

CHAPTER I

1.1. Background of the study

Communication is at the heart of human social life and plays a crucial role in various aspects of life, including education. Etymologically, the term “communication” comes from the Latin word “communicare,” which means “to share” or “to make common.” In this context, communication is understood as the process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, and feelings between two or more parties to create mutual understanding. Language as a communication tool is not only limited to verbal use of words, but also encompasses non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, body language, eye contact, and tone of voice. In the context of learning, the effectiveness of material delivery is greatly influenced by the teacher's ability to use both types of communication harmoniously (Abdikarimova et al., 2021).

Verbal communication in teaching and learning activities includes the use of questions, directions, praise, and encouragement from teachers to students. According to Brown (2007), effective verbal communication can foster meaningful interactions and enhance students' confidence in expressing their opinions. Conversely, ineffective communication can cause confusion, loss of focus, and even trigger misunderstandings between teachers and students. Therefore, it is important for teachers to have strong verbal communication competence to create a conducive learning atmosphere.

Besides verbal communication, non-verbal elements such as hand gestures, body posture, facial expressions, and eye contact are also very influential in the learning process. Hall (1959) classifies non-verbal communication in several aspects, such as haptics, kinesics, proxemics, chronemics, physical environment cues, and paralanguage. Non-verbal communication can reinforce verbal messages or even stand alone as a form of conveying meaning. Purwati et al. (2019) emphasized that non-verbal communication has a significant impact on students' understanding of the material presented by the teacher.

An interesting phenomenon today is how the role of verbal and non-verbal communication changes in the context of online learning and inclusive education. In online learning, some elements of non-verbal communication are limited, so teachers need to adapt to keep communication effective. This is a challenge, especially for teachers who are just starting their careers or pre-service teachers. To help the student feel at ease while studying English, the pre-service teacher should be able to foster engagement and communication (Pakpahan, E. M., 2023). Meanwhile, in inclusive education, teachers are required to be more sensitive to the diversity of students,

including students with special needs who may have limitations in receiving verbal messages.

Previous research has shown that teachers' ability to use verbal and non-verbal language affects student engagement and achievement of learning outcomes (Sutiyatno, 2018; Thamrin & Darsih, 2023). However, there are not many studies that compare how experienced and pre-service teachers use verbal and non-verbal communication in the classroom. Understanding these differences is important to evaluate teacher education institutions and to improve the quality of teaching in schools.

This research is motivated by the importance of building effective communication in the learning process, especially in the post-pandemic era, which encourages the integration of technology in teaching. Changes in the medium of learning also demand changes in communication strategies from educators. A study by Prabowo and Nurdiarti (2021) emphasized that communication that relies not only on words, but also on expressions and gestures, has a major impact on the success of learning activities, including in creative activities such as storytelling.

Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study focuses on an in-depth exploration of how experienced and pre-service teachers at SMP Panca Budi Medan utilize verbal and non-verbal language in teaching. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation to obtain a real picture of communication practices in the classroom. Brown's (2007) theory was used to examine the verbal aspect, while Hall's (1959) theory for the non-verbal aspect, to understand how communication contributes to successful learning.

Through this research, a more comprehensive understanding of the role of verbal and non-verbal communication in education is expected. The results of this study can also serve as input for educators, pre-service teachers, and education policy makers in designing effective and inclusive learning strategies. Thus, communication is not only a means of conveying information, but also a means of forming social relationships, motivating students, and creating meaningful learning experiences.

1.2 The problem of the study

Research Questions

Based on the research background above, the problems in this study are as follows:

1. How do teachers define verbal and non-verbal communication in the teaching and learning process?
2. How do pre-service teachers differ from Experienced teacher who have used verbal and non-verbal communication in the teaching and learning process?

1.3 The objectives of the study

The objectives of this research are:

1. To explore how teachers interpret and apply verbal and non-verbal communication in the teaching and learning process, in order to improve teaching effectiveness, strengthen teacher-student interaction, and increase classroom engagement.
2. To analyze the differences between pre-service teachers and Experienced teacher in their use of verbal and non-verbal communication, particularly in terms of communication style, frequency of use, contextual appropriateness, and the impact on student responsiveness during classroom interaction.

1.4 The scope of the study

This study focuses on exploring the role of verbal and non-verbal communication used by teachers in facilitating effective teaching and learning processes in secondary school classrooms. It examines how these forms of communication function to deliver instructional content, manage classroom interactions, and support student engagement. The study specifically analyzes the ways in which teachers use spoken language, tone, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and other non-verbal cues as part of their teaching strategies. Furthermore, the study is limited to classroom settings in secondary schools and does not measure learning outcomes, but rather focuses on how communication serves as a pedagogical tool during instructional delivery.

1.5 The significance of the study

1 For Teachers:

This study provides insights into how teachers, both experienced and pre-service teacher, interpret and utilize verbal and non-verbal communication in the teaching and learning process. By analyzing their differing perceptions and approaches, the findings can contribute to a better understanding of the communicative competencies required in classroom interactions. This knowledge is particularly valuable for teacher education and professional development programs, as it highlights the areas where communication training can be strengthened to support more effective classroom engagement.

2 For Educational Researchers:

This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how verbal and non-verbal communication work together to improve the teaching-learning process.

3 For Students:

Effective communication fosters a more supportive learning environment, which aids students' comprehension and enhances their academic performance..