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**Exploring Teachers' Use of Body Language and their Perspectives**

**about its Role in Students' Listening Comprehension**

**The Case of EFL Teachers at Haffian Taher Ben Ali Middle School**

**-Hammamet-**

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### **List of Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**NVC:** Nonverbal Communication

**TPR:** Total Physical Response

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## **Abstract**

Teaching English in middle school is no easy feat, especially for beginners. EFL teachers use a variety of strategies to pique their students' curiosity and foster their language learning, particularly in the realm of listening. Unfortunately, the complexities of the English language can make it difficult for students to comprehend the intended listening message. Accordingly, implementing body language as a teaching strategy and a type of communication to a considerable extent may have an effective role in developing students' listening comprehension. The present research is an exploratory study relying on a qualitative approach that aims at exploring EFL teachers' use of body language and their perspectives about its role in students' listening comprehension. It is divided into two main chapters; the first is devoted to the theoretical part of the present research, and the second is practical, including research methodology, data analysis, discussion, limitations, and recommendations. This study was conducted using two data gathering tools that were addressed to first-year EFL teachers at Haffian Taher Ben Ali middle school "Hammamet" for the sake of answering our research questions. The first data gathering tool was a structured observation to observe teachers' use of body language cues. The second was a structured interview to highlight the teachers' perspectives about the role of their body language in students' listening comprehension. The findings revealed that EFL teachers incorporate body language excessively in the classroom and most of the time appropriately. Further, it plays a crucial role in enhancing students' listening comprehension. Finally, a number of proposed recommendations about the appropriate use of body language were provided to achieve better learning outcomes.

*Keywords:* body language, EFL, listening comprehension

## **General Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

Teaching proficiency does not just depend on teachers' intellectual repertoire; rather, it requires effective communicative competence with their students. This can be accomplished through verbal and nonverbal communication to achieve the expected objectives. Stressing the incorporation of nonverbal communication, or so-called body language, as a strategy in the classroom is essential in improving the quality of the teaching process.

According Callahan (2012), body language refers to the nonverbal form of communication present in all of our interactions with others. It serves as a reflection, providing insight into the other person's thoughts and emotions in response to our words and deeds (p. 4). For effective communication, body language can be used because of its power for teachers in the classroom. As noted by Liu (2019), body language is essential for teaching English, as it fosters a positive and harmonious relationship between the teacher and students, promotes discipline, and increases teaching efficiency (p. 962). Moreover, teachers' body language cues, including eye contact, voice tone, hands movements, body movements, spacial distance, facial expressions, posture, and touching, clarify the information and facilitate it for the students. So, it is used for better understanding. Therefore, body language is considered a powerful aid in regulating and fostering students' learning achievements and language skills.

Actually, developing language ability and efficient learning greatly depends on mastering the four major skills; reading, writing, speaking, and listening. As a result, foreign language teachers and learners in particular have to increase their interest in those aspects. More specifically, the capacity to listen attentively is pivotal

for effective communication and participation in a variety of contexts. Yavuz and Celik (2017) stated that "listening is the primary tool of learners to create understandings in target language and acquire the input" (p. 9). As a comprehension skill, listening offers language learners a significant amount of linguistic input that aids the development of a foreign language. This process requires learners to not only comprehend the spoken message but also retain and retrieve the information as and when required. Listening is a complex cognitive process that draws upon the listener's linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge to decipher the intended meaning. Peterson (2001) stated that by actively listening, learners can develop an understanding of the different aspects and mechanisms of language at different levels. This can help them improve their ability to communicate fluently and effectively in various contexts (p.87). Hence, inadequate comprehension of the input hampers the learning process and impedes its progress. To address this challenge, learners should be exhibited to various teaching strategies to enhance their listening ability.

A reasonable number of studies have dealt with body language as a teaching strategy for improving the learning process. Abubaker Abdurahman et al. (2022) conducted a study on the contribution of body language to effective classroom management, in which the results revealed that the teachers' proper implementation of body language ensured that the message was transmitted more vividly and efficiently to the learners. Thus, he recommended the teachers to be more active and mindful of their body language to manage their classes successfully (p.305). Further, Ghedied and laib (2014) have examined the attitudes and awareness of both teachers and learners towards the application of body language in the classroom. The findings showed that all teachers use body language instinctively and acknowledge it as a valuable technique to facilitate and enhance students' learning. Moreover, the results

demonstrated that students are conscious of their teachers' employment of body language and perceive it as an effective method to reinforce their learning outcomes (p. 48). Another qualitative study accomplished by Ula (2022) about the use of body language in English teaching. She found that teachers use body language as their support to make students interested in learning. Besides, it helps teachers develop stronger connections with their students, leading to a more seamless English learning experience and greater willingness among students to follow the teacher's guidance. The researcher also noted that the most commonly used forms of body language in the classroom were eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, voice intonation, and physical touch (p. 47). Yet, there have been no studies focused on the identification of the use of EFL teachers' body language and their perspectives about it in students' listening comprehension at the level of our university. This insight has been revealed because of our experience as EFL former beginners with teachers' ways of delivering their lectures, especially in terms of what they say when accompanied by the proper body motions that go hand in hand with their speech.

In the present study, we will explore teachers' incorporation of body language cues in the classroom as a mean of enhancing their teaching proficiency, with a particular emphasis on their perspectives about the role of body language in students' listening comprehension.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

First-year middle school students are the first to encounter English in a formal setting. Since they seem more motivated, active, and curious by nature, the teacher's role is to increase their interest in learning English. Using only one teaching strategy is not sufficient due to the students' problems regarding their listening ability.

Listening is not simply a process of receiving spoken utterances; rather, it requires

high cognitive ability, and students fail to follow the teacher's speech for a variety of reasons. As a result, the lesson cannot be adequately communicated to them.

Therefore, teachers' body language is one of the ways that has the potential to alleviate the different listening problems that English language learners confront and increase their awareness for better listening comprehension outcomes. The present study will try to explore EFL teachers' use of body language and their perspectives about its role in students' listening comprehension.

### **3. Research Questions**

This research aims to provide satisfactory answers to the following questions:

- 1) To what extent do teachers use body language in the EFL classroom?
- 2) According to EFL teachers, what role does body language play in students' listening comprehension?

### **4. Research Aim and Objectives**

It is worth mentioning that the endeavor behind selecting and conducting any particular research is highly depends on the researcher's aim. So, the present study has two main objectives to be reached. The first objective seeks to explore teachers' use of body language cues in EFL classes. The second objective tends to identify the EFL teachers' perspectives about the role that their body language plays in students' listening comprehension.

### **5. Research Methodology**

The present exploratory study is examined through the qualitative method, which is carried out via two data collection tools; structured observation and structured interview, in order to collect the required data from all first-year English teachers at Haffian Taher Ben Ali middle school. More specifically, the rationale behind choosing this sample is their experience with them, as they are freshcomers in

learning English. On the first hand, structured observation was assigned to observe the teachers' incorporation of body language cues in the EFL classroom. On the other hand, a structured interview was selected for the sake of knowing EFL teachers' perspectives about the role of body language in students' listening comprehension.

## **6. Structure of the Dissertation**

The current study consists of two chapters. The first chapter is a literature review that presents the theoretical basis for our research. It has two sections. In section one, which is a theoretical overview of body language, our focus is on teachers' body language with regard to teaching. In section two, which is a theoretical overview of listening comprehension, the focus is on students' listening comprehension. While the second chapter is practical and dedicated to the research methodology and data analysis. It was divided into two sections; the first is research methodology, which is devoted to the research paradigm, approach, instruments, population and sampling, and data collection procedures. The second section is data analysis and discussion, along with the provided limitations and recommendations.

## **1. Chapter One: Literature Review**

### **1.1 Section One: Theoretical Overview about Body Language**

#### **Introduction**

Interpersonal communication has significance in the life process. Different people exchange thoughts, feelings, and attitudes relying on verbal and nonverbal messages. In fact, it is argued that less than 10 percent of communication is in the form of words, while most of the interaction occurs through adopting various body signals that encompass all that is necessary to be shared. In this respect, numerous details about body language will be discussed in the following section in line with the teaching process.

#### ***1.1.1 Definition of Communication***

Coates (2009) said that communication “is derived from the Latin verb *communicare*, which means to share or to make common” (p. 13). Also, the word communication means “A process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Additionally, “Communication is the act of transmitting and receiving information” (Barker, 2011, p. 11).

Moreover, according to Davis (as cited in Rai, 2010), “Communication is a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another” (p. 6). Further, for McFarland (as cited in Rai, 2010), “Communication is the process by which meanings are perceived and understandings are reached among human beings” (p. 6). And for Little (as cited in Rai, 2010), “Communication is the process by which information is passed between individuals and/or organizations by means of previously agreed symbols” (p. 6).



Overall, it is vitally important to point out that communication is the act of exchanging information between individuals that leads to a level of understanding.

### ***1.1.2 Types of Communication***

Communication, by its nature, has two main types to convey the intended messages in everyday conversations. These types are embodied in verbal and nonverbal communication when people send and receive multiple clues to achieve successful interaction with each other.

**1.1.2.1 Verbal Communication.** It is the use of spoken or written words. It can be conveyed approximately via face-to-face, over the telephone, e-mail, memos, social media posts, letters, contracts, etc. All these forms have the same primary goal to transmit information in a clear and concise manner. Rai (2010) said that "communication through words called verbal communication" (p. 13).

Penrose et al. (1963, as cited in M'sabel, 2016) mentioned that successful communicative process requires shared understanding between the receiver and the sender through transmitting and exchanging thoughts via written and spoken words (pp. 7-8).

**1.1.2.2 Nonverbal Communication.** Unlike verbal communication, nonverbal communication is the process of sending and receiving messages without the use of words, i.e., any form of communication that is not accompanied by written or spoken words is considered a nonverbal cue. Meakin (2017) defined nonverbal communication (NVC) as the absence of words while transferring information (p. 6).

Furthermore, nonverbal communication is simply stated as "all of the messages other than words that people exchange" (Devito & Hecht, 1990, as cited in Gregersen, 2007, p. 52). This communication extends beyond the use of words through different non-linguistic clues, which usually appear in the form of body

movements, gestures, facial expressions, touching, clothing, eye contact, eye gaze, proximity, voice tone, and others that are used to communicate meanings among individuals.

Besides, Rai (2010) mentioned that nonverbal communication can be performed intentionally by the sender. On the other hand, it is frequently involuntary, unconscious, and challenging to manage, which may expose what the sender is trying to secret behind his words. As said, nonverbal communication has the power to be stronger than words (p. 16).

Knapp et al. (2013) discussed the multiple uses of nonverbal behaviors, which hold different denotative and connotative meanings, similarly to verbal ones. As well, nonverbal behavior interrelates with verbal cues through repeating, conflicting, complementing, substituting, accenting/moderating, and regulating. The nonverbal behavior repeats what is produced verbally, for instance, pointing in a certain direction. Conflicting occurs when there is an opposition between what is said and what is really performed, as when saying something does not represent what the facial expressions manifest. A nonverbal message complements the spoken words when it modifies or elaborates the intended message for more accurate meaning. Substituting means using nonverbal cues instead of verbal ones for the purpose of powering or minimizing the conversation such as thumbs-up signal. Accenting or moderating concerns with emphasizing certain verbal messages either by movements, facial expressions, voice tone, and other means, as in stressing a specific word. At last, regulating verbal behavior enhances decoding the perceived message, such as encouraging the student to keep answering using head movement up and down (pp. 15-21). Thus, nonverbal communication is connected with verbal communication in various ways.

Therefore, nonverbal communication is the exchange of messages without words, including any form of communication that is not accompanied by written or spoken words.

### **1.1.3 *Characteristics of Nonverbal Communication***

According to Barker (2011, p. 34), nonverbal communication is characterized as follows:

- It is difficult to interpret nonverbal messages. They are not adequately defined in dictionaries. Their meaning can vary considerably depending on the context, the degree of intent, and the feelings involved.
- Nonverbal cues are constantly being given. It is possible to cease speaking but not to cease acting. Grammar rules impose limits on language, but different rules apply to nonverbal communication.
- Nonverbal cues come in different forms. Every movement, including those of the hands, feet, and body, occurs simultaneously. We perceive nonverbal cues as a whole, as an impression. They are therefore powerful yet ambiguous, making it difficult for us to pinpoint the precise cause of the experience we have.
- Nonverbal cues are influenced by culture. According to research, some non-verbal cues are shared by all people. For instance, when people are joyful, they all appear to grin. However, the majority of nonverbal behaviors are culturally distinctive. The misunderstanding of nonverbal cues across a cultural barrier can lead to a lot of uncertainty.

Therefore, non-verbal communication is characterized by its complexity of interpretation, continuity, and variety.

#### ***1.1.4 Brief Historical Background of Body Language Studies***

The most influential contributions to the studies of nonverbal behaviors or body language were the foundations of the pre-twentieth century, where many modern researchers validated numerous observations and findings through recording about one million body language cues and signals based on Charles Darwin's book entitled *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* in 1872. Furthermore, Albert Mehrabian, a pioneer in body language research in the 1950s, concluded that nonverbal language represents 55 percent of human communication and 38 percent of vocal production, including voice, inflection, and other sounds, with only 7 percent done verbally (only words) (Pease, 1981, p. 9).

Pease and Pease (2004) also acknowledged the anthropologist professor Ray Birdwhistell for his efforts in initiating nonverbal studies during the 1950s, mainly what he called "Kinesics". Birdwhistell rates the nonverbal communication volumes. According to his findings, an individual speaks for around ten to eleven minutes each day, with sentence length done in just 2.5 seconds, where we can create and recognize over 250,000 different facial expressions (P. 27).

More than that, Knapp et al. (2013) reviewed many historical trends during the mid-twentieth century and stated that if the 1950s witnessed a high number of nonverbal studies, the 1960s were considered the period of the explosion of the matter. Additionally, the 1970s were characterized by the publication of such books that aroused the readers' interest in body language cues, where they were persuaded by their importance in life success and reminding them about the role of context in decoding particular behaviors. In the 1970s as well, researchers summarized and synthesized research on human nonverbal behaviors, some of which were Ekman's research on the human face (*Emotion in the Human Face*, 1972, with Friesen and

Ellsworth); Mehrabian's research on the meaning of nonverbal cues of immediacy, status, and responsiveness (*Nonverbal Communication*, 1972 b); and others (p. 21-24). Patterson (1983, as cited in Knapp et al., 2013) mentioned that in the 1980s, the focus was on identifying how different nonverbal cues cooperate to achieve common communicative aims, while some scientists progressed and developed their studies (p. 24).

Currently, body language studies have extended to encompass a number of disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and others in which an interdisciplinary approach has developed to stress the significance of nonverbal communication and its application in various domains.

#### ***1.1.5 Definition of Body Language***

“Body language is the movement of our bodies to communicate our attitudes and feelings” (Meakin, 2017, p. 6). Also, “Body language means the changes that occur in the body position and movements that show what the person is feeling or thinking” (Rai, 2010, p. 21).

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (n.d.) defined it as “the process of communicating what you are feeling or thinking by the way you place and move your body rather than by words”. Also, “Body language uses nonverbal techniques to relay messages and is seen through the expression of feelings, intentions, and thoughts using physical behavior” (Cantrell, 2015, p. 8).

Body language is a non-verbal type of communication with other people in which feelings, thoughts, and ideas are communicated using gestures and body movements instead of words to convey messages.

### ***1.1.6 Cues of Body Language***

Body language takes different forms in which communication parties provide valuable insights about their interests. It is also considered an essential medium in EFL classes. Some of these cues include:

**1.1.6.1 Eye Contact.** Reading someone's thoughts and attitudes requires the ability to analyze their eye signals. It is said that the eyes are a mirror that reflects the soul. The truth will always be revealed by the eyes, even if there is an intention of deception. Reading what the eyes tell us does not require much expertise to infer a lot about another person's views. In addition, eye contact is highly associated with self-confidence. Because the eyes are the focal point of the body, they accurately convey the message (Andrew, 2016, p. 50). Moreover, Rai (2010) stated that eye contact should only be maintained for no more than three seconds before it becomes annoying for the other person (p. 25).

Eye contact is considered a vital medium in classroom interaction, and a competent teacher is always aware of how to sustain the appropriate application of eye contact. As far as face-to-face communication is concerned, eye contact can be held in the form of a survey or focus. Survey stands for the frequent look at the students when reminding them to listen carefully or waiting to answer a given question. Through the survey, the teacher identifies the pupils who wish to respond and reminds those who are not sure. While focus is long-term eye contact with a learner, and the main priority should be keeping a tight eye. The teacher's smiling eyes and focus will help the students reduce their anxiety (Yang, 2017, p. 1335). Thus, teachers should know how to use eye contact in the classroom while delivering their content due to its effectiveness in strengthening students' attention, interest, and enthusiasm.

**1.1.6.2 Facial Expressions.** It is a process whereby facial muscles are used in order to convey one's mood, attitude, opinion, emotion, or many other messages to another (Givens, 2002, p. 22). In other words, facial expressions can communicate messages without words.

One of the most significant cues used in teaching is facial expressions. For EFL teachers, nonverbal communication will influence verbal communication directly in order to attract students' interest in learning English, and they will observe their facial expressions to decide if their lessons need more explanation. In this way, the concept becomes clearer to them. Additionally, to support teachers and students in controlling interaction, responding, and carrying on any conversations. Therefore, it fosters strong conversation, especially in speaking classes. Teachers must therefore use caution in how they behave in the classroom (Sohriani et al., 2018, p. 2). To sum up, in the EFL classroom, the teacher's facial expressions are crucial for class interaction, so they must be cautious with their delivery.

**1.1.6.3 Voice Tone.** It is a part of paralanguage that describes the manner in which something is said (pitch, tone, volume of voice, accent, pauses, speech dysfluencies, etc.) (Hargie, 2019, p. 52). The tone of the voice conveys the speaker's mood, including anger, boredom, melancholy, enthusiasm, or skepticism (Handbook on Communication Skills, n.d., p. 31).

A teacher's voice is one of the most crucial tools in their profession. They use it to manage or teach behavior. Effective use impacts students' information processing and understanding, and it is essential for their educational accomplishment (Ragerson & Dodd, 2005, as cited in Paulmann & Weinstein, 2022, p. 2). To sum up, the appropriate implementation of voice tone inside the classroom regulates attention through the teacher's awareness of situations using different tone realizations. For

example, friendly greetings will create a harmonious atmosphere to begin the lesson, a loud voice will give better access to the whole class, stressing important points and using serious warnings without embarrassing the students. A good teacher varies his inflection and volume to maintain students' interest and keep them more engaged and excited.

**1.1.6.4 Hands Movements.** In the human body, the hands are the terminal end organs located below the forearms, used for grasping and gesturing. Hand movements are gestures that illustrate or supplement speech (Rahmat, 2018, p. 83). In other words, the hands movements are a nonverbal cue that is used in accordance with speech to deliver a message.

When it comes to teaching, the appropriate use of hand gestures is very effective and can be used to convey a message very efficiently. This is specifically for EFL teachers. Therefore, they use hand gestures to explain lessons and manage their classrooms in order to achieve their objectives. In addition, students will find it helpful to understand and be motivated to learn English. It is also much easier for students to engage in the learning process (Afdaliah, 2022, p. 185). Moreover, the EFL teachers use their hands movements in their explanation of the lessons and in controlling their classes.

**1.1.6.5 Body Movements.** The term "body movement" encompasses all the voluntary and involuntary actions that are used to transmit various messages. The human nervous system and its ability to regulate muscles are both related concepts. Somatic and autonomic components make up the nervous system. The first is responsible for controlling muscles that are used for voluntary movements like walking, running, and bidding someone farewell. While the autonomic nervous system controls involuntary and unconscious bodily functions



individually, like dropping tears associated with sadness or happiness or blushing (Kadouci & Kadouci, 2018, p. 13).

Teacher's body movements are evident in ameliorating students' attention and behavior. It is considered the most effective strategy for reinforcing their comprehension by adopting different movements that are presented with the content simultaneously. In addition, it helps the students to be more engaged in the learning process. It is worth noting that the most common body movements are relocating around the whole classroom while explaining the lecture.

**1.1.6.6 Spacial Distance (Proxemics).** The term "proxemics" describes the separation between two people during a conversation. The proximity between them when they are speaking influences how efficiently nonverbal signals convey the message. As cultural standards alter around the world, the distance varies. Furthermore, the relationship between the two individuals is another aspect of distance (Andrews, 2016, p. 13). In other words, spacial distance is the space between two people in a conversation, which varies depending on cultural standards.

Distances can be categorized into four types that convey meaning; intimate, personal, social, and public. Intimate space ranges from 0 inches to 18 inches. Personal space ranges from 18 inches to 4 feet, and public distance varies from 4 feet to 12 feet. So, the way people structure the space around them also conveys meaning (Rai, 2010, p. 26). Furthermore, it is important to be aware of these distance types and the meanings they convey in different situations and cultures.

It is important that proxemics play a crucial role in establishing a successful interaction between the teacher and the students in the classroom. Despite this, there is a wide

range of positions that teachers are expected to take in EFL classes, depending on the culture (Hişmanoğlu & Hişmanoğlu, 2008, p. 168). Thus, according to culture, proxemics are crucial for effective communication between teachers and students in EFL lessons.

**1.1.6.7 Posture.** It is “the position or bearing of the body whether characteristic or assumed for a special purpose” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In other words, it is the body's orientation, no matter if it is natural or imposed for a particular reason. Moreover, there is a difference in the impression one gets from a person speaking in an upright position over a slouched one.

The position of the teacher in the classroom is affected by the atmosphere of the class and the nature of the tasks. In order to effectively communicate with students, teachers need to consider whether they should stand in front of them, crouch near them, or sit with them on the floor. The teacher's gestures, such as positioning and body posture, convey a particular message to the students (Restuningrum, 2018, p. 1). Therefore, teachers' posture reflects their confidence and interest based on their body position.

**1.1.6.8 Touching.** It is also referred to as “haptics”, which is derived from the Greek word “hapticos”, which denotes a capacity for grasping or perceiving. It is related to the use of touch or tactile sensation. When communicating with another person through touch, it is important for the speaker to be aware of how the other person thinks and the different ways the message might be interpreted by the recipient. This lowers the risk of sending the incorrect message. Applying tactile sensation serves a variety of purposes, including requesting a favor, providing information, offering advice, instructing, sharing experience, making the other person feel at ease, and convincing someone (Andrew, 2016, p. 8). Evidently, incorporating

touching as an effective body gesture into individuals' communication will have a noticeable outcome as far as the speaker's intention and aim are concerned.

Within the context of the teaching and learning process, there is a significant debate concerning the incorporation of teacher-student touching. Some studies agreed that touching has a positive academic influence when applied appropriately and purposefully. However, recent academic views suggested being avoided as far as misinterpretation occurs, and they tolerate only shaking hands as feedback for students' good work. Additionally, concerning the Islamic background towards touching, it is prohibited for people of different sexes to be touched by each other. Thus, teachers are required to find other alternatives for better encouraging students (Pratolo, 2019, p. 126).

All the aforementioned forms of body language have a profound impact if they are implemented appropriately and naturally. But body language is also a double-edged sword, which may create a negative impression and distract from the flow and success of the interaction. Accordingly, both positive and negative body language will be highlighted.

### ***1.1.7 Positive and Negative Body Language***

There are two forms of body language that people use to communicate nonverbally: positive body language and negative body language.

**1.1.7.1 Positive Body Language.** It contributes to our feelings of comfort and nobility. According to Guendouz (2017), positive body language is a fairly accurate predictor of how someone feels. This is a way of showing curiosity about the other person and the discussion. Including sitting comfortably and breathing slowly, there is no obvious distress and no sudden movements. One of the signs of openness is the relaxed arms that are not intertwined with the raised palms. Maintaining correct eye

contact by looking away occasionally in order to avoid staring. Additionally, nodding in agreement and taking notes indicate understanding and interest. Also, a smile indicates friendly personal contact. Hand contact also shows interest in the other person's speech and response. Moderation is the guiding principle for all of these admirable actions. They can become more detrimental than beneficial when exaggerated (pp. 38-39). To sum up, the interest of the people in a conversation is reflected in positive body language. Relaxed posture, uncrossed arms and hands, good eye contact, nodding agreement, taking notes, smiling, leaning closer, and gesturing warmly are all positive gestures. Moderation is the rule, as exaggerated gestures can be more negative than positive.

**1.1.7.2 Negative Body Language.** It concerns the misuse of different nonverbal cues that could decrease interest and credibility during interaction; it is also referred to as closed body language, and it can occur consciously or unconsciously. Guendouz (2017) claimed that a person's actions that are typically viewed negatively could simply be a matter of comfort for them, a sign that they are exhausted, or an outcome of various issues that are bothering the interlocutor, which makes positive body language more accurate as a predictor of someone's satisfaction during the conversation than negative body language. Some negative body indicators include body pressure, arms folded in front, hand on face, fidgeting, arms behind head, yawning, distraction, avoiding moving closer, and other negative facial expressions such as shaking head, avoiding eye contact with narrowed eyes, scowling, frowning, and so on. These actions express several feelings of boredom, nervousness, impatience, and carelessness that will leave a bad impression on the other interlocutor (pp. 39-40). All in all, for successful interaction, negative body cues should not go

beyond their limits since the target goal is to achieve more curious and fruitful interplay.

Positive body language is an extremely powerful tool that can enhance communication skills, improve our ability to connect with others, and lead to increased success in personal and professional relationships. So, it is important to understand the significance of nonverbal communication tools to use them effectively.

### ***1.1.8 The Importance of Body Language in Teaching***

Body language, an integral component of nonverbal communication, is crucial to the study and teaching of foreign languages. According to Marwijk (2002, as cited in Hişmanoğlu & Hişmanoğlu, 2008, pp. 173-175), highlighted the importance of body language in teaching as follows:

Inadequacy of words is one of the factors that requires the application of body cues to provide clarity to the meaning, such as making hand and arm motions to provide students with visual cues about what they are receiving. When describing a certain area of study, the teacher might make gestures like "wide", "tall", "short", and so on.

Further, body language assists in establishing more genuine or natural communication in the classroom, especially when it becomes conscious of its own and others' body language. In a foreign language classroom, the teacher who puts his hands on their hips when they are angry is better than saying "Is somebody talking?" because the nonverbal message is conveyed more authentically.

On top of that, body language is a tool for expressing feelings, i.e., what is not said by words will be revealed through body signals, either purposefully or unconsciously. For instance, teachers' reflections on their students' outcomes as having bad marks will be expressed via their facial expressions of dissatisfaction. As

well, students find it challenging to conceal their emotions or tell lies through their body language, making it easy for professors to catch them when they cheat because their psychological condition is unintentionally displayed. Thus, interpreting students' and teachers' words without anybody cues tend to be a challenging task.

Incorporating body language in the classroom increases students' motivation and enthusiasm for the lesson. Teachers use their hands movements excessively to engage their students in learning. Teachers' actions are a reflection of their emotions and thoughts. When the teacher travels around the classroom while delivering the lesson, the students are more aware and focused. However, if the teacher moves about excessively while teaching, the students could become distracted. The teacher should make their actions simple, natural, and smooth in order to avoid confusing the students' thoughts.

Establishing a warm and humorous atmosphere via different body cues is another key factor in deepening the teaching and learning process. If the instructor grins whenever it is suitable throughout the class, this may persuade students to be more motivated because they will feel sincere. The teacher's face should represent their attitudes, feelings, and emotions more vividly than any other part of their body. When students look at their teacher's face, they should be able to see them assured, approachable, and confident.

To sum up, body language is a vital medium for teachers and students to build a successful interaction inside the classroom.

### ***1.1.9 Teachers' Nonverbal Feedback***

Body language considered as a powerful tool for teachers to provide feedback to their students. According to Yang (2017) teachers' body language "has alternative function, accessibility function, feedback function" (pp.1334-1335). In other words,

teachers may use body language to deliver feedback to their pupils, as it can communicate a message instead of speaking. Furthermore, Abubakr Abdulrahman et al. (2022) reported that teachers are not merely personalities who deliver lectures, but also role models who guide students in performing correct and good behaviors (p.300). So, students are guided by their teachers in appropriate behavior. It is important for teachers to remind students to hear what the teacher has to say carefully, while relying on eye contact. A smile also conveys positive feedback and has a significant effect on the affective domain by conveying pleasure, trust, friendliness, interest, excitement and surprise (Yang, 2017, p.1335). In short, it is essential to use appropriate body language while giving feedback to students.

Teacher's feedback can be provided through the use of the various body language cues. It consists facial expressions as the most evident used feature carried out in the classroom interaction, which it may includes nice smile as an indication of pleasure towards student's good work or gloomy face as negative feedback resulted from their poor performance. A teacher's facial expressions have the potential to communicate their encouragement, interest, approval, disapproval, and wonder, as a reaction to their students' acts. Also, maintaining eye contact give students positive insights about their teacher's interest to what they are saying. Moreover, teachers' posture reveals the way they carry themselves which communicates indirect feedback to their learners through standing firm and tall, representing their confidence and dominance in the classroom. Not only, other gestures can be transmitted to students instead of the verbal feedback, including thumbs up, high-five, shrug signal, or shaking of the head aiming at substituting the verbal message and convey it more accurately and smoothly. To put it brief, through teachers' body language students

construct and grasp what feedback directed to them more thoroughly and authentically.

### ***1.1.10 Body Language in Teaching Methods***

**1.1.10.1 The Total Physical Response Approach.** (TPR) is a teaching method that is targeted to foreign or second language learners, more specifically, beginners. It was established by James Asher in the late 1960s. The basic focus of TPR is improving listening comprehension, in which learners are required to respond to physical actions without speaking (Savic, 2014, p. 447). Further, according to Gendouz (2017), TPR is based on the theory that memory is reinforced through association with physical movement. Also, it is closely related to views about how young children learn their first words by physically responding to their parents' directions (pp. 34-35). Thus, total physical response helps students understand the target language as a whole rather than the rules of the language. For instance, instead of repeating the word pen, the teacher holds up a pen and says, "This is a pen". Then, the teacher will ask for commands to help the students recognize the word, like show or give the pen to your classmate.

There are several principles that govern the total physical response. The fundamental beliefs of the TPR approach are that learning a language is made easier by linking speech with physical actions. Grammar is taught through observation and deduction, and understanding language's meaning is deemed more critical than its structure. In addition, speaking is prohibited until the student gains a sufficient level of comprehension. Also, learning is most effective in a relaxing and pressure-free environment. The teacher is responsible for selecting and directing the vocabulary and structure, while the student's role is to listen and follow instructions. This method maximizes learning outcomes when practiced in a stress-free environment (Asher,



1977, as cited in Celik et al., 2021, p. 155). Overall, the total physical response principles emphasize incorporating physical movements into language learning to enhance comprehension, memory retention, and overall motivation.

Total physical response has many advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, it increases the pace and mood of the class and makes the students' learning enjoyable. Additionally, it is memorable and effective at helping students recognize words and phrases. TPR also benefits kinesthetic learners and is suitable for mixed-ability classes. It can be easily implemented with minimal preparation and works particularly well for younger learners. Furthermore, TPR involves both left- and right-brain learning. However, TPR also has several disadvantages. Some students may feel embarrassed or uncomfortable with this method, particularly at the beginning. Moreover, TPR is primarily effective at the beginner level and may become repetitive if used excessively. It is not suitable or flexible enough to teach all aspects of language. When used for extended periods, it neglects narratives, descriptions, and other conversational forms of language. Finally, while TPR can be effective, it may not be suitable for teaching abstract vocabulary or expressions. Teachers may need to supplement it with other teaching methods (Widodo, 2005, pp. 239-240). To sum up, TPR has its upsides and downsides. It is better suited for beginners and should be used alongside other teaching methods.

#### *1.1.11 Dos and Don'ts in Body Language in the Classroom*

Abubakr Abdulrahman et al. (2022, pp. 301-302) suggested a number of important body language techniques that are essential to apply inside the classroom for the effective process of the lesson:

- **Do Not Sit Unless Necessary:** It is impossible to expect a teacher to provide an effective lecture while positioned in his chair and paying attention to his students. As a result,

teachers should avoid sitting down and instead stay standing unless absolutely necessary. Even though prolonged standing can be physically exhausting, it is crucial for optimal content delivery.

- **Do Not Move too Much and Stand Firm:** Misunderstandings and active teaching by teachers occur occasionally. The teacher, for example, moves around the classroom in practically all directions. Walking about the classroom occasionally is important, but only when it is necessary. But even when standing, the instructor needs to adopt a powerful stance. By maintaining legs slightly wider than hip distance, a straight back, and an elevated head, this stance shows the teacher is in charge, self-assured, and able to influence the listeners.
- **Keep Your Palms Facing the Students:** Keeping palms towards the students is an indication of maintaining the quality of gestures. The teachers should coordinate their arm movements in front of them from 40 to 45 cm without attaching to their bodies.
- **Never Cross Your Arms, and Do Not Lean on Anything:** The instructor may teach depending on something such as a table, wall, or crossing his arms. This may indicate a lack of interest and feebleness among students. Hence, a disciplined teacher should be aware of such acts.
- **Look for More towards the Back and Middle than Front:** Every teacher must shift his sight to various classroom locations and take a quick look at each student. To maintain the motivation and interest of the entire class, the teachers accomplish this by using the W pattern and regularly following the students with their eyes.
- **Remember to Smile:** A teacher's smile is the finest favor that can be given to students. A smile has the power to make learners feel happy and confident enough to come to class and achieve a positive attitude towards learning. Thus, if students are not pleased with the teacher, they will not want to be there.

Accordingly, teachers should be aware of the way they use their body language because of its impact on helping the students grasp the received input.

### ***1.1.12 Cross Cultural Differences in Interpreting Different Body Language Cues***

Communication using body language can be challenging enough when dealing with individuals from your own culture. However, when dealing with individuals from other cultures, it can be even more complicated, as cultural differences can have a significant impact on personal and professional interactions (Wainwright, 2010, p. 3). In other words, interpersonal interactions can be strongly influenced by cultural variations. Every culture has its own body language because some gestures that are acceptable in your culture and regarded as normal may be regarded as abnormal in other cultures. Before using body language in a culture, one needs to read and observe it first, because otherwise it may cause misunderstandings and some may consider it an offense. For example, referring to people may be considered rude in some cultures (Meakin, 2017, p. 24). So, it is crucial to pay attention and analyze body language before using it to prevent misinterpretations.

### **Conclusion**

Effective communication is not complete without knowing how to coordinate what the speaker says with what his body language represents. Throughout this section, numerous details related to body language have been discussed, starting with its historical background, definition, cues, and how it can be in positive and negative forms. As well as its significance in EFL classes as a crucial tool in learning a foreign language and its implementation in teaching methods, ending with its cross-cultural variation in perceiving it. In the second section, we will castle light on the nature of the students' listening comprehension.

## **1.2 Section Two: Theoretical Overview about Listening Comprehension**

### **Introduction**

Language learning and teaching primarily depend on four major skills; reading, writing, speaking, and listening. However, until the late 1960s, listening was an ignored skill in foreign languages. Second language researchers considered listening an ability that could be developed without assistance. But previous studies regarded listening as the most important skill for language learning, and it develops faster than the other language skills. Thus, more attention was paid to listening comprehension, and the status of listening changed from being disregarded and incidental to one of utmost importance. Accordingly, in this section, many details regarding listening and listening comprehension will be discussed, along with their significance in teaching and learning second and foreign languages.

#### ***1.2.1 Definition of Comprehension***

The word comprehension is “The act or action of grasping with the intellect: understanding” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Also, comprehension is a person’s ability to recognize and interpret ideas. The process entails a profound mental effort in order to comprehend the text and recognize the content's essential information. Thus, the reader can understand the purpose of the text by drawing information from the text that is directly or indirectly presented (Benítez Hernández & Hernández Solano, 2017, p. 34). In other words, this process requires a great deal of mental effort to decode and identify the received information.

Alfassi (2004), Meneghetti, Carretti & De Beni (2006) (as cited in Benítez Hernández & Hernández Solano, 2017) defined comprehension as “The interaction between the text being read and the reader’s existing prior knowledge and expectations will generate meaning and comprehension” (p. 35). In this regard, comprehension is an internal process that is

activated by certain external developments that enable readers to achieve higher levels of reading comprehension.

### ***1.2.2 Comprehending or Understanding***

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (n.d.) defined both verbs understand and comprehend as "to understand something fully", and for Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.), to comprehend and to understand "is to mentally grasp something's complete nature or meaning". They consider them synonyms, and they use them interchangeably. Also, the word understand is derived from the Old English word "understandan" while the word comprehend is derived from Middle English: from Old French "comprehender", or Latin "comprehendere".

However, there is a slight difference between understanding and comprehending. The practice of comprehension rather than understanding is becoming increasingly common. An example would be understanding the instructions provided in a handbook without fully comprehending its purpose (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). So, comprehending and understanding are synonyms, but there is a difference between them in terms of practice.

### ***1.2.3 Definition of Listening***

The concept of listening is a salient skill that human beings know for. It was deemed a passive skill in which listeners just receive the input, but numerous recent studies have valued it as an active and complex skill. Listening has received various definitions according to different interests. Vandergrift (1999) defined listening as:

A complex, active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and

intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above and interpret it within the immediate as well as larger sociocultural context of the utterance. (p. 168)

He added that the listening process requires high mental ability, which makes it a challenging task that needs more analysis and support.

Further, Lynch and Mandelsohn (2010) claimed that "listening used to be thought of as the exact decoding of the message" (p. 181). Therefore, listening requires a high mental ability to decode the intended message.

Purdy (1997) defined listening as "the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal) needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings" (p. 8). This definition illustrates that listening is a detailed process of analyzing and interpreting all the important matters addressed by the speaker.

It is concluded that listening is a complicated mental process of grasping the received data relying on the listener's background and the given context.

#### ***1.2.4 Models of the Listening Process***

A number of models of the listening process have been developed by researchers to help them understand how listeners utilize these sources of information, provide insight into the listening text's overall meaning, and reveal the listening process, which is a difficult process to describe due to its invisible nature. According to Flowerdew and Miller (2005, pp. 24-27), bottom-up, top-down, and interactive processing models are the most prevalent:

**1.2.4.1 The Bottom-Up Model.** In the 1940s and 1950s, researchers created the bottom-up model of listening, which entails beginning with the simplest acoustic message components and assembling them into words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. It adheres to the conventional understanding of communication as the dissemination of information, where the sender encrypts a message and the receiver decrypts it.

**1.2.4.2 The Top-Down Model.** It was created after researchers took into account the fact that test respondents are unable to distinguish shortened sounds from the words they are a part of on their own. This shows that listeners use pre-established patterns of information and discourse structure stored in memory in addition to auditory information to decipher a verbal message. The fundamental tenet is that recurring occurrences serve as the basis for organizing and storing knowledge in human memory. Understanding the text's general organization and meaning at this macro-level makes up for any understanding issues with smaller details like sound discrimination, grammar, and word and utterance-level semantics. In this paradigm, listening is purpose-driven, and listeners pay attention to what they need.

**1.2.4.3 The Interactive Model.** Rumelhart's interactive model, established in 1975, suggested that when language is being processed, knowledge of phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics interact with each other at different levels. This interaction takes place simultaneously. It permits a model that is sensitive to different learning preferences and group requirements by allowing for individual diversity in linguistic processing. It recommends that while more experienced students should concentrate on top-down abilities for applying schematic knowledge, beginners should concentrate on establishing fundamental bottom-up skills for decoding.

To sum up, according to researchers, top-down, bottom-up, and interactive listening processes can be described as models of the listening process.

### ***1.2.5 Definition of Listening Comprehension***

Schiff and Joshi (2016) defined listening comprehension as “one’s ability to comprehend spoken language at the discourse level – including conversations, stories (i.e., narratives), and informational oral texts – that involves the processes of extracting and constructing meaning” (p. 160).

According to Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011b), “Listening comprehension is an active process in which individuals concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, form meaning from passages, and associate what they hear with existing knowledge” (p. 979). Nadig (2013, as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016) defined listening comprehension as “the various processes of understanding and making sense of spoken language. These involve knowing speech sounds, comprehending the meaning of individual words, and understanding the syntax of sentences” (p. 124).

Based on the definitions above, it can be concluded that listening comprehension is the act of interpreting spoken language.

### ***1.2.6 Stages of Listening Comprehension***

In teaching a second language, the listening process depends on both teachers and students due to their pivotal roles. The stages of listening comprehension are as follows:

**1.2.6.1 The Pre-Listening Stage.** During this stage, students receive instructions about what is required from them before listening. The pre-listening stage consists of two sub-stages to make the process easier for learners. It starts with activating students prior knowledge, or "schemata," through brainstorming to help them expect what they will listen by adopting different ways given by the teacher. It



includes using visuals that are related to the listening passage, which are effective in raising students' awareness. In addition, the teacher may provide them with written texts or words to be read before the listening task as an introduction. Moreover, incorporating students into real-life situations can stimulate them to predict the development of the content held in the listening passage. After preparing the students, the next stage concerns ordering the students to establish their own work related to the topic discussed for better involvement before the listening material commences (Wilson, 2008, as cited in Ziane, 2011, p. 9). Briefly, the two main purposes before the listening stage that students benefit from are matching their ideas revealed from brainstorming to the current real situation and direct their concentration and motivation to predict what is going to be heard.

**1.2.6.2 The While-Listening Stage.** In this stage, students are exposed to listen to the given input. While receiving the listening material, learners' cognitive ability takes place. In order to ensure students' comprehension and understand what is being said as much as possible, various activities delivered by the teacher to be accomplished while listening. The activities that can be integrated may include identifying true and false statements, grasping key ideas from the listening extract, filling gaps, and reordering chronological events. The purpose behind providing such tasks is to test students' degree of recognition while listening. Then, the teacher ultimately determines how many times they should repeat it and what activities can be done in the following phase to deepen their understanding or help them overcome their listening issues (Bouchikhi, 2020, p. 34). Thus, through this stage, learners should have a high mental ability to contract the overall meaning of the intended message.

**1.2.6.3 The Post-Listening Stage.** The post-listening stage is the final stage in which learners reflect on the content they received by producing different forms of expressions and opinions. Goh (1997) argued that implementing the knowledge acquired from the listening passage should not be the end of the post-listening phase. It should be expanded upon to incorporate students' self-reflection on their thought processes while they engaged in the listening activity (p. 7). After the listening stage, learners will have the capacity to connect their pre-existing thoughts with the information they have listened to. Consequently, this will enhance their ability to listen and comprehend, while also improving their language proficiency and overall background knowledge. Furthermore, this phase aims to highlight the listening challenges encountered in the listening stage and try to develop solutions for them. This allows teachers to know how well their students achieve comprehension and identify factors behind the lack of it.

To sum up, the listening process goes through three main stages. First, it starts with activating students' prior experiences before listening. Second, engaging learners in the listening process is accompanied by a number of tasks depending on their listening purposes. Finally, they respond to the listening material and relate it to their background knowledge to infer and understand the target content, in addition to sharing their interests and inquiries.

### **1.2.7 Listening Comprehension Components**

Listening comprehension, like any other process, cannot be reached except by going through its components. According to Chastain (1988, as cited in Ahmadi, 2016), listening comprehension involves four components. The first stands for the listener's capacity to distinguish the phonological properties of the target language, including "all sounds, intonation patterns, and voice qualities", as well as sounds of

the native language. The second component concerns grasping the whole message being transmitted, which depends on comprehending the semantic meaning after recognizing the sound sequence, and in case of meaning interpretation failure, the listener will rely on syntactic knowledge. The third is processing the received message through the listener's auditory memory. To strengthen learners' auditory memory, teachers should provide language tasks that are effective and comprehensible for the sake of improvement. The improvement from less detailed to more complex sentences should be gradual and continuous. The content rapidness should be raised based on the learners' ability to decode the held message. The last component is comprehension, which is the delivery of speech at "the syntactic, lexical, pragmatic, and discourse levels" (p. 8).

Kaspar (1984, as cited in Ahmadi, 2016) stated that comprehension component include various steps. Contextualization is the first step. Real language takes place within a communicative frame, and in order to duplicate the speaker's message, the listener must be aware of this context. The next step is to activate relevant prior information and make use of it to anticipate the possible carried data. Predicting the overall content of the message is the third step. In order to listen effectively, one should anticipate what will be received next. Instead of attempting an unexpected and quick inference, they are reviewing the material they have already been exposed to. The fourth step is sampling the key meanings of the conveyed material. It takes more effort on the part of the listener to comprehend the content of unknown subjects, and as a result, they depend more on language cues to construct their limited prior knowledge. The final step is to use the samples to validate or disprove the earlier predictions. The samples are accepted as accurate when they match the listeners' expectations. When the samples contradict their predictions, they should reevaluate either their expectations or the material to make the content understandable (p. 8).

Listening comprehension is a complicated process involving four key components; distinguishing sounds, understanding the message, processing it through memory, and comprehending on multiple levels. Improving auditory memory involves gradually increasing task difficulty based on decoding ability. Comprehension involves contextualization, activating prior knowledge, predicting content, sampling important meanings, and validating or disproving expectations. Effective listening requires anticipating the message and using language cues to build knowledge, with reevaluation as needed.

### ***1.2.8 Listening Vs Hearing***

Even though hearing and listening are commonly used interchangeably, a difference must be drawn between the two.

Kline (1996) clarified the difference between hearing and listening as: “Hearing is the reception of sound, listening is the attachment of meaning to the sound. Hearing is passive, listening is active” (p. 7). Likewise, Rost (2011) stated that “while both hearing and listening are initiated through sound perception, the difference between them is essentially a degree of intention” (p. 12). In addition, listening is “the process of receiving, constructing meaning from and responding to spoken or nonverbal messages” (International Listening Association, 1995, p. 5). Unlike hearing, it is the physiological process that permits receiving the sound motions (Rost, 2011, p. 11).

To sum up, listening and hearing are two distinct terms. Hearing is the physical process that our bodies go through when sound reaches our ear drums, whereas listening is an active process that demands mental efforts.

### ***1.2.9 Listening Comprehension Problems***

In a foreign language classroom, learners may encounter numerous problems related to the listening comprehension process, in which learners and teachers should be aware of such difficulties that hinder comprehending the listening material.

According to Bingol et al. (2014, pp. 3-4) listening problems are a result of various sources summarized as follows:

- **Quality of Recorded Material:** Despite the technological development that the world witnessed, many schools and institutions still lack qualified equipment such as computers, smart boards, headphones, and other multimedia stuff. As a result of the weak sound system that students receive content from, their understanding will be highly influenced.
- **Cultural Differences:** It is worth noting that language and culture are unseparable parts and that language is a vital instrument in understanding a given context. Thus, learners that are exposed to a foreign language background will face different cultural matters that obstruct interpreting and understanding the spoken message as far as the teacher does not explain the cultural reference of such content.
- **Accent:** It is believed that different uttered accents have a major influence on reducing comprehension. In the case of EFL/ESL learners who are not familiar with both American and British accents, they will lose their concentration in distinguishing what has been said. Hence, teachers have to improve their learners' communication based on the variety of accents they use.
- **Unfamiliar Vocabulary:** The biggest problem with listening comprehension is that the listeners are not able to decode the meaning of some vocabulary items, which can stop them, trying to question what they denote, which highly leads

them to miss the other part of speech. Further, many words can carry more than one single meaning depending on the context, which may cause learners to get confused if they are applied inappropriately.

- **Length and Speed of the Listening:** It is challenging for less advanced learners to grasp lengthy listening materials and remember every detailed information. For this reason, short listening texts are the best solution to keep students excited and more focused. Another obstacle that learners face during listening is speed, which causes them fail to attain thorough listening outcomes. In this situation, listeners cannot control the speaker's speed, which can result in poor listening comprehension.
- **Physical Conditions:** The physical setting plays a crucial role in determining a student's listening comprehension performance. But, inconveniences in the classroom reveal weak listening achievements. These problems manifested in overcrowded classes, internal and external noise, temperature, and so on. All these factors contribute to distracting both learners and teachers from completing and carrying out effective listening process.
- **Lack of Concentration:** One of the key elements that affect listening comprehension is students' motivation. In a school setting, when they are studying a foreign language, children may find it challenging to focus. Even the smallest attentional gap can significantly impair listening comprehension. Understanding is made simpler when students find the subject matter of the listening text engaging. In spite of their enthusiasm for the subject, students find listening to be quite boring because it takes a lot of concentration to avoid missing the meaning.

Overall, listening comprehension problems may have a crucial impact on learners' ability to comprehend the listening material. By being able to cope with

these difficulties and implementing different strategies, learners can improve their listening skill and overcome these challenges.

### ***1.2.10 Listening Comprehension Strategies***

It is important to shed light on the learning strategies that are applied to the listening skill. Oxford (2002) defined learning strategies as "specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language" (p.124). Through these strategies, learners can develop their second language's communicative ability. For O'Malley and Chamot (1990), "Learning strategies are the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (p. 1).

Based on the previous definitions, learning strategies are the specific procedures that learners consciously apply during various activities to enhance the effectiveness and success of the learning process. Consequently, it is important for teachers to educate their students about the steps and techniques that aid in comprehending and carrying out the required tasks.

Three types of learning strategies have been classified according to the type and level of processing; cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies.

**1.2.10.1 Cognitive Strategies.** Listening strategies are regarded as one of the essential strategies that are used to overcome students' listening problems. These strategies are related to understanding and gathering input in short-term or long-term memory for later recall. Comprehension is achieved through the cognitive decoding of the received data. Thus, they are problem-solving strategies that learners apply

during the listening tasks to promote recognizing the listening passage (Bingol et al., 2014, p. 2).

Further, Oxford (2002) stated that learners develop their cognitive ability through reasoning, analyzing, summarizing, and practicing (p. 128). Other aspects of cognitive strategies include inferencing, elaboration, translation, transfer, repetition, resourcing, grouping, and substitution. From what is mentioned, we can infer that cognitive listening strategies are the application of different mental techniques that listeners employ to help them construct, deepen, and facilitate the comprehension of the aural input and retrieve it whenever needed, as well as relate new information to existing background knowledge. These strategies are highly connected to the top-down and bottom-up processes that were discussed earlier.

**1.2.10.2 Metacognitive Strategies.** According to O'Malley et al. (1989), metacognitive strategies integrate knowledge of learning with management of learning through process planning, monitoring, and assessment. These strategies can be applied to many tasks (pp. 422-423). In other words, metacognitive strategies involve both the understanding of how to learn and the ability to manage one's learning effectively. Holden (2004) further explains that metacognitive strategies involve the previous processes, corresponding to pre-task, on-task, and post-task activities (p.259).

Under listening tasks, metacognitive strategies combine learning knowledge with the management of the learning process by means of planning, monitoring, and evaluation. These strategies are relevant to various activities and require proficiency in both comprehending how to learn and being capable of managing one's learning in an efficient manner. Competence in metacognitive strategies is crucial for successful learning outcomes.



### **1.2.10.3 Socio-Affective Strategies**

As stated by Holden (2004), socio-affective strategies encompass learning through cooperative engagement with classmates, inquiries directed to the instructor, and anxiety-reduction approaches (p. 259). These strategies are crucial for successful learning. O'Malley et al. (1989) further noted that cooperative learning, asking for clarification, and mental authority over learning experiences are examples of socio-affective strategies (p. 423). To sum up, both researchers highlight the importance of socio-affective strategies as vital components for successful learning.

Socio-affective learning strategies belong to teaching that emphasizes students' social and emotional well-being as well as academic achievement. These tactics aim to establish a good and supportive learning environment in which students feel secure, interested, and motivated to gain knowledge. Educators can build an increasingly supportive atmosphere for learning where students are appreciated, honored, and motivated in their education by incorporating socio-affective learning strategies into their teaching practice.

### ***1.2.11 The Importance of Listening Comprehension in Language learning and Teaching***

Listening comprehension is vital to language learning. The efficiency of employing listening as a tool for learning makes a significant distinction between more and less successful learners (Rost, 2001, & Kurita, 2012, as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016b, p. 1670).

Hasan (2000) and Hamouda (2013) (as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016b) expressed that listening comprehension creates the conditions for the development and extension of language skills (p. 1670). Furthermore, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016b) stated that the process of listening comprehension gives useful intuitions for

teaching listening. Learners may find it challenging to master listening comprehension skills, which can create an opportunity for teachers to adapt their listening tasks into more effective ones. Improving listening comprehension skills assists learners in achieving success in language acquisition by increasing intelligible input (p. 1670). Moreover, according to Rost (1994) and Ziane (2011) (as cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2016b), listening comprehension is critical since it is a process through which we receive input, and learning cannot occur without it (p. 1672).

The ability to listen is crucial when learning a foreign language because receiving language input is the key to language learning. Rost (1994, as cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2016b), stated that listening plays an essential role in language learning, because it gives students input and is necessary to the development of their language (p. 1670). Hamouda (2013, as cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2016b), expressed that listening is the most commonly utilized skill in language classes. As a result, it is apparent that listening is highly essential in students' lives since it is employed as a way of learning at all stages of education (p. 1670). Also, Doff (1995) and Ziane (2011) (as cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2016b) represented that listening has a profound impact on the development of speaking. That is, we cannot improve our speaking capacity until we improve our listening skills. If learners have strong listening skills in English, they will find it extremely simple to listen to the radio, study, watch movies, and converse with foreigners. To acquire this skill, learners need to have a lot of practice and exposure to English (pp. 1672-1673).

In short, listening comprehension is critical for language learning since it provides students with input and is required for language development. Listening influences speaking development. Learners may find it difficult to master listening

comprehension skills, yet doing so can help them succeed in language acquisition.

Learners must practice and be exposed to English to master this ability.

### **Conclusion**

Listening is the most important skill for language learning, and its status has transformed from being ignored to become highly significant. Accordingly, in this section, we discussed listening, its models, and listening comprehension with its stages, along with its components and the difference between listening and hearing, as well as its problems, strategies, and significance in learning and teaching the language.

## **2. Chapter Two: Research Methodology and Data Analysis**

### **2.1 Section One: Research Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

The endeavor of any particular study is based on the selected research methodology, through which the investigated area of interest is systematically controlled. This section is devoted to the research methodology, which consists of the research paradigm, approach, instruments, population and sampling, and data collection procedures.

#### **2.1.1 Research Paradigm**

With regard to the present research, constructivism commonly involves qualitative research methods in which the objective of the research is:

To understand a phenomenon as it is seen and interpreted by the participants themselves, individually (e.g., Piagetian constructivism) or socially (e.g., Vygotskyian constructivism), in a world characterized by a multiple view of reality and in which the researcher works with the world as it is construed by its participants (i.e., bottom-up). (Cohen et al., 2018. p. 34)

According to social constructivists, individuals generate personal associations from their encounters, which are discussed socially and historically. They concentrate on the processes of communication among people as well as the unique circumstances in which individuals reside and operate in order to comprehend the participants' historical and cultural surroundings. Rather than beginning with a theory, the researcher's goal is to make meaning of the perceptions people have about the world (Creswell, 2009, p. 26). This research is conducted for the purpose of finding the best way to answer the research questions and hypotheses; the constructivist paradigm was chosen in this respect.

### ***2.1.2 Research Approach***

Adopting a certain research approach, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed, depends not on the researcher's preference for one or another but on the compatibility of a particular method that fits the research. Since the objective of this study is to explore teachers' use of body language and its role in students' listening comprehension, the qualitative approach has been chosen, which is defined as:

An approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants setting, data analysis inductively building from particular to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. (Creswell, 2009, p. 22)

Hence, the structured observation and interview permit gaining the required qualitative data for better understanding the studied phenomenon from the participants' perspective in its natural setting with no researcher engagement or influence on the development of the observed behavior. This makes the qualitative method appropriate to get more thorough and reliable results.

### ***2.1.3 Research Instruments***

With regard to the exploration of the phenomenon studied, two data collection tools have been selected. An observation and interview were directed to the EFL teachers of Haffian Taher Ben Ali Middle School.

**2.1.3.1 The Structured Observation.** It is a research instrument where the observer follows preset criteria to observe specific behaviors in an organized manner. According to Cohen et al. (2018), the observer takes a non-intrusive role, just noting

the frequency of the elements under investigation in an observing schedule (p. 545). The structured observation allows us to observe the teachers' use of body language in the EFL classroom, and it is intended to reduce subjectivity and bias in the process of data collection.

**2.1.3.2 The Structured Interview.** It is a data-gathering instrument that enables researchers to obtain data from selected respondents or interviewees in the form of an oral questionnaire. According to Cohen et al. (2018), a structured interview entails the prior organization of content and procedures with predetermined wording and a planned sequence of questions. The interviewer has limited flexibility to make modifications; rather, it is established beforehand. This type of interview is closed due to its fixed nature (p. 13). The structured interview is one of the best methods that corresponds with our research work, as it allows us to restrict the number of questions that are targeted to interviewees in a real setting. It also has the benefit of providing detailed data about the topic being investigated, which may not be available through other research tools like surveys. As a result, ensuring more authentic and credible findings.

#### ***2.1.4 Population and Sampling***

The population of the present study is composed of three female English teachers at Haffian Taher Ben Ali Middle School. For ease of access and the small number of English teachers, we conducted our study on all Haffian Taher Ben Ali middle school English teachers, which are three (3) teachers who are teaching first-year students, totaling 140 students divided into four (4) groups. So, we observed all three English teachers with all their groups in six sessions for each teacher. We selected the first-year middle school level because they are beginners and this is the first year they will study English officially at the school. Hence, they need their

teachers' body language more than the other levels. Following the research's objectives, all three teachers of English were available at Haffian Taher Ben Ali Middle School to be observed and interviewed. For a better understanding of the research.

### ***2.1.5 Data Collection Procedures***

In order to collect the needed data from the target population, structured classroom observation was conducted for the sake of observing all English language teachers application of the outlined body language cues with the first-year middle school level. In fact, our observation took over a month, during which we attended six sessions for each of the three teachers during their lectures.

After finishing our observation, we conducted an interview with the teachers, which took the form of an oral discussion. Actually, we have interviewed each teacher during her scheduled reception hour. First, we have greeted the teachers and thanked them for their approval, cooperation, being a part of the present study, and clarifying our aim before starting interviewing them. Then we posed our fourteen (14) questions as ordered (see Appendix B) and asked them about their perspective and experience in teaching first-year middle school students. Finally, teachers' answers were organized and administered as they were gathered from them.

### **Conclusion**

This section offers a comprehensive overview of a well-defined research methodology that is compatible with our current exploratory research.

## 2.2 Section Two: Data Analysis and Discussion

### Introduction

In this section, the data that has been collected through classroom observation and interview is analyzed and discussed. This is for the sake of reaching our research objectives, which are to explore teachers' use of body language in the EFL classroom and their perspectives about its role in enhancing students' listening comprehension.

#### *2.2.1 Description and Analysis of the Classroom Observation*

Teachers' body language cues are described and observed carefully during our classroom observation. In addition, it can also be viewed as a vital tool in gathering data about teachers and their students during direct contact in the classroom.

**2.2.1.1 Description of the Classroom Observation.** For the sake of collecting qualitative data on teachers' use of body language in first-year middle school classes at Haffian Taher Ben Ali in Hammamet, a structured classroom observation was used as a data gathering tool to ensure the two main conditions of any research work; validity and reliability.

In our current situation, the classroom observation follows a specific structure that helps to outline the actions occurring within the classroom. In order to ensure that the observation is advantageous, we create a table that includes the eight (8) body language cues; eye contact, voice tone, hands movements, body movements, spacial distance, facial expressions, posture, and touching. Quality attached to each cue and its degree of frequency (see Appendix A).



We conducted our classroom observation during the second semester, starting in March 2023, which took over one month. In fact, we piloted our observation one week before getting started, in which we confirmed teachers' application of body language. Our attendance comprised eighteen (18) sessions, divided between the three (3) teachers of English and four (4) groups of first-year middle school students. More specifically, we devoted six (6) sessions for each teacher to be observed.

Furthermore, there are a reasonable number of students in each class; class number one (1) (group one ) holds thirty-eight (38) students (twenty (20) males and eighteen (18) females), class number two (2) (group two) holds thirty-four (34) students (nine-teen (19) males and fifteen (15) females), class number three (3) (group three) holds thirty-five (35) students ( twenty-two (22) males and thirteen (13) females), and class four (4) (group four) holds thirty-three (33) students (twenty (20) males and thirteen (13) females). During our presence, students' attendance was almost uniform and frequent. The aim of attending these classes is to observe the expected body language cues that the teacher may exhibit. Classroom observation is conducted during work sessions at different times with different teachers. Our interest in choosing these classes is to assimilate and obtain data as close to reality as possible.

**2.2.1.2 Analysis of the Classroom Observation.** Our work will be analyzed based on eight (8) body language cues (eye contact, voice tone, hands movements, body movements, spacial distance, facial expressions, posture, and touching).

**2.2.1.2.1 Results of the Classroom Observation.** We aimed to participate in actual setting where learning occurs and witness any notable actions or behaviors displayed by teachers to enhance our study with more comprehensive findings about the research subject. This will result in the attainment of validity and reliability.

- **General Description of the Setting:** As previously mentioned, we observed each of the three teachers taking attendance in six sessions, totaling eighteen (18) observations in a normal classroom setting. At the beginning of each session, we noticed that all three teachers greeted their students with pleasant facial expressions and appeared at ease throughout the lesson. They started directly ask about the date, warm them up, and provide an overview of the lesson's objective. Then they presented the lesson effectively using body language.

#### *2.2.1.2.2 Teachers' Use of Body Language*

- **Eye Contact:** According to what we have observed, we noticed that all three teachers at the eighteen sessions used general eye contact, represented by three time  $\frac{3}{4}$  for each session, as a dominant action more than the focus eye contact incorporated by them. Teachers used general eye contact during the explanation of the lesson and when delivering a listening extract to control the whole classroom and engage the students in the discussion process. In addition, they kept maintaining general eye contact when waiting for their students' answers. However, they maintain focus eye contact in the discussion with students who participate, and with those who do not. They also maintain focus eye contact into the back classroom to gain students' attention as well as to punish students for their misbehavior (noise). The teachers focus eye contact shows that they value every student's contribution in the classroom. We noticed that more than half of students liked focus eye contact during the explanation more than the general one, as it helped them stay engaged. While others who are represented by less than half get bored from the overuse and start making noise, it may even become disruptive for them.
- **Voice Tone:** Based on our findings, two teachers had changeable voice tones that ranged between low and loud. They frequently used the low voice tone during the explanation

time, but they also used the loud voice tone as a warning strategy for students to keep quiet and when stressing specific ideas. Unlike the third teacher, the tone of her voice was noticeable and loud throughout the entire time. We have noticed that the teachers' loud voice has a remarkable impact on students' access to their teachers' speech, which raised their concentration. Most students showed a preference for the loud voice tone, and they concentrated more except for less than half of them who found it predictable and lost attention.

- **Hands Movements:** Hands movements were used excessively by all three teachers when presenting their lessons. They succeed in transmitting appropriate hands movements and rarely used them inappropriately. For example, pointing to the students who wished to answer was a dominant hand movement during the whole session. They also used hands movements in parallel with their speech to indicate the probability of students' correct answers, the past tense of some verbs, questioning, and using fingers to count numbers. They also used it as a tool to clarify some verb meanings, like "listen" (finger on the ear), "look" (finger on the eyes), "hands' claps" (indicating hurry up and alerting the students to be ready to start the lesson), and in ordering the students to raise their hands. Also, they gave students feedback via thumb-up and thumb-down signals. However, we have noticed a rare spontaneous misuse of hands movements when they speak, as happened to one of the teachers when she constantly tapped her fingers while explaining as a result of her boredom and frustration towards her class.
- **Body Movements:** During our presence in all the sessions, we have seen that three teachers do not move frequently into the back classroom; more specifically, one teacher used it sometimes for discipline purposes when she punished her students as a result of their misbehavior. While all of them used it rarely when

checking students' copybooks, it was never used while explaining the lesson.

Yet, they relied on the front classroom as a fundamental area of their body movements during the teaching process. Also, we have noticed that permanently using the front classroom affected students negatively, in which they get bored and lost their concentration that led to a noisy classroom atmosphere.

- **Spacial Distance:** Upon our observation, we noticed that two teachers positioned themselves in close proximity to the students at the front of the classroom, while maintaining a distance from those seated towards the back that is why the back students were not engaged in the lesson and they were started rioting during the lesson. In contrast, the third teacher maintained a far distance from students while explaining and discussing ideas, thereby making them feel comfortable and not under stress. So, we noticed them more engaged with her and participatory, while she used close distance and moved around the classroom from time to time in checking their copybooks and writings and she disciplined certain students for their misconduct.
- **Facial Expressions:** Based on what we have seen in the sessions we have attended, teachers' facial expressions were shown to reflect their positive and negative feelings and emotions, such as satisfaction, anger, and happiness. This was revealed in teachers' smiling faces in different situations, especially at the beginning of each session, to arouse students' interest, engagement, and reflection on the content they will receive. Praising students' right answers with a smile was a frequent expression. As a result, a positive classroom environment was created. However, all three teachers have also utilized negative facial expressions. One teacher reacted to a student's wrong answer with a surprised face accompanied by a raised eyebrow. While the second teacher used a negative facial expression

represented by open eyes to warn students to stop making noise. Additionally, the other teacher expressed a negative and gloomy face during the whole session as a reaction to her students' lack of participation.

- **Posture:** Throughout the sessions, we noticed that all three teachers maintained an appropriate posture, standing tall and upright when they addressed the lesson to their students. This posture conveyed confidence and authority, which enabled them to control the classroom environment. As a result, the students' attention was improved and they became more focused when they were exposed to it. This posture served as a positive example for the students, and it encouraged them to adopt a similar attitude when engaging in the lesson. It also helped to foster better relationships between the teachers and the students, leading to a more productive learning environment.
- **Touching:** In our observation, the touching cue was noted by two teachers when rewarding students. So one of them gave high fives to reward her students for their correct answers. The other teacher, when checking her students' copybooks, patted them on the head for their good handwriting. So both of them used it respectfully, without crossing cultural limitations, as a supportive strategy for their students. Unlike the third teacher did not touch her students. She instead used verbal praise and positive reinforcement to reward her students. This shows that there are different ways teachers can use to show a positive feedback to their students.

### ***2.2.2 Analysis of the Teachers' Interview***

This interview was addressed to all English teachers at Haffian Taher Ben Ali Middle School, which is composed of three (3) female teachers who are aged 30, 37, and 52. This interview aims at exploring teachers' experiences in teaching and

assessing overall learning skills and listening skill in particular, and mainly their perspectives about the role of body language as a teaching strategy in fostering students' listening comprehension.

Question 1: How long have you been teaching English at the middle school?

The question is designed to gain insights about teachers' experiences with teaching English as a foreign language. The teachers' answers were as follows:

Interviewee 1 (Teacher 1): "I have been teaching for twenty-nine (29) years".

Interviewee 2 (Teacher 2): "I have been teaching since 2009. So, it is for about fourteen (14) years".

Interviewee 3 (Teacher 3): "I have been teaching English at the middle school for six (6) years".

Question 2: How would you describe the overall students' interaction and response towards the English language as they are beginners in learning it?

This question provides insights into how the students are coping with the English language for the first time. Teachers had different views in this respect.

Interviewee 1 (Teacher 1): "Learners are exposed to the English language and learn it effectively. They show an interesting reaction to discovering and learning the language gradually as beginners".

Interviewee 2 (Teacher 2): "The engagement of the students with English varies from one to another. Generally, they are motivated when the topics are interesting and get their attention also, when audio-visuals like pictures, videos, or listening scripts are used during the session".

Interviewee 3 (Teacher 3): "Young children are spontaneous and motivated to learn the language without conscious effort. They have the capacity to imitate the language correctly".

Question 3: What strategies do you use to help your students comprehend and retain information?

This question is focused on the teaching strategies used in imparting knowledge to students. All three teachers share the same perspective concerning the strategies they use in the classroom. They agreed on working in groups, quoting from one of the teachers (Interviewee 2): "It gives them the chance to exchange information and boosts their confidence to participate freely with one another". Also, using audio-visuals such as pictures, videos, audios, flash cards, and songs makes the pupils' minds ready to receive the information without difficulties. In addition to reading out loud, seek out demonstration, repetition, practice, and body language. Another way is through remedial work, in which they give different tasks to target the difficulties and make the comprehension process easier for them.

Question 4: How would you assess your students' overall language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening?

The purpose of this question is to know the teachers' ways of assessing their students' language skills. Through our discussion with the three teachers, we inferred that listening and speaking skills are assessed on interactive competence, fluency, pronunciation, accuracy, and vocabulary through class activities and discussion. Whereas, reading and writing are evaluated on fluency, content, syntax, vocabulary, organization, grammar, and clarity through reading comprehension tests and pieces of writing.

Question 5: What role do you think listening skill play in overall language proficiency and students' success?

The aim behind this question is to understand the status of listening as a receptive skill in language learning. Teachers' answers reveal that listening skill plays a pivotal role in language development.

Interviewee 1 (Teacher 1): "While listening, the learner gains information to use it correctly when speaking or writing because active listening motivates the students to comprehend, grasp, and interpret verbal and non-verbal messages. So, the students interact with their teacher, understand new vocabulary and expressions, and learn effectively".

Interviewee 2 (Teacher 2): "Developing the language to a high extent depends on the listening skill. Listening to native speakers provides learners with a great amount of information, which helps them develop a larger vocabulary and background".

Interviewee 3 (Teacher 3): "Listening enhances students' awareness of language and improves it. It is the only way to fully adapt to a language's sound, rhythm, intonation, and stress".

Question 6: What are the problems that you have noticed in terms of students struggling with listening comprehension?

This question sought to identify common challenges that students face when it comes to listening comprehension. Two teachers (Interviewees 1 and 3) agreed that students struggle in listening comprehension with identifying key words and phrases and remembering information heard earlier in the conversation. However, teacher 2 (interviewee 2) mentions another obstacle. She said: "Students usually face listening problems with their teachers as well as native speakers because of the different pronunciation and their first exposure to the language".



Question 7: According to your experience, what are the strategies you use to establish a learning environment in a classroom that fosters active listening?

This question seeks to know the teaching strategies that teachers use to create a positive and engaging classroom environment that encourages active listening among students. In this regard, all three teachers agreed that they use visual aids to support listening comprehension and motivate the students, create a comfortable classroom environment, encourage students' participation using reinforcement and positive feedback, design a variety of tasks from easy to difficult, use body language, and explain new items.

Question 8: What is your perception of using body language as a teaching strategy during listening comprehension tasks?

This question was asked to reveal teachers views on the use of body language during listening comprehension tasks. They stated that:

Interviewee 1 (Teacher 1): "The use of body language in the teaching process is of great importance in conveying the message and retaining information because it is an easy and simple way to explain, illustrate, and clarify".

Interviewee 2 (Teacher 2): "I think that body language is essential as a vital medium for transmitting our message. Sometimes it makes things clearer than pictures, and it can be unforgettable. You can even check the students understanding through it".

Interviewee 3 (Teacher 3): "Body language plays a paramount role in teaching and listening tasks precisely because it accounts for most of the information conveyed. When the verbal and non-verbal cues align, it builds trust, clarity, and rapport, which helps students better comprehend the intended message".

Question 9: Which body language cues do you tend to use most during the listening comprehension tasks?

- ✓ Eye Contact
- ✓ Voice Tone
- ✓ Hands Movements
- ✓ Body Movements
- ✓ Spacial Distance
- ✓ Facial Expressions
- ✓ Posture
- ✓ Touching

The purpose of this question is to shed light on the specific body language cues that teachers use most frequently during listening comprehension tasks. There was agreement among teachers about the use of all the mentioned body language cues; eye contact, voice tone, hands movements, body movements, special distance, facial expressions, posture, and touching. In the words of one of them (Teacher 3): “During the listening tasks, I frequently use them according to the given task”.

Question 10: When do you incorporate your body language cues most into listening tasks? Is it in the pre-listening stage, in the while-listening stage, or in the post-listening stage?

This question is intended to determine when teachers incorporate body language cues most frequently into listening activities. Two teachers (Interviewees 2 and 3) agreed upon incorporating the body language cues most in both the pre-listening stage and the while-listening stage for activating students’ background knowledge and making them more engaged and interested in the upcoming tasks. Unlike the other teacher (Interviewee 1), who

said: "I often use body language most in the while-listening stage because in this phase I provide my students with tasks that require explanations and clarifications, so I have to use my body language".

Question 11: What role do you believe your body language plays in students' listening comprehension?

This question aims to highlight teachers' beliefs regarding the function of body language in students' listening comprehension. In which teachers provide divergent views in this respect:

Interviewee 1 (Teacher 1): "Body language makes it easier for students to decode what they receive. Because nonverbal actions are more expressive than words. This will engage and motivate students, making lessons more memorable and fun".

Interviewee 2 (Teacher 2): "The appropriate use of body language creates an interacting environment in the classroom. Sometimes, when the script is a story or a play, teachers tend to play the roles, which promotes better listening comprehension skills".

Interviewee 3 (Teacher 3): "Body language is an indispensable component for teachers while delivering their lectures and instructions. It also helps in reinforcing the learners' acquisition of new vocabulary and provides a pleasant classroom environment for them.".

Question 12: Are body language cues effective at motivating students during listening comprehension?

This question was asked to determine if teachers view body language as a motivational tool. All the teachers answered by yes, saying it is effective at motivating and engaging students during listening comprehension tasks.

Question 13: How do you provide your students with feedback using body language cues?

This question was asked to know the ways that teachers provide feedback to their students using their body language. They stated the following:

Interviewee 1 (Teacher 1): "I make eye contact to show attentiveness and engagement, I smile to show satisfaction, and I use nodding to show if they are correct or not".

Interviewee 2 (Teacher 2): "I use my facial expressions to convey emotions and shake my head to indicate agreement and disagreement".

Interviewee 3 (Teacher 3): "I used to touch my students, like patting them on the back or giving them a high-five, as a way of rewarding them for their work or positive behaviors".

Question 14: What are your suggestions concerning the incorporation of body language in the classroom and its impact on students' listening comprehension?

In this question, we intend to explore the perspectives and experiences of teachers regarding the best practices for integrating body language in the classroom to reinforce students' listening comprehension. The teachers' suggestions are as follows:

Interviewee 1 (Teacher 1): "Body language develops students' abilities, especially the listening one. Therefore, I suggest using it appropriately and making sure it is positive and encouraging. It can also serve as a way to engage students and make them more involved in the learning process. Also, I suggest inspectors train teachers and urge them to apply and use body language."

Interviewee 2 (Teacher 2): "As a foreign language teacher for more than 13 years, I strongly believe that body language is the key factor that fosters students' comprehension and their listening outcomes in particular, especially when it comes to beginners who are motivated by

nature to learn the language. So, the teacher has to vary his teaching style, and stressing the excessive use of body language is one of which. For example, different facial expressions will give the pupils strong hints about what the teacher is clarifying. Also, teachers should speak loudly and clearly to raise students' attention and listen effectively. Not only, but teachers should also maintain eye contact as a communicative tool with their students to let them feel the teachers' pertinence. It is also important for teachers to master the art of using body distance, gestures, and appropriate body posture and pay attention to every single detail that their bodies convey”.

Interviewee 3 (Teacher 3): “Being a foreign language teacher requires being active as much as possible. So, teachers should be aware of the suitable implementation of positive body language forms and avoid transmitting a bad impression to their students via negative gestures”.

### ***2.2.3 Discussion of the Results***

After gathering the data from teachers’ classroom observation and interview, the results will be discussed in relation to the questions posed. Teachers’ classroom observation and interview provided valuable insights concerning exploring teachers' use of body language in the EFL classroom and their perspectives about its role in students' listening comprehension.

The classroom observation’s main objective is to answer the first raised research question, "To what extent do teachers use body language in the EFL classroom?". From our findings, which are based on the eight observed body language cues; eye contact, voice tone, hands movements, body movements, spacial distance, facial expressions, posture, and touching, we conclude that:

Firstly, the results showed that the application of eye contact by teachers ranged between focus and general eye contact in different situations. However, it was to show both positive and negative messages to their students. This cue can be interpreted as an inseparable part of the teaching process. Its impact was remarkable in terms of students' attention, discipline, and mainly ensuring their concentration in comparison to those who were not paying attention, as well as controlling their session's progress. Secondly, we found that voice tone is critical to classroom dynamics. The loud voice tone has a significant impact on students' ability to comprehend the teachers' words, contributing to higher focus. The majority of students preferred the loud voice tone and showed increased concentration, while some found it predictable and lost interest. Additionally, teachers used their hands extensively during their classroom sessions. They were able to use them appropriately to enhance classroom communication and aid in clarifying concepts for their students, and they rarely moved them contradictorily. This indicates the teachers' awareness of the importance of sharing suitable hands movements to cope with their students' comprehension difficulties. Moreover, staying in the front of the classroom negatively impacted the back students, leading them to lose their attention, being noisy in the classroom, and get bored. So, moving to the back of the classroom permanently engages students in learning. In addition, teachers' physical proximity or their spacial distance showed a significant impact on students' engagement and behavior. Teachers' close proximity involved the students more effectively in the interaction but failed to engage those seated towards the back. This proves the advantage of maintaining a close distance from time to time to help students feel more comfortable, valued, less stressed, and motivated. Furthermore, teachers' facial expressions play a significant role in creating a positive classroom environment and promoting student engagement

in learning. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of teachers being aware of how their facial expressions may be perceived by their students, especially when providing feedback. Next, the teachers' posture also served as a positive example for the students, encouraging them to adopt a similar attitude when engaging in the lesson. This not only helped foster better relationships between the teachers and the students but also created a more productive learning environment. By maintaining an upright posture, the teachers were able to deliver their lessons with confidence and authority, which helped to keep students engaged and motivated throughout the session. Finally, teachers used the touching cue as a way to support their students in a respectful and appropriate manner. This emphasizes the value of positive reinforcement strategies in the classroom.

We confirmed the findings of our classroom observation with question nine (9) in the interview, in which we found agreement among teachers on the use of the aforementioned body language cues.

Overall, from the discussed results of the classroom observation and question nine (9) from the interview, we generate an answer to the first research question in which the three EFL teachers incorporate the eight cues of body language in first-year middle school classes excessively depending on what is needed when delivering their lectures.

Teachers' interview answer the second research question "According to EFL teachers, what role does body language play in students' listening comprehension?". Based on the responses of the teachers to the interview, it was evident that their perspectives varied from which their first-year students demonstrated effective reactions to the learning process, were motivated, and learn the language naturally. This ensures that they use different teaching strategies to engage and motivate

students to improve their language skills after assessing them. Especially the listening one, because it was confirmed as a fundamental skill for English language learning and students tend to listen more than they speak, read and write. It is essential to improving language ability, encouraging interpretation, and providing them with a broader vocabulary and background. In order to foster this skill and handle students' listening comprehension problems, teachers use a variety of strategies, and body language is one of them. They stress the use of body language as a teaching strategy to convey information and listen more effectively. Also, make it easier for students to understand and retain it during different phases of the listening activity. Emphasizing one of the main objectives concerning EFL teachers' perspectives about the role of body language in students' listening comprehension and based on our findings, teachers confirmed its vital role as a key component of effective teaching and student engagement. According to teachers, the use of body language in the classroom plays a significant role in conveying emotions, retaining information, promoting listening comprehension, and motivating students. Also, to provide them with feedback using suitable body language. Thus, create a positive and interactive classroom environment. Therefore, teachers highlighted numerous suggestions concerning the need for applying body language in the learning process and for teaching a foreign language in particular for its effectiveness in students' listening comprehension.

From the discussed results, it has been demonstrated that teachers' use of body language with their words offers students a clear and visual depiction of the content. Simply relying on words alone may fail to convey the intended meaning to first-year middle school students. Consequently, incorporating body language into teaching enhances students' listening comprehension.



#### ***2.2.4 Limitations of the Study***

Despite the careful execution of this study and its successful achievement of its objectives, there were several difficulties listed as follows:

- Due to the small sample size, it is difficult to generalize the results to a larger population of English teachers.
- It was difficult to conduct a comprehensive literature review due to a lack of resources, as several books containing worthy content were only available for purchase online. This rendered them inaccessible to us.
- Since our sample was comprised only of three female teachers, we do not know if the male teachers use their body language and respond in the same way.

#### ***2.2.5 Recommendations***

Based on the results obtained, we suggest a set of recommendations:

- We suggest conducting the same study with a larger sample to overcome the generalization issue.
- Since our research was conducted using two (2) data collection tools; observation and interview, further research can investigate the same topic, relying on an experimental study for more accurate and reliable findings.
- For the effectiveness of body language in the learning process, teachers should incorporate it appropriately at all educational levels.
- Teachers are suggested to move around the classroom in order to engage all the students in learning.
- Teachers should take into consideration their proper body distance for classroom management.

- Teachers' facial expressions tell a lot about their emotions, interests, and attitudes. Therefore, they should be aware of transmitting positive and motivating facial expressions to make students more interested and enthusiastic about the material being taught.
- We recommend curriculum designers emphasize the use of body language as a teaching strategy and train teachers to master its proper use.
- Teachers must create a convenient atmosphere within the classroom for students to focus on their body language.

### **Conclusion**

The collected data is analyzed qualitatively and discussed in relation to the research problem. Thus, we ensured EFL teachers application of body language as well as its effectiveness in enhancing students' listening comprehension. In addition to highlighting potential limitations and recommendations.

## General Conclusion

As the gateway to a world of language and opportunities, the teacher's role in teaching English to middle school students is crucial to sparking their interest and engagement in learning. Since acquiring the language greatly depends on attentive listening ability and relying on only one teaching strategy is inadequate due to the students' challenges with listening comprehension. The current study has been undertaken to explore EFL teachers' use of body language and their perspectives about its role in students' listening comprehension at Haffian Taher Ben Ali Middle School "Hammamet".

This study seeks to determine the extent to which EFL teachers use body language in their interactions with first-year middle school students, as well as their perspectives about its role in their listening comprehension. In this respect, our work was divided into two chapters. The first chapter provided a theoretical overview of the studied issue and consisted of two sections. The first section represented communication in general and body language in particular, while the second section reviewed various concepts and details concerning listening comprehension. The second chapter was devoted to the research methodology and data analysis. It also consisted of two sections. Research methodology was underlined in the first section, including research paradigm, approach, instrumentation, sampling, and data collection procedures. However, the second section comprised of the data analysis and results discussion, along with the limitations given for this research and the suggested recommendations.

In order to answer our research questions, two data collection tools were used to collect valuable data. On the first hand, the structured observation was carried out to answer the first research question concerning EFL teachers' use of body language

cues; eye contact, voice tone, hands movements, body movements, spacial distance, facial expressions, posture, and touching in the classroom. On the other hand, teachers' structured interview was conducted aiming at answering the second research question concerning EFL teachers' perspectives about the role of their body language in students' listening comprehension.

Therefore, the classroom observation and interview findings' confirmed that EFL teachers incorporate body language cues excessively and usually appropriately in the classroom. Also, it plays a crucial role in enhancing students' listening comprehension. Thereby, from this research, it is inferred that teachers' verbal communication is not sufficient medium for providing their students with enough comprehensive input; rather, varying their teaching methods via stressing the appropriate use of body language will certainly lead to the creation of a learning environment that fosters effective listening and improves the target language.

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## **Appendix B: Teachers' Interview**

Dear teachers,

This interview serves as a data collection instrument administered to English Teachers at Haffian Taher Ben Ali Middle School in Hammamet, to gather relevant data about exploring teachers' perspectives about the role of body language in students' listening comprehension. Your collaboration will be highly appreciated.

Note: Based on your experience, answer the questions in accordance with the level of first-year students.

### **Questions:**

- 1- How long have you been teaching English at the Middle School?
- 2- How would you describe the overall students' interaction and response towards the English language as they are beginners in learning it?
- 3- What strategies do you use to help your students comprehend and retain information?
- 4- How would you assess your students' overall language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening?
- 5- What role do you think listening skill play in overall language proficiency and students' success?
- 6- What are the problems that you have noticed in terms of students struggling with listening comprehension?
- 7- According to your experience, what are the strategies you use to establish a learning environment in a classroom that fosters active listening?
- 8- What is your perception of using body language as a teaching strategy during listening comprehension tasks?

9- Which body language cues do you tend to use most during the listening comprehension tasks?

- ✓ Eye Contact
- ✓ Facial Expressions
- ✓ Voice Tone
- ✓ Hands Movement
- ✓ Body Movement
- ✓ Spacial Distance
- ✓ Posture
- ✓ Touching

10- When do you incorporate your body language cues most into listening tasks? Is it in the pre-listening stage, in the while-listening stage, or in the post-listening stage?

11- What role do you believe your body language plays in students' listening comprehension?

12- Are body language cues effective at motivating students during listening comprehension?

13- How do you provide your students with feedback using body language cues?

14- What are your suggestions concerning the incorporation of body language in the classroom and its impact on students' listening comprehension?

**Thank you !**

## Appendix C:



الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية والشعبية  
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي  
جامعة العربي التبسي تبسة  
كلية الآداب واللغات  
قسم الآداب و اللغة الإنجليزية



إلى السيد (ة): ..... من مؤسسة الشهيد  
حنيا بن الملائكة بن يحيى الهمامة -

إذن بالدخول

بعد التحية و الإحترام ،

لغرض إستكمال البحوث الميدانية لطلبة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية يرجى منكم السماح للطلبة الآتية أسمائهم  
بإجراء زيارات ميدانية بمؤسستكم : ..... من مؤسسة الشهيد حنيا بن الملائكة بن يحيى الهمامة -

الطالب : ..... عوييس عيا ..... و ..... تبتة

الطالب : ..... جليل سوس

الطالب : .....

التخصص : ..... ثانياة هاستر علوم اللغة -

في الأخير تقبلوا منا فائق التحية و الاحترام

في : ..... 2023.03.05

المؤسسة المستقبلة

رئيس القسم

الأستاذ المشرف

المدير  
طوالسة أحمد

رئيس القسم  
كلية الآداب واللغات  
الجامعة العربية التبسي تبسة  
فوابية أسماء

ع

## Résumé

Enseigner l'anglais au collège n'est pas une mince affaire, surtout pour les débutants. Les enseignants EFL utilisent une variété de stratégies pour piquer la curiosité de leurs élèves et favoriser leur apprentissage des langues, en particulier dans le domaine de l'écoute. Malheureusement, les complexités de la langue anglaise peuvent compliquer la compréhension du message d'écoute destiné aux étudiants. Par conséquent, la mise en œuvre du langage corporel comme stratégie d'enseignement et comme type de communication dans une large mesure peut avoir un rôle efficace dans le développement de la compréhension auditive des élèves. La présente recherche est une étude exploratoire reposant sur une approche qualitative qui vise à explorer l'utilisation du langage corporel par les enseignants d'EFL et leurs points de vue sur son rôle dans la compréhension orale des élèves. Il est divisé en deux chapitres principaux; le premier est consacré à la partie théorique de la présente recherche, et le second est pratique, y compris la méthodologie de recherche, l'analyse des données, la discussion, les limites et les recommandations. Cette étude a été menée à l'aide de deux outils de collecte de données qui ont été adressés aux enseignants EFL de première année au collège Haffian Taher Ben Ali "Hammamet" dans le but de répondre à nos questions de recherche. Le premier outil de collecte de données était une observation structurée pour observer l'utilisation par les enseignants des signaux du langage corporel. La seconde était une entrevue structurée pour mettre en évidence les points de vue des enseignants sur le rôle de leur langage corporel dans la compréhension orale des élèves. Les résultats ont révélé que les enseignants d'EFL intègrent le langage corporel de manière excessive dans la classe et la plupart du temps de manière appropriée. De plus, il joue un rôle crucial dans l'amélioration de la compréhension orale des élèves. Enfin, un certain nombre de recommandations



proposées sur l'utilisation appropriée du langage corporel ont été fournies pour obtenir de meilleurs résultats d'apprentissage.

*Mots-clés:* langage corporel, EFL, compréhension orale

### الملخص

إن تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في المدرسة المتوسطة ليس بالأمر السهل، خاصة للمبتدئين. يستخدم مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية مجموعة متنوعة من الاستراتيجيات لإثارة فضول طلابهم وتعزيز تعلمهم للغة، لا سيما في مجال الاستماع. لسوء الحظ، يمكن أن تجعل تعقيدات اللغة الإنجليزية من الصعب على الطلاب فهم رسالة الاستماع المقصودة. وفقاً لذلك، قد يكون لتطبيق لغة الجسد كاستراتيجية تدريس ونوع من الاتصال إلى حد كبير دور فعال في تطوير فهم الاستماع لدى الطلاب. البحث الحالي عبارة عن دراسة استكشافية تعتمد على نهج نوعي يهدف إلى استكشاف استخدام معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للغة الجسد ووجهات نظرهم حول دورها في الفهم السمعي للطلاب. وهي مقسمة إلى فصلين رئيسيين؛ الأول مخصص للجزء النظري من البحث الحالي، والثاني عملي، بما في ذلك منهجية البحث، وتحليل البيانات، والمناقشة، والقيود، والتوصيات. أجريت هذه الدراسة باستخدام أداتين لجمع البيانات تم توجيههما لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للسنة الأولى في متوسطة حفيان الطاهر بن علي "الحمامات" من أجل الإجابة على أسئلة البحث. كانت أداة جمع البيانات الأولى عبارة عن ملاحظة منظمة لمراقبة استخدام المعلمين لإشارات لغة الجسد. والثاني عبارة عن مقابلة منظمة لتسليط الضوء على وجهات نظر المعلمين حول دور لغة جسدهم في الفهم السمعي للطلاب. كشفت النتائج أن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يدمجون لغة الجسد بشكل مفرط في الفصل الدراسي وفي معظم الوقت بشكل مناسب. علاوة على ذلك، تلعب دوراً مهماً في تعزيز فهم الاستماع لدى الطلاب. أخيراً، تم تقديم عدد من التوصيات المقترحة حول الاستخدام المناسب للغة الجسد لتحقيق نتائج تعليمية أفضل.

*الكلمات المفتاحية: لغة الجسد، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الفهم السمعي*