NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION CUES OCCURRENCES IN ENGLISH JOB INTERVIEW

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Abstract

Language and nonverbal communication play a significant role in a job interview. While a candidate uses English to elaborate their answer to the questions given by the interviewer, nonverbal communication delivers a signal to the interviewer regarding the candidate's personality, behavior, and attitude. The current study explored the occurrences of nonverbal communication cues in an English job hotel interview by applying qualitative study design. The study gathered the data from three informants who work in hotel's human resources department. The data were gathered through interview and were analyzed using qualitative analysis method, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The result of the study revealed that many candidates use some nonverbal communication cues during the English interview, including body language and gestures, facial expressions, eye contacts, and voice tones. These cues helped the interviewer to gain better interpretation toward the candidate's answers. Therefore, in attending an English job interview, candidates should be aware of the nonverbal communication knowledge.

Keywords: English; Job Interview; Nonverbal Communication Cues

INTRODUCTION

English has widely spoken around the world. The mastery of English, nowadays, has become one of the consideration of employee's quality factor. Most of the job vacancies mention English communication skill as one of the basic requirements, for both spoken and written. On the other side, many companies also select the potential candidate for their employees from the capacity of English speaking. Therefore, the job interview is recently conducted in English. Regarding the process of recruitment, language and nonverbal communication are closely related and play a crucial role in a job interview. While language is used to convey specific information about the candidate's qualifications and experience, nonverbal communication provides additional information about the candidate's personality, confidence, and professionalism, which is expressed through gestures, body language, eye contacts, facial expressions, and voice tone (Abdumutalibovich, 2022). Besides, prior study also revealed that the nonverbal cures could determine the person's feeling and emotion while interacting to other people (Kidwell & Hasford, 2014). One of the main ways that language and nonverbal communication are related in a job interview is through the use of paralanguage. Paralanguage refers to the nonverbal elements of language, such as tone, pitch, and volume. These elements can convey additional meaning and emotion beyond the words themselves ((Mosa, 2021). For example, a candidate's tone of voice can indicate whether they are nervous, confident, or enthusiastic, even if the words they are saying do not convey that emotion. Another way that language and nonverbal communication are related in a job interview is through the use of gestures and facial expressions. These nonverbal cues can provide additional information about what the candidate is saying and how they are feeling. For example, a candidate may say that

they are excited about the opportunity, but if their nonverbal cues indicate that they are not interested or engaged, it may indicate that they are not being truthful. Additionally, body language and posture are also important aspects of nonverbal communication in a job interview. Before the interview, the interviewer could get a hint of a sense of leadership from the way of candidate's entering the room and walk into the chair provided (Lombardi et al., 2020). Then, giving a firm handshake could also indicate interpersonal trust, whereas a long handshake will lead to less enjoyment and friendliness (Nagy et al., 2020). During the interview, a candidate who maintains good postures, sits up straight and shakes hands firmly can indicate that they are confident and professional. Beside, having proper gestures also help the candidate to perform better as the nonverbal cues could be an aid in explaining certain situation. On the other hand, a candidate who is displaying negative nonverbal cues such as crossed arms, fidgeting or slouching may indicate that they are not as invested in the job or lack confidence. Thus, the body language could be perceieved as supporting engagement (Jia & Cheng, 2021). Furthermore, nonverbal communication also plays a crucial role in building rapport with the interviewer. A candidate who uses open body language, smiles and makes eye contact can indicate that they are approachable, friendly and interested in building a connection with the interviewer. Direct eye contact could also be a sign of directness and honesty (Aleksandrovna, 2021), while a long gaze may indicate the candidate get distracted (Hurley et al., 2021). Besides, nodding head could indicate a positive reaction toward other speaker. Moreover, proper facial experience could also be an aid to expose positive attitude and emotion owned by the candidate (Hussein & Mahmood, 2020). These cues can help to create a positive and relaxed atmosphere during the interview. As nonverbal communication also plays a crucial role in a job interview, understanding the nonverbal communication can help interviewers gain a more complete understanding of the candidate and whether they would be a good fit for the job. By paying attention to nonverbal cues, such as paralanguage, gestures, facial expressions, body language, and posture, interviewers can gain insight into a candidate's personality, confidence, and professionalism. Therefore, the current study aimed at identifying the occurrences of nonverbal communication cues in an English job hotel interview.

METHOD

In order to identify the occurrences of nonverbal communication in English hotel job interview, the current study applied a descriptive qualitative research. The study implemented a narrative inquiry design to gain personal experiences of the informants who have interviewed several employment candidates, in this case English hotel job interview. The process of nonverbal communication occurrences identification were carried out by inviting three informants as the source of information, one female and two males. These informants work as human resources personnel in three different hotels in Bali. They have different working experience background and have interviewed different sections job application in the hotel, including frontliners, kitchen, restaurants, gym, and bars. The data collection were conducted through interviews with the three informants. The interview was performed separately with an emphasis on eliciting each participant's personal experience conducting English interviews with prior job applicants in the hotel. The interview questions were conducted in the informants' first language to gain accurate answer. Following three steps of qualitative data analysis (Miles et al., 2014), the data gathering results were subsequently examined. The analysis was began by removing some redundant and extraneous data from the interview. Then, the data were classified into some categories based on the form of nonverbal communication cues in English hotel job interview, i.e. gestures, facial expressions, eye contacts, and voice tones. Then, a further interpretation was constructed to gain deeper elaboration on the current findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Both verbal and nonverbal communication are used during every interview. The use of nonverbal communication in the hiring process, particularly during the job interview, is the main emphasis of this research. The body language and gestures, facial expression, eye contact, and voice tone, are the nonverbal cues that this study focuses on.

Body Language and Gestures

Body movement, head motions, hand-shaking, and seating postures all contribute to body language during job interviews. Any informants agree that all candidate body language displayed during job interviews is valid. During the interview, handshakes and hand motions are also very significant in the usage of body language. A candidate's traits and personality can also be inferred from how they shake hands or react to handshakes. The interviewer also took this into account when making their decision. This is highly trusted by the first informat, where greetings and a handshake are the only other things to do before to the interview. Once everyone has greeted one another and shook hands, the interviewer will start making an assessment to make the environment more comfortable.

The pandemic, however, resulted in different treatment for the second and third informant, and this has persisted to the present day, when handshakes are no longer used to begin job interviews. The applicant's reaction to a handshake can reveal details about their unique traits. A firmer handshake from applicants conveys more optimism, which also affects the confidence that emerges when providing replies during the interview. During the interview process, it is usual to witness applicants playing with writing devices like pens and tapping on the table, as well as some tapping their fingers. Nearly all of these motions are evident when the candidate is taking in the interviewer's instructions or questions while considering finding replies or even covering their nervousness. A substantial hand movement, such as sitting impassively while listening to or replying to interviewers' responses, is typically demonstrated by candidates who are more senior or who have extensive professional work experience, according to the third informant.

Facial Expression

People's emotions can be seen in their facial expressions. This is also evident during the interview, as seen by the expressions sad, glad, tense, and flat. The majority of the applicants; facial expressions fall into one of these four categories. A flat facial expression (also known as being expressionless) gives the appearance that the applicant is unconcerned with their surroundings and has no regard for them, which confuses the informant.

Eye Contact

Eye contact is another form of body language that is simple to read in addition to facial reactions. There were applicants who constantly made eye contact, seldom made eye contact, and some even nearly never made eye contact, just infrequently when saying opening and closing greetings, according to almost all of the informant's comments. It is sometimes observed that a candidate won't always look directly into the interviewer's eyes, as when they are anxious or searching for the answers to questions. Most candidates tend to stare at the table, lean sideways, or look up.

Voice Tone

Depending on how someone is feeling, their voice will have a varied tone when speaking. People will undoubtedly speak differently when they are joyful compared to when they are disappointed. The interview was also influenced by the speaker's presence and their use of high and low pitches, softness, and different vocal registers. Each candidate has a distinctive speaking style and voice. The interviewer can determine the applicant's various

speaking vocabularies based on how they react to the questions asked. The tone of the applicant's voice and the use of filler words might also reveal their anxiety. Filler is a spontaneous statement made by the applicant that usually occurs when they are pondering or linking two ideas in a sentence. The interviewing process can be hampered, nevertheless, by the use of filler that is excessive or dominating. In a job interview, filler that is quantitatively excessive can be a distraction.

Most Leading Non-Verbal Communication Cues

All of the respondents are professionals with a minimum of a decade of experience in human resources, so they are familiar with the traits that make a good candidate during the hiring process. There are also a lot of applicants that have high working hours and solid product knowledge but come across as cocky and overconfident. On the other side, there are also individuals that have a strong desire to work for the hotel but adequate product knowledge. For each of the aforementioned criteria, candidates who were chosen had better nonverbal communication skills than those who had a solid understanding of the products. According to R2, candidates are more likely to succeed on the team if they have a high level of eagerness to learn, good grooming, and a positive attitude. Product knowledge can be gained as the applicant works with the team, but an inflated sense of self-confidence and arrogance will be more challenging to regulate because character changes take a lot of time and are very tough to make. Facial expression ranks first among the four non-verbal clues that frequently surface during interviews, followed by eye contact, body language and gesture, and voice tone. According to the informants, facial expressions become the major concern as it reveals so many different emotions and attitude, including excitement, sadness, anger, and confusion. Therefore, facial expression is thought to be the primary factor in evaluating an interview. Then, eye contact becomes the second influencing factor. Based on the informants' statements, this plays a significant role to show respect and attitude. They concern on how the candidate have proper eye contact during the conversation, rather than staring the ceiling or gazing the wall. The next indicator is the body language and gestures. The informants mentioned that this nonverbal cues could encompass so many different elements, including head motion, hand movement, hand-shaking, and seating positions The interviewer forms their first impression of the candidate based on this factor. Last, the concern is on candidate's vocal tone. These are signals that come over loud and clear when speaking to someone. The informants emphasized that the flow of communication will be severely disrupted if there is an excessive amount of filler, and this usually leads to the communication taking longer and not demonstrating good speaking skills. Despite the fact that communication will be seen at first glance, this can be modified and used in accordance with hotel standards.

Discussion

Having nonverbal cues in a job interview may help the candidate to reveal their feeling, emotion, and attitude toward the interviewer. Nonverbal communication conveys information without using words or verbal language, such as gestures, tones, and facial expressions (Hashmi & Waheed, 2020), which need particular treatment or examination. The current study had investigated the occurrences of nonverbal communication cues in an English job interview for hotel applicants. It is revealed that the candidates commonly provide four types of nonverbal communication cues, including body language and gestures, facial expressions, eye contacts, and voice tones.

There are various features of its use that can be identified as nonverbal communication cues. Since individuals prefer to display their emotions, such as grief, happiness, fear, and anger, through their faces, facial expression is the first nonverbal indication that may be identified. A different research also shown that nonverbal indicators such as personal feeling or emotional

state, such as grief, happiness, fear, or rage, might be sent by facial expressions in addition to meaning that cannot be stated by words (Rezer, 2021; Samara et al., 2022). On the other hand, eye contact is also an important nonverbal cue in communication, since it may convey attention, affection, and attraction towards the other speaker. Maintaining adequate eye contact with the audience helps to project inner confidence; nevertheless, excessive eye contact might come out as confrontational (Kidwell & Hasford, 2014). Then, nonverbal cues may be recognized by bodily movement and postures, such as how individuals stand, walk, or sit when conversing with others. In addition, gestures serve to convey nonverbal cues in communication, such as the use of hands or fingers when explaining. Some nonverbal cues, such as certain gestures, might help accentuate a message or piece of information (Muhammad & Mahmood, 2021). When discussing, people count or highlight the number of topics they have covered with their fingers. The significant element or the point that they wish to emphasize can also be highlighted by emphasizing key words in the speech. Nonverbal cues can also convey a person's personality or attitude toward the conversation or the other speaker's statements (Kidwell & Hasford, 2014). Touches, such as a handshake, a hug, a pat on the back, or a pad on the shoulder, can also be detected as nonverbal cues, particularly when they indicate a close connection. According to one study, someone who shakes hands firmly tends to be forceful and trustworthy toward others (Nagy et al., 2020). On the other side, head scratching is another sign of anxiety and decreased comfort during the conversation (Whitehouse et al., 2022). Because of this, using particular gestures can also influence how listeners feel and behave (King et al., 2020). In addition, speaking tone, pitch, and pauses can be employed as nonverbal cues in communication.

The ability to master nonverbal communication in business communication becomes a crucial skill that employees must have. During their interactions with clients, employees must convey their attention through various nonverbal cues. The way an employee responds to a client's request will influence the outcome in terms of the client's attitude (Shadaydeh et al., 2021). The staff must behave properly when attending to the requirements of the client by using suitable nonverbal cues, such as open body language, excellent eye contact, and smiling to demonstrate friendliness and warmth (Novotny et al., 2021; Zand et al., 2020). With effective nonverbal communication, the client or customer will begin to enjoy the discussion, which will indirectly affect the listener's emotions and attitude (Anuradha & Singh, 2020). Additionally, this creates a favorable consumer experience and favorable perception of the provided services (Mosa, 2021). As a result, one of the crucial communication skills to learn in business environments is nonverbal (Pereira & Hone, 2021).

CONCLUSION

In an English hotel job interview, facial expression, eye contact, body language, and voice tone are the typical non-verbal cues occurred. Based on this nonverbal cues showed, the three respondents choose individuals who exhibit positive nonverbal cues including gesture and body language as well as a pleasant demeanor. Both verbal and nonverbal communication are important in identifying the candidate's characteristics. Furthermore, they believe that while product knowledge can be learned, attitude is something that is inherent to an individual and must be modified over time in order to meet hotel standards. Facial expression will be seen as the most important aspect among those four basic non-verbal indicators, followed by eye contact, body language and gestures, and voice tone.

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