

## СКАРБНИЦЯ МЕТОДИЧНИХ ІДЕЙ

У навчальному закладі бажано створити такі умови, щоб учні мали можливість відвідувати курси за вибором з різних предметів. Це допоможе їм оцінити свої можливості та зорієнтує на подальший вибір профілю навчання. Саме тому зміст таких курсів має не тільки містити інформацію, що розширює знання зі шкільних предметів, а й знайомити учнів із різними способами діяльності, необхідними для подальшого успішного навчання в класах того чи іншого профілю старшої школи та у своєму житті.

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**Pysaienko L. V.\***

### NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

*Стаття присвячена використанню невербальної комунікації на уроках англійської мови. Визначено роль невербальної поведінки в нашому житті та на уроці англійської мовизокрема. Проаналізовано основні компоненти та проілюстровано їх застосування в ситуаціях невербального спілкування, виходячи із навчальних цілей на кожному етапі уроку.*

There is no doubt that non-verbal communication plays an important role in human social interaction. Teaching English incorporating non-verbal techniques is a burning issue for Ukrainian teachers as, to our mind, they are not completely aware what role non-verbal communication plays in the learning process and how to apply it at the certain stages of the lesson successfully. Moreover, the official documents issued by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine state that sociocultural competence plays a major role in understanding and respecting culture and traditions of people from other cultures [4].

In this regard, Abercrombie [5,55] states what is generally taken for granted: «We speak with our vocal organs, but we converse with our entire bodies.» Every facial expression and every gesture contributes to the overall meaning of a statement. Our body language accompanies every speech act we make, and even if we do not speak, our non-verbal behaviour constantly

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transmits information that can be meaningful. Non-verbal communication has been a focus of attention for some time in areas such as the refinement of presentation skills, developing social skills, and even as a realistic alternative to the lie-detector test. Relatively little attention, as stated by a Russian professor Petrova [3], however, has been given in language teaching to non-verbal communication as a complement to spoken language. This is quite surprising as no language learner can become communicatively competent and successful without having some knowledge of non-verbal behaviour in the countries of the studied foreign languages, which make their communication as non-native speakers authentic with the «locals». Teaching a combination of verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication positively affects the language learning process in general and the students' willingness to communicate in particular. Furthermore, it is important for language learners to become aware of the role non-verbal communication plays in *intercultural encounters*. So, given article aims at providing educators working at Ukrainian schools the updated knowledge on the non-verbal communication as a phenomena and equipping them with effective tools of teaching their students as efficient communicators in non-Ukrainian language environment.

Birdwhistell [7,11] estimated that in a conversation up to 65% of what is transmitted on the social, interpersonal level is conveyed non-verbally. This implies that a considerable part of any message that we are sending and receiving is encoded and decoded non-verbally. Since it is said by Dr. Anjana Maitra [15] that as little as ten percent of communication takes place verbally, and that facial expressions, gestures and posture form part of our culture and language, it seems reasonable that we should at least raise learners' awareness of non-verbal communication in order to improve their use of natural language, increase confidence and fluency and help to avoid intercultural misunderstandings.

On the grounds that 'It's not what you say, it's the way that you say it', there is much to be said for teaching non-verbal communication either parallel to, or integrated with, a language and skill-based syllabus, in the same way that phonology is often treated.

According to Collins Dictionary [16] non-verbal communication is a system of gestures and facial expressions that do not involve verbal communication but which may include nonverbal aspects of speech itself (accent, tone of voice, speed of speaking, etc). The combination of these gestures and expressions is often a subconscious choice made by native speakers or even subgroups/subcultures within a language group. The main components of the system, identified by Judee Burgoon in 1994 [8, 15] are:

– Kinesics (body language) Body motions such as shrugs, foot tapping, drumming fingers, eye movements such as winking,

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facial expressions, and gestures

- Proxemics (proximity) (use of space to signal privacy or attraction)
- Haptics (touch)
- Oculistics (eye contact)
- Chronemics (use of time, waiting, pausing)
- Olfactics (smell)
- Vocalics (tone of voice, timbre, volume, speed)
- Sound symbols (grunting, mmm, er, ah, uh-huh, mumbling)
- Silence (pausing, waiting, secrecy)
- Posture (position of the body, stance)
- Adornment (clothing, jewellery, hairstyle)
- Locomotion (walking, running, staggering, limping)

We strongly believe that of the above, body language (particularly facial expressions and gestures), eye contact, proximity and posture are probably those which learners most need to be aware of in terms of conveying meaning, avoiding misunderstandings and fitting in with the target culture.

In terms of skill development, non-verbal clues should not be underestimated when developing both listening and speaking skills. Like grammatical structures, non-verbal communication has form, function and meaning, all of which may vary from language to language.

Relatively few techniques have been suggested by us for teaching non-verbal communication in secondary school, but some techniques are:

- Learners discuss the meaning of gestures and expressions (either demonstrated by the teacher, from pictures, or from existing published materials). This is particularly effective with multilingual classes .
- Learners mime adjectives of both physical and emotional feelings
- Learners watch a video clip without sound, discuss body language, relationships, emotions and feelings, then write the dialogue
- Learners act out a dialogue using gesture and expression only
- Learners make up a dialogue based on mime
- Learners, in pairs, take turns in listening to each other for 30 seconds, using only non-verbal responses.

If we leave out the non-verbal dimension of communication in foreign language teaching, we are creating artificial situations, which do not reflect real-life encounters between speakers of the foreign language. Students of any grade do not learn to coordinate word and action, language and gesture, neither in the reception of the foreign language nor in its production.

Non-verbal behaviour is also relevant to the communicative strategy which can help secondary school learners both to

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understand the foreign language and to express themselves in it. Being not much acknowledged with vocabulary or not being able to produce speech they have to, learners can compensate it by the decoding the non-verbal signals or transmitting part of the communicative intention to the gesture modality. Similarly, the emotive function of non-verbal behaviour can give secondary school students valuable information about the emotions and the intentions of their conversation partner in linguistic emergencies. Making use of the positive function of non-verbal communication can be a strategy for speakers to use their own facial expression and /or gestures in order to give feedback to their conversation partner concerning their reaction to the perceived communicative process or, inversely, to interpret whether the communication is successful or not by decoding their conversation partner's non-verbal behaviour.

For example, for practising expressions, gestures and postures you can suggest your secondary school learners acting out the dialogue in which students work in pairs. First, student B replies silently to half of the dialogue read by student B, then A replies to the other half of the dialogue. Both students become familiar with the dialogue. then act it out as whole dialogue using expressions, gestures and posture. We would advise to educators to give plenty of time for thought and rehearsal, remind students to stand up to practise posture and whole body language. So, it sounds like that:

*Dialogue:*

A Excuse me. Can you take a picture of me ?

B Yeah, sure.

A Just press that button.

B Er, which one ?

A The one on the top.

B OK, right. Er.... can you move back a bit.

A Is this OK?

B Fine, now smile. That's it. Very nice.

A Thanks.

B Not at all. You've got a lovely smile. Er... fancy a drink ?

A OK, but I've got no money on me.

B That's OK. I'll pay.

Finally, the combination of verbal and non-verbal communication in the foreign language classroom can make it easier for learners to remember new words or grammatical structures on any topic.

Effective communication in a foreign language is more than just a matter of language proficiency. One of the goals – if not the main one – in foreign language teaching is to help students to become intercultural speakers because phenomena such as the direction of gaze or the role of silence are often not the same across cultures [3].

In some cultures, for example, gestures play a more

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prominent role than in others: Italians use more gestures than Scandinavians. As a result, Scandinavians appear 'wooden' and boring to Italians. Eye contact is also treated differently. For instance, most Germans would think East Asians are trying to hide something, or are shifty because respect forbids East Asians from looking their partner directly into the eyes. During a discussion of equals, Arabs tend to raise their voice to express strength and sincerity; an American would consider that to be aggressive and objectionable.

What is considered an appropriate distance between people in a conversation depends on culture, too. Edward Hall [9] argues that cultures can be differentiated in terms of the degree of contact preferred by their members. Cultures in which people tend to stand close and touch a lot are referred to as high contact cultures, while cultures in which people stand apart and tend not to touch are referred to as low contact cultures. People belonging to high contact cultures (African, Arabic, Brazilian, Chinese, Filipinos, French Canadian, French, Greek, Hawaiian) consider physical closeness in conversations as positive and distance as negative; in low contact cultures (Australian, Dutch, English Canadian, English, Finnish, German) the opposite is often the case [10; 11] Therefore, the aim of the teachers is to involve secondary school students in different cultural situations with the pedagogical purposes of teaching them norms of etiquette to avoid misunderstanding in future.

These examples indicate that the greatest obstacles to successful intercultural communication are very often not linguistic mistakes. Though grammar or vocabulary errors can make a conversation difficult, they seldom inhibit the communication process. Violations in non-verbal behaviour normally entail more serious consequences: many intercultural misunderstandings and even communication breakdowns are due to the behaviour of a person from one culture being 'inappropriately' perceived, interpreted, and reacted to by someone from another culture. This is particularly true for *homomorphy*, that is, one and the same gesture being used as an emblem in different cultures but carrying significantly different meanings.

Therefore, the teaching of intercultural communicative competence should include non-verbal communication. Any learners of foreign languages must be made aware of the impact culture has on vocal and non-vocal phenomena. This implies that they should explore and develop an awareness of the conventional behaviour in common situations in their own culture. This is particularly obvious in the case of so-called '*culturemes*', that is, specific forms of behaviour such as how to treat guests, table manners, giving and receiving presents etc., that play a role in every culture, but that are often expressed through different non-verbal behaviour, so-called '*behavioremes*'.

There is yet another advantage of including non-verbal

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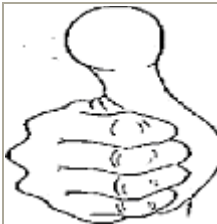
techniques in the English classroom that the integration of non-verbal communication has to offer in fostering intercultural competence. Just as non-verbal behaviour can have a strategic function for verbal learning processes, components of non-verbal communication can be used in intercultural interactions for soothing tensions between speakers ,for example, by expressing an open and attentive attitude towards one's conversation partner by means of facial expressions or a certain physical posture. The fact that, aside from culture-specific signs, there are also a number of physical expressions that are interpreted identically in every culture, helps to support the idea of using non-verbal communication to increase mutual understanding.

For instance, we offer the teacher to introduce the pictures of some gestures and ask your secondary school students their meanings in their own culture, and what they might mean in English speaking cultures.

|  |  |
|--|--|
|     | <p>America: OK<br/>Commonly: Perfect<br/>Japan: Money</p>  |
| <p>Ukraine: Obscene gesture<br/>No such gesture in English<br/>Brazil: Goodluck!</p> |                    |
|   | <p>Ukraine: You get nothing from me<br/>Commonly: Stop, enough<br/>W.Africa: You have 5 fathers!</p> |

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Ukraine: Cool  
 Commonly: OK  
 Japan: Five



Non-verbal aspects are also important for the understanding and interpretation of literary texts. When characters interact with each other, they also act non-verbally, and these components can fulfill functions in literary dialogues that are similar to their real-life counterparts so any literary text( chosen according to the level of knowledge of your learners) in the English classroom can help illustrate the general importance and the different functions non-verbal means of expression have in everyday life. Many secondary school students have difficulty, as stated by the Russian linguist Passov [1; 2], for example, in speculating about the motives of the characters, let alone describing and interpreting the creative use of narrative, dramatic or filmic devices. We use such techniques at the 5-9 form(s). Their understanding of literature extracts of any type is often limited and restricted to being able to follow a text's plot. Interpreting a literary text, however, does not stop at students reading the text and analysing its verbal codes. In the case of a play, for example, students of the 8<sup>th</sup> form are supposed to view the text as a script written for the staging of the play. This performance dimension of stage plays can only be illustrated by considering the non-verbal elements included in the text.

There is a variety of methods that can be used in order to practise different forms and functions of non-verbal communication in the foreign language classroom. Thus, with the 4-7th formers we offer to include the use of images (e.g. advertising poster) and audio-visual material as well as action-orientated methods such as role-plays, video-conferences with speakers of the target language or real-life meetings during school exchanges. It is not surprising that drama activities potentially offer particular opportunities to foster non-verbal communicative competence as they involve movement and demand the performance of language encounters in a holistic way.

The mere fact that drama activities might increase awareness of non-verbal forms of expression, however, is of little help when it comes to the actual lesson planning. For teachers to be able to select suitable drama activities, it must be clear which areas of foreign language teaching and which dimension of non-verbal communication are meant to be focused on at a particular time. In addition, one must not forget that no methodological approach can (or needs to) achieve every potential goal at the same time. In the

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context of fostering non-verbal communicative competence, for instance, it is important for learners of foreign languages to be familiar with different bodily forms of expression – when producing as well as understanding the foreign language. They should be able to listen to native speakers and they should also be able to see them while they are communicating in the foreign language. For this reason, the use of drama activities should be combined with additional materials (e.g. images, films or audio texts) and with different methodological approaches (e.g. a classroom discussion for reflecting on the non-verbal forms of communication used or observed in a drama activity).

In conclusion we can state that overall aims of a non-verbal communication pedagogy should be implemented into practice of Ukrainian classrooms on a regular basis so that to sensitize the secondary school students to the potential effects of non-verbal phenomena in communication – both in formal and everyday conversations, in intercultural relationships and in literary texts. It makes grounds for the quality shift away «from the competence-performance dichotomy and toward a perspective that embraces the importance of language in use – that is, how language is contextually situated in interaction» [3, p. 25].

Thus, we recommend that Ukrainian educators should also bear in mind following aspects in their daily teaching a foreign language:

- Non-verbal communication needs to be taught in small chunks in appropriate situations where the situational or thematic context lends itself to the language.

- Time needs to be devoted to confidence-building, creativity and other drama-based activities which help learners to produce natural language and to use expressions and gestures to reinforce meaning.

- Non-verbal communication, like phonology, should be taught from beginner level. Crash courses in natural language production are unlikely to work. An awareness-raising approach is appropriate.

- Gesture and expression, in particular, add an extra dimension to language, and certainly add to the cultural component that verbal communication carries. An awareness of non-verbal cues also helps to avoid some of the misunderstandings which are the inevitable but annoying consequence of cultural interpretation of meaning.

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