



Universidade Federal de Alagoas  
Faculdade de Letras  
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras e Lingüística  
Área de Concentração: Língua Inglesa e suas Literaturas

**NONVERBAL LANGUAGE IN EFL CLASSROOM  
INTERACTION**

**Lílian Maria Dantas**

Maceió  
2007



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**Dissertação de Mestrado apresentada ao  
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras e  
Lingüística da Universidade Federal de  
Alagoas.**

**Orientadora: Prof. Dra. Roseanne Rocha  
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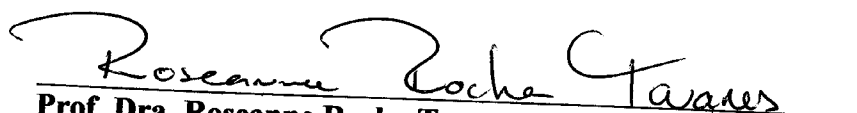
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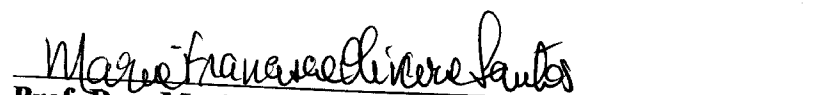
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**COMISSÃO EXAMINADORA**

  
**Prof. Dra. Roseanne Rocha Tavares**  
**Universidade Federal de Alagoas**

  
**Prof. Dra. Maria Francisca de Oliveira Santos**  
**Universidade Federal de Alagoas**

  
**Prof. Dr. José Carlos Paes de Almeida Filho**  
**Universidade Federal de Brasília**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The main objective of this research is to analyze the influence of nonverbal language (together with verbal) in EFL classroom interaction. Starting from the concept of language as a social activity and basing our studies in Discourse Analysis, Conversational Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics, I developed a micro analysis of discourse study which happened at the extension school of English from the Federal University of Alagoas. The corpus was defined by audio and video recordings and its transcriptions, interviews and questionnaires. Among many types of nonverbal language, I chose as the focus of our investigation the smile (EKMAN, 2003; PEASE and PEASE, 2005; CARVALHO, 1999; KINDE, 1999) because it showed out to be an important element to increase classroom interaction through a convivial strategy (used by the teacher as a balance between the instructional and the spontaneous discourse, based on KRAMSCH, 1987); to promote a funny learning environment through teacher and learners' own experiences and to reprimand learners (exerting power and saving face) for not doing their homework. These three types of smile contributed to lower the affective filter, increase interaction and consequently improve students' learning. In pedagogical terms, the classroom showed to be a place where teacher and students build up a learning and teaching culture and where the smile helped keep interaction high, developing a convivial environment which affected students' learning positively.

## RESUMO

O objetivo principal desta pesquisa é analisar a influência da linguagem não-verbal (juntamente com a verbal) na interação de sala de aula de Língua Inglesa como língua estrangeira. Partindo de um conceito de linguagem como atividade social e tendo como base os estudos na área da Análise do Discurso, Análise da Conversação e Sociolingüística Interacional, desenvolvi um estudo micro-analítico do discurso que aconteceu na extensão da Universidade Federal de Alagoas (Casa de Cultura Britânica). O corpus foi definido por gravações em áudio e vídeo e transcrições, entrevistas e questionários. Entre os muitos tipos de linguagem não verbal, escolhi como foco da nossa investigação *o sorriso* (EKMAN, 2003; PEASE & PEASE, 2005; CARVALHO, 1999; KINDE, 1999; dentre outros) devido ao fato de o sorriso ter se mostrado um elemento importante que contribuiu para aumentar a interação em sala de aula através da estratégia de convívio (estratégia usada pelo professor que funciona como um balanço entre o discurso instrucional e o espontâneo, baseado em Kramsch, 1987); para promover um ambiente de aprendizado divertido através das próprias experiências do professor e dos aprendizes e para repreender os alunos (exercendo poder e salvando a face) por não fazerem as tarefas pedidas. Os tipos de sorriso observados contribuíram para diminuir o filtro afetivo entre o professor e os alunos, aumentando a interação e consequentemente a produção e aprendizado dos mesmos. Em termos pedagógicos, a sala de aula se mostrou um lugar onde os participantes envolvidos constroem uma cultura de aprender e ensinar e também um lugar onde o sorriso ajudou a aumentar a interação, desenvolvendo um ambiente de convívio que afetou o aprendizado dos alunos positivamente.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Resumo</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION: GETTING STARTED</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: CLASSROOM INTERACTION</b>	<b>09</b>
1.1 A Brief Historical Overview about the theoretical trends in classroom interaction	15
1.2 Deepening the studies into the second and third trends: conversational analysis and interactional sociolinguistics	17
1.3 Classroom interaction discourse in EFL environment	19
<b>CHAPTER 2: VERBAL AND NONVERBAL LANGUAGE</b>	<b>23</b>
2.1 Research on interactive gestures	27
2.2 The research and its methodology on verbal and nonverbal language	30
2.3 The corpus and the subjects	33
2.4 The school	36



<b>CHAPTER 3: THE SMILE</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>3.1 The different facets of a smile</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>3.2 The smile in a foreign language teaching classroom: the three different types</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>75</b>

## INTRODUCTION: GETTING STARTED

Before World War I, foreign language learning and teaching was based in Philology, which refers to the study of texts from the perspective of Historical Linguistics. Over the last century, however, there have been changes in the way Second Language is treated. As Kramsch (2000, p.313) says: “Between the two world wars, the rise of Psychology and the Sciences of Education brought language learning and teaching within the orbit of Education and the Social Sciences”. After the Second World War, linguists took part in Foreign Language Programs, giving to them a new discipline called Theoretical Linguistics.

In the 1970's, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research was born in child language acquisition as a result of the flowing together of linguistics, psychology and education and the necessity of teaching English as a Second Language to an increasing number of learners all over the world. SLA has helped not only in the teaching and learning of other second languages such as English as a second language in the United States, but also for the study of foreign languages in the educational environment as well.

It [SLA] has gradually supplemented philological / literary scholarship and educational psychology as the theoretical base for the practice of language teaching in the United States (BYRNES,1998). It has spawned new pedagogical methods and brought new insights into the success or failure of students studying foreign languages at school and in college (KRAMSCH, 2000, p.313).

According to the author, SLA is concerned with the processes which children and adults go through when they learn a second language in addition to their native language, how learners acquire this language, make use of it in different contexts, and learn to read, speak and write this language in instructional settings or natural ones. “SLA is also concerned with the nature of these learner languages and their development throughout life” (p.315), as well as in the processes by which a learner develops bilingualism, becomes fluent or has difficulties in learning the language.

This research does not seek, however, to identify learner, teacher and curricular variables that contribute to the success of language acquisition, but to focus more specifically on the teacher and how his/her nonverbal language can contribute to the learning of a foreign language (English) in a setting which is not a natural one, but instructional – the classroom.

Nowadays, learning a foreign language is seen as an experience which involves both the learner and the teacher interactively and reflects the social-cultural aspects and values of a particular community or country. Language is a social activity which cannot be studied separately from interaction, from its social context and its historical reality (TAVARES 2001, ORLANDI, 2005).

Within this view of language, Kramsch (1998), who works in the area of Foreign Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, argues that language expresses *cultural reality* (world knowledge shared by people through ideas, facts or events ); it *embodies cultural reality* (people who belong to the same group, make use of language and the medium to communicate) and language *symbolizes cultural reality* because “speakers view their language as a symbol of their social identity”, a system of signs ( p.313 ). The author above mentions yet another type of culture:

But there is another way of viewing culture – one which takes a more historical perspective.(...) The culture of everyday practices draws on the culture of shared history and traditions. People identify themselves as members of a society to the extent that they can have a place in that society’s history and that they can identify with the way it remembers its past, turns its attention to the present, and anticipates its future (p.7).

This alternative way of viewing culture is what makes people aware of their role in society, as a member of a community and as one who can identify himself/herself with that community. Therefore, in instructional settings such as the classroom, this view becomes a little distant as the learners are not learning their own language, but a foreign language. The teacher then has an important role which is to be able to link culture and language in order to provide a more complete learning experience, having them use the language and understand it in different contexts of everyday life.

Even though there have been great advances concerning the teaching of a foreign language at public schools, our country still has followers of the traditional method (based on grammar and translation). The teacher’s concept of foreign language, his/her teaching approach/method, institutional factors, the material used to teach and the community’s learning and teaching tradition will determine how and why the foreign language is being taught and learned the way it is. Almeida Filho (1993) perfectly defines his idea of an approach to teaching and learning a foreign language, the one used in this research. He says that learning a foreign language involves affections such as feeling motivated, knowing that

one can take risks to be able to speak the new language, lower anxiety and group pressure. When it comes to teaching, he says:

A contemporary approach to teaching languages takes, among other things, the sense or the meaning as the main requisite and understands them as a function of a relation. Something will make sense if not taken separately and in relation to something else (p.15).<sup>1</sup>

Although sense and meaning are of utmost importance concerning language teaching, that is not what really happens at schools in our country. All over Brazil, public or private schools, follow the PCNs (National Curricular Parameters) which were elaborated by a team of specialists linked to the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC). The PCNs are a MEC's proposal to all teachers to provide students with a basic quality teaching in the country, guaranteeing that children and young learners from all parts of the country have access to the necessary knowledge for their integration in a modern society as conscientious, responsible and participant citizens (MEC/SEF, 1998).

Learning a foreign language together with the native language is a right that all Brazilian citizens have at any school in the country. This is guaranteed by a law called LDB (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases, 1996) and at the Universal Linguistic Rights Declaration, published by the Ciemen (Centro Internacional Escarré para Minorias Étnicas e Nações) a center for ethnic minorities and nations; and by the PEN-Club International. The PCNs for foreign languages, according to MEC (1998), aim at developing reading skills with learners due to the fact that the foreign language being learned (English) is not used orally outside school in Brazil (except at some tourist places) and for admission at Post-Graduate Courses. The focus on reading is also justified by reduced teaching hours, crowded classes, little or no oral ability from most teachers, teaching material reduced to chalk and textbook at most Brazilian schools. Practicing the four abilities (reading, writing, listening and speaking) becomes a difficult task, although not an impossible one. Reading and understanding texts become the main objective. Although what has just been described is what MEC believes, I follow the thoughts of some researchers in the area who believe that language has to be taught in a way that the learner can practice the four abilities, and not only one in isolation.

It is important to point out that learners will feel motivated if the teacher also feels motivated and encourage them to learn. Anything then becomes possible, but the low salaries, poor or insufficient conditions at most schools (mainly public ones), demotivated learners and crowded classes, among other factors, contribute to the present public teaching situation.

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<sup>1</sup> All the quotations which were originally written in Portuguese in this research have been translated by me.

Including English in the school curriculum, according to the MEC, is explained by the power and influence of the North-American economy which grew along this century, mainly after the Second World War. It is the language of business and in countries such as Finland, Sweden and Netherlands its usage at universities is almost total.

It is common knowledge that secondary schools in our country do not really make a connection between what is being taught and the learners' own experiences. As we have mentioned before, most schools still treat the teaching of a foreign language as a traditional and mechanical one, making use of translations and very little oral practice resulting in meaningless learning as described above. This is due to several reasons such as the teachers' lack of experience and language background, lack of extra materials to work with, equipment, creativity, among other reasons already mentioned.

After many years dedicated to the learning of a foreign language, I could observe, contrast and compare the different ways in which teachers exposed their learners to the language and their attempts to share their knowledge as significantly as possible. This opportunity to have had so many different teachers, also from different nationalities and to realize that one of the most significant and memorable learning was related to nonverbal language together with the verbal one, was the starting point to deepen the studies into the contribution of nonverbal language (together with the verbal) to the learning of a foreign one, in this case, the English language. Not only for the practical side but my academic experience and the studies about nonverbal language which contributed to develop research on the topic. Also, I would like to know how it can contribute to classroom interaction, in which situations it occurs and to what extent the relation between verbal and nonverbal language is succeeded.

This research was conducted at the extension school of the Federal University of Alagoas, which according to data collection and classroom observation, shares the same concept of teaching and learning a foreign language as the one described by Almeida Filho (1993). It is a school where both teaching and learning occur differently from the traditional method. It is based on the concept which, as the author noted above says, initially sees the language on focus as a foreign one; but as one dedicates time, shows interest in learning it, makes it meaningful to his/her learning and identity, it is no longer totally foreign, but becomes slightly more familiar. This process is called by Almeida Filho as “desestraneirização<sup>2</sup>” (p.12).

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<sup>2</sup> The author calls it deforeignization, but I translated as above because there is no similar translation in Portuguese.

In Brazil, there is important research which relate classroom interaction and the use of nonverbal language (such as research done by TAVARES, 2001; SANTOS, 2004 and others) although we have found no research which relates and analyzes the influence of the nonverbal language to the learning of a foreign language and its importance.

In order to reflect about the nature of nonverbal and verbal language in EFL classrooms, this research is also concerned about observing the teaching and learning process of a foreign language.

Teaching a foreign language is not a simplified process which involves only the teacher, the students and the school. It is a process in which the school's approach is highly taken into account as well as the material used, the teacher's teaching approach and the students' learning approach, for instance. The material used, according to Almeida Filho (1993), has to fit the teacher's belief about teaching a **foreign** language. Not only good quality input is essential, but also good quality interaction.

As the author above says, students bring into the learning non-natural environment all their expectations about what it is like to learn another language, their anxiety and tolerance towards the target language, their motivation, their limitations which are called *affective filter*. It might happen that the culture the students possess regarding learning a foreign language is different or contrary to the teacher's teaching approach or the material being used. In that case, learning and teaching would become a source of problems, failures, difficulties, resistance and lack of interest from both teachers and students. That is why it is important that the affective filter between teachers and students is very low. The lowest the affective filter, the highest the relationship among the individuals involved. Learning a foreign language according to the same author, means providing relevant, meaningful, valid and deep experiences that will consequently result in growing interactive moments in the target language.

According to Krashen (1982, p.30-31), "the affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process". Although this research does not focus on second but foreign language learning and does not see the acquisition process as purely cognitive, there are important affective variables to be considered which can be classified into three categories: **motivation** (highly motivated learners tend to do better in second language learning (or foreign language learning); **self-confidence** (learners who have good self-image also tend to do better); **anxiety** (personal or classroom low anxiety helps in the learning process). The same author adds:

“The affective filter” posited by Dulay and Burt (1977), acts to prevent input from being used for language acquisition. Acquirers with optimal attitudes (described above) are hypothesized to have “low” affective filters. Classrooms that encourage low filters are those that promote low anxiety among students, that keep students “off the defensive” (p.32).

The effective language teacher, according to Krashen (1982) is someone who can provide a learning atmosphere which is motivating for students, helping them feel self-confident and less anxious. The same author also says that for foreign language students learning the target language in an environment which is not the natural one (as in our research -the classroom), the low filter comprehensible input is the only source they possess in order to learn the language. The comprehensible input described by him is called  $i + 1$ , where  $i$  represents the present inter language (an emerging linguistic system that has been developed by a learner of a second language who has not become fully proficient yet, but is only approximating the target language) and  $+1$  represents the new input. To Moita Lopes (1996), input is also considered the knowledge acquired by the learners and how they use it in the classroom successfully.

Although the input is indeed important, it does not promote learning by itself. It is true that a low affective filter promotes a more significant learning but not only in a natural (being in contact with the target language outside class or living in an English-speaking country) environment do students learn. Today teachers have a variety of different sources such as the cable TV, DVDs and videos, course books, appropriate computer materials for learning languages, the internet, special books to practice the language and others which also help enrich the learning in and outside the classroom. The effort of both teachers (to help students learn) and learners (to do their best to learn) is what promotes learning. Such learning, according to Tavares (2001) is influenced by classroom interaction.

Based on the arguments presented above, we intend, with this work, to investigate how *nonverbal and verbal language or any aspects of them taken separately can influence EFL classroom interaction*.

To help in the investigation of the central research question, we have defined the following objectives:

## GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

Analyze how nonverbal language can influence the learning of a foreign language at moments of interaction between teacher and students in an English classroom at the extension school of English from the Federal University of Alagoas.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

Reflect upon the relation among verbal and nonverbal discursive strategies, specially in foreign language classrooms; analyze how nonverbal language can occur in EFL classroom interaction and identify which nonverbal language used by the teacher influenced classroom interaction and why.

The choice to study a teacher's nonverbal language in a classroom with Brazilians studying a foreign language (English) has both theoretical and practical reasons. On the theoretical side, this work can provide teachers and specialists in the area of EFL teaching with a deeper thought about the importance of nonverbal language in the classroom, mainly when teaching a foreign one; its different types and how it can improve or worsen one's interaction. We do not intend to analyze all types of nonverbal language, but will focus on those which contributed (or not), were relevant or helped students' learning as well as the teacher's teaching approaches. With the theoretical foundations from Conversation Analysis, Interactional Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis, this research will attempt to find the answers for the research question described above without the intention to follow universal results.

On the practical side, this research offers benefits to teachers who would like to reflect on their own use of nonverbal and verbal language in class and think over the influence it can have in their classrooms, with the type of interaction they use, their methodology and analyze the results it can bring to students' language learning.

Based on everything which has been said before, this research is introduced with reflections about verbal and nonverbal language related to the teaching and learning of a foreign language and the theme is contextualized with the central problem being investigated, its objectives and justifications<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> This study is based on the Anglo-Saxon Discourse Analysis.



In the first chapter, I discuss, according to specialists in the field, what interaction is about, its importance and relation to foreign language learning and what aspects better promotes EFL classroom interaction.

In the second chapter, I present the theoretical foundations from research which help understand and deepen different aspects and characteristics of nonverbal language, its different types and when they occur, related to verbal interaction. There is also research on interactive gestures. I also present and discuss about the theoretical trends this research is based on: Discourse Analysis, Conversational Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics. Still in this chapter, I present the research methodology, its corpus and subjects and the school where data collection and observation took place.

In the third chapter, I reflect about the smile, what specialists in the area say, the different facets of a smile, the three different types of smile recognized through this research and its influence when the subject is learning a foreign language. In this chapter, I also analyze data collection and show correspondent transcriptions.

Finally, I present the conclusion and answer the central investigation question. The conclusion is followed by references and appendices.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **CLASSROOM INTERACTION**

In order to understand the interactional process which occurs between teacher and learners in a classroom, it is important to understand that such a process is part of a macro context in which the elements are interrelated and influence one another. Therefore, to understand the use of verbal and nonverbal language in EFL classrooms, it is necessary to highlight what interaction really is in this language learning environment.

As we have already mentioned before, the pioneers from the Anglo-Saxon DA in studying and writing about classroom interaction were Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). To them, typical classroom interaction consists of a sequence of cycles which they call interchanges and each one is composed of three moments known as IRF (initiation-response-feedback), or as IRE (initiation-response-evaluation) by Mehan (1978), where the teacher initiates the interaction by means of a question for example, the student will response to this question and the teacher will evaluate the student's response.

In Brazil, Leffa (2003, 2005) developed studies about classroom interaction in language learning and also about interaction in the virtual world. Leffa comments on the authors' interactive model (IRF) saying that it seems to characterize the expositive-dialogued type of classroom from the last decades and also a tendency in recent classes where the initiative of each cycle always comes from the teacher. Although the teacher maintains a dialogue with the students, he/she still exerts a central role as the class interaction conductor.

To Rivers (1987, one of the leading authorities on EFL and ESL teaching and also a teacher at Harvard University), interaction occurs when pupils are able to convey and receive messages which are of interest for the listener and the speaker in a context which is also relevant for both. According to Wells (1981:29, 46-7 apud RIVERS, 1987: 4) "exchange is the basic unit of discourse...Linguistic interaction is a collaborative activity involving the establishment of a triangular relationship between the sender, the receiver and the context of the situation". The author believes it is important, according to her own experience when learning a foreign language, that the teacher shows interest in teaching, be active, imaginative and innovative, developing a rapport with the students which will help them feel involved and motivated. Interaction also involves understanding others' ideas, listening and responding to others, working out interpretations of meaning, all related to a context which can be physical

or experimental, having the help of nonverbal language over the verbal. Interaction, according to the same author, is an important process in language learning as students learn from their peers, increasing their language store which they absorb from texts, listenings, from the teacher, from tasks and other sources used in class to promote students' learning.

For interaction to take place in a formal environment, according to the same author above, the teacher should consider some points such as the students' age, their scholastic and cultural background, their reason for studying the language, the different ways they learn (by reading, by writing, by seeing visuals, by talking etc) as well as their political and social pressures and career opportunities which will certainly contribute to their motivation in class. Other important factors should be taken into account as well such as the learners' anxiety and tolerance towards the target language, the affective filter and others which have been mentioned before. Another important point to be taken into account according to the author, is the teacher's approach to the language, the way he/she conducts the class and the materials used to achieve a high level of class interaction. For Rivers (1987), considering learners' individual strategies, temperaments and learning preferences can turn each class into a new and unique experience for them, trying not to manipulate, direct or decide how they will learn but encourage students to interact, build up their confidence and enjoyment in what they do or say. "Real interaction in the classroom requires the teacher to step out of the limelight, to cede a full role to the student in developing and carrying through activities, to accept all kinds of opinions, and be tolerant of errors the student makes while attempting to communicate"(p.9). Teacher-centered classes can never be interactive as interaction does not happen one-way. The materials used are also important as they reflect the teacher's belief concerning language learning, they facilitate acquisition and help learners interact.

"Teachers should not be looking for the best method for teaching languages (or helping students learn languages), but rather *the most appropriate approach, design of materials, or set of procedures in a particular case*. Teachers need to be flexible, with a repertoire of techniques they can employ as circumstances dictate, while *keeping interaction central*- interaction between teacher and student, student and teacher, student and student, student and authors of texts, and student and computer program" (RIVERS, 1987, p.6).

After considering the points just mentioned above, a teacher might become aware of the importance of selecting the right material for the right pupils, according to their

expectations and takes into account that there is no best method which can alone, provide all which is needed for language learning success.

Besides the relevance of what has just been described above, it is also important for the teacher to plan the lessons in advance in order to try to achieve his/her goals which can vary from cultural, grammatical, lexical among others. Teachers usually make use of verbal and nonverbal resources such as drawings, pictures, gestures, signs, looks, faces and others to establish communication in the classroom. There is also the use of much listening, authentic material, newspapers, films, plays, even native speakers where available. Therefore, according to some authors such as Tsui (1995) a successful lesson planning (LP) will depend on the learners' reaction to it (they repeat what has been asked or not, follow instructions or not, have initiative etc). The teacher can change the LP according to her/his students' needs and expectations and he/she has certain ideas about how the lesson should develop. Lessons are considered successful or not if they went on as expected by the teacher and if learners' outcome is positive. However, not always what the teacher wants to achieve is what really happens. Many factors can affect classroom interaction (learners interest in different things at the moment of the class; students that would not follow the teacher's instructions, among many other factors).

According to specialists in the area, learners do not come to class without any knowledge. They bring with them their life and learning experiences, their needs and expectations towards language learning. The teacher, on the other hand, brings his/her world and classroom experience. Together with him/her there is the school's teaching policy, textbooks, teaching method, among other pedagogical resources. "These elements constantly interact with each other, and it is the chemistry among these elements that determines the progress of the lesson" (TSUI, 1995, p.5). Also, the type of learning opportunities that are made available to pupils and the whole learning that takes place.

Both teacher's and students' expectations are to be considered when determining the way a lesson proceeds. Students who expect teachers to be book-centered or the ones who expect the teacher to be giving them responsibility for their learning will find difficulties in adapting with a different type of teacher (the one they do not expect) in class. Such a fact interferes classroom interaction and learning. Allwright and Bailey (1991) point out that:

“the success of the interaction between the elements in the classroom cannot be taken for granted and cannot be guaranteed just by exhaustive planning. [...] interaction, in class or anywhere, has to be managed, as it goes along, no matter how much has gone into it beforehand...it has to be managed by everyone taking part, not just by the teacher, because interaction is obviously not something you just do to people, but something people do together, collectively” (p.18-19).

Another important point to be considered, according to Tsui (1995), is the students' talking time. Interaction will be better if learners develop topics which are of their interest, part of their world experience. That will increase their speaking and consequently, interaction and participation will grow.

This research is based on the analysis of interaction in a foreign language classroom. According to researchers in the area, teachers in a foreign language class need to try to promote communication through interaction in the target language, providing opportunities for learners to focus on the learning process and trying to link what students have learned to their reality outside the classroom through authentic texts (texts that have not been altered in content). As Brown (1994) affirms:

We are exploring pedagogical means for “real-life” communication in the classroom. We are trying to get our learners to develop linguistic fluency, not just the accuracy that has so consumed our historical journey. We are equipping our students with tools for generating unrehearsed language performance “out there” when they leave the womb of our classrooms. We are concerned with how to facilitate lifelong language learning among our students not just with the immediate classroom task (p.77).

It is in this classroom environment that the subjects are constructed and the learning process is negotiated between the one who teaches and the ones who learn, through interaction in which verbal and nonverbal languages are present, without becoming apart- they complement each other.

Both Brown (1994) and Tavares (2003) agree on the concept of interaction which is defined as a result of negotiation, “of give and take” or a “come and go path” of meaning. It also involves how language is conveyed by the interactants, thus producing communication.

In EFL teaching, interaction has been relevant and spread in some methods and approaches. Within this field, the Communicative Approach sees interaction as the main element for a teaching and learning setting. Interaction through the Communicative Approach occurs during the class by means of learner-centered, task-based and cooperative activities.

Without interaction, the learning becomes meaningless due to the fact that the student does not relate what is being learned to his/her real life, as it has already been said. Such a fact is clear from research on class interaction conducted by Consolo & Vani (2003) when they interviewed students about their opinion of a language teacher from their school:

When asked about the reason why the class was considered “boring”, the students said that they did not like the teacher and the way she taught, writing the grammar topics on the board, speaking briefly about them and asking them to do exercises because they hardly ever had the chance to participate. They also complained about the text translations and her lack of creativity (p.58,59).

The authors of the research clearly show that the mechanized activities alone no longer makes sense. Teachers still resort to translation and they concentrate on grammar sometimes but, in the Communicative Approach (CA), interaction (be it student-student or teacher-student or even both) is usually not forgotten. When interaction does not occur, making use of the language meaningfully, then there is no significant learning. Widdowson (1978), one of the precursors of the CA, says that translation in this approach is not considered negative. On the contrary, when it comes to the level of use, the student can recognize that acts of communication like communication, description, orders, instructions and others in his mother tongue are different from the language he/she is learning and that should help “to impress upon him the values that the foreign language sentences can assume, which is precisely the aim we wish to achieve” (p.18). On the CA, the same author says that the aims of a language teaching course are generally expressed by developing the four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. But not only this should language teachers be concerned about, but developing in learners the ability to produce correct sentences, how sentences are used to communicate effectively. “When we acquire a language we do not only learn how to compose and comprehend correct sentences as isolated linguistic units of random occurrence; we also learn how to use sentences appropriately to achieve a communicative purpose” (p.2).

Still about the CA, Almeida Filho (1993) adds that the experiences lived by learners in a language classroom can make it possible for them to identify different linguistic codes from that language as well as to understand their own, providing opportunities to place themselves in different situations, places and with different people. Such experiences can broaden learners’ minds and will be remembered forever.

Among so many opportunities of Foreign Language production, we chose verbal interaction, and to deepen our studies we chose nonverbal language. They are not seen as dichotomies but as complementary modalities of language. Our understanding of verbal interaction is based on Conversational Analysis. In this area, Marcuschi (1991), sees conversation (interactive verbal talk or speech) as a social practice in which people are daily involved, building an appropriate space for the construction of social identities in the real context, “being one of the most efficient ways of immediate social control” (p.5).

According to the author above, conversation is the first type of language that a person is exposed to and maybe the only one which people never abandon throughout their lives, that is, conversation is the crucial point of the process of human interaction. For conversation to take place, the participants must take turns (the moment each speaker has to convey his/her message using words, gestures, signs etc), interact mutually in a question-answer dialogue, reply and others.

Interaction takes place both in written and in oral communication, although it is in the oral one that interaction is more evident. Marcuschi (2001) says that from the point of view of human reality, a man is described as a being who speaks, not as one who reads. Therefore, that does not mean that the oral part is superior to the written one, not even the wrong conviction that writing is derived and speaking is primary. Also, writing cannot be taken as a representation of speaking due to the former does not reproduce many of the things the oral part does such as gestures, body movement, eye movement, prosody, facial expressions and others. On the other hand, writing contains elements which are not present in speaking such as the letters and their size, colors, pictorial elements that operate as gestures, mimics etc. The oral and the speaking are uses of language with typical characteristics, they are not opposed nor represent a dichotomy.

There is also interaction when it comes to nonverbal language, gestures and facial expressions, for example. One can easily recognize when another is feeling pleasure, disgust, happiness or the like.

It was thinking about this type of language that this research was developed, aiming at answering the central question which is about the influence of nonverbal language, together with verbal language, to EFL classroom interaction.

### **1.1. A brief historical overview about the theoretical trends in classroom interaction**

Aiming at understanding the importance of verbal and nonverbal language in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom environment and how nonverbal language more specifically, can influence in classroom interaction, we found it necessary to make a brief historical overview about the theoretical trends our research is based on. Such trends, therefore, see the subject as someone who has a relative autonomy, who is an actor and an author in his/her world, connected to a reality which creates and is created by himself/herself as a member of a community (TAVARES, 2006). Language is seen here as a social activity, dynamic, in constant change, which cannot be studied apart from other social elements such as interaction. Because of this connection among language, culture and interaction, we found it important to have a historical overview about the theoretical trends which are the basis of our research. The first one to be highlighted is Discourse Analysis (the Anglo-Saxon Trend).

According to Mc Carthy (1991) DA developed from different disciplines such as Semiotics, Psychology, Anthropology and Sociology in the 1960s and beginning of 1970s. It is concerned with the use of language in different contexts. What discourse analysts study is language being used and some examples are transcribed texts of all kinds and spoken data, from day-to-day conversation to institutionalized ways of speech.

The same view of DA is shared by Brown and Yule (1983) and they add that Sociolinguists are particularly concerned “with the structure of social interaction manifested in conversation, and their descriptions emphasize features of social context which are amenable to sociological classification” (p.viii). They are concerned with analyzing “real” examples of language in use, and their work, as it has been said above, includes transcribed spoken data.

It was in the 1960s then that Dell Hymes (1972), among other authors, came up with a more sociological perspective about discourse analysis, studying the speech in its social surroundings. Other linguistic philosophers within a pragmatist view of language, such as Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975), according to Mc Carthy (1991, p.5, 6), also had great influence in the study of “language as social action, reflected in speech-act theory and the formulation of conversational maxims, alongside the emergence of pragmatics” which is the study of meaning in context.

The British discourse analysis trend, also had great influence of M. A. K. Halliday (1973) whose framework highlights the social function of language and the thematic and



informational structure of speech and writing. There were other important names in Britain at this time such as Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), at the University of Birmingham, who, based on the hierarchy of discourse units, developed a system to describe the talk between a teacher and a student, still used in some Conversational Analysis research. There were other types of interaction being studied as well, such as doctor-patient, service encounters, interviews, debates and business monologues. “The British work has principally followed structural-linguistic criteria, on the basis of the isolation of units, and sets of rules defining well-formed sequences of discourse” (MC CARTHY, 1991, p.6).

This was a time when discourse still followed a structural and positivist way of analyzing language. As time went by, such way of viewing language began to change; there was a growing concern in interpreting data better than only focusing on its structure.

This research, therefore, follows the Anglo-Saxon Discourse Analysis trend in Linguistics which has been dominated by work within the ethno-methodological tradition, giving emphasis to the research method of close observation of groups of people interacting in natural environments. It does not investigate types of speech events (like storytelling, greeting habits and verbal duels) in different social and cultural environments. According to Mc Carthy (1991), what is generally called *conversational analysis* within the American tradition, can also be part of discourse analysis due to the fact that in conversational analysis, the emphasis is also on the close observation of the participants’ behavior interacting in a natural environment and on their recurrence over a vast range of natural data. Some authors such as Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson<sup>4</sup> (1974) have contributed with important work in the study of conversational rules, turn-taking, and other features of spoken interaction. Mc Carthy says:

Discourse analysis has grown into a wide-ranging and heterogeneous discipline which finds its unity in the description of language above the sentence and an interest in the contexts and cultural influences which affect language in use. It is also now, increasingly, forming a backdrop to research in Applied Linguistics, and second language learning and teaching in particular (p.7).

Owing to discourse analysis, data collection, class observation and questionnaires I could better analyze the most significant nonverbal language (together with verbal) and its influence to an EFL classroom environment with a Brazilian teacher.

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<sup>4</sup> Although they were the precursors to talk about interaction, we do not follow their thoughts in this study.

## **1.2. Deepening the studies into the second and third trends: Conversational Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics**

A second important area in which we base our research is Conversational Analysis (CA). According to Marcuschi (1991), CA began in the 1960s following the studies in ethnomethodology and Cognitive Anthropology and was concerned, until mid 1970s, with analyzing the organizational structure of verbal interaction. After that, it was not only concerned with observing the organizational structure, but also with linguistic, paralinguistic and socio-cultural knowledge that should be present so that interaction was successful.

To understand about Conversational analysis, I first highlight what conversation is understood as. According to the author noted above, conversation is the first type of language (human language) that a person is exposed to due to the fact that it is through interaction with other people (asking and answering) that we converse and learn to speak. That reinforces the dialogical characteristic of language. A good example of what has just been said is mother-baby interaction in his/her first years of life. The baby does not know how to speak but the mother develops conversation with him/her which is fundamental as the baby is learning to interact, understanding that when we talk, we do it dialogically (with another person and not alone) and such conversation has turns. Conversation is not an anarchic phenomena, and because it is highly organized, it can be studied with scientific support.

According to Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1978), a turn is what makes social activities socially organized. Each person usually takes the turn (has the word) at a time in face-to-face interaction and turns have some systems (one party speaks at a time, occurrences of more than one time are common but brief, turn order is not fixed; there is continuity and discontinuity etc).

When we speak, according to Marcuschi (1991), we follow rules which are systematically and culturally set, where attention is drawn not only to the merely linguistic rules but to the rules of use. He organizes conversation into five basic characteristics: a) interaction between at least two speakers; b) occurrence of at least one change of speaker; c) presence of a sequence of coordinated actions; d) happen in a temporal identity; e) involvement in “centered interaction” (p.15). These characteristics, according to the author, make us believe that conversation is a centered verbal interaction, where two or more people draw their visual and cognitive attention to a common task. But not only through face-to-face interaction does conversation happen. There is telephone conversation, for instance. But it

must have turn taking, have at least two speakers and happen at the same time. To produce and keep conversation, two people should share similar cultural involvement, linguistic aptitude and control of social situations.

In order to study nonverbal language interaction in foreign language classroom, we should first understand how verbal language interaction happens, as they are not considered or studied separately.

Leffa (2003) defines verbal interaction as everything we know in the universe, no matter if it is an object or a person. Interaction happens when these objects or people relate to others. We are always interacting with the environment which surrounds us. He adds that the process of interaction is of vital importance to the learning process. It involves three different types of negotiation: 1. the knowledge a person has and what he/she knows about the language lexis; 2. between two people (trying to understand a poem, for example ); 3 .between a person and an object (person x computer). In other words, it was concerned then with the cooperative processes present in conversation, with its *interpretation*.

Because Conversational Analysis works with paralinguistic phenomena, and this research concentrates on nonverbal interaction, it became crucial to this study in order to be able to answer questions such as *how can nonverbal language help teacher-learners interaction in an EFL classroom? Which nonverbal language is used to facilitate students' language learning?* CA attempts to answer questions related to interaction, mutual comprehension and interaction conflicts.

Conversation Analysis basic method of investigation is the inductive one, without pre-established models, analyzing several interaction speech recordings in order to find linguistic as well as paralinguistic recurring patterns which can be considered relevant to interaction (LEFFA, 2003).

A third and last trend we base the research on is Interactional Sociolinguistics, due to its foundations be strongly anchored in the type of research we develop here – interpretive and empirical qualitative and for its theoretical principles of language and teaching. The aim of Interactional Sociolinguistics is to study language in social interaction, to analyze *what* is happening at the moment of face-to-face interaction, constructing a social meaning which can be analyzed and has sociological as well as linguistic interests (RIBEIRO and GARCEZ, 1998).

According to the authors just mentioned, it was in order to investigate the topics presented above that, researchers such as Gumperz, Goffman and Shultz, started to develop studies about analyzing communication during face-to-face interaction. According to them,

the discourse during interaction is socially organized and the nature of human communication is dialogical, having a hard social and linguistic work implicit in the co-construction of meaning.

In this area, Philips (1998), says that “in order to analyze models of interaction that consider both the speaker and the listener, it is necessary to see the work of the ones who study nonverbal communication” (p.19) through videotaping and conversations. As the author says, during interaction there are nonverbal language that should be noticed such as body movement (the position of the front part of the body), head and body alignment, face movements (such as eyebrows and the muscles around the eyes, all the face muscles which permit us to smile, frown, move lips and others), hands and arms gestures, among others.

Such nonverbal actions, according to the author, is directly related to speech, what confirms, again, that verbal and nonverbal language happen together and might have some influence in the process of teaching and learning a foreign language.

### **1.3. Classroom Interaction Discourse in EFL environment**

Over the last thirty years, a number of educational researchers have developed work on verbal interaction, emphasizing the role of talk in the classroom environment. As it has been said before, authors such as Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), for example, defend that the most common type of classroom interaction is called recitation, where the teacher initiates the interaction by means of a question for example, the student will response and the teacher will evaluate the student’s response. This type of interaction became known as IRF (initiation-response-feedback) by the authors above or as IRE (initiation-response-evaluation) by Mehan (1978). In Brazil it is also known as IRA (iniciação-resposta-avaliação).

According to Cajal (2001), besides the classroom environment being an adequate place for learning, it is also a social activity where the “actors” (teacher and learners) meet face-to-face and act/react to one another. A classroom is a place where there are people with different backgrounds and knowledge, with different expectations and who have different feelings such as anger, happiness, anxiety, sadness etc. Because it is a social event, it follows some negotiation rules (most of them controlled by the teacher) and builds up meaning every day, all the time.

Based on the theoretical foundations of Pragmatics, Interactional Sociolinguistics and Applied Linguistics, Tavares (2004) says that one is able to understand the complexity of teaching and learning a foreign language when he/she can notice the multi-components (such as socio-cultural components, the teacher's and the students' discourse, the course book) which are related to this process. The author noted above describes a language classroom according to van Lier (1988, p.47, apud TAVARES, 2004) who sees it as a place where there are two or more people aiming at learning a language and where one assumes the position of teacher for a certain period of time. Based on Malamah-Thomas (1987), Tavares (2004) describes other elements which influence the classroom event which would be: *who* says *what* to *whom* and *why*. According to Malamah-Thomas, Tavares says that there are three types of discourse contents:

- the pedagogical content- which aims at passing on knowledge, but it is important to consider both teacher and students in terms of social background and associates it to the socio-cultural aspects of the target language. This content is important as it distinguishes the classroom environment from other contexts. Both teacher and learners are involved with one main aim which is learning a language.
- The second content aims at keeping harmony at a high level in class in order to promote a good environment for learning. Participants try here to keep a relationship with each other, no matter if it is formal or informal, authoritarian or tolerant.
- The third content is concerned with the organizational and administrative objectives in the classroom, such as desks positions, calling the role etc.

The three contents described above are of vital importance when describing a classroom environment. They are, as the author above has already mentioned, what distinguishes a classroom from other contexts. As the focus of our research is nonverbal language, we are not going deeper into the content analysis at this moment.

As Tavares (2004) says in her article, interaction is a process which involves teacher and learners and can result in harmony/cooperation or conflict. "The way interaction is directed will depend on the attitudes and intentions of the people involved and their interpretation of the others' attitudes and intentions" (p.104). In the classroom, besides the input provided by the teacher to promote students' learning, there is also the teacher's lesson planning, the material used to facilitate their learning such as nonverbal resources (gestures, signs, photos, drawings, body language etc), the students' struggle to learn (which is influenced by classroom interaction) and the discursive structures applied in interaction. Such discursive structures are defined by Kramsch (1987, apud TAVARES 2004) as **instructional**:

“where the participants have a determined role, the tasks are teacher-centered and the emphasis is put on the amount of content taught and its precision” (p.105); **spontaneous**: where interaction is more evident, with role negotiation and knowledge centered on the learning process; **convivial**: according to Kramsch (apud Tavares 2004), the ideal one, which combines elements of both discursive structures described above in a balanced and harmonious way. Besides the three discursive structures mentioned above, in a traditional class, the most common one is the initiation / response / evaluation, IRE structure, which is also an element of the traditional classroom discourse.

Although, during our research, the *convivial* discursive structure was more evident in about 90% of the classes observed, there were moments in which the instructional one was stronger, for example, when the teacher had to explain and at the same time test students’ memory about the different papers the First Certificate of English exam had.

What in fact characterizes the structure of a classroom and differentiates it from other contexts is the IRE organization it has. The initiation can be done by means of questions, affirmatives, imperatives and others. IRE dimensions should be considered when analyzing classroom interaction (TAVARES, 2004, p.106).

Still about interaction, Santos (2004) says that analyzing verbal and nonverbal elements can show the analyst how power relations happen in the classroom. A classroom has asymmetric nature and is an ideological place where knowledge is transmitted; it is possible to identify the power that sometimes the teacher exerts over the students.

According to Tavares (2004), in the classroom environment, it is usually the teacher who has control of the interaction, as it is him/her who possesses a more accurate communicative competence of the language in focus and does that through controlling the turns, asking questions and others. Tavares believes that this type of turn distribution in the classroom is a good example of a metaphor which Mehan suggests and Cazden (1988) presents in her book.

Therefore, only the teacher knows the screenplay (or thinks he/she knows) and the learners are the “immigrants” who are expected to use the language taught by the teacher, according to cultural conventions in the classroom, using the right sentences at the right time. With time, learners become more competent communicatively and participate more, therefore increasing class interaction (p.107-109).

Verbal and nonverbal languages cannot be studied separately. Understanding verbal interaction will help analyze the influence of nonverbal language (such as gestures, facial

expressions, body movements and others) to the learning of a foreign language and at which moments of verbal interaction the nonverbal was mostly predominant and why.

In the next chapter, we describe some features of verbal and nonverbal language, talk about research on interactive gestures and methodology used in this study.

## CHAPTER 2

### VERBAL AND NONVERBAL LANGUAGE

As we have seen in the previous chapter, when interaction is observed and analyzed, not only the verbal language is usually activated but there is also the influence of nonverbal language. As Rector & Trinta say (1999, p.21): “In everyday life, people have become so accustomed to verbal communication that they give little importance to the nonverbal one, as if it is simply complementary in the process of communication”. This becomes evident because people listen to themselves the same way they listen to others, but they do not see themselves.

However, to specialists in the area, both verbal and nonverbal languages are present during interaction. It has been called nonverbal language all the ways in which communication takes place among people in the presence of others, without the use of words (KENDOM, 1981). As it has been said before, the visible message has the same importance as the audible one. Nonverbal language is more than a “system of emotional passwords” and that, in fact, it cannot be separated from verbal language due to the fact that they happen together (DAVIS, 1979, p.16).

The authors Rector & Trinta (1999, p.21) add that “verbal and nonverbal are two modalities of exercise of the human language faculty, through the linguistic expression, in the first case, and through significant body movement, in the second” (p.21).

According to Paul Ekman (2003), a specialist in nonverbal communication, the voice rarely gives false emotional messages, although it gives no message at all if the person does not speak. The face more often than the voice gives false emotional messages, although it can never be totally turned off. Even when listening, a subtle sign of an expression may leak out. The same author also says that the voice captures people’s attention even when we are ignoring the person whereas we must pay attention to the person to pick up facial expressions.

In his book, **Emotions Revealed** (2003), Ekman describes an amount of different emotions (anger, surprise, fear, agony, sadness etc) and how one can notice such emotions through facial expressions. Although one cannot know why a certain person shows a certain emotion by the face, it is almost impossible to hide them as the face can hardly prevent a certain emotion from coming out. That is why one can notice the other’s emotion – by their facial expressions. Being aware of such facial expressions can be of great help to teachers as



they can have a better relationship with the learners and understand them better therefore providing a more enjoyable learning atmosphere.

Davis (1979) based her studies in Ekman's previous experiments. She adds that as people become aware of their facial expressions, it becomes difficult to avoid synchronization with other people's feelings. Husband and wife, patient and therapist, teachers and students, will be able to interpret anger, despair, unpleasant moments better as well as measure what type of impression they cause in the other. At the same time, as people become more conscious of what they do with their faces, they will end up reaching a better intimacy with their own feelings. Although aware of its importance, this research does not go into depth with the studies of facial expressions but are going to mention relevant ones observed during data collection.

In Rector & Trinta's view (1985), the nonverbal resources used by speakers in any type of social interaction, being responsible for the majority of the exchanged information, are represented by:

a) *paralanguage*, that is any type of nonverbal communicative activity that accompanies verbal behavior during a conversation. Examples of paralanguage are increasing and decreasing intonations, pauses like "hummm", a smile, a look.

Paralanguage is defined by Poyatos (1977, apud RECTOR & TRINTA, 1985) as :

The nonverbal voice qualities, modifiers, and sounds produced or conditioned in the areas covered by the supra glottal cavities (from the lips and the nares to the pharynx); the laryngeal cavity and the infra glottal cavities, down to the abdominal muscles which people use consciously or unconsciously supporting or contradicting the linguistic, kinesic, or proxemic messages mainly either simultaneously or alternating with them" (p.222).

To understand the paralinguistic phenomenon, according to the same authors, we have to understand the non-linguistic elements in conversation. They happen next to the spoken language, interact with it and produce, together with it, the total communication system. That happens because humans speak with the vocal organs but talk or communicate making use of the whole body.

b) *The Kinesics* is a subject which studies body movements and gestures, postures and facial expressions. The studies about kinesics were initiated in 1952, by R. Birdwhistell. That was when a series of systematic researches about body movements started, regarding it as a

science that is worried about the communicative aspects of learned and structured behavior of the body when moving.

This research will, on a secondary basis, describe some gestures which were considered relevant to language acquisition in the English classroom.

c) The study about the use of space is called *proxemics*; and the use of time, *chronemics*.

d) The *tactile* is the use of the touch in human interaction; and *the silence* is explained by the absence of linguistic constructions brought from paralinguistic (STEINBERG, 1988, apud RECTOR & TRINTA, 1999). The categories above act in every form of communication as well as the ones which integrate human behavior. A small part of this work is dedicated to some theory about the silence in EFL classes.

Rector & Trinta (1999) also say that it is important to know about paralinguistic codes when learning a foreign language so as not to cause misunderstandings among different nationalities. Sometimes the same gesture can mean something totally different when talking about different cultures.

Although the items above (from a to d) have been observed throughout this research, the contributions of kinesics (gestures and facial expressions) were analyzed but the focus was deeper on the study of paralinguistic, more specifically *-the smile-* and how it can influence classroom interaction as well as contribute to the learning of a foreign language. The smile was chosen because it was the most significant nonverbal language noticed during data collection and classroom observations.

Nonverbal and verbal languages, in communicative situations in the classroom are part of a continuum, which means they do not oppose to one another, do not contradict but complement each other, making the negotiation of senses in the classroom possible (RECTOR & TRINTA, 1999).

Nonverbal and verbal signs are present in the semantic, synthetic, pragmatic and dialogical functions. To Argyle (1988, apud SANTOS, 2004), such linguistic signs (discrete units which represent something to somebody) have a meaning when they can substitute, explain, contradict or modulate the verbal message. The same signs also denote a synthetic function due to the relationship among the signs themselves. Santos explains:

They represent the pragmatic function too, as they not only give us information related to sex and age, of aspects of social group personality and the attitudes of its interactants but they also show the reactions to the others' speeches. Finally, they establish the dialogic function, that becomes established by the way interactants coordinate their actions, allowing this movement to concentrate on a type of interactive relationship (p.44).

In order to read the discursive interactions which happen in the classroom, it is important to consider the allusive aspects related to time and space. There are two different ways in which one can relate to time: the monochronic and the polichronic. The first is typical of people who do one thing at a time and the second is true for people who do several activities simultaneously (SANTOS, 2004).

This research concentrates on the polichronic type as the teacher observed clearly conducted more than one activity at a time (like talking, lifting an arm and smiling) but making sure she was being understood and the subject was being learned in order to move to another step.

When it comes to distance, Santos (2004) mentions four types as follows:

1. *intimate distance*: the physical involvement between two participants, justified by the proximity and the body contact;
2. *personal distance*: a certain intimacy or formality in social events;
3. *social distance*: typical in commercial transactions or meetings with important people ;
4. *public distance*: seen as those which happen in public speeches and conferences for the fact that the language spoken is more formal and the voice is paused and slower.

The context in which this research happened showed a personal type of distance which sometimes varied from a little informal in order to promote better interaction to a little formal, in order to define the roles in the classroom (the latter occurred whenever the teacher was supposed to remind students of their role as learners). Some examples will be showed in different Interactive Moments in the next chapter.

## 2.1. Research on interactive gestures

According to research done by Bavelas, Chovil, Lawrie and Wade (1992), gestures were analyzed in two categories: topic gestures which depict semantic information related to the topic of discourse and interactive gestures (a smaller group) which involve hand gestures and refer to the process of conversing with another person. The latter was noticed to be more significant in face-to-face interactions and helped keep involvement with the other/interlocutor without a break in the verbal flow of discourse, consequently helping maintain conversation as a social system. Interactive gestures were present in our research and are going to be analyzed and mentioned later.

The research just described above focuses on *illustrators* which are, according to Ekman and Friesen (1969), hand signals improvised during conversation. They are very often made when the person is speaking (rather than listening), and they are temporally synchronized with the speaker's verbal syntax- occurring at exactly the same moment as the relevant part of speech. "They depict concrete meanings iconically and abstract meanings metaphorically" e.g., "weighing" two choices or indicating the past as "behind" you (p.470). They present the same improvisational quality as do words in conversation, rarely appearing in quite the same form or sequence twice.

Bavelas' et al (1992) examination of dialogue data showed that there is a subclass of illustrators which refer to the other rather than to the topic of the discourse. The same authors argue that there are no two similar interactive illustrators, but say that they share some common characteristics.

Interactive gestures, according to the authors above, have been named this way because their meaning is related to the interlocutor and not to the topic of the conversation. Gestures that accompany, for example, "what did you mean/say/think?" have the palm usually forward and held upright, while the fingers extend and spread out, generally also curling: considered a metaphor for the question as an object or container into which the listener is expected to place an answer.

We can distinguish between topic and interactive gestures because information about what is being discussed (ex: details of the story being told) and the latter, to be considered an interactive gesture, it has to be directly related/addressed to the other person. "In addition, the form must be interactive, which means that the finger(s), thumb, or open palm(s) are oriented directly toward the other person at some point, however briefly" (p.473). Some parts of the

hand such as the back of the palm, the heel of the hand, or closed hand are negative criteria, i.e., not interactive in form. I believe both types of gestures are interrelated, happen together or depend on one another in conversational processes.

An interesting intrinsic problem in dialogue is when the conversation turns into a monologue. In order to involve the listener from time to time, phrases such as *you know?* or *what do you think?* are used, but one problem about it is that it breaks the flow of the conversation, so nonverbal elements are well suited to this function. Interactive gestures can contribute to involve the listener so as to get out of a monologue every time one person has the floor.

One of the research experiments done by Bavelas et al included two tasks. In the first task participants worked individually as well as in pairs. They were asked to watch a short cartoon episode twice and describe and recreate the episode afterwards, focusing on the details. The other task involved participants on how to get a book from a library. In both tasks they were videotaped and shown the recording. The researchers explained the study and the participants agreed on signing a permission form choosing the uses that could be made of the videotape. The result showed that the rate of interactive gestures was higher with individuals working in pairs than in the alone condition. On the other hand, topic gestures were more frequent in the alone condition.

A second experiment was made in which participants were placed face-to-face and were asked to tell each other a “close call”. Others their view of each other with a partition and asked to perform the same task. They came to the conclusion that interactive gestures did not work if the other person could not see them.

Taken together, the results show that gestures are important to maintain conversation as a social system and for this reason, they are sensitive to visual presence. Participants made significantly fewer gestures when they could not see each other than when they were interacting face-to-face. Alternating monologues by two people produce fewer interactive gestures than dialogues by the same pair as well. “Interactive gestures elicit predictable responses from the interlocutor” (p.486).

To the researchers, the listener also plays an active part in maintaining the conversation by interactive acts called back channels or listener responses, such as “mhm” and head nods. They have seen interactive facial displays such as inquiring or puzzled looks and would now speculate that motor mimicry serves in conversation to indicate comprehension, as do verbal mimics such as echoing or anticipating the speaker’s words. Goodwin (1981) and Clark and Schaefer (1989), according to these research authors, have

described several ways in which speakers modify their talk in response to vocal and non-vocal acts by the listener that they would call interactive.

In Brazil, a study on gestures related to the interactive effects of speaking was conducted by Santos (2006). According to the author, nonverbal language helps to complement verbal language when for example, one points and says where a house is located or contradict what has been said (when in a presentation, for instance, a spectator's opinion "great" does not match with the gestures and voice intonation). On the other hand, verbal messages can be replaced by nonverbal ones and sometimes when the nonverbal is not enough to communicate, people usually resort to words. Also, parts of the verbal message can come together with a nonverbal element in order to emphasize what has been said or make it clearer.

With concern to gestures, Santos (2006) says that there are gestures which are related to speaking or come together when we speak. There are four different types: 1- gestures which link the speaker and the referent; 2- gestures which show the relationship between the speaker and the referent (both 1 and 2 exemplified by the position of the palms- open, closed, turned to the right or left); 3- gestures which intensify a single word or a bigger unity of expression and 4- gestures which help regulate or organize the dialogue between the interactants. No matter which gesture is being used at the moment of speaking, their intention is to promote interaction. The frequency of gestures, according to the author, is linked to the type of communication established (face-to-face, telephone conversation, for example). Gestures tend to be intensified when the speaker is enthusiastic and involved in the subject and when we are face-to-face with the referent.

Interactive gestures play an important role in class, as they clearly help keep interaction at a higher level, involving both the speaker and the listener(s). In this research, the focus is on the influence that nonverbal language (the smile), together with verbal language, can have in a classroom environment with foreign language learners.

## 2.2. The research and its methodology on verbal and nonverbal language

The starting point of this research method is based on ethnography. One of the main purposes of ethnography in educational environments, according to Erickson (1992), is to “reveal what is inside the black boxes”, identify the processes by which educational outcomes really happen. A useful tool to study education is through close analysis of interaction which is done by means of audiovisual records. Ethnographic microanalysis of interaction derives and is influenced by different work trends (such as conversation analysis, for instance) which take into account, for example, how verbal and nonverbal behaviors are organized (as they occur simultaneously) during moments of interaction and how the “social actors” interact with one another on the course of interaction. For Erickson (1992), another reason why taking a close look at interaction is important is that, “it tests the validity of characterizations of intent and meaning that more general ethnography may claim for the participants who are studied” (p.204). Also, it is concerned with how routine processes of interaction are organized and not only with describing *what* interactions might occur.

Following the same thought of the Anglo-Saxon Discourse Analysis line, besides emphasizing a close observation of groups of people interacting in natural environments, ethnographic microanalysis of interaction is also concerned with identifying subtle degrees of meaning that occur in speech and nonverbal actions, the latter being of greater importance to this research. In order to study human interaction in a social context with verbal and nonverbal language and their importance in the learning of a foreign language, we adopted an ethnographic perspective of research. It is qualitative disregard to quantities and it is also social, interpretative and analytical.

According to André (2004), ethnography is a type of research which was first developed by anthropologists in order to study culture and society. For them, the term means several techniques which are used to collect data about the values, beliefs, habits and practices of a certain group and whose results are written as a report afterwards. In order to be considered an ethnographic research in education, the work has to show some traditional techniques such as participant observation (called participant due to the researcher’s level of involvement with the situation being studied), interviews (both with students and teacher aiming at going deeper into the questions being studied as well as the problems observed throughout the research) and data analysis (the data is used to contextualize, deepen and

complete the information collected with other sources); among others, usually used and analyzed together.

Another characteristic of ethnography, according to the same author, is the constant interaction that the researcher has with the object of study, being “the principal instrument in data collection and analysis” (p.28). The researcher is someone who is in a position to respond actively to what is happening around him/her, changing data techniques, finding new subjects, revising methodology, etc. The researcher is also much worried about the process itself, what is happening at that moment, how it is developing, what characterizes the process, besides the final results.

According to Cançado (1994), Ethnography has been used significantly in the educational field due to the importance of studying human behavior in context, in other words - in “real” classroom performance. It is guided by two main principles: the emic and the holistic. The emic asks the observer to focus on the functional aspects of day-by-day classroom, avoiding pre-established models, schemes or typologies. The holistic, worries about all the aspects which involve interaction – social, personal or physical thus considering the classroom as a whole. Both principles are important and considered in this research.

An important feature of an ethnographic research described by the same author is that it involves field work. The researcher is directly in contact with people, situations, places and events for a certain period of time which may range from some weeks to several months or years. The intention is to avoid changes in the research environment in order to keep these people, places and events as natural as possible.

Yet another characteristic of ethnography is that the researcher, having in hands a lot of descriptive data from situations, interviews, dialogues, observation etc, makes use of description and induction – which he / she can rewrite or transcribe afterwards. I believe this is the reason why some authors regard ethnographic research as something very subjective (it is more qualitative than quantitative and validity is placed upon the researcher’s data interpretation, not numbers).

In order to avoid such “subjectivity”, we preferred to use the term *interpretative* research adopted by Erickson (1986) to refer to this type of research for three main reasons: first, because he says the term is more “inclusive” than many of the others (such as ethnography, case study); second, because it avoids considering it qualitative, as quantification is also possible in this type of research and third, because “it points to the key



feature of family resemblance among various approaches – central research interest in human meaning in social life and in its elucidation and exposition by the researcher” ( p. 2 ).

Besides the reasons mentioned above, the term *interpretative research* was also adopted because it deals with classroom interaction (teacher-students) and requires a lot of interpretation from the participants, from all items which make the data collection.

The author argues that a research has an interpretative approach when the content is more relevant than the procedure:

If interpretative research on classroom teaching is to play a significant role in educational research, it will be because of what interpretive research has to say about its central substantive concerns: (a) the nature of classrooms as socially and culturally organized environments for learning, (b) the nature of teaching as one, *but only one*, aspect of the reflexive learning environment, and (c) the nature ( and content ) of the meaning-perspectives of teacher and learner as intrinsic to the educational process ( p.4 ).

As it has been stated before, the nonverbal language used by the teacher in the classroom was the aim of our research which could only be possible through ethnographic/interpretative method. Through it, we could observe how the teacher’s non-verbal language influenced and helped students in the learning of a foreign language; the teacher’s nonverbal discursive strategies when using the foreign language in the classroom; which nonverbal language contributed most to students’ learning and why, and teacher-student interaction concerning nonverbal language. The procedure involved recording (a number of 12 classes), note-taking (since the first class observed), questionnaires<sup>5</sup> (to students) and interview (with the teacher).

It is important to understand how the ethnographic researcher is seen. According to Cançado (1994), he/she is usually regarded as an intruder, someone who is bound to disturb the classroom flow. This was true in the first weeks of observation, taking notes of what happened in class – no recording was being used. There was, indeed, the feeling of disturbance caused by the observer’s presence, invading the classroom environment with a mix of discontentment and displeasure. It was noticed by the students’ reaction (such as sitting away from the camera and speaking very low) that they were somewhat afraid of participating, thinking they were being tested. With time, the observer assumed the role of participant (although not thoroughly). Cançado (1994) affirms that this is a characteristic of

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<sup>5</sup> The questionnaires have not been used to conclude the analysis.

flexibility, typical of interpretive research, where the researcher is not only the observer but he/she also participates somehow in the interaction. There is a continuum between the two, which is only defined throughout the research, throughout the observation. There were moments later on in class when the observer was even asked to give her opinion or try and help solve some vocabulary doubts.

The ethnographic research gives priority to the process and therefore, throughout the methodological description, the process will be analyzed presenting some preliminary considerations. It was only through this process analysis, with data collection, questionnaires, observations, videotaping, interviews and others, that this research could try and find the answer to the central question being investigated.

### **2.3. The corpus and the subjects**

In ethnographic research, there are two ways in which to obtain a corpus: “look” and “ask”. According to Cançado (1994) “look” refers to several observation techniques such as field notes, audio and video recordings (and subsequent transcriptions). “Ask” refers to questionnaires, interviews, teacher’s diaries, students’ diaries, study of documents, etc. We used both ways in order to have different material to analyze, compare and study. However, we did not go deep into teacher and students’ diaries or documents.

Something important which should be considered is the subjective nature of analyzing the corpus. That was the reason why different research instruments were used. In order to obtain the corpus, a number of twelve classes which lasted two hours and ten minutes were observed, selected and transcribed later on. It started in August, 2005 and it lasted the whole semester. We took field notes of ten classes and recorded six entire classes of two hours and ten minutes. Students had classes only on Fridays which meant that each recorded lesson was equivalent to two regular classes a week at that school. Questionnaires were handed out when pupils had become more confident with the observer’s presence and had developed a more positive relationship between the observer and the whole group. The teacher also filled in a questionnaire at home after the term had ended, (see appendix 1). The teacher was willing to help and so were most learners in the group. They helped by answering questionnaires, agreeing to be observed and being available for interviews. The class had a number of fifteen

advanced students enrolled but the number of students present in each class varied considerably. There was only one class in which 13 students were present. All the other classes took place with a number of students which ranged from 7 to 10. When the semester finished, there were 8 students enrolled, 6 had given up and 1 had changed group. We handed out an identification questionnaire to all the students, but just 6 returned them filled out. Through the questionnaire, it was possible to observe that none of them lived in privileged areas around the city. Their age ranged from 17 to 22. Only two of the students who answered the questionnaire had a job. They all lived with a parent (either the mother, the father or both). When asked about the English language, they all enjoyed studying it for several reasons such as: 1. the English language is part of their life; 2. it promotes world interaction; 3. it is seen on television; 4. it causes fascination because it is foreign; 5. it is interesting and spoken all over the world.

Some students had already learned English in other language schools and also at the state or private school where they study/studied before. They have been studying it for quite a long time, from 7 to 12 years. They had just reached the FCE (First Certificate of English) level when this research started. The reason why they had chosen to study the English language was because: 1.it is important to speak another language; 2.it is needed professionally; 3.it is a rich language; 4.it is spoken in almost all the films they watch; 5.it can be used to communicate around the world.

In terms of benefits the language can bring them, they agreed on professional development; for pleasure (for example, chatting at the internet); for their future studies such as medicine (understanding medicine books) and also in order to improve their knowledge so as to become an English teacher. To practice the language, they all do the same, which includes watching films in English (with or without subtitles), using the internet and listening to music or singing. Among the various teaching resources, they mostly enjoy watching videos, singing and playing games. Their teacher, according to our observations and audio recordings, was aware of learners' reasons for studying the language (she read students' identification questionnaire I gave them to fill in) and tried to satisfy them as well as keep their interest in the lesson by bringing different types of resources for the class, what made them rate the school as one of the best language schools in town, with qualified professionals who do their best to teach the language meaningfully.

The teacher was also interviewed. Since the beginning she agreed on helping me and agreed on showing her image. She is a young professional who has been teaching English for

twelve years. There is no other English teacher in her family. She studied English in four different schools where she lived and spent half a year in England. She is a professional who has graduated in Arts (Portuguese / English) and had just passed the tests to start her Master's Degree Course at the Federal University of Alagoas at the time this research was beginning. She has also got the COTE (Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English), an intensive course which prepares foreign teachers to achieve a better methodological approach when teaching English, and the CPE (Certificate of Proficiency in English), a certificate offered by the University of Oxford for those who achieve the requirements of the test; it proves the one who has got it can speak, write and understand English at the highest level of proficiency.

When asked about what she thinks teaching a foreign language is (see appendix 2), I could notice that she sees language and culture as inseparable, as she said: "Besides the linguistic aspect, the cultural aspect should be considered as language is immerse in a culture". To her, being a teacher involves not only passing on knowledge to students but also knowing the best and more effective way to do it. It also involves creating a learning atmosphere which favors students learning and for that, a teacher needs to be able to adapt her lesson plan if needed, helping students to be more efficient learners. She seemed to be really successful in doing the described above. According to our observations, data collection, interviews and questionnaires, she bases her lessons on the Communicative Approach principles in order to make students interact with one another as much as possible, therefore providing a more appropriate and meaningful learning environment and a low affective filter between her and the learners. To her, an English teacher should have, "besides the linguistic competence (and here she means the ability to be able to speak the language fluently), wide professional experience as well as a knowledge background so as to be able to teach". She adds that the teacher should also be responsible, creative, flexible and attentive. Her idea matches with the school's policy which, according to the coordinator, follows the Communicative Approach. As he says, all the teachers who enter CCB have already been using this approach for some time. If it happens that a new teacher is not familiar with it, then he/she goes through a training offered by the school.

In terms of gestures, facial expressions, mimics and nonverbal language she believes that:

“nonverbal language like mimics and gestures can help clarify the meaning and the sense of new words and new expressions. Besides, nonverbal language acts as a support in the communication process as a whole, for example, encouraging the student to express himself/herself in the target language through careful body movement”.<sup>6</sup>

The teacher’s belief and use of nonverbal language was what gave me the necessary material to be observed, recorded and analyzed in order to be studied.

During the first two lessons we only took field notes in order to become more familiar with the teacher and the students. On the first day in this group, we explained the importance of the research and let them know that the reason why we were there was not to test them.

In the third class, we started videotaping the teacher and the students, focusing more closely on the teacher. Extra linguistic elements such as gestures, facial expressions and body movement were observed, which facilitated transcription afterwards.

The variety of research instruments, according to Cançado (1994), is a way to guarantee that “theory is being tested in different ways” (p.58) and that “reality” is interpreted under different perspectives.

## **2.4. The school**

The observation and data collection took place at a private language school in Maceió which is an extension of the Federal University of Alagoas. The classes were filmed and recorded with a video camera placed at one of the corners in the classroom. It could not, however, have all the students and the teacher in the recording as the room the classes took place was fairly small. Most of the transcriptions were made after each class had been filmed, using the transcription code suggested by Marcuschi (1991), which is going to be presented in the analysis chapter. The class had a number of 15 students enrolled, as it has been described before. This number varied from class to class, although the students who were usually present were basically the same. They belonged to an

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<sup>6</sup> The teacher’s answers were given in Portuguese and translated into English.

advanced level, having specific lessons to practice for the First Certificate in English (FCE). It is a preparatory course which lasts 3 semesters. The FCE is a certificate given by the Oxford University to those students who pass the examination. Having an FCE certificate indicates a person is able to write, understand and communicate fluently at an upper intermediate level and in different situations. Their fluency was very good, they showed great interest in the language and communicated only in the target language, even among themselves and in group or pair work. They were all young adults who worked or studied (or both) and for these reasons had to study at night. The class was given once a week, on Fridays, from 18:00h to 20:10h. There was no break during this time. The teacher provided the students with different sorts of activities, involving them the most she could in order to keep their attention, interest and participation at a high level.

The University extension is a cultural, scientific and educational environment which functions as an incentive to learning and to doing research, promoting the relationship between the University and the community. It is part of the PROEX (Pro-Reitoria de Extensão), a Federal University department which is responsible for the university extension and also part of the FALE (Faculdade de Letras). The English Language Center is named Casa de Cultura Britânica (CCB) and has a coordinator who is also an English teacher.

According to the identification questionnaires filled in, learners regard it as one of the best language schools in the city, the price is quite reasonable but it does not offer extra features such as a library or a self-access center. It has got a large number of students and limited vacancies. The number of vacancies is not enough for the great number of people interested in studying there. The date for enrollment is usually short. It is not possible to enroll any other student when the period for that is over.

There are more than 10 classrooms which are mostly wide due to the large number of students per group, usually ranging from 15 to 20. The school invests on teacher's training providing courses in and outside the city. The professionals who work there are usually satisfied with the working environment and conditions. Most classrooms are equipped with a television and some have a DVD and a sound system. There is also an OHP available.

The coursebook used was one from Cambridge University Press which focus on the First Certificate Examination. The classes observed had more specific lessons because the teacher is expected to prepare the learners for the exam. The book contains several types of material (such as texts, listenings, readings and speaking activities) which aim at preparing the learners for the real test based on authentic material. The coursebook accompanies an Exam

Maximizer, an extra book with exercise samples intended to be used as further practice at home. It contains full sample tests which are corrected by the teacher later and the learners can follow their progress and analyze their chances to pass the real test according to their punctuation on the sample test.

It was a rewarding experience which took the whole term and provided me with rich and valuable data to be analyzed, being this research just the initial step for me and for those who want to extend the topic about the importance of nonverbal language and its contributions to the learning of a foreign language.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE SMILE

As it has been mentioned before, people interact with everything which is in the universe like other people, objects and others. “We are always acting and reacting with the context surrounding us” (Leffa 2003, p.2). In the learning environment it is not different, teachers and learners, learners and learners, the whole group, learners and textbook etc, there is constant interaction going on. In order to understand the interactive process in a foreign language class, it is important to analyze both verbal and nonverbal language together because as it has been mentioned, they are part of a continuum and cannot be studied separately. Among the different types of nonverbal language present throughout data collection and observations, the one which called more attention and was more significant in the learning process was the smile.

According to a study conducted by Freitas-Magalhães (2004), a Portuguese psychologist, there are three types of smile: 1. a wide smile - when we smile and see the teeth; 2. a superior smile - when just the superior teeth are seen and 3. the closed smile - when the teeth are not seen and the person’s face does not change much. This study happened in 2003 and finished in 2004 and had the cooperation of 800 university students being 400 women and 400 men.

According to the researcher, people that smile with the lips closed, without showing their teeth are seen by others as affectionate. Among the other types, the closed smile besides showing affection, it is also a smile of seduction. Between men and women, the latter are seen as being more affectionate than men as they use the closed smile much more often. Women also smile more socially than men in an attempt to please others. It is almost involuntary, but more seductive and true (the smile is suggestive). He concludes saying that both men and women show a “yellow smile” (another name for the closed smile).

We have noticed, throughout data collection, that the smile played important roles in the teacher’s way of teaching. She used the smile as a form of exerting power in the classroom, as a convivial strategy and also as face saving. Below we try to explain the types just mentioned. We begin by characteristic number 1: *face saving*.

Erwin Goffman, a Sociologist who studies social matters and face-to-face discursive interactions, in his article about ritual elements in social interaction (1967), defines *face* as:



the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes-albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself (p.5).

According to him, social interaction happens when we meet people either face-to-face or through mediated contact. In such contacts, we tend to call a *line* - that is, a pattern of verbal and nonverbal act by which he expresses his view or opinion and at the same time analyses the participants and himself. What Goffman (1967) calls a *line* is called by other authors in Conversational Analysis such as Marcuschi (1991) and Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1978) a *turn*. According to Marcuschi, for example, a *turn* means each time a speaker talks, meaning that each speaker speaks at a time. *Turn taking* is the basic rule in conversation, making it possible to organize conversations and distribute turns. In general, one speaker usually waits for the other to finish; speakers alternate turns. Turn taking is what happens when there is face-to-face interaction. What Goffman (1967) calls face work, Tavares (2001) prefers to call *image negotiation* due to the fact that the word *image* is more representative in our language and is in accordance with the view of language as a social act, in which interaction, social actors and the context are in accordance. Also, because someone's image is not always preserved to keep a good interaction flow. It is preserved and lost in conflicting situations as well. Goffman's use of the term *face work*, according to Tavares (2001) is an attempt to promote the flow of interaction.

Another characteristic of the smile (number 2) according to our data collection, is *power relation*.

Power, according to Marcuschi (1988) and Dijk (1988a and 1988b) shows two different perspectives: a macro one (involving political, economical, social lines and others) and a micro one (power which comes from interpersonal relations). It is in the micro perspective that classroom control happens; it is the teacher who controls the topic, the turns, the speech, the tasks etc.

According to Kramsch (1987), a teacher exerting a relative power in the classroom can have "various origins and be unevenly distributed" (p.19). This is due to the fact that it is the teacher who usually masters grammar and vocabulary in foreign language teaching and can better control interaction. This asymmetry, according to Tannen (1994, apud SANTOS, 2004) is also relative as both teacher and student engage in a linguistic process because one

exerts power (has the knowledge) over the other, and the other is solidary (lets the first exert power, ending up with limited freedom). Such classroom relations are known as asymmetrical, having the teacher (the one who teaches), the student (the one who should learn), the method (how the knowledge is transmitted) and the topic (what is being taught).

Classroom discourse<sup>7</sup> according to Fairclough (1989), can show extra linguistic elements due to the fact that it is the teacher who controls the turns in an asymmetrical relation. To Marcuschi (1995) we should not label interaction as symmetrical or asymmetrical as in any of the situations we can have elements from both (SANTOS, 1999).

It is through interaction that language is produced and subject construction happens, although it does not always happen through verbal language. Extra linguistic elements like gestures, for example, can help in the interactive language process. Interaction becomes effective when the interlocutors participate in the negotiation of meaning in order to construct the topic. The classroom environment allows such negotiation of meaning but might present argument imposition from the teacher (SANTOS, 1999). This research analyzes one extra linguistic element which is the smile and how the teacher uses the smile to exert power in the classroom.

According to Kramsch (1987), “classroom discourse happens between two poles of a continuum of instructional options” (p.104). From one end, there is the instructional discourse, in which the participants have fixed roles developing tasks which are teacher-centered and there is emphasis in the amount of content taught and its effectiveness. At the other end, there is the spontaneous discourse, with negotiated roles, knowledge centered in the learning process and tasks oriented by the group. To Kramsch, the ideal would be to have a balanced discourse which she calls *convivial discourse* (characteristic 3), where elements from both ends could be seen promoting a fruitful learning. In her study, Tavares (2001) prefers to call it a *convivial strategy*, present in most of the classes observed in our research. Her research observes image negotiation in a foreign language classroom based in three types of discourse: the spontaneous, the instructional and the convivial. Different types of strategies (five) were established. The most significant strategy shows how the teacher negotiates his/her own image and his/her learners’ images through a convivial discourse, specially in organizational situations when the intention is to lessen the institutionalized image of power that teachers have over students. Besides the strategies, her study also analyzed several

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<sup>7</sup> Discourse is seen here, according to Kramsch (1984, apud SANTOS, 1999) as “a negotiation process, reached by the discursive topic itself, of the turns that happen in conversation and of communicative activities that aim at stimulating classroom interaction” (p.11).

discursive marks which were relevant in the observation process such as clapping hands, humor, informality, expressions which indicate collectivity, each with its specific negotiation strategy.

The convivial strategy (term adopted) is an image negotiation used by the teacher to lessen the instructional discourse (also present in approximately 70% of the classes observed). It was a way to “get closer” to the students and help them feel more confident and relaxed in order to promote interaction and consequently, a more meaningful learning. The smile was used by the teacher in the three points just mentioned throughout the research and will be shown together with images in the next section.

### 3.1. The different facets of a smile

Most people have probably never thought about the different facets of a smile. Pease and Pease (2005), specialists in human relationships and body language, say that the power of a smile comes from our grandmothers, when they insisted on making us give a wide smile showing the teeth whenever we met a person for the first time. They claimed that such procedure would cause a positive first impression on others.

Popular sayings apart, the same authors also say that the first studies about the smile dated from the nineteenth century, made by a French neurologist called Guillaume Duchenne de Boulogne. He said that there are two types of smile: one which we can see the wrinkles on the person's face (considered a sincere smile) and another in which only the lips smile (considered false smiles). Pease and Pease (2005) affirm that "people who are less sincere smile with the lips whereas when the sincere ones smile, wrinkles around the eyes can be noticed" (p.55). It is possible for scientists to distinguish a false smile from a genuine one. It is possible to notice the two types of smile just mentioned using a system created by the scientists Paul Ekman, from the University of California and Dr. Wallace V. Friesen, from the University of Kentucky. They say that when a person feels pleasure, some signals are given to the brain which makes "the muscles of one's mouth move, the cheeks go upwards, the eyes get narrower and the eyebrows turn slightly down"(p.55). Duchenne (apud EKMAN, 2003) adds that if, on the other hand, the feeling is false joy or fraudulent laugh, the muscles around the eyes are not contracted, what makes it clear that there is something fake in the action.

Another feature of the smile is its submission. Pease and Pease (2005) claim that a smile can clearly show to others that one does not represent any threat and wants to be part of a group or team. According to their view: "That explains why some individuals such as Clint Eastwood, Margaret Thatcher and Charles Bronson are rarely seen smiling. They do not want to show, by any means, submission" (p.57).

The smile is contagious (and also suggestive). If a person comes into another's direction smiling, the latter is due to smile too, it is something almost automatic. That is why smiling is important to one's everyday life, even when he/she is not willing to. It influences the other's attitude towards us and the way they react to our presence thus causing a positive atmosphere around us (PEASE and PEASE, 2005).

According to Carvalho (1999), Richard Davidson, Ph.D. Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin in Madison shares the same view as Pease and Pease about the smile and adds that it is difficult not to respond positively to someone who is smiling at us, even when we do not feel happy. He says that smiling makes anyone enter the “happy zone” in the brain which makes one feel spontaneous happiness. I believe that the smile does help improve class interaction and it was a tool used by the teacher to lessen the instructional discourse but I do not thoroughly believe it may make anyone feel spontaneous happiness.

John Kinde (1999) says something really interesting about the importance of the smile in relationships: “Life’s lessons have taught me this: a smile is the number one feature that makes people attractive. It’s a welcome mat. It’s what makes folks approachable. People with great smiles radiate a warmth that draws others to them instantly” (p.1).

The thought developed by Kinde was reaffirmed throughout our research. It was clear that, when the biggest aim is classroom interaction and language learning, the teacher observed showed a big smile whenever she entered the classroom for a lesson. Her smile was the “welcome mat” described by Kinde, aiming at making her class an enjoyable one, bringing her and the students together in order to achieve her goals which were directed to learning.

Pease and Pease (2005) say that smiling and laughing can both contribute to a person’s general well-being. When incorporated to our personality, it attracts friends, improves the health and extends life. When we laugh, we positively affect all parts of our body. Specialists have found that laughing can work as an aerobics exercise as it can burn calories. It stimulates the production of endorphins - natural painkillers and sensation and well-being agents which help reduce stress and cure illnesses.

The endorphins are chemical substances released by the brain when we laugh. With a chemical composition similar to the morphine and the heroine, it produces a relaxing effect on the body, at the same time reinforcing the immune system. That explains why the happy people hardly get sick while the unhappy and complaining ones seem to be always sick. (p.63)

A similar thought is developed by Ekman (2003) concerning the well-being which a smile can cause. According to him, in general, people who smile and move the muscle around the eye are reported to feel more happiness, have lower blood pressure and are seen as happy people by their friends and spouses.

When the word “smile” is pronounced, it is usually linked with something which signs pleasure such as amusement, relief, wonderment, ecstasy and others. Ekman (2003) says that smiles can be confusing as well due to the fact that they not only relate to the feelings described above but are also shown when people do not show enjoyment of any kind, for example, in politeness. He believes that often, people are not worried if the other is showing a Duchenne smile, is having pleasure or enjoyment or is showing a fake smile, but “there may be times when we really care whether the other person is truly enjoying himself or herself, and the place to look, you now know, is the eye cover fold directly below the eyebrows”. (p.212)

In an educational field, based on our data collection, a student’s smile is a distinctive feature of enjoyment for a teacher. When learners smile showing satisfaction, the teacher feels motivated to carry on doing a nice job, preparing activities which make students feel motivated as well. Besides that, a smile has really got the power to increase classroom interaction as both teacher and learners feel comfortable to talk and participate. It shows that verbal and nonverbal language are inseparable, happen together and depend on one another.

### **3.2. The smile in a foreign language teaching class**

#### **The three different types**

It has been discussed in this chapter the theoretical view of some specialized authors, mainly from Psychology, about how important a smile can be in a person's life, how to recognize a sincere smile from a fake one and its influence to one's well-being.

This research turns now to a more specific field which is foreign language teaching. As it has been discussed previously, it had the corpus defined by audio and video recordings (a number of 12 classes which lasted 2 hours and ten minutes each were recorded) and its transcriptions, note-taking since the first class observed, interviews (formally and informally with teacher and students) and questionnaires to both teacher and learners.

Among the innumerable types of nonverbal elements observed (such as gestures, body movement, eye contact, looks, facial expressions, body positions etc), I decided to concentrate my studies on the influence of the smile to the foreign language learning environment. It was a very significant nonverbal language used by the teacher which contributed to improve classroom interaction and consequently students' learning. As I have mentioned previously, the smile was an element used by the teacher to promote class interaction. Among several features which interfere in class interaction (for instance: age, background, school's policy, material and others) according to researchers such as Rivers (1987) and Tsui (1995) it (class interaction) occurs when learners are able to convey and receive messages which are of interest for the listener and the speaker in a context which is also relevant for both and part of their world experience. In this study, such a fact can be noticed in Interactive Moments 1,3,4,6,7 and 8 because as the researchers above say, learners were involved in developing conversation which was relevant for them, interesting and part of their world experience.

Throughout the research, I observed three different ways in which the smile was used by the teacher in the classroom in order to promote a convivial strategy. One of them was making use of the smile to reprimand students for not coping with what had been agreed before (such as doing homework, buying the book etc). This procedure is clear in the following examples:

Interactive Moment (IM) 1 - Class 5 – Type of smile = reprimand

The interactive moment (IM) which follows happens right in the beginning of class 5. The teacher usually entered the room smiling and asking students how their holiday had been and some students talked about what they had done but some of them answered that they had studied. The teacher then asked them if they had studied any English and the answer was negative. She usually started the class after greeting students and having an informal conversation, asking them about homework she had assigned for that class.

The extracts which follow are based on Marcuschi's (1991) table of transcription where:

T	Represents the teacher
S	Represents a student
S1	One student talks
S2	Another student talks
(( ))	Analyst's comments
XXX	Words that could not be understood
CAPITAL LETTER	Emphasis on the word
!!!	Indignation or surprise
.....:	Long vowel sound
/.../	Partial transcription
Ahã, mhm, uhm	Hesitation or sign of attention
?	Sign which corresponds to a question
...	A pause in speaking
Words <b>in italics</b>	Occurrence of nonverbal language for analysis.

## IM1

((It is time to start the class. **T enters the classroom smiling**))  
 1 T: so, how was your holiday? ((some students move hands as if saying "not bad")) what did you do?  
 S1: studied.  
 T: studied? ((she looks at another student)) studied too?  
 S2: ((nods head positively))  
 5 T: and you alberto? what did you do?



Alberto: studied.  
 T: everybody studied this holiday?  
 Alberto: I did a test XXX.  
 T: u:::::h .right! a:::::nd, u:::::h, did you study english too?  
 10 Alberto: no.  
 ((T **smiles**, places hands on the waist and nods head from left to right)) naughty, naughty students. a:::::nd, but...have...do you...have you done any homework? have you done the homework?  
 ((a student comes in))  
 T: o:::::h, rachel! XXXX. so, have you done the homework in the exam...uh...exam maximizer? ((she **smiles**  
 15 with both hands on the waist)).  
 ((students are silent))  
 T: how do you think...you're going to pass the exam? ((**smiling**)) tell me!! ((she places hands on the waist))  
 ((students are silent))  
 T: be sincere!  
 20 alberto: XXX.  
 ((some students laugh))  
 T: in ten years' time! ((**smiling**))  
 alberto: ten years?  
 T: yeah? people...the fact that you're coming once a week doesn't mean you don't have to study! this is, this  
 25 is just part of the process! you have...lots of things to do at home!  
 S2: XXX.  
 T: two hours and a half! less than that! per week! yeah? so, if you don't make the most...of the material, of your time...preparing for the exam, I'm sorry but you won't pass.  
 30 /.../  
 T: right? because I'm talking about the homework...because I suppose that AT THIS LEVEL, with A GROUP LIKE THAT, I don't think...I'm supposed to CHECK homework...to check if you're doing or not... ((**she smiles**)). this is something that YOU have to do...without the teacher's pressure.  
 35 /.../  
 T: I would do it today, but as just two students have the book ((**smiling**)), so I'm going to do next class, ok? OK. so, agreed on that?((**she smiles**)) so, let's...so...BE::::: honest to yourselves, see the things you have to 40 do...and then if you don't pass the exam, don't blame the teacher, yeah? ((T **smiles** again))

Although the teacher smiled (and that can be seen on lines 11, 14, 17, 22, 34 and from 38 to 40), she was in fact, reprimanding the students. When reprimand becomes stronger, learners keep silent. That can be noticed from lines 24 to 40. They noticed (by their reaction) that although she smiled from time to time, she meant what she said. There was no turn taking in the lines mentioned above.

According to Orlandi, in her book *The Forms of Silence in the Movement of Senses*, (1992, title translated to English), silence means, it is not transparent. It is so ambiguous as words because they happen in specific conditions that define the way they mean. As silence does speak, it is useless to try to understand it in words, but it is possible to understand it through discursive observational methods. As she says:

Silence is not absence of words. Imposing silence to the interlocutor is not shutting his mouth but impeding him to sustain another discourse. In given conditions, people speak in order not to say (or not let people say) things that might cause significant rupture in the relation of meanings. Words come full of silence(s) (p.105).

According to her, silence means, it can be interpreted. It does not mean absence of interaction but is part of meaning construction during interaction. But if, as Orlandi says, where there is language, there is silence and if there is continuity between language and silence and not rupture, I conclude that the students absence of words is due to the fact that there are moments of asymmetry in the process of class interaction. Even though the convivial discourse was present in most of the classes observed, the instructional discourse was also noted and it became evident whenever there was a need to define roles in the classroom. The interactive moment (IM) just described above shows that the teacher was using the instructional discourse in order to make students realize that she was doing her job which was to help them learn a foreign language but they needed to do their job which was doing homework and other assignments. The learners' silence is observed as a form of defeat, they had no excuse to explain why they had not done what they were supposed to. Orlandi explains:

(...) there are multiple silences: the silence of emotions, the mystic, the contemplation one, the introspective, the revolting one, the resistant one, the disciplined, the exerting power one, the defeat of wish etc (p.44)

The smile worked here, throughout IM1, as a tool to lessen the awkward moment which is calling students attention for not coping with what they had been asked to do. Also because smiling was a way to keep a good relationship with the students and a nice learning environment. Such attitude is known as *face saving or image negotiation* (GOFFMAN, 1967; TAVARES, 2001). As I have already mentioned before in this chapter, image negotiation is used during face-to-face interaction when there is intention to preserve one's image. In the IM above, the teacher besides reprimanding, tries to preserve her image saying that if the learners do not pass the exam it is not going to be her fault because she is doing her job. That can be noticed more clearly in lines 18, 28, 29 and from 39 to 41.

See image below.

## IM 1



Image 1

I could also notice a convivial strategy, not only in the extract shown above but in most of the classes observed. The *convivial* is one of the strategies used to negotiate one's image during interactive moments. According to Tavares (2001), it lessens the instructional strategy (where the teacher decides the moments when activities begin and end, being the one who gives the orders, and has the roles well defined in class: teacher holds the knowledge, students obey) and breaks the barrier caused by it (the instructional strategy), helping students to attempt to speak and participate in the target language more often and more naturally. According to Kramsch (1987), it is a balance between the instructional discourse and the spontaneous discourse.

When informally asked about the use of the smile when reprimanding students, the teacher admitted she did not want to sound strict, causing students to feel afraid of speaking and interacting in a class where they were supposed to participate a lot in order to develop speaking, writing, listening and reading skills for the exam (FCE). The smile was a way to *exert power* in the classroom (they are not doing their job which is to do their assignments at home, if they don't pass the test don't blame the teacher, as she says - she is doing her part) in a nicer way, trying not to sound rude or unfriendly (more detailed information in the next IM). According to Kramsch (1987), a teacher can exert power in the classroom due to the fact that she is the one who masters the language and better controls interaction, but it is noticed in this study that students also start interaction by asking questions and participating as it is seen in

IMs 7 and 8. This is confirmed by Tannen (1994, apud SANTOS, 2004) who says that this asymmetry is relative as both teacher and students engage in a linguistic process.

Below, another IM image is shown and described. Reprimand from the teacher can be noticed.

#### Interactive Moment 2 - Class 5 – type= reprimand

In this class, the teacher is revising what they had studied the previous week: intensifiers. She asks students if they remember the intensifiers they had studied but nobody answered. She asks them to have a look at their book on page 22 and starts revising and asking why intensifiers are used in a sentence.

#### IM2

[...]

1. T: sli::ghtly! uh-uh. a bit and slightly. and there is some intensifier that goes in between. it's not the GREAT difference but it's not...little. somewhere in the middle. it's....? ((waiting for an answer)).  
S1: wide?
- 5 T: **((nods head saying no))**  
Ss: rather?  
T: RATHER! and if there's no difference at all?  
S2: no.  
T: NO!! it's no worse than the other, it's no cheaper than the other. both are nice, both are bad,
- 10 Yeah? right! so, all these intensifiers that you've just said are all used in COMPARATIVES. yeah? more or less, yeah? and there are intensifiers that you have to use with a different structure: as/as. as good as, as cheap as etc.  
((student's mobile rings and she looks at him in a reprimanding way, **smiling**. student leaves the room))
- 15 so, which one indicates a ...a great difference?  
((nobody answers. she waits for about 10 seconds. **she lifts eyebrows**))  
T: so, it's much MO:::::RE expensive or...much cheaper? it's in the book!!!!((**she lifts eyebrows**)) **you know, that's why homework is important to do because by doing homework you revise...now you have NO IDEA ((smiling)), you forgot everything!**
- 20 **((smiling))** yeah?  
so, the XXX that means MUCH cheaper is not NEARLY as expensive as the other.  
remember?  
S: XXX



of the situations in which reprimand was being used. Although the teacher smiled to soften the reprimand, the hand on the waist was a clear sign that what students were doing did not please her. Students noticed the reprimand and reacted to it looking down, not facing her as it can be seen in IM 1. On the other hand, lifting the eyebrows was noticed in 90% of her speech. Whenever students took long to answer something, did not know what to say or there was silence in class, she lifted eyebrows as if waiting for something they were supposed to know. This gesture was also a sign of irritation, as noticed in IM 2.

Another interesting aspect about the use of the smile in the language classroom was to **promote a convivial strategy** (teacher – students). The teacher made it an instrument in order to increase interaction between her and the students, which resulted in students' active participation (interactive moment 3). They felt like talking, like giving their opinion and showing their points of view. It worked so well that there were times in which the teacher had to break the flow of the conversation in order to go on with her lesson plan. Some aspects are shown below (interactive moment 4).

The class begins with the teacher reminding the students about the speaking paper in the exam (FCE). By asking questions, she revises some common topics in the exam like free time activities and personal questions. She then plays a game which practices the two topics. Before working with the book, she does a quiz with the students.

### Interactive Moments 3 and 4 – Class 4- type= convivial strategy

#### IM3

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | (In order to introduce the topic about free time activities and adventure as well as dangerous sports, the teacher uses a transparency with a personality test which indicates, in the end, how adventurous the person is).<br>[...] |
| 5  | T: so, do you agree with the results?<br>S1: no.<br>T: no? you think you are more or less? than that?<br>S1: less.<br>T: less? not so wild, yeah? and you? ((and looks at another student, <b>smiling</b> )).                        |
| 10 | S2: yes. not tha:::t much. (( <b>T smiles</b> ))<br>T: maybe you are not conscious about how wild you are, uh? so, would you like to try extreme sports? risky sports?<br>S3: yeah!<br>T: yeah? so, what sports?                     |
| 15 | S3: I'd like to go climbing.<br>T: what about the others?<br>S4: ( XXX) (( <b>students laugh</b> ))<br>T: no? so, describe it.<br>S4: I don't know how to describe it.   |
| 20 | (( <b>T smiles</b> ))  |



sports?", line 14: "yeah? so, what sports?", line 16: "what about the others?", line 18: "no? so, describe it", line 34: "I don't know that. but anyway, it's a...you need a skateboard?". The teacher also supports students' conversation as it is seen on lines: 28: "uhm...", line 32 and 35: "yeah". As it has been already mentioned previously, the smile is important and powerful in a language learning environment because it can increase class interaction causing both teacher and students willingness to participate. It shows that both verbal and nonverbal language happen together and depend on one another.

The next IM happens in the same class, at a moment when the teacher is revising tenses playing music and having students mingle. They had to talk to a person nearest them according to the tense she asked, right after the music stopped.

#### IM 4

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | (( the teacher starts the class revising verb tenses with an interactive activity in which students were supposed to keep walking around the room with music on and whenever she stopped the music, they had to pair up and ask the nearest person a question based on the tense she shouted)).<br>T: walk, walk.you have to walk around the class until I stop the music and then...make pairs...and talk   |
| 5  | to the person...the nearest person to you. ((students start walking around the class- T stops the music after some seconds))<br>T: make pairs!! the topic is future tense!<br>((students all talk at the same time and T gets closer to try to listen to what they are saying))<br>T: ok. ((plays music again)) remember you have to talk to different people! ((students move around and  |
| 10 | <b>T smiles</b> broadly with their interest in the activity)).<br>((the music stops, students pair up))<br>T: family, family, family.((she gets closer again to hear what students say)) ok. ((plays music again)) different people!! (( <b>she smiles</b> with something funny said by a student)) different people! different people!!((some students wanted to keep their pairs)) sorry! the topic is free time... free time.<br>S1: free time? |
| 15 | ((T nods head positively))<br>T: ((after some seconds she stops the music)) <b>all right! ((claps hands)) ok. so. ok. people!! that's enough!</b> thank you (( <b>smiles</b> )). <b>ok. you like talking, right?((smiles))</b> so, anything that you'd like to show the others? that you heard from your colleagues? no?<br>S2: Yes, I guess uh...uh...something interesting uh...in their free time...uh...they like, they                        |
| 20 | like...sleeping!<br>T: Yeah. everybody likes sleeping! (( <b>she smiles</b> ))<br>S2: yeah.<br>T: and you? ((looking at another student)) what do you like doing?<br>S3: I like listening to music, going to the beach...  |
| 25 | T: uhm...(( <b>smiling</b> ))<br>((student says something inaudible))<br>T: ok. right. why not?<br>S3: it's a waste of time.<br>T: uhm! ok. right. and you rachel?   |
| 30 | Rachel: I don't like sleeping.<br>T: no? why not? so, what do you like instead?(( <b>she smiles</b> ))<br>Rachel: I listen to music...<br>((after that the teacher does a quiz in the book))   |



Using the smile was a nice way to promote class interaction and help students feel more confident about what they said, also showing that the teacher was interested in what they had to say and that was a sign that interaction was at its peak. It is also shown, all over this IM3, that the convivial strategy was again present as a way to break the instructional discourse and encourage students to speak. Even though they did not know how to say something in the target language, they tried without feeling ashamed of making mistakes. That can be seen in IM 3 when S6 speaks, on lines 23: "I like to skate. skating and those ...those...uh...", line 25: "it's not snowboard...skating and those (XXX). how do you say 'rampa'", line 27: "slope? (XXX)", line 30: "'raf", line 33: "I can't remember (XXX)", line 35: "yeah". Students became so engaged in the activity that if they had not had a time limit they would have spent much longer in the activity. That was a clear sign (all over IM4) that interaction was high and that was so true that the teacher had to interrupt the activity in order to continue the class (lines 16 and 17). The *convivial strategy*, as it has been said before, is considered the ideal strategy when it comes to language teaching and learning in the classroom environment. It combines elements of both discursive structures described before (instructional and spontaneous) in a balanced and harmonious way.

Another aspect of nonverbal language, according to Rector & Trinta (1985), used by speakers in any type of social interaction and responsible for the majority of the sent and received information is represented by *paralanguage*. Examples of *paralanguage* in this extract (IM4) are seen on lines 19: "uh-uh", line 25: "uhm..." and line 29: "uhm!". Such non-linguistic elements in conversation happen next to the spoken language, interact with it and together with it produce the total communication system.

Image from IM4 on next page.

## IM4



Image 4

The extracts above show that the smile contributed a lot to promote a convivial strategy as learners became interested in the lesson and participation consequently increased. The teacher's smile was a “doormat” which led to interaction by means of informal conversation, clearly showing that the smile helped learners feel motivated to speak therefore increasing class participation as a whole.

In the next extract, I show another IM where a convivial strategy is present, promoting a better interaction between the teacher and the learners. The class starts with the teachers telling the students that they are going to do a unit revision which will last about twenty minutes. She hands out copies of the test to the students and sets some time. When they finish, she checks answers and solves doubts. After that, she plays a game with students about articles. She divides them into two teams. They have to correct the sentences and throw a sticking ball on the board. The position the ball hits, indicates the number of points the team scores.

## Interactive Moment 5 – Class 6 - type= convivial strategy

- 1 T: so, all these sentences have something in common.  
S1: articles.  
T: ar:::::ticles! ((**smiling**))- all these sentences have problems with articles. do you know how to use articles in english? ((**smiles**)) sometimes, yes? ((**smiles**))
- 5 S2: better sometimes than never.  
T: ((**smiles**)) yeah. well, basically, what articles...do we use in english?  
S3: the.  
T: the...  
S4: a/an
- 10 a or an...((writing on board)) and? zero article. you are going to see the use of this articles on page 192. please work in trio and decide who is going to explain what to each other.  
((students do the activity in trio, explaining the rules about articles (a,an,the) to one another))  
((**T smiles** feeling pleased with students participation- after that, she asks students to do an exercise in the book and the teacher asks students to answer the sentences and choose another student to answer the
- 15 next sentence))  
T: aline, another student.  
Aline: his name is....  
T: ((**smiles** and nods her head))  
Thiago: thiago.
- 20 Aline: thiago.  
((students finish correcting sentences with difficulty to remember everybody's names))  
T: people, people...((**smiling**)) you don't remember each other's names! I don't believe it! ok! revision! what's her name? ((and points to each student while everybody repeats classmates' names)). t-t-t ((noise with tongue)). bad , bad students ((**smiling** and playing with students))  
((**students laugh**))

The teacher's smiles during this part of the class helped students engage in the activity and turn it not only in an exercise correction but in an interactive practice.

There were moments of interaction, mainly student-student interaction, in which the teacher used the smile to show learners that she was happy they were doing what was expected from them. That caused the students a feeling of achievement and interest, contributing to their learning and language improvement, as it is shown in the extracts above. When informally interviewed, the students (a number of 4 who were in class) said that one of the reasons they enjoyed the teacher's class was because she was always smiling, in a good mood. The teacher said that the smile helps create a more pleasant teaching atmosphere. See image below.

IM5



Image 5

Yet another facet of a smile, besides creating a nice atmosphere for language learning promoting class interaction as we have mentioned before, it can become a **funny environment** as well. There were moments in which the teacher was more serious, as if asking for concentration and a more active participation but other moments (in more or less 80% of the classes observed) were especially reserved for some change of attitude, mainly because the class happened once a week and it was rather long. Such change of pace can be observed below.

#### Interactive Moment 6 - Class 4 – funny environment

At this moment of the class, the teacher does a listening activity with the students and checks the answers afterwards. The listening was a tool to introduce ED X ING endings of adjectives. Before this moment, she revised verb tenses and did a quiz about sports with students.

[...]

1 (T and students are checking the answers of an exercise and discussing about dangerous sports- she links the topic to ED X ING adjectives)

S1: hangliding i:::s?

T: hanggliding...you know...I don't know...corcovado? no. pedra da gávea! in rio...so, they....people....do

5 hanggliding there!

((teacher draws on board))

T: something like this...and there's a person...((she smiles))

S1: ah! asa delta!

((students laugh))

10 T: (**smiling**) it's like a lamp, yeah? a person holding here, yeah?

((everybody laughs))

T: my god! don't tell the others... XXX going to be XXX yeah? so, do you understand?

S1: yes, it's asa delta. ((**teacher smiles** and nods head positively))

T: yes, in portuguese, right? right! so, number 3?

15

[...]

T: so, the opposite of shallow ...((pointing to the board)) i:::s?

S1: deep.

20 T: deep. all right. it's a very frightening experience. I wouldn't like to be in a situation like that. yes, so, something annoying. does anybody want to tell us? ((she smiles))

S2 : they said that something really annoying is the....is the....I don't know the word...the caicó ice cream.

((some students laugh - teacher doesn't understand))

((a student whistles the music from caicó ice cream))

25 T: yeah! ((**smiling** broadly)) but I think the worst thing is...the...the piece of music. my god! is so depressing!!!!(**smiling**)

S3: ve:::ry old, very old.

((student starts whistling the music again and everybody laughs)).

T: ((**smiling**)) oh, that's irritating, yeah?

((all students laugh))

Again, classroom correction became something more interactive and funnier than if it had been done mechanically. It is a moment when all students are attentive to what is going on in class and do not feel afraid of participating. The extract shown above has a lot of participation from students. One of the reasons for that is the theme being discussed: Caicó ice cream, which besides being common knowledge, is part of the local culture. Everyone who lives in the city knows about the music the ice cream vendors play when selling the ice cream. It is a convivial discourse which becomes almost spontaneous as not only the teacher starts interaction but also the students, in a very relaxed way.

See image below, when the teacher feels annoyed by the whistling sound and students all laugh about it.



- [...]
- 1 T: have you ever done things unconsciously like you see a TV commercial then you want to buy that? have you ever done that?  
S1: only with coca-cola.  
T: really? **((smiling))**
- 5 S2: only with food.  
T: fo::::d!  
S3: mc donald's.  
S1: when I watch coca-cola ad I want to drink it.  
T: **((smiling))** your throat gets dry!! **((laughing))**
- 10 S1: yes!  
S3: **((XXX))** because of the colors... the colors that they use.  
T: red?  
S2: black?  
S3: like yellow. because apart from black, they're strong colors.
- 15 T: strange?  
S3: STRONG, strong colors. So, they give you ...uh...this feeling of hot, that you're hot.  
T: a::::h!  
S3: so, that's why.
- 20 T: oh, and the other way round too, like toothpaste.  
S4: and XXX?  
T: **((smiling))** well, ask our expert **((pointing to S3))**.  
**((XXX))**  
T: so, blue is out **((smiling))**. Yes, clothes are very colorful.
- 25 S3: because of this you have a lot of research, brandies and styles...so XXX.  
T: yeah...about color the other way round is also true. because for toothpaste. they use what color do they use?  
S1: red?  
T: no.
- 30 S3: white.  
T: white and?  
S3: green.  
T: **((nods head saying "no"))** BLUE!!!!  
S2: right!!
- 35 S4: but colgate is red and white.  
T: ok, but not the color of the labels...the color of the advert...people in the water **((smiling))** you know? swimming...  
S4: a::::h!!!! I know! kolynos!!!!  
**((everybody laughs a lot))**
- 40 T: kolynos????**((laughing))** my god!!! **((smiling))** when were you born?  
**((everybody laughs))**  
T: ok!!

The whole IM moment presented above happens in a very nice learning and relaxed atmosphere but it is through the end of it that it becomes more evident. Both teacher and students had a good funny moment which can be seen from lines 36 to 41. Her teasing the students, which can be seen on lines 22 and 40 contributed to students laughing even more. See image below.

**IM 7****Image 7**

Students showed pleasure in participating in the class. The teacher's smile together with her relaxing way of conducting the activities, created enjoyable moments of interaction which led to a more significant learning. Below I show another funny moment.

**Interactive Moment 8 – Class 7 – type= funny environment**

This IM happens in the beginning of the class. The teacher enters the room, greets students smiling and starts the class. In order to have a link with what students were supposed to read in the book, she starts talking about a real situation that happened to her and her sister. She then asks students to think about what might have happened to some situations she had written on slips of paper. They discuss together. After that, they engage in a reading activity.

**IM 8**



- 1 T: so, are you creative? do you XXX? ((**smiling**))  
 S1: I have to.  
 T: you HAVE to. You have no choice ((**smiling**)). ok. so, I'm going to give a REAL embarrassing... moment...that I've seen...and you have to explain me WHAT had happened
- 5 why...you know, why...eh...what happened BEFORE...to...come to that situation, ok? so, once, I went out with my...my boyfriend, my sister and her boyfriend. we went out together to the cinema...in the shopping center...and while we...me and my sister...I don't remember where...to buy or to see something, when we came back we saw MY boyfriend and HER boyfriend, hand in hand in front of the cinema ((**smiling**)). why?
- 10 S2: hand-in-hand?  
 T: not hand-in-hand. Like this ((and gets closer to a student and holds his little finger)) like this. Very cute! ((**smiling**))  
 ((**all students laugh**))  
 ((**laughing**)) in front of the cinema.
- 15 S3: oh, no!!  
 T: now you know. have you ever been caught in this kind of situation?? so, what happened? this is real.  
 S2: it happened to you?  
 T: yes, he was MY boyfriend.
- 20 S4: your ex-boyfriend.  
 ((**everybody laughs**))  
 S3: they were like this "boyfriend", yeah?  
 T: yeah. so romantically, yeah? ((**smiling**)) finger to finger, yeah? what do you think?  
 S4: it's funny.
- 25 T: yeah ((**laughing**))  
 S3: you're just saying hw...uh...how they always XXX or ((**laughing**)) their opinion changed.  
 T: ((**smiling**)) oh...yes. changed XXX  
 S4: were they twins?
- 30 T: no, no, they weren't related.  
 ((students talk to each other))  
 T: any idea?  
 S5: XXX  
 T: yes. ((**smiling**)) because they didn't see that we had left...so they were there...looking at
- 35 the posters...then one of them, I don't know who...started to look for...you know...they felt an arm ((**smiling**)) and then the other thought it was my sister ((**smiling**)) and then "tchuk" ((makes movement of small fingers getting together)) you know.  
 S5. XXX  
 T: in front of the cinema, in the shopping center.
- 40 S5: and you believed that?!  
 ((**everybody laughs**))  
 T: well, I had to, right? ((**smiling**)) well, I have strange situations here. Now let's see ((holding slips of papers)).
- [...]  
 ((students then tried to figure out strange situations in pairs))

## IM 8



Image 8

All over the IM above, we can see that the way in which the teacher described the situation (smiling and making gestures) created a feeling of curiosity in the learners. They wanted to interact, they asked questions, they wanted to know what had happened. I believe one of the reasons they were so curious was that it had happened to the teacher, it was not an anonymous situation.

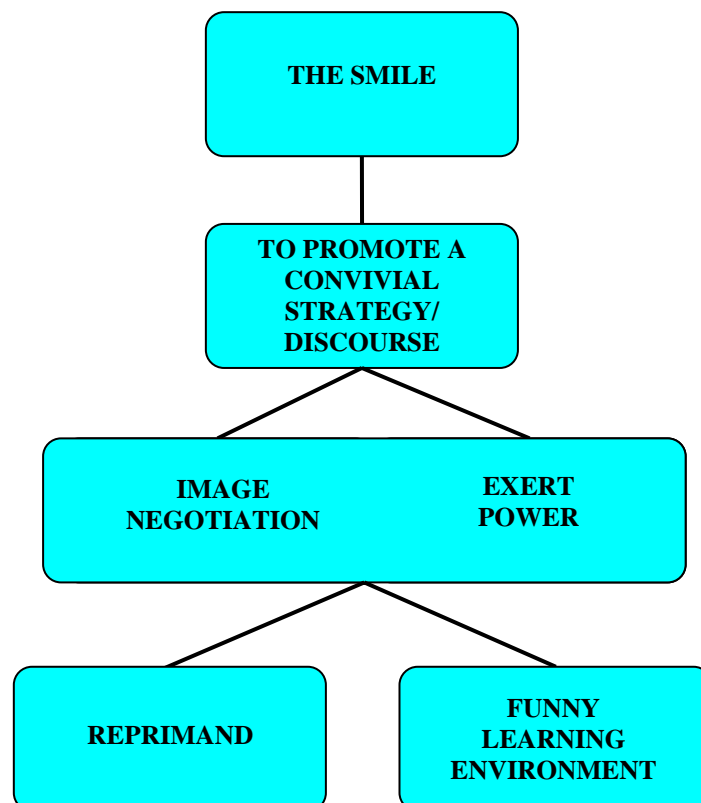
In all the interactive moments presented above about funny moments in the class, besides what has been said before, they are also examples of the convivial discourse (also described as convivial strategy by TAVARES, 2001) being used. To Kramsch (1987 apud TAVARES, 2004), it is the ideal discourse to be used as it is a balance between the instructional (with lessons centered in the teacher) and the spontaneous (with negotiated roles) discourses. It uses elements of both discourses and it can lead to a more fruitful learning because it lessens the instructional discourse, considered by learners, according to research described previously (CONSOLO & VANI, 2003), to be boring and demotivating. The reason for that is students' lack of participation and involvement, causing the language class to be a series of set rules of grammar.

I believe that highly motivated students, as already mentioned by Krashen (1982), tend to do better in foreign language learning as well as self-confident students and classrooms which promote lowering students' anxiety. Students in this group showed to be

motivated during class due to their participation and interest in the lessons. The smile worked as a tool to lessen students' anxiety, helping them feel more confident. As a consequence, lessons had high teacher-students and student-student interaction resulting in a more lively (sometimes funny) learning environment.

The interactional process is extremely important to the human communication process. Nonverbal language is vital so that interaction is successful-t is an integrant part of verbal communication (RECTOR & TRINTA, 1985). I observe that verbal and nonverbal language do not contradict one another but complete each other. They are part of the communicative process between teacher and learners, making the negotiation of meaning among them possible.

The ideas mentioned above are summarized and represented in the following graph.



In the representation above, the smile is the element used by the teachers to promote a macro class environment which is called as a convivial strategy. It is through this convivial strategy that the teacher analyzed negotiated her image and exerted power when defining the roles between her and the students in class (she smiled and reprimanded at the same time) . The smiled was also used to promote a funny learning environment which increased students participation and interaction, contributing to a more significant learning.

## CONCLUSION

This work had as a central focus the study about nonverbal (and verbal) language and its influence to the teaching process of a foreign language in an institutional environment which is not a natural one: the classroom. Although there are several researches on nonverbal language developed in Linguistics, I did not find any study which related the use of nonverbal language and its influence to the teaching of a foreign language.

Teaching a foreign language according to Almeida Filho (1993) involves not only the teacher, the students and the school but also the teacher and students' approach, the school's approach and the material. Students bring their blocks to the classroom, their anxiety, expectations, worries, motivation, their view of culture, what they think learning a foreign language is, all known as affective filters. The lowest the affective filter, the highest the relationship among the individuals involved. Learning a foreign language, as Almeida Filho says (1993), means providing relevant, meaningful, valid and deep experiences that will consequently result in growing interactive moments in the target language. According to Krashen (1982), the low filter comprehensible input is a source learners possess in order to learn a foreign language in a non-natural environment, although not the only source, as it has been mentioned before in this study.

Besides what has been said above, Kramsch (1987) adds that learning a foreign language is a process which creates a certain tension to the student as he brings, not only the expectations and experiences just cited, but the fear to fail the whole process of learning a new language, being able to use it and interact with the inside and outside context of language. According to her, the interactional process shows a continuum which ranges from instructional (the participants' roles, the tasks they accomplish, the knowledge exchange) to natural (the natural conversation in the target language and the negotiation of roles and tasks). The ideal discourse, however, should be a "convivial" form of discourse, as it has been mentioned before.

It was thinking about the interactional process in class that a central research question was developed: How can nonverbal language used by the teacher in foreign language classrooms influence students' learning? Among the many types of nonverbal language (such as facial expressions, gestures, body movement, looks, the smile, the silence, among others) I decided to concentrate our studies on the influence of the smile in the foreign language

learning process. The specific objectives include reflecting upon the relation among verbal and nonverbal discursive strategies, especially in foreign language classrooms; analyze how nonverbal language can interfere in EFL classroom interaction and identify which nonverbal language used by the teacher most influenced classroom interaction.

The smile was the key nonverbal language which influenced in the interactional moments of the classes observed. Both Brown (1994) and Tavares (2003) agree on the concept of interaction which is defined as a result of negotiation, “of give and take” or a “come and go path” of meaning. It also involves how the language is conveyed by the speaker and understood by the listener, thus producing communication. Interaction through the Communicative Approach occurs during the class by means of learner-centered, task-based and cooperative activities. Without interaction, the learning becomes meaningless due to the fact that the student does not relate what is being learned to his/her real life, as it has already been said.

Rivers (1987) believes it is important, according to her own experience when learning a foreign language, that the teacher shows interest in teaching, be active, imaginative and innovative, developing a rapport with the students which will help them feel involved and motivated. Interaction also involves understanding others’ ideas, listening and responding to others, working out interpretations of meaning, all related to a context which can be physical or experimental, having the help of nonverbal language over the verbal. Interaction, according to the same author, is an important process in language learning as students learn from their peers, increasing their language store which they absorb from texts, listenings, from the teacher, from tasks and other sources used in class to promote students’ learning. The smile proved to contribute to promote interaction, increase motivation and help in the learning process in the classroom.

I analyzed, throughout the research, different ways in which the smile was used by the teacher in order to keep a convivial discourse, promoting interaction (or a convivial strategy, according to TAVARES, 2001, which means the teacher keeps control of the class and the activities without threatening students): to negotiate her image (to save her face during moments of conflicting interaction) and to exert power in the classroom (to let the roles well defined in the classroom= teacher is still the one who detains the knowledge).

Based on the description above, I categorized the smile in three different ways. They happen together and are presented in the following situations: the first one was the use of the smile as a *form of reprimand*. According to the teacher, she smiled whenever she wanted to reprimand students due to the fact that she did not want to threaten them, sound unfriendly

and create an unpleasant learning environment afterwards. Although she smiled, students felt they were being reprimanded and responded with silence. The silence then indicated that the message was received and they accepted without speaking because the teacher was right. They were not doing their duties which involved doing homework, extra tasks and others. The fact that they did not do what they were supposed to irritated her but this feeling was disguised with a smile.

The second type of smile was to promote a *funny learning environment* in the class. Their class lasted 2 hours and 10 minutes and the funny moments helped students feel more relaxed and willing to participate. The teacher's smile worked as an incentive to their participation as they also responded with a smile and showed interest in participating (based on observations and note taking during data collection). She was friendly and attentive with her learners in all classes observed and they reacted with their participation (but not their homework). We believe that such funny moments are going to be memorable for students as they were always linked to either the teacher's or the learners' real life situations.

A third and last type was to promote a *convivial strategy* or discourse so as to *increase classroom interaction*. In order to promote a convivial form of discourse in a classroom environment, according to Kramsch (1987), roles have to be negotiated between teacher and learners so that tasks are successfully achieved. There were moments of interaction, mainly student-student interaction, in which the teacher used the smile to show learners that she was happy they were doing what was expected from them. That caused the students a feeling of achievement and interest, contributing to their learning and language improvement. The *convivial strategy*, as it has been said before, is considered the ideal strategy when it comes to language teaching and learning in the classroom environment. It is a balance between the instructional strategy/discourse and the spontaneous strategy /discourse.

This research tried to point out that the use of nonverbal language, together with verbal (they cannot be considered in isolation due to the fact that they depend on one another), was of great help when it comes to teaching a foreign language. It helped lower the affective filter between teacher and learners thus increasing interaction. When interaction is increased, students' learning is consequently improved through participation.



When the filter is adequate and there is good language input the chances to increase interaction are maximized, what possibly results in learning improvement.

Although I noticed the importance of some gestures during this research, it is an extensive study which can be developed and improved in a future work. I believe there are gestures which contributed and facilitated in the process of learning a foreign language but they can be analyzed better and studied in more details later on, together with nonverbal language pedagogical implications.

In pedagogical terms, the classroom showed to be a place where teacher and students build up a learning and teaching culture and where the smile helped keep interaction high, developing a convivial environment which affected students' learning positively.

It is important to point out that verbal and nonverbal language happen together, are used together due to the fact that they depend on one another, complement each other (SANTOS, 2004). The three types of smile described in this study also happen together. For instance: when the teacher is reprimanding the students, she is also saving her face and exerting power in the classroom. When a funny situation is taking place it is through a convivial strategy that everything happens. The same is true when the subject is language. It is hard to attempt to explain how language happens. Language is complex, it cannot be studied separately from the social context it happens or from situations in which the participants are interacting. This complexity to attempt to define language sent me to an interesting description about it - "Language is, according to an image of Wittgenstein himself, a nebulous, composed of multiple places, regions, sublanguages more or less similar among themselves, and it is in them and in their internal frontier transgressions that the philosopher should focus his attention" (COSTA 2002, p.35).

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**APPENDIX 1**

**QUESTIONÁRIO**

1. A quanto tempo você ensina Inglês?
2. Como você aprendeu a língua?
3. Onde você nasceu?
4. A sua família tem professores de Inglês?
5. O que você pensa sobre ser professor?
6. O que é ensinar uma língua estrangeira na sua opinião?
7. Qual a sua formação para ensinar?
8. Qual abordagem de ensino você utiliza?
9. Quais pré-requisitos você acha que um professor de língua estrangeira deve ter?
10. Houve algum choque cultural quando você começou a lecionar?
11. Você utiliza gestos, expressões faciais, mímicas etc nas suas aulas? Qual a importância desses elementos não-verbais no ensino do idioma?

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**APPENDIX 2**

**QUESTIONÁRIO DE IDENTIFICAÇÃO**

Nome: \_\_\_\_\_ Idade: \_\_\_\_\_

Você trabalha? \_\_\_\_\_ Onde? \_\_\_\_\_

Onde você mora? \_\_\_\_\_ Mora com seus pais? \_\_\_\_\_

Você gosta de Língua Inglesa? \_\_\_\_\_ Por quê? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Já estudou Língua Inglesa antes? \_\_\_\_\_ Onde? \_\_\_\_\_

Há quanto tempo tem contato com esta língua? \_\_\_\_\_

Por quê escolheu Língua Inglesa? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Que benefícios você acha que esta língua pode lhe trazer? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Onde você vê a Língua Inglesa sendo utilizada? \_\_\_\_\_

---

De que forma os alunos podem praticar, fora da sala de aula, o que estão aprendendo?

---

Quais os recursos utilizados que você mais gosta? (video, música etc)

---

O que você acha desta escola? \_\_\_\_\_