



Patterns of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication of Indian Learners in BIPA Learning

Nuny Sulistiany Idris*, Hazhiyah Fildzah N., Muhammad Farhan Basarah

Indonesian Language Education for Foreign Speakers Study Program, Faculty of Language and Literature Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

**Corresponding author. Email: nuny@upi.edu*

ABSTRACT

Communication is a process of delivering messages that involve both verbal and nonverbal cues. Some barriers to conveying messages might occur in communication causing misunderstanding. In BIPA learning, knowledge about verbal and nonverbal communication is needed to bridge the communication between teachers and learners. This research aims to describe the verbal and nonverbal communication forms of Indian learners in BIPA learning. This research uses the type of case study investigating the verbal and nonverbal communication patterns of Indian learners, and their communication barriers when learning BIPA. The findings showed that in communicating verbally, Indian learners tend to use metaphors, idioms, or proverbs. Nonverbal communication is also performed by Indian learners, such as nodding their heads, making eye contact, and shaking hands. The gesture in nonverbal communication that Indian learners often do is shaking their heads as a minimal greeting. This study also found that understanding intercultural communication makes the interaction and communication process smooth and minimal misunderstanding. The understanding of intercultural communication precisely in the verbal and nonverbal communication patterns of Indian learners in BIPA learning minimizes the emergence of negative assumptions or prejudices against other cultures to help Indian learners and teachers adapt to each other's culture.

Keywords: *BIPA, communication patterns, nonverbal communication, verbal communication.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) is increasingly popular among international students who are interested in learning Indonesian language and culture. According to the 2022 performance report from the Language Agency, there were 52 countries teaching BIPA programs by 2022 (The Language Development and Fostering Agency, 2023). The data from the report indicates an increase in popularity and international recognition of Indonesian language learning. This shows that Indonesian culture and language are increasingly recognized as a source of intellectual and cultural wealth that appeals to the global community.

Indonesian language learning for Indian learners is part of second language learning which of course has its own characteristics in its acquisition (Syah, Setiadi, & Ansoriyah, 2023). Indian learners are very interested in joining the BIPA program in Indonesia. As one of the countries with the largest population in the world and participating in various international economic and political cooperation, Indian learners are interested in Indonesian language and culture. However, obstacles in second language learning are inevitable, both verbal and nonverbal communication due to differences in culture and background. Many second-language learners experience obstacles are resulted from the influence of the first language (Subandowo, 2017).

Verbal and nonverbal communication patterns play an important role in shaping Indian students' interactions with society and their classmates. Studying these communication patterns will assist educational institutions in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment, which will ensure better understanding and more harmonious social interactions between Indian students and Indonesian society.

The phenomenon of globalization has enabled more cultural exchanges and mobility between countries. In such a situation, the demand for Indonesian language skills from non-native speakers is increasing for academic, professional, and personal purposes.

Challenges still exist due to the structural differences between Indonesian and the languages that Indian students use, and it can cause difficulties in learning. Therefore, appropriate learning strategies remain necessary. These strategies include the use of innovative educational technologies and the creation of materials tailored to the needs of Indian students.

The popularity of BIPA among international students, especially Indian students, shows that the promotion of Indonesian language and culture is working well. It also offers opportunities to broaden cross-cultural understanding and strengthen relations between nations. The popularity of BIPA program among international students, especially Indian students, demonstrates that efforts to promote Indonesian language and culture are paying off. Aside from language acquisition, this phenomenon provides an opportunity to promote cross-cultural understanding and develop international ties. Indonesian educational institutions can better embrace Indian students and prepare them to contribute to an increasingly interconnected global order by recognizing the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication in this setting. As a result, they serve a critical role in furthering the cause of cultural interchange and cooperation in our diverse and linked globe.

In previous research, Fahmi (2019) conducted a study motivated by the misunderstandings experienced by BIPA students when interacting with Indonesians. This misunderstanding is the result of culture shock which causes intercultural communication to fail. The communication process may be hampered or differ for BIPA students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, whether because of language- or cultural-related communication events (Fahmi, 2019). Intercultural communication is communicative behavior that is infused with cultural specificities and intercultural communication as the work of individuals in meeting communicative demands through their world (Damayanti & Herdiana, 2023).

Based on previous research, this research was made into further research that discusses verbal and non-verbal communication patterns. By understanding the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication in this context, educational institutions in Indonesia can better embrace Indian students and prepare them to contribute to an increasingly connected global order.

1.1. Verbal Communication

According to Purba and Siahaan (2022) verbal communication is the easiest way of communicating that humans can do by using words, such as oral or written, either by conversation or writing. Verbal communication is the process of conveying information or messages using words, both orally and in writing. Individuals have a platform to clearly express complex feelings, deep emotional dimensions, reflective thoughts, creative ideas, or even hidden intentions that may be difficult to capture when communicating verbally.

Verbal communication can make it easier for someone to convey thoughts, ideas, or decisions (Khotimah, 2019). Verbal communication also allows a person to convey data and facts clearly and build a convincing story that can influence the views and attitudes of others. Verbal communication can even be a site of contestation in a discussion, where arguments and opinions clash with each other, potentially sharpening understanding and resolving differences through a constructive critical process.

Despite its complexities, verbal communication plays an important role in interpersonal interactions. The ability of words to build and sustain relationships in everyday conversation is one of the main reasons why verbal communication is the basis of communication. They can strengthen relationships, understand each other, and foster a sense of community that is essential in human relationships by crafting the right sentences, using the appropriate tone of voice, and paying attention to supportive body language. Therefore, there is no denying that communication skills, particularly the ability to string words together appropriately and effectively, significantly, and widely affect human social dynamics. One of the reasons for the importance of verbal communication is that words can build interpersonal relationships that are established in everyday conversations.

1.2. Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is the process of conveying messages without explicit words by using gestures, body language, eye contact, signs, and other nonverbal elements. Nonverbal communication can help communicators further strengthen the message conveyed while understanding the communicant's reaction when receiving the message (Gantiano, 2019). Here are some basic concepts of nonverbal communication.

1.2.1. Body Gestures

Body gestures are usually used in place of a word or phrase, such as nodding to say yes, to illustrate something or to show a feeling. Gestures include eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, and body postures.

1.2.2. Touch

Touch is another form of nonverbal communication. There is no need for words to send emotional messages, support, or comfort through touch. Physical touch, such as a hug, handshake, or subtle touch on the shoulder, can express a sense of sympathy, warmth, or togetherness. Touch can also have special meanings in some cultures, such as a sign of respect or politeness.

1.2.3. Cues and Facial Expressions

Cues and facial expressions are very important in nonverbal communication. For example, hand gestures can bring to life a story that words do not convey and can also highlight or explain a point. For example, one can describe an object or event with an excited hand gesture.

Facial expressions, such as a deep frown or a genuine smile, directly indicate how a person is feeling and their reaction to the situation or discussion at hand. Facial language can express joy, confusion, annoyance, or surprise, even when words cannot express all the complex emotions. Overcoming the limitations of spoken language, it helps people better understand each other.

1.2.4. Eye Contact

Eyes are likened to windows to the soul. Their role in nonverbal communication cannot be ignored. Eyes are not just a visual tool; they can reveal a range of emotions, from liking a pleasant conversation to showing trust in an interpersonal relationship. However, distant eyes can also indicate discomfort or even conflict.

Well-maintained eye contact can build a strong connection between the communicator and the person receiving the message. Upright, regular eyes indicate trust and openness, while restless eyes can indicate hesitation. Excessive eye contact can be considered threatening or disrespectful in some cultures, but in others, it is considered a sign of candor.

1.2.5. Body Posture

A person's posture is a visual representation of their emotions and mental attitude. A closed posture that tends to hide itself can indicate discomfort or defensiveness that may arise from fear or indecision, while a well-built posture can indicate solid confidence.

Posture can also speak about a person without words. Postures that show such as standing up straight with open shoulders, can indicate enthusiasm and involvement in the situation, while postures that tend to slouch can indicate feelings of sadness or fatigue.

2. METHOD

As one of the countries with the largest population in the world, India has a diversity of ethnicities, languages, and cultures. The culture of verbal and non-verbal communication in India is one that can be studied. Language is representative of ethnic and regional identity in this complex environment, where each region has a different main language and dialect.

More than 1,600 languages are spoken daily in India, which shows how complex communication is in everyday life. In addition, nonverbal habits such as hand gestures, facial expressions, and the distance set when interacting with others form a vast communicative environment.

These environments often have deep meanings according to one's cultural and social circumstances. For example, a warm smile does not only indicate joy; in Indian culture, but a smile can also indicate approval, courtesy, or even subtle sadness. Therefore, to understand the Indian culture of communication, we must carefully study the history, principles, and customs that shape social interactions in this highly diverse society.

This article's methodology employs a literature study, or the comprehension and study of theories from numerous literatures relevant to the topic, to gather data. The information is gathered by locating sources and assembling them from a variety of sources, including books, journals, and previously completed studies (Adlini, Dinda, Yulinda,

Chotimah, & Merliyana, 2022). To back up claims and views, literature gleaned from numerous references must be critically assessed and thoroughly examined. The data obtained in this research is the result of a series of actions linked to library data collection methods, reading, and recording research materials, and processing those materials (Kurniawan, Dwikoranto, & Marsini, 2023). This research restricts its operations to journal collection materials that have been collected without the requirement for field research. The information acquired was generated and related to the current research, Patterns of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication of Indian Learners in BIPA Learning, using data from prior research, namely from the last 10 years (2013 to 2023).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that Indian BIPA learners often use nonverbal communication while learning. Expressive hand gestures, intense eye contact and friendly body language are common ways to show that they understand and respond to the subject matter. Variations in the intonation of their verbal language also show their engagement and confidence in the learning process. Nonverbal communication is essential for strengthening the relationship between BIPA students and their teachers as well as with each other.

Indian BIPA students have diverse language backgrounds, such as Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, and so on. The pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence patterns used when speaking in Indonesian can show the influence of their native languages. Sometimes, certain sounds or consonants in Indonesian do not exist in their native language, which causes them to have difficulty in pronunciation.

In BIPA learning, vocabulary reflects the uniqueness of Indian culture. Students bring certain terms or concepts from their culture, which can affect the way they communicate in Indonesian. For example, they refer to similar Indian and Indonesian specialties when learning about food.

3.1. Body Gestures

In daily life, Indians use various expressive body language. To emphasize the information conveyed, hand, head, and eye movements may be used. In BIPA learning, Indian BIPA students exhibit these traits, such as Indian BIPA students show feelings like agreeing, disagreeing, or understanding by using body movements like nodding, shaking their heads, or winking. This helps the BIPA teacher understand the extent to which the student understands the material being taught.

3.2. Facial Expressions

During the BIPA learning process, facial expressions play an important role in Indian BIPA student interactions. Facial expressions can reveal a range of emotions and attitudes, which in turn impact the quality of communication and student comprehension.

Facial expressions, such as focused eyes and smiles, can reflect interest in learning. When a BIPA teacher speaks or explains with passion, facial expressions that show enthusiasm can help students feel more connected to the lesson.

Facial expressions and nonverbal communication are not just about individual interpretation but also about the wider cultural context. An emphasis on awareness of facial expressions and nonverbal communication as a whole can help create an inclusive learning environment where every student feels included and comfortable.

3.3. Eye Contact

In Indian culture, eye contact is often considered a sign of respect, openness, and deference to the person speaking. Indian students learning Bahasa Indonesia in a BIPA learning environment bring elements of their culture into the classroom.

In Indian culture, looking appropriately at others while speaking shows engagement and appreciation. Students look at the teacher attentively, showing respect for the knowledge she teaches. Strong eye contact can also indicate high interest and enthusiasm.

3.4. Body Posture

In posture, Indian BIPA students show respect and courtesy. For example, when they are talking to the teacher or fellow students, they tend to keep their body leaning or slouching.

Enthusiastic posture can indicate how engaged and interested the student is in the topic of the lesson. Interested students will sit up straight and focus on the instructor or the material provided. They may also have facial expressions that show attention.

Additionally, a student's posture can indicate how confident or unsure they are of the subject matter. Confident students sit upright with their heads slightly raised, while hesitant students use a more closed posture, such as crossing their arms or leaning back.

The present investigation supports the earlier findings. This study significantly advances our knowledge of Indian learners' communication methods, both verbal and nonverbal, in the context of BIPA learning. In this study, we were able to pinpoint several distinctive communication styles among Indian students and investigate practical applications for BIPA teachers.

We advise BIPA teachers to incorporate this knowledge into their teaching strategies in light of the study's findings. We advise educators to become more cognizant of the distinctive verbal and nonverbal communication patterns of Indian learners and to modify their teaching methods to cater for each student's unique communication preferences and needs.

Future studies should delve further into the social and cultural factors that affect the verbal and nonverbal communication styles of Indian BIPA learners. To examine the variations and continuities in communication styles, comparative studies can be carried out with learners from various cultural backgrounds.

4. CONCLUSION

BIPA is gaining popularity among international learners, and India is no exception. The increase in the number of countries offering BIPA programs indicates international recognition of Indonesian language and culture. This shows that Indonesian language and culture have significant appeal to people around the world.

Verbal and nonverbal communication play an important role in shaping Indian BIPA learners' interactions with teachers. Understanding this communication helps create an inclusive learning environment and supports harmonious social interactions between learners, teachers and the local community.

Indian learners use rich and expressive body language. They actively show their thoughts and feelings through their body movements, facial expressions, eye contact and posture. They mainly use nonverbal communication. The results of this study show that Indian BIPA learners often use nonverbal communication while learning. Expressive hand gestures, intense eye contact and friendly body language are common ways to show that they understand and respond to the subject matter.

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