254/FKIP-UNIKU/PBI/S1/SKR/2026

EXPLORING VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL BACKCHANNELS IN PROMOTING ORAL INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

A PAPER

Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for getting ***Sarjana Pendidikan*** Degree

By:

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UNIVERSITAS KUNINGAN
2026

PAGE OF APPROVAL

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I acknowledge that this paper entitled: **"EXPLORING VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL BACKCHANNELS IN PROMOTING ORAL INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM"** is really my own writing.

This paper has guided by using acceptable scientific method of writing or without copying from other papers. I make this statement according the truth. I will be responsible to any risk that happens in the future if it is proven to offend to ethic of scientific writing.

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PREFACE

Praise comes to Allah SWT, The God Almighty and The Most Merciful who has granted his blessing for each human being. May Allah bless the prophet, Muhammad SAW as the last of messenger, his households, his companions, and those who follow him until the day of Judgement. The researcher would like to express gratitude to Allah SWT for giving her strength and health that because of Allah's blessings she could finish her paper.

This paper, entitled "**EXPLORING VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL BACKCHANNELS IN PROMOTING ORAL INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM**", is written as a part of requirements for completing the Bachelor Degree in English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teachers Training and Education, Universitas Kuningan. This paper aims to Explore Verbal and Non-Verbal Backchannels in Promoting Oral Interaction in The EFL Classroom.

This paper hopefully can give contributions for all readers and become inspiration for other researchers who will undertake further research in a related field. The researcher realizes this paper is still far from being perfect. Therefore, critical comments and suggestions from those who are deeply concerned with such topic are welcomed.

Kuningan, July 2026

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL BACKCHANNELS IN PROMOTING ORAL INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstract: Oral interaction in EFL classrooms is essential, yet it is frequently limited by students' language anxiety and a lack of listener response. This qualitative case study aims to identify and analyse the frequency distribution of verbal and non-verbal backchannels and examine their contribution to promoting oral interaction in 11th-grade classrooms at SMA Negeri 3 Kuningan and SMA Negeri 1 Kadugede. Data were collected through classroom observation recordings, semi-structured interviews with two teachers, and open-ended questionnaires from 54 students. The findings from the classroom observations revealed a total of 192 backchannel tokens across both verbal and non-verbal modalities. The occurrence of verbal backchannels was highly limited, accounting for only 9 out of 192 tokens (4.7%). This verbal modality was dominated by the teachers, who produced 7 tokens (77.8% of verbal data). The verbal data consisted of 5 continuer tokens (55.6%), 3 agreement tokens (33.3%), and 1 assessment token (11.1%), while no clarification tokens were identified (0%). Conversely, non-verbal backchannels appeared extensively, capturing 183 out of 192 tokens (95.3%). This visual modality was dominated by students, who produced 170 tokens (92.9% of non-verbal data). The distribution of non-verbal backchannels consisted of eye gaze with 106 tokens (57.9%), nodding with 46 tokens (25.1%), gestures in the form of chin-resting with 21 tokens (11.5%), and facial expressions with 10 tokens (5.5%). The triangulated findings further indicated that backchannels functioned as interactional scaffolding that assisted students during word-searching difficulties, as socio-affective support that contributed to students' confidence and reduced feelings of speaking anxiety, and as participation reinforcement that increased students' willingness to communicate. Conversely, the absence of listener feedback often generated self-doubt and reduced students' confidence to continue speaking. Overall, verbal and non-verbal backchannels play a crucial role in fostering a supportive and communicative EFL classroom environment.

Keywords: *EFL classroom discourse; interactional scaffolding; oral interaction; non-verbal backchannels; Verbal backchannels*

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Praise is to Allah SWT, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, for the strength and blessings so that the researcher could finish the paper. She realizes that without supports, encouragements, and guidance from people surround, she might not be able to accomplish this paper as good as possible. Therefore, she would like to give thankfulness to all people who have to contribute to complete this paper. There are honorable people who are important to the researcher to whom she can only express her gratitude. to:

1. Mrs. Wulan Rahmatunisa, M.Pd. as the first supervisor and Mrs. Vina Agustiana, M.Pd. as the second supervisor who have given much guidance and motivation to the researcher in finishing this research paper.
2. Mrs. Dr. Nani Ronsani Thamrin, M.Pd. as head of English Education Study Program, who has provided support and academic facilities throughout my studies
3. All the lecturers and staff English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teachers Training and Education of Universitas Kuningan who have given researcher pray and support until the researcher completed this paper.
4. Mrs. Dr. Anna Fitri Hindriana, M.Si. as the Rector of Universitas Kuningan.
5. Mr. Dr. Asep Jejen Jaelani, M.Pd. as Dean of Faculty of Teachers Training and Education of Universitas Kuningan.
6. My deepest and most profound gratitude goes to my beloved parents, Mamah (Mrs. Iis Isnawati) and Bapak (Mr. Muhamad Subana), for their endless love, prayers, and sacrifices. Thank you for always believing in me, supporting me financially and emotionally, and being my ultimate source of strength throughout this journey. This achievement is as much theirs as it is mine.
7. My deepest gratitude goes to my beloved brother (Muhamad Risnadi), and sister (Ninda Tri Hafsari), for always being there for me, accompanying my days, and providing me with endless prayers and

support. Your presence has been an immense source of motivation for me in completing this journey.

8. To my beloved best friends, Indah Nurul Fitria, Vania Putri Ardianti, and Haidar Agnar, thank you for being a part of my life, standing by my side throughout this journey, sharing stories, and making my days here so much brighter. May our bond last a lifetime and that we all find success in whatever paths we choose
9. To my dearest friends, Siti Nabila Maemunah and Anita Amelia. Thank you for always being there for me, for listening, and for truly understanding me. Thank you for the endless support; your presence has brought so much color and joy to my life.
10. All of my wonderful classmates of English Education Program. Thank you for the togetherness, support, discussions, and memories we have built throughout our time in this program. Spending these past several semesters learning and growing alongside you has been an invaluable experience. I wish you all the very best and continued success in your future endeavours.

In the end, the researcher realized that paper contains some weaknesses and was far being perfect. Therefore, she accepts every suggestion, critics, and comments from those who are concerned to this paper. The researcher hopes that this paper will be useful and give contribution for the readers, especially for the next researcher who learns deeply about this research.

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