# Verbal and Nonverbal Teacher Affectivity in an EFL Classroom: A Pre-service Teachers' Perspective

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**Abstract**  What teachers do and how they do it – what language choices they make and what non-verbal signals they send to their students – all constitute an affective dimension of a FL teacher's discourse and has a significant impact on effective interaction, group dynamics and, as a result, student language achievement and well-being. This article focuses on the specificity of foreign language (FL) teacher talk (TT) as an expression of his/her emotionality and on the impact it has on the students. It consists of three parts. Firstly, it expresses the view on the importance of affectivity in the FL classroom on the basis of a continuously growing body of research. The emphasis is on verbal and nonverbal aspects of teachers' emotionality as expressed in their classroom talk. The second part of the text reports on a small-scale empirical study of pre-service teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) and their perception of how they actually express affectivity in teacher talk on the level of verbosity (their choice of language) as well as their nonverbal behaviour. Preliminary observations signal that this group of pre-service teachers still involved in their professional training is largely unaware of how to use affectivity as a tool in successful teaching and communication in the FL classroom. The study results point out that an active engagement of the trainees in self-awareness and self-assessment by means of action research projects is an important element in FL teacher education.

**Keywords**  EFL trainees · Teacher talk · Verbal indictors · Nonverbal indicators · Awareness

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## 1   Introduction

The importance of emotions in our functioning in every domain of life, in personal, social and professional spheres of life, is demonstrated in our behaviour and in the way we assess situations and react to them. It is the result of brain activation that is based on intricate interaction between cognitive and affective processing and the primary activation of the affective brain (amygdala) to filter the way we think (Schumann, 1999). We express our emotions verbally and non-verbally. The language choices we make in particular situations give evidence of how we feel at a given moment and are accompanied by non-verbal signals, for example gestures, body language or eye contact. Not only daily interaction observations but also research demonstrate that the nonverbal dimension of communication plays a dominant role in being able to communicate to and understand others in a variety of contexts of interaction (Mast, 2007; Phutela, 2015; Zeki, 2009).

This article focuses on the affective dimension of teacher discourse expressed by teacher talk (TT) in an EFL classroom in communicating and interacting with learners. It embraces both verbal and nonverbal aspects of TT. It compares what we actually know about FL teacher discourse on the basis of extensive research in this area and confronts it with the empirical data collected from pre-service EFL teachers on the awareness of their TT emotionality. The findings of the study help formulate certain implications for teacher training in respect of teacher emotionality, an important aspect contributing to their success as teachers and also to their wellbeing as humans.

As stated earlier, the study reported here is part of a teacher training programme, which embraces the idea that developing teacher reflectivity at any stage of teachers' professional development is a necessary condition for teacher success. Introducing reflection-on-action in the form of small-scale action research projects, we as trainers can focus on various areas of trainees' experiences in their own classrooms. Additionally, the dissemination of the results gathered becomes an important instrument in future (FL) teacher professional development.

## 2   Teacher Talk as Classroom Discourse: Functions and Characteristics

Classroom discourse on the part of the teacher is first of all expressed by his/her talk. In a foreign language class, teacher talk is usually monitored and planned, and it demonstrates the teacher's approach to teaching (Gabryś-Barker, 2018). In the teacher-centred class, the dominance of TT (versus learner talk) will be visible not only on the level of language presentation, but also classroom management, and as a consequence of teacher responsibility for all that happens in the classroom. On the other hand, in the learner-centred class, where some of the responsibility is passed on to the learners, the teacher will try to limit his/her talk to elicit language from the learners, i.e. learner talk (LT). Thus, the proportion between TT and LT will be the

opposite of what can be observed in the teacher-centred approach. Irrespective of what the teacher's approach is, as mentioned earlier, TT is seen not only as a planned and monitored process at different stages of the lesson (on-tasks activities), but it also embraces spontaneous talk (off-task communication). In each case, TT is an important verbal and nonverbal tool allowing for a (hopefully) smooth communication and interaction during a FL lesson to reach the objectives of a lesson and thus, contributing to its effectiveness. In classroom discourse, various factors play a role as Tsui (2008) puts it

> The linguistic and non-linguistic elements constitute the observable dimension of classroom discourse. Studies of classroom discourse have explored factors which play a critical role in shaping classroom discourse. These factors pertain to the sociocultural contexts in which the discourse is generated, including the physical environment, the socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds of participants, as well as the psychological dimensions such as their perceptions, emotions, beliefs and orientations. They constitute the unobservable dimension of classroom discourse (p. 261)

Research on classroom discourse offers a variety of classifications of classroom talk. One of them presented by Watkinson (2006) divides classroom talk into:

- cognitive talk, which focuses on the subject taught (here: a FL),
- managerial talk, which is responsible for various organizational aspects of a lesson and for example, controlling and reacting to classroom behaviour,
- counseling talk, in which a teacher responds to pupils´ needs and feelings, giving appropriate feedback,
- expressive talk, which demonstrates feelings and emotions in response to a person or a situation.

Table 1 presents a more detailed discussion of another classification of TT (for an even more detailed discussion of these types of TT, see the *Foreign Language Teacher Talk Survey* in Warford and Rose, 2011) (Table 1).

Foreign language TT is one of the important sources of input for learners, and exposure to it during a lesson may create a semi-authentic situation of communication in a given language. It is not only a model of new language being introduced but also a tool of communication and interaction for both task and off-task procedures during the lesson. In such a way it can be compared to foreigner talk. In fact, definitions of the construct and research on TT are very much based on foreigner talk studies. Both of them present a modified version of authentic language, adapted to a given interlocutor (a learner – his or her level and characteristics) and the context (classroom or beyond, type of task/activity, objectives etc.). The modifications in TT (like in foreigner talk) mean that on the one hand the language learners are exposed to may be far from authentic, but on the other, the modifications assure the comprehensibility of the message. According to one of the first studies of TT (Osborne, 1999), foreign language TT embraces phonological, lexical, syntactic and discourse modifications. Phonological modifications are observed in the:

- exaggerated articulation of words and phrases, even emphatic at points
- extended pauses in speech to allow the learner to process the message heard
- slower than natural rate of speech

**Table 1** Classification of TT (Gabryś-Barker, 2018, p. 303, based on Warford & Rose, 2011)

| Main aspects/categories of TT | Specific categories | Role |
|---|---|---|
| Procedural | Taking attendance, announcements, giving directions to an activity, introducing a topic, goals, giving agenda for a lesson, etc. | Organizer |
| Instructional (discourse related to lesson content) | Introducing new language, reviewing, modeling, drills, activities and exercises, etc. | Knowledge giver/ source of input |
| Offering and soliciting feedback (discourse related to progress, repair sequences/ corrections) | Explicit and implicit corrections, praising, comprehension check, giving feedback, etc. | Assessor/corrector/ evaluator |
| Spontaneous L2/FL talk (interaction on and off task) | Eliciting student talk, facilitating communication, expressing humour/ empathy/sympathy, etc. | Facilitator/ communicator/ interlocutor |
| Classroom management/ maintaining discipline | Reminding the rules of behaviour, encouraging engagement in tasks, discouraging misbehaviour, etc. | Manager/facilitator |

- atypical pronunciation with less reduction of vowels and consonants clusters
- a louder delivery
- use of a more standard pronunciation, avoiding dialectal forms

On the level of lexical modifications of TT the following ones are observed:

- more basic vocabulary, adjusted to the level of learners
- focusing more on formal and informal lexis than colloquialisms
- fewer indefinite pronouns
- neutral and unmarked style

Syntactic modifications in TT are expressed by the use of simplified structures in term of:

- avoidance of subordinate clauses
- shorter clauses (fewer words in a clause)
- shorter sentences
- predominance in the use of simple present tense
- use of fully grammatically correct sentences

There are also significant discourse modifications introduced in TT and expressed as:

- use of first person references
- simplified language functions
- teacher-initiated talk (though the trend is to do otherwise now)
- using conversational frames and scripts/schemata
- implementation of self-repetitions
- repetitiveness (more verbalization)

Some of these modifications require more affective expression on the part of the teacher to have a greater impact on learners, for example phonological modifications, among others.

Additionally, it is assumed that to be more easily understood, a FL teacher can modify his/her talk by more affective language use, which is mostly visible at its phonological level (e.g., the use of emphasis). Also, the nonverbal aspect of TT needs to be modified, especially that this dimension of interaction is culture-sensitive. Thus, by appropriate use of nonverbal signals, a FL teacher makes learners aware of how to carry out a successful communication act in a given FL, especially in the target language context. Unfortunately, this is an often neglected aspect of classroom discourse (more on non-verbality in TT later in the text).

## 3  Expression of Affectivity in Teacher Talk

### 3.1  *Language Is Us*

Metzger (2007) believes that the language we use, of which we are not always fully aware, can reveal who we are. Language choices in communication express not only our educational background, but also who we are as people, our attitudes and emotions. This verbality is accompanied by a whole array of nonverbal communication signals. Also in the classroom context, the (FL) teacher uses language not only to present the material, monitor the lesson and follow all the necessary procedures in the classroom, but he/she also expresses much more: some aspects of his/her personality, the attitude to the subject taught and to the learners, often accompanied by bursts of affective reactions to the situation. Teacher language is believed to affect learners: "Your choice of words and your language selections are critical to the self-esteem, the academic success, and the healthy mental and emotional development of your students" (Arnold-Morgan & Fonseca-Mora, 2007, p. 1).

Classroom discourse, which teacher talk is a part of, embraces all the teachers' different functions and responsibilities at different stages of a lesson, as well as more generally, in creating positivity and motivating learners. The latter functions are affective in nature and are observable in verbal and nonverbal aspects of teacher talk.

### 3.2  *Verbal Affectivity in Teacher Talk*

Empirical data on teacher classroom behavior demonstrate that out of the 60 different behaviour patterns of teachers, four major categories were identified by Arnold-Morgan and Fonseca-Mora (2007) as marked affectively, both in the positive and negative sense (Table 2).

**Table 2** Affective aspects of teacher classroom behaviour – categories (Gabryś-Barker, 2018, p. 308, based on Arnold-Morgan & Fonseca-Mora, 2007)

| Category | Examples |
|---|---|
| Teacher questioning behaviour, especially teachers´ response to students´ questions/comments. | Listening to students attentively, appreciating their responses, flexibility in a lesson plan, availability beyond the class. |
| Teacher demonstrates interest in students and in their learning. | Giving constructive feedback on students' work/performance, being familiar with learners as individuals (e.g., knowing their names), making an effort to get to know students better, providing praise and encouragement, expressing genuine interest in learners´ progress. |
| Teaching style | Implementing comprehension checks, introducing interaction during classes, listening to students, accepting their views, making connections between material and its value for learners in their lives. |
| Aberrant disconfirmation | Using put-down statements, ignoring student responses and comments, embarrassing students in front of class, playing favourites and ignoring others, interrupting students, focusing more on teaching and fulfilling the syllabus than monitoring learning. |

The verbal affectivity of teacher talk is visible at every stage of a lesson when the focus is on pre-determined and planned activities but also in spontaneous communication in off-task situations (e.g., small talk). Table 3 illustrates instances of affectivity of teacher talk.

The following verbal indicators of teacher affectivity can be observed in TT and demonstrate very well the verbal immediacy (closeness) of the teacher (based on Gregersen, 2010):

- using personal examples, soliciting viewpoints, and discussing issues unrelated to class, thus encouraging students to talk, discussing student topics,
- employing humour,
- addressing students by name,
- praising student work,
- having conversations outside of class.

Each of these indicators demonstrates teacher engagement in the process of teaching and interaction, and expresses the affectivity of the attitude and approach to the learners the teacher exhibits.

## 3.3 Nonverbal Affectivity in Teacher Talk

The non-verbal dimension of FL classroom communication performs a double function. First of all, it contributes to the level of comprehension during the lesson, both during the on-task and off-task interaction. Secondly, it shapes learner attitudes

**Table 3** Verbal affectivity of teacher talk (based on Gabryś-Barker, 2018)

| Context | Affectivity indicators |
|---|---|
| Procedural teacher talk | Forms of direct address, the use of personal pronouns (*us, we*) (Taylor, 2005) in Arnold-Morgan & Fonseca-Mora (2007)) |
| | Expression of teacher's engagement in the lesson, affective |
| | Language expressing one's feelings: *How interesting!, you will find it quite exciting* or *I am glad to be able to share this with you*, etc. |
| Classroom management/ maintaining discipline | Encouraging engagement in tasks and discouraging misbehaviour: |
| | Best expressed by non-verbal signals (such as tone of voice) |
| | Impact of the choice of language on how learners perform and whether they behave according to the set rules. |
| Offering and soliciting feedback | In discourse related to progress, repair sequences/corrections): |
| | Giving feedback (a combination of its cognitive, affective, external and internal characteristics, positive and negative statements). |
| Spontaneous L2/FL talk | In eliciting student talk, facilitating communication expressing |
| | Humour/empathy/sympathy: |
| | Off-task communication (teacher's interest in learners) |
| | A teacher addressing a learner by his/her first name (and not his/her surname!), which creates learner visibility in class (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003). |

and motivation to learn and become actively involved in learning during a lesson. Compared with verbal messages, whose main function is cognitive (though with elements of affectivity), the nonverbal aspect of communication performs mainly affective and emotional functions (Richmond & McCroskey, 2004). Non-verbal messages are expressed in:

- posture, touching behaviour, facial expressions and eye behavior
- proxemics: how personal and social space are used and perceived
- paralinguistics: how something is said rather than what is said (including tone, pitch rhythm, timbre, loudness and inflection) (Knapp & Hall, 1992 in Gregersen, 2005, p. 18)

Each of these elements has its place in classroom communication and interaction. One of the most important nonverbal elements are gestures. Following Ekman & Friesen (1969), Gregersen (2007) presents a typology of gestures related to (classroom) communication:

- Illustrators (gesturing, smiling, frowning, pointing to something): they accompany verbal speech to complement the message, to emphasize some element of content, to make the message clearer.
- Regulators (termination of a gesture, change in eye gaze direction, looking away from the speaker): they are used to regulate interaction, for example turn-taking in a conversation.

- Emblems (e.g. *good luck, time is over*, nodding and turning head, etc.): they transmit information/messages, to substitute words symbolically, grounded in a given culture.
- Affect display (facial expression, smiling, laughing, crying, body posture): they express emotion, grounded in a given culture (e.g. their frequency and appropriacy of use in a given context).

Each of these gestures performs different functions in classroom communication and constitutes a significant part of teacher discourse in the FL classroom. As such, they all affect learners, however, it is the latter group that directly contributes to the affectivity level and type in the classroom (Gregersen, 2007). Apart from teacher gestures, a teacher also has other means of expressing their affectivity: eye contact, facial expression and proximity understood as non-verbal immediacy/closeness (described in Table 4).

Especially the last non-verbal indicator (proximity/non-verbal immediacy) is seen as significant in teacher classroom interaction expressing affectivity. Elliott (2004, p. 99) suggests the following guidelines on how to use teacher non-verbal immediacy:

> Stand or sit confidently – shoulders back, spine straight and so on. Stand still! Shifting feet distracts pupils and are a sure sign of nerves. Control your hands! However nervous you are feeling inside, try to avoid fidgeting with them. Try to be positive and expressive with your face: smile and nod regularly when pupils say and do anything positive. Have the confidence to approach pupils for an intimate discussion of their work, but avoid invading their personal space.

The teacher's position and his/her use of space in the classroom, as well as his/her body posture in class, demonstrate both the teacher's affinity with the group and

**Table 4** Nonverbal indicators of affect (based on Christophel, 1990 and Gregersen 2007, 2010)

| Non-verbal indicator | Function |
|---|---|
| (Frequent) eye contact | A positive attitude to learners, a form of acknowledgement of their individuality and acceptance |
| | A non-verbal expression of praise or dissatisfaction with learner performance |
| | Control of turn-taking (very) loaded affectively; it may encourage or discourage learner involvement |
| Facial expression | To demonstrate the teacher's attitude to learners and teaching itself; |
| | A form of corrective feedback: a smiling face *versus* a frowning face (less inhibiting than a verbal correction). |
| Proximity (non-verbal immediacy) | To signal approachability and availability for communication. |
| | To increases sensory simulation, and communicates interpersonal warmth and closeness. |
| | To create positive attitudes in learners, greater engagement and motivation to learn |
| | To develop a more positive affect toward instruction when taught by immediacy practising teachers |
| | Teacher position in class and body posture |

individuals as well as the teacher's confidence or otherwise (sitting at the desk versus moving across the classroom, having a tense *versu*s a relaxed body posture when talking to learners). In other words, the use of space in the classroom is accompanied by teacher body language, which may exude teacher confidence or its lack.

## 4 The Emotionality of Teacher Talk: The Case of Pre-service EFL Teachers (the Study)

### 4.1 Methodology and the Aim of the Study

The empirical part of this article offers preliminary findings of a project focusing on the emotionality of pre-service teachers of EFL. It is a part of the ongoing action research project aiming at long-term improvement of teacher training programmes and implementing changes in the short term in a group of trainees who participated in a given study. At different stages of data collection in the homogenous groups of trainees, various aspects of their FL teaching and learning awareness and ability are being examined. So far, they related to the issues of FL learning environment and classroom climate (Gabryś-Barker, 2016; 2019a, b), language choices and the code-switching practices of trainees (Gabryś-Barker, 2020), as well as reflections on their multiple language learning experiences (Gabryś-Barker, 2019a, b) or inspirational approaches to teaching FL (Gabryś-Barker, 2021). Another research project embraces a study of these FL trainee' well-being (Gabryś-Barker, 2022, work in progress). The choice of these issues was dictated by the apparent difficulties these trainees encountered in their own practice of teaching and learning English and their additional languages. Also importantly, it is to promote the development of a reflective approach to one's teaching (and learning) of languages. The modest size of the sample as well as the area of focus determined the methodology used, as all of the studies employed mainly qualitative instruments such as questionnaires, narrative texts, metaphors and visualisation. Each of the studies was carried out as an action research project focusing on the trainees' functioning in their own teaching environment (a school placement, language schools, private tuition).

In the part reported here, the aim of the examination is the trainees' level of awareness of their own emotionality in classroom interaction situations, pointing out its importance for successful communication with their learners. As a consequence, the results of the study allow us to diagnose how aware students are of their emotionality and how they express it in different situations. The implications of the study have led to the implementation of some training strategies for improvement, such as emotion labour strategies and development of teacher wellbeing. As was observed in various earlier studies (e.g., Gabryś-Barker, 2012), emotionality is the dominant source of insecurity pre-service FL teachers experience at the start of their professional development and teaching careers. This focus on emotionality and

raising awareness of it had a pragmatic value for a specific group of subjects who participated in the study. The results have already been implemented in actual teacher training sessions and are outlined here as implications.

In the present study, the following research questions were formulated:

- *How is emotionality expressed in pre-service FL teacher discourse in its verbal and nonverbal dimensions?*
- *How aware are the trainees of their emotionality?*

## *4.2 Participants*

The subjects participating in the study at this stage of the project were 15 pre-service EFL teachers at the BA level during their school placement period. They were about to get initial qualifications to teach English at the primary level of education with the prospect of completing MA degree courses which offer them full qualifications to teach at all levels of the educational system in Poland. All of them completed a set of obligatory courses in applied linguistics, TEFL and theoretical and comparative linguistics, at the same time developing their competence level in English (B2+/C1).

## *4.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures*

The task performed by the trainees constituted an example of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The reflection-in-action occurred during the self-observation in lesson and post-lesson time, whereas reflection-on-action was carried out in an informal group interview between the researcher and the trainees.

To be able to gather data allowing to answer the research questions, self-observation was used. The participants observed their verbal and non-verbal affectivity during their school placement. Using a pre-designed observation scheme (used in the data analysis in Sec. 4.4.2, also see Appendix), the subjects were to mark both:

- verbal indicators of affect in their TT in terms of context, purpose, language expression
- nonverbal indicators of affect in their TT in terms of context, purpose, type of expression.

Each of the subjects observed himself/herself during five lessons, making notes in their individual observation schemes during the lessons after each change of lesson task/activity/procedure. They were also asked to reflect on their emotional behaviours after each lesson by completing the observation forms retrospectively and sharing their thoughts with the researcher in an informal group discussion. The total

number of observations was 60. It could be assumed that it was the downside of the procedure that the subjects were only able to mark these indicators that they mostly used consciously so some of them might have gone unnoticed. However, such a design of the study allowed us to see how much awareness of emotionality and their expression these trainees have and thus, are able (or otherwise) to use and to monitor. The data collected is presented following the observation categories of emotional behaviour expressed by the participants: *context (when?), purpose (why?) and form of expression (how?)*. The contexts of teacher emotionality and its indicators observed during the lesson (*Context/When?*) are classified solely on the basis of the data received and not pre-conceived by the researcher. The subjects referred to the following contexts:

- emotions expressed on completing the task: responding to learner performance (positive and negative feedback)
- emotionality in teacher reaction to misbehaviour of individual learners
- emotionality indicators in response to a noisy and disturbing class

The identical contexts are exemplified and discussed in both verbal and non-verbal indictors of teacher emotionality (the same observation scheme). The data collected is discussed against the theoretical assumptions of TT and its emotionality discussed in the earlier part of the text.

## 4.4   Results of the Study

### Challenges of Identifying Indicators of Affect

The task of identifying their affectivity when communicating with the learners was found by the trainees to be extremely challenging (post-observation informal group discussion). On the one hand, the difficulty of the task was determined by the fact of simultaneously teaching and self-observing to reflect on one's communicative behaviour in class (reflection-in-action) and reflect on it *post factum* in a group interview (reflection-on-action). On the other hand, the identification of emotions and labelling them was not less difficult for the trainees, as it departs from a traditional focus of observation trainees are usually asked to perform and focus on in their practicum lessons.

The collected data reflect the above difficulties and leads to the conclusion that there is a visible gap in the training programme of these pre-service teachers. As emotions are a significant dimension of the teaching-learning continuum, affectivity deserves more attention in developing future teachers' professional competences, which most obviously go beyond only the purely technical abilities of teaching a foreign language. Affectivity as such is also seen as a decisive factor in teacher well-being (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020), but this is the subject of a separate study. The lack of trainees' awareness of how affectivity can serve them as a tool in communicating and interacting with learners during a lesson (and beyond) is shown in the

visibly poor data received in the study, which strongly points to the need for more emphasis to be put on this aspect of professional competence.

## Verbal and Non-verbal Indicators of Affect in Trainees' Classroom Discourse (Data)

The group participating in the study was not very numerous, which was determined by the fact that BA seminars are usually limited in size, i.e. a number of students involved in teacher training at this stage of their professional education. Thus, quantitative analysis is not carried out here as the data indicates only the individual responses of the subjects and constitutes a typical example of an action research project relevant for a given teaching context only. Table 5 demonstrates verbal indicators of affect as identified by the subjects, whereas Table 6 illustrates the non-verbal indicators.

On the one hand, the data collected in the course of study seem highly disappointing due its paucity and insufficiency. On the other hand, such a poor outcome in terms of quantity of observations made by the subjects clearly indicates a high level the trainees' unawareness of their own affectivity during their communication and interaction in class when teaching English. Such a high level of unawareness means that the affective aspect of teacher discourse unnoticed by the subjects cannot be controlled and monitored by them. As such, their emotionality (i.e. its indicators) will not be consciously used by them as a tool for successful teaching, in which affectivity plays a significant role. As emphasised earlier, affectivity in the process of teaching contributes to the development of learner motivation and engagement in teaching as well as a boost to their self-confidence. Thus, it can be assumed that positive affectivity may lead to greater academic achievement (Benesch, 2012; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2017). By making these trainees reflect on their use of affectivity in classroom discourse, gaps in this understanding can be identified. The question is; *What are the areas of affectivity expression which need attention?*

**Table 5** Verbally expressed emotionality (sample data)

| Context/When? | Purpose/Why? | Form of expression/ How? |
|---|---|---|
| On completing the task: Responding to learner performance (positive and negative feedback) | To motivate a learner | *Very good!* (6) |
| | | *Well- done!* (4) |
| | To give feedback | *A (very) good job!* (2) |
| | To encourage | *Nicely done!* |
| | | *Fantastic!* |
| Misbehaviour of an individual | Involvement | *Good work!* |
| Noisy and disturbing class | To mark progress | |
| | To reward good behaviour | |
| | To influence learners´ emotions (in learning) | |

**Table 6** Nonverbally expressed emotionality (sample data)

| Context/When? | Purpose/Why? | Form of expression/How? |
|---|---|---|
| On completing the task: Responding to learner performance (positive and negative feedback) | To motivate | Indicative face expression (negative) |
| | To encourage | |
| | To make students | Gestures |
| | | Smiling |
| | | Staring |
| | Involved | Rewards (stickers and stamps) |
| | To give a clue on correct/incorrect performance | Clapping hands |
| Misbehaviour of an individual | | Head nodding |
| Noisy and disturbing class | To show attitude | Silence (pausing) |
| | To praise | |

# 5   Discussion

Although the data collected in the course of this mini-scale action research project is not very rich, some preliminary observations and findings can be proposed. The first consideration is, to what an extent the whole array of contexts in which affectivity can be employed to make communication and interaction in a FL classroom more effective is identified by the subjects. In their *Foreign Language Teacher Talk Survey,* Warford and Rose (2011) distinguish four general categories of teacher classroom behaviour in which affectivity is seen as playing a significant role as a teaching tool (see Table 1). Additionally, but no less importantly, affectivity is observed in spontaneous L2/FL talk (see Table 3). These categories include procedural, instructional discourse related to lesson focus, offering and soliciting feedback and classroom management/maintaining discipline. Taking into consideration the observations made by the subjects on their own verbal behaviour, it is first of all clear that contexts in which they identify affect in their teacher talk relate just to the last two: giving feedback on the completion of a given task and maintaining discipline in individuals and misbehaving group. Both of these are first of all control and assessment-related situations. In the case of feedback, it also has a motivational aspect, which the subjects rightly point out.

Comparing the findings of the other studies mentioned earlier, we can identify what is missing:

- No expressions of affectivity in procedural talk, which can be shown by for example using the first names of learners, expressing teachers' engagement in the lesson by appropriately chosen emphatic language (phrases such as *I am excited to share this with you!*).
- Total absence of off-task communication or spontaneous talk with the learners, which can best show teachers' attitude to learners, interest in their affairs and thus, resulting in building a successful rapport.

- Lack of building rapport and development of classroom climate by appropriate use of voice (effective vocal strategies as a paralinguistic indicator of affectivity).
- Unawareness of the role of proxemics in the classroom expressed by teacher immediacy, his/her use of classroom space and posture assumed.

We can also observe that there are hardly any indicators of teacher affectivity that would express his/her attitude to the course, and more importantly to the learners themselves. Although the trainees observe that teacher's affectivity is an instrument in motivating and encouraging learners' involvement in learning, praising them for achievement and good behaviour (and reprimanding them for misbehaviour), at the same time, they seem not to be fully aware of how to do it. The limited number of contexts in which affectivity is identified by the trainees also limits the types of indicators used.

The verbal repertoire is very scanty and limited to language expressions such as: *Very good! Well- done*! *A (very) good job. Fantastic.* Paralinguistic signals such as tone of voice or vocal emphasis, pitch rhythm, timbre, loudness and inflection are absent from the data. Also, non-verbal indicators of affect such as posture, touching behaviour, facial expressions and eye behaviour and proxemics (Gregersen, 2005) are not indicted in the data. The non-verbal indicators mentioned in the data are not very abundant, for example they just refer to: an indicative face expression (negative), smiling, staring, clapping hands or head nodding. These are general examples of affect display gestures (e.g., facial expression, smiling) and partly emblems (e.g. nodding, turning head). At the same time, no specific gestures seem to be a part of the trainees' teaching repertoire in relation to their affectivity. These are missing examples of illustrators (e.g. frowning, pointing to something/somebody) or regulators (e.g., gaze direction, looking away, terminating gestures) (Gregersen, 2007). The frequency of the same gestures' use may lower their effectiveness and create teacher routines, which are less effective than various novel ones.

# 6 Conclusions and Implications for FL Teacher Training Programmes

The data collected in this mini-scale research project testify to the need for bridging existing gaps in these trainees' professional instruction. It is demonstrated not only in the scarcity of affective strategies they are able to identify, but also in their very limited awareness of what impact affectivity has on EFL classroom communication and successful interactions. One of the ways of sensitising the trainee teachers (and teachers in general) to the issue of affectivity is to engage them in different reflective activities. One of them is their involvement in action research projects, such as the one described in this article. It allows them to reflect on their own experiences and confront them with the findings of other research. Though the outcomes of such observations and reflections may be quite unsatisfactory, as they are in the case of this study, they can sensitise and make the students more aware of certain gaps in

their professional competence and skills at this stage in their careers. This was achieved, as the trainees participating in the study were alerted to various issues related to their affective functioning in their classrooms. This was accomplished by the process of dissemination and feedback. The results presented here and set against research on the affectivity of teacher discourse were discussed with the subject group.

Apart from discussing the importance of affectivity in educational contexts and especially in FL instruction, where language is the tool of establishing and maintaining communication and interaction, more focus on this aspect of teacher development is in place. It is clear, taking into consideration the above observations, that some elements of explicit instruction on teacher affectivity indicators need to be added to the training module. The introduction of mini research projects is a good starting point, but it also needs some complimentary background from other studies as mentioned above (some of the better sources have been referred to in this article).

Instruction in using appropriate indicators of affect would naturally refer to verbal as well as the non-verbal indicators of teacher affect presented earlier. Verbal indicators demonstrating teacher's acceptance of ideas and feelings (both spontaneous and animated), and a varied way of praising, clarifying and giving feedback are often situations of intense emotionality. A whole array of ways of dealing with them to avoid routine reactions should be developed as a clearly-defined repertoire of strategies, in which teacher talk (as described earlier) is consciously controlled at the level of word choices, intonation and appropriate volume of speech. However, it is non-verbal aspects of affectivity that are most poorly represented in the self-observation data.

One indicator visibly absent is the way trainees in this study use proxemics, that is, non-verbal immediacy in terms of the physical space in the classroom, where the position (location) of the teacher demonstrates their approach to teaching and the roles performed. Closeness and entering learners' spatial zone may indicate involvement and openness to the learners as contrasted with a distant position of power and dominance (e.g., a teacher walking around the classroom versus a teacher standing at his/her desk and towering over the class). Of course, the issues related to proxemics are culturally determined and certain manifestations of spatial closeness may not be acceptable in certain cultures, whereas in others, they may be expected. A FL teacher needs to exhibit awareness of these cross-cultural differences.

It is not only position and its job in performing different teacher roles during a lesson, but also its variability in demonstrating attitude, interest and teacher involvement in the lesson. One of the important strategic tools at a teacher's disposal is his/her voice as shown in paralanguage, i.e. vocal animation expressed by a teacher's intonation, use of varied vocal tones and the level of volume, pitch and quality. The emphasis or a changing volume of speech can both be used as an attention-getting strategy or as a didactic tool in signalling important points, as well as expressing teacher emotion, involvement and attitude (Gabryś-Barker, 2014). These indicators of affect are a part of an effective teaching strategy and thus ought to constitute an indispensable part of any (FL) teacher's repertoire.

## 7    Final Remarks

It was a risky speculation to take up the topic of affectivity, as experienced by EFL pre-service teachers. The issues related to this domain of the professional development of future teachers have been neglected for a long time in training programmes. Only fairly recently applied linguists and applied psycholinguists researching educational contexts have made their research more multidisciplinary, looking into the findings of psychology (and also sociology) and applying them in education, including language education. As a result, many research projects and their outcomes have contributed to this changed perspective on teaching/learning processes, and affectivity has been seen to be at its core. At the same time, such an approach has not invariably entered the training programmes of future (FL) teachers, as it should have. Thus, future teachers do not receive much guidance on how to recognise, cope with and monitor their emotions and what emotion indicators (as well as emotion labour strategies) they have at their disposal in communicating and interacting with their learners. In fact, this observation, so clearly relevant for FL trainees, may relate to practicing in-service teachers who often find themselves at a loss and unable to face their own (and their learners') emotions.

## Appendix

Verbal and non-verbal indicators of teacher affect (the observation scheme used in the study).

| Context/When during the lesson? | Purpose/Why was it used? | Form of expression/What were the indicators of teacher emotionality? |
|---|---|---|
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