirms the assertion of Pan (2014) that, it is quite challenging as a teacher to stand in front of the classroom maintaining distance from the learners. Interaction is less between teacher and learners in such a situation. Sitting arrangement as part of proxemics has its own advantage and disadvantage on learners' participation in reading lesson. Pan (2014) explained that the direction and movement

of gaze was another useful non-verbal cue in good classroom communication. The present study has shown that when the teacher fixed his gaze on the learners, they withdrew their gaze away from the teacher due to shyness.

Further, the study concluded that 33(18.4%) of the teaching staff usually deem it vital to smile when teaching concepts, whereas 34(19%) appraise such action as always important. However, 49(27.4%) view this action as hardly prominent, 51(28.5%) declare it never prominent and 12 (6.7%) believe it to be scarcely prominent. This is in line with Terada (2018)'s argument that, angry outlook and serious gestures may damage the relationship with the students, but smile is a boon to create rapport with the students. Most people feel warmth through smile and ready to share more with smiling people. As we all know, there is no teaching without reaching, smile is superb tool for learning. It is an obvious fact that smiling teachers are perceived by learners as friendly that can support them. Showing the pearly white teeth is important make teacher liked by the students as smile builds trust, respect and motivation (Smith, 2016). It is the proven fact that happy workforce is more productive workforce (Smith, 2016). Smiles produce positive emotions and can feed motivation whereas negative emotions can drain effort and engagement. Smile helps teachers to increase skills, enhance professional development and maximize classroom learning time (Fay & Fay, 2016).

The findings of this study also show that 39(21.8%) of the teachers almost always tend to be aware of the expression on their face during reading instruction while 103(57.5%) of teachers always tend to be aware of the expression on their face during reading instruction. However, 10(5.6%) rarely, 23(12.8%) never and 4(2.2%) of the teachers almost never tend to be aware of the expression on their face during reading instruction. Table 4.6 shows that 44(24.6%) of the teachers almost always tend to be aware of their gestures during reading instructions while the majority that is 99(55.3%) of the teachers always tend to be aware of their gestures during reading instructions. Another 16.2% (29) rarely, 1.7% (3) never and 2.2% (4) of the teachers almost never tend to be aware of their gestures during reading instructions. Lock (2020) explained that body language plays a vital role in the success of any presentation. It has the power to engage with the audience with crystal clear messages but may also confuse them, leaving them doubting on what the speaker has said. Non-verbal language, as it is interpreted in different ways and may have different meanings, can cause misconceptions. Stuart (2016) stated that misconceptions occur in circumstances where people are unaware of making wrong assumptions which can be caused by nonverbal language.

Further, 44(24.6%) of the teachers almost constantly attend to qualities of their vocals while they instruct reading, with the most part, which is 101 (55.4%) of the teachers, consistently ensuring they remain mindful of their vocal tones. A further 19(10.6%), 7(3.9%) and 8(4.5%) respectively rarely, never and almost never pay attention to their voice throughout reading instruction. Additionally, 27.9% (50) of the teachers nearly always make prudent selections regarding eye contact during reading lessons while the greater part (30.7%) regularly make wise decisions regarding the same. On the other hand, 20.1% (36) occasionally, 16.8% (30) never and 4.5% (8) hardly ever pick well considered glances during teaching reading. This finding confirms Carnevale (2020) who avers that eye contact is a must, and it tells someone about a person and what that person is thinking. Giving the speaker 100% attention and having the eyes glued to them the entire time is an effective way to communicate that the listener is invested in what the speaker has to say. Failure to lock eyes with the speaker who is constantly averting their gaze sends a signal that the listener doesn't care about the speaker or his thoughts, or are rather uncomfortable around them. According to McKay and McKay (2019), several causes of avoiding eye contact: hiding deceit, meaning a person may purposely hide the truth from someone, masking emotions because a person may wish to conceal their emotions from others, and insecurity because eye contact invites more interaction. Some other eye gestures are squinting and the raising of eyebrows.

The results of the research revealed that 15.6% (28) of the teachers make an effort to be animated and enthusiastic when teaching reading more or less each time, while 43.0% (77) of the instructors are consistently spirited and enthused when instructing reading, 21.8% (39) barely ever, 10.1% (18) never and 9.5% (17) of the teachers nearly never attempt to be spirited and excited when instructing reading. The discoveries likewise show that 12.8% (23) of the instructors attempt to use substitute seating during reading directions, for example, sitting on the floor, mats or pads all or nearly all of the time, while 18.4% (33) of instructors utilize elective seating plans during reading instructions, for example, sitting on the floor, mats or pads consistently. Moreover, 26.3% (47) from time to time, 40.2% (72) never and 2.2% (4) of the educators nearly never use substitute seating during reading instructions, for example, sitting on the floor, mats or pillows. This agrees with the work of Long, Ming, Chen (2013) who argued that important role when learning a foreign language is motivation. Students who have motivation in the learning process have robust learning motivation and have a positive attitude while learning. (Hariani, Rositasari, & Saraswati, 2018). The learning process in Primary schools must be done straightforwardly. This leads to the ability and features of the students. Primary school students are classified as young learners. According to Wahyuni & Tantri (2020), the young learner has several features. Young learners aged between five and twelve years show that young learners have a short attention span. You will also be quickly dull if the lesson is not sufficiently attractive. Most of them also learn indirectly rather than directly from the teachers. In this golden age, 44 young students will learn and absorb new things more efficiently, just like English, which is also one of the new primary school languages.

The findings of this study reveal that 15.6% (28) of educators almost always pay attention to non-verbal cues from their pupils during reading instructions, while 37.4% (67) always observe non-verbal communication from their students while teaching them to read. Approximately 30.2% (54) of the instructors rarely watch for non-verbal communication from their students during reading sessions, 10.6% (19) never do and 6.1% (11) almost never take notice of such signals from students. Similarly, 21.8% (39) of the teachers almost always consider non-verbal signals of incorrect answers/responses to be less effective than verbal cues when teaching reading, while 22.9% (41) always deem such signals to be less effective than verbal cues. However, 27.4% (49) of the teachers rarely find non-verbal cues of inaccurate answers/responses to be less effective than verbal cues when delivering reading instruction, 23.5% (42) of them never think so and 4.5% (8) almost never reach that conclusion. This agrees with the work of Pan (2014) that it is quite challenging as a teacher to stand in front of the classroom maintains a far distance from the learners. Interaction is less between a teacher and learners in such a situation. Sitting arrangement as part of proxemics has its own advantage and disadvantage on learners' participation.

Pan (2014) explained that the direction and movement of gaze was another useful non-verbal cue in good classroom communication. The study has shown that when the teacher fixed his gaze on the learners, they withdrew their gaze away from the teacher due to shyness.

The findings of this study further show that approximately 15.6% (28) of educators typically take note of non-verbal gestures from students when providing reading instructions, while 37.4% (67) consistently monitor these communicative signs while teaching them to read. Approximately 30.2% (54) of the instructors occasionally observe non-verbal communicative signals from their pupils during reading classes, 10.6% (19) never do, and 6.1% (11) nearly never take note of such indications from learners. Likewise, 21.8% (39) of the teachers typically deem non-verbal signs of wrong responses to be less effective than verbal cues when instructing reading, while 22.9% (41) generally think so. However, 27.4% (49) of the teachers occasionally believe non-verbal cues of mistaken answers/responses to be less effective than verbal cues while delivering reading guidance, 23.5% (42) of them never do so and 4.5% (8) scarcely ever form such an opinion. This confirms the work of Arriessgado (2018) where she established that when it comes to presentations speakers must observe and put their body language to good use. She stated that having an expressive face can both be positive and negative. It is positive if the speaker uses facial expressions properly, which can help send the message across to the learners. However, if the speaker cannot control his expressions this might affect the speech being implied. Emotions are universal; people show similar facial reactions for anger, fear, disgust, happiness, sadness, and surprise. She stated that the emotion fear commonly displayed by speakers, which should be avoided. She added that having a poker face can be served as a substitute for hiding fear, however displaying a poker face during presentations can be easily misunderstood by the listeners and some may even feel intimidated.

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### Summary of the Findings

The research found that majority of the teachers, 86%, would organize their seating during reading instruction in order to have a good view of their pupils all the time. Nonetheless, 80.1% would either seldom or never consider it essential to get down on their knees beside the students to clarify a notion. Additionally, only a few teachers deemed it necessary to smile while clarifying the same concept, with 62.6% rarely or never thinking it crucial. Also, 79.3% of those teachers would nearly always remain conscious of their facial expression during reading instruction.

The study established that most of the teachers (79.9%) kept conscious of their body language while delivering reading lessons. Moreover, the same percentage (80%) was aware of their vocal tone. Additionally, the majority of teachers (58.6%) always made a point to make consistent eye contact. Likewise, the same proportion (58.6%) tried to appear enthusiastic while teaching. However, a large majority (68.7%) rarely or never resorted to alternative seating while delivering reading lessons, such as sitting on the floor, rugs or pillows. The research also shows that the majority (53%) of instructors always look for non-verbal clues from their pupils while teaching reading lessons. At the same time, a marginally higher portion (55.4%) rarely or never consider non-verbal cues more effective than verbal cues for spotting wrong answers. Furthermore, approximately half (50.8%) of the teachers hardly ever note students being perplexed with the use of non-verbal communication when reading is taught. For the most part (70.9%), instructors rarely or never provide students a chance to propose where to sit during reading instruction time.

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### Conclusions

The study also concludes that teacher-trainees face a number of challenges in using non-verbal communication skills which include decisions about seating arrangement of their learners, awareness and use of the right facial expressions and gestures, tone of voice and choice on eye contact. They also tended to strive about when to be animated and excited during reading instruction. Most however always sought affirmation from their pupils' non-verbal expressions during their Kiswahili reading classes.

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