



## THE IMPORTANCE OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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### Abstract

The article is devoted to the importance of non-verbal communication in teaching and learning a foreign language. It is stated that non-verbal communication is a form of communication that includes gestures, facial expressions, postures, visual contact, tone of voice, touch, and conveys figurative and emotional content.

Knowledge of a sign language allows a person to better understand the interlocutor and anticipate his impressions. Non-verbal communication is also an integral part of learning and teaching a foreign language and culture. In the interaction of a teacher with children non-verbal communication is carried out through several channels: facial expressions, touching, gestures, communication distance, visual interaction, intonation.

There are various methods of non-verbal correction which can be used in class, such as finger correction, gestures and facial expressions, echo correction. All these types of correction are very effective in class.

Non-verbal aspect of communication plays a significant role in the process of interaction between a teacher and students and facilitates their mutual work.

**Keywords:** non-verbal communication, teaching, learning, foreign language, facial expressions, visual contact, interaction, intonation.

Communication (from the Latin *communicatio* – unity, transmission, connection, message associated with the verb Latin *communico* – make common, report, connect, derived from the Latin *communis* – common) – is the process of exchanging information (facts, ideas, views, emotions, etc.) between two or more

people, communication through verbal and non-verbal means to convey and receive information («Комунікація», 2021).

There are various types and forms of communication. People try to convey their thoughts using every means of communication they know. Nevertheless, a large majority of people do not realize that most of the information we receive is not due to the verbal-sign system, i.e. to a language, but through the non-verbal aspect of communication.

Non-verbal communication is a type of communication characterized by the use of non-verbal behaviour and non-verbal communication as the main means of transmitting information, organizing interaction, forming an image, opinion about the interlocutor, influencing another person (Невербальне спілкування, 2021).

It is known that the verbal component of interpersonal communication is about 35%, and over 65% of the information transferred during communication is given in a non-verbal way. In other words, it is not what is said that matters, but how it is said.

“Like any other language, body language consists of words, sentences and punctuation. Each gesture is like a single word and a word may have several different meanings. It is only when you put the word into a sentence with other words that you can fully understand its meaning. Gestures come in ‘sentences’ and invariably tell the truth about a person’s feelings or attitudes” (Pease, 1988, p. 5).

Knowledge of a sign language allows a person to better understand the interlocutor and anticipate what impression the information will make on him even before he speaks on the subject. The correct interpretation of non-verbal cues is essential for effective communication.

Non-verbal communication surrounds us everywhere; we use a sign language in all spheres of our life. And of course, the field of teaching foreign languages is no exception. Non-verbal communication is also an integral part of learning a foreign language and culture.

Learning a foreign language is not just learning vocabulary and grammar. A foreign language is a culture, and the non-verbal language of communication as part of the country culture in the target language must be taught and studied in the

classroom. The language of non-verbal communication is not universal. It has national characteristics that must be taken into account when dealing with foreigners. Ignorance of this peculiarity can create significant obstacles to successful communication.

In addition, non-verbal techniques can be very effective in the teaching process itself. This is due to the fact that the situational nature of the surrounding world perception, inherent in children, primarily focuses on facial expressions, gestures, when reproduced in the child's mind, all links of the chain are connected. Thus, non-verbal language can be not only a subject of study but also a successful tool in teaching foreign languages.

In the interaction of a teacher with children non-verbal communication is carried out through several channels:

- facial expressions;
- touching;
- gestures;
- communication distance;
- visual interaction;
- intonation.

Frequent use of gestures is thought to lead to liking and cooperation in class. The teacher's body language attracts more attention and encourages students to answer more often than words. The more the teacher uses the blackboard, the less effective the lesson is due to the lack of non-verbal communication since there is no interaction. Non-verbal forms of teacher's behaviour (communication at close distance, smiles, eye contact, gestures) are very effective in attracting students to the teacher. If the teacher is standing or moving down the aisle between desks, students are more involved in the work, feeling connection with the teacher. But when the teacher is seated, the interaction between him and the class is greatly reduced. It is important that the teacher should pay non-verbal attention not only to the students sitting at the front desks, but has contact with each student.

The system of gestures plays a major role in the teacher's non-verbal communication system. For students, the teacher's gestures are one of the indicators of his attitude towards them. It is noted that most of the information from the teacher passes through gestures, especially expressions of feelings. The nature of the teacher's gestures from the first minutes creates a certain atmosphere in the classroom. If the teacher's movements are nervous, then tension arises among students. Gestures play an important part in ensuring students' attention since the emotional intensity of the gesture attracts audience's attention. Among the means of organizing attention almost every teacher actively uses such gestures as pointing gestures, imitating gestures, and emphasizing gestures. With the help of a gesture the teacher establishes interaction with the student (head nods, inviting gestures, etc.), increases its intensity (gestures of approval, assessment) or ends the contact.

In the teacher's communication with the students, the speech tone is also of great importance. Intonation in adult communication can carry up to 40% of information. When communicating with a child the impact of intonation increases. The intonation reveals the attitude that accompanies the teacher's speech. A child surprisingly accurately recognizes adults' attitude towards him by intonation. The teacher's speech should be emotionally rich; extremes should be avoided. In regard to a foreign language simple rhythm tapping helps students develop the correct intonation, find the peculiarities of the intonation pattern. It is enough for the teacher to tap the sentence rhythm, and the student needs to read the sentence with the correct intonation pattern.

The teacher can change the pitch, volume or melody of his voice to convey an emotion or mood, indicate size and speed, hint at something, heighten interest or event motivate students (Stevie, n.d.).

The above-mentioned information shows that non-verbal communication plays an irreplaceable role in creating a classroom environment focused on successful learning. Teachers need to know the non-verbal language because children understand the teacher's behaviour, mood, and attitude. Thus, teachers should be more aware of non-verbal communication importance in teaching and try to

transform the unconscious use of gestures into a conscious one to make the lesson more effective.

Non-verbal language is very useful not only in creating a supportive atmosphere at the lesson, but also in correcting students during their responses. There are some methods of nonverbal correction which can be used in class.

– ***Finger correction***. You just show students where they made a mistake in the statement. We can point out where the mistake is without saying a word and thus not interrupting the student. We can also turn our hand to the class and bend our finger at each student's word. If a student missed a word in a statement, it will be very easy to point out where something is missing, and it will be easier for him to correct. This method is also useful if we want students to use contracted forms such as *They're studying* rather than *They are studying*. We simply put two fingers together and the student understands that contraction is better in this case.

– ***Gestures and facial expressions*** are useful when we do not want to interrupt students, but still want to show that they made a mistake. A teacher's worried or questioning glance is often enough to make the student realize that he has made a mistake. And a smile, on the contrary, can help to accurately determine the answer. This works great when the student answers correctly but still continues to doubt.

You can work with your students to create your own set of gestures that will indicate different types of errors. For example, the gesture of the hand back over the shoulder means that it is necessary to use the Past Simple tense here, and spreading the arms to the sides means using the Past Continuous tense. The main thing is that students should be familiar with this code.

– ***Echo correction***. To correct the student, you can repeat the phrase (part of the phrase) where the mistake was made, but only with rising intonation. Hence, the phrase will sound like a question, and the student realizes that a mistake has been made. This technique is useful when the teacher is confident that the student can correct his own mistake without assistance. This type of correction is very effective; students immediately understand what needs to be corrected.

Thus, we can conclude that the non-verbal aspect of communication plays a significant role in the process of interaction between a teacher and students. To facilitate their work, the teacher must be able to communicate with children without speaking, must take into account not only the student's speech, but also his every gesture and look, and also strictly control his own non-verbal behaviour. Non-verbal communication in the classroom will allow teachers to become effective communicators of knowledge and qualified recipients of the students' needs (Williamson, 2021). However, the issues of the relationship between verbal and non-verbal techniques have not yet been sufficiently studied in the scientific and pedagogical literature and require careful research, since the interdependence of these two aspects of human communication and their influence on the pedagogical process cannot be denied.

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