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**THE ANALYSIS OF NON-VERBAL MEANS  
OF COMMUNICATION AND ITS ROLE  
IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING**

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**Keywords:** foreign language teaching; gesture; gesture frame; language manifestation; non-verbal means of communication; optional and obligatory frame components; situational models.

**Abstract:** Non-verbal communication and linguistic means of its representation became the subject of numerous studies from the point of pragmalinguistics, axiology, the frame approach and foreign language methodology. The article discusses the approach to the analysis of the speech representation of non-verbal means of communication within the gesture framework emphasizing the metalanguage nature of non-verbal means of communication, as well as highlights the problem of teaching non-verbal tools in the foreign language classroom. Various factors which influence the body language, such as culture, individual characteristics of a person, etc. are established. The linguistic means features of hand gestures are analyzed in the dialogical speech of literary personages from the point of pragmalinguistics, their system-forming, lexico-semantic and communicative-pragmatic properties. Obligatory and optional components of the gesture frame are described. The situational models, which are the basis for studying the non-verbal part of communication process in a dialogical discourse, are analyzed. Tasks on training non-verbal communication skills in a foreign language classroom are considered.

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## **Introduction**

The communicative nature of speech activity predetermines its bilateral character. Human speech activity is designed to transfer some specific amount of information to another person who is supposed to respond by receiving this information. Thus, a mutual speech process arises where co-operation, assistance and complicity are viewed as important components.

Speech communication involves a complex set of personal funds, including non-linguistic funds, which plays an important role in the communication process. Being historically the first form of human communication, non-verbal communication is a type of interaction between people without verbal means which allows not only to diversify and complement verbal communication, but also to replace it in some situations. The necessary information can be obtained not only through linguistic, i.e. verbal, means of communication, but also using non-verbal tools which sometimes become the only possible means of communication.

Non-verbal communication is determined by the social norms of society. Excessive and friendly gestures are unlikely to be appropriate in the official circumstances; rather, communicants will use special non-verbal means. And only thanks to involuntary gestures we can determine the real intention of the sender and the recipient, as well as their true emotional state.

Mastering non-verbal language is essential not only for understanding an interlocutor but for the formation of learners' inner world and their attitude towards native speakers, their culture, their mindset and communicative behavior. Therefore, foreign language students should be aware of non-verbal means of communication and their correspondence to their language representation and the content of the transferred information which is one of the important components of the communication culture.

## **Literature review**

Nowadays non-verbal communication has become the subject of research in both traditional and developing linguistic areas such as semiotics, pragmalinguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, etc. In modern linguistics the trend towards the study of the correlation between the language and the kinetic phenomena that accompany speech is increasing. Therefore, the study of non-verbal means of communication, which refers to kinesics, i.e. the science of gestures, gesture movements and gesture systems, has been put into the spotlight of linguists. To identify any completed (having a certain structure, method of execution and sustainable value) and independent gesture movement we will refer to the term "kinema" given by E.M. Vereshchagin and V.G. Kostomarov [1].

The structure of the non-verbal communication is represented as the interaction of three hierarchical plans: the expression plan (exponential plan), the translation plan, and the content plan (contensive plan).

The expression plan for the non-verbal component is represented by various non-verbal means of manifesting the meanings of the intersubjective interaction. These include: phonation, kinesics, proxemics (along with tactile communication), postures, etc.

The translation plan allows the communicants to encode and decode the meanings of non-verbal actions determining the communicative situation. With the help of these factors, it is possible to adequately determine the meaning of nodding from the Russians and Bulgarians or giving honor at a military school.

The content plan of non-verbal components is represented by its communicative-functional (pragmasemantic) structure. It is comparable with the plan of the content of the statement and discovers all the basic components of the semantic and communicative-pragmatic structure.

The verbalization of non-verbal communication components is described as a designation of features of one semiotic system (non-verbal system of signs) by means of another semiotic signs (language system) [2, p. 57]. The sender of the verbal message has the ability to choose the means of language manifestation of non-verbal actions.

In the process of communication, the important information is viewed as positonic activity. The psychodynamic characteristics and personal characteristics of a man are clearly manifested in the specificity of poses as well as in the dynamics of their changes. Cognitive tonic expressions of the personality character serve as the visible language through which nonverbal dialogue takes place.

The use of different language tools for the manifestation of non-verbal actions allows to specify their content, which communicatively refers to a particular act. A feature of the linguistic manifestation of non-verbal means of communication is that, in addition to formally significant signs, linguistic means also convey subjectively evaluative, emotional, pragmatic interpretations of them. This allows to provide not only compensation for possible losses, but also semantic "increment" [2, p. 18].

A lively direct interest in pragmalinguistics, in particular in the problem of non-verbal communication, is quite logical these days because the linguistic study of speech facts cannot be isolated from the communicative situation, communicative intentions of the speaker and the listener. The center of the utterance lies in the interaction of the sender and the recipient of the communicative message. "On the part of the speaker, this interaction is limited to the implementation of the message in speech, as well as its facial expressions and gestures, while on the part of the listener, it is the processing of the received information" [3, p. 173]. In our opinion, it is necessary to distinguish between cases when the speaker expressing a certain idea has in mind exactly what he is saying, from cases where the statement is implicit in nature and can only be revealed through the process of explication. In the first case, as noted by J.R. Searle, "the speaker seeks to influence the listener and encourage him to recognize this intention based on the knowledge of the listener about the rules that underlie the production of statements" [4, p. 16]. In cases of implicit expression of the speaker's thoughts, the content of the statement can be perceived ambiguously. The means of language manifestation of hand gestures are of great interest in connection with their special "metalanguage character". By using non-verbal means of communication, one can convey his attitude to objects, phenomena or people.

Non-verbal communication components can be represented in the language as polysemic. In such cases, "the context is intended to remove any polysemy, to fix one or another real meaning of a unit" [5, p. 5]. T.A. van Dijk

distinguishes the concepts of “situation” and “context”: “The situation is a real state of affairs where a communicative event takes place, while the context includes only linguistically relevant characteristics of the communicative situation” [6, p. 30].

In the communication process verbal and non-verbal tools are integrated and interact with each other. Non-verbal means of communication such as intonation, gestures, facial expressions and their language manifestation transfer information about the individual characteristics of a person, his emotional state, etc.

In our opinion, analyzing linguistic means of hand gesture manifestations and identifying the mechanism of language representation of non-verbal means of communication in the dialogical discourse through the framework approach seems to be promising.

### **The structure of the gesture frame**

Generally, in the theory of communication and cognitive science frames are considered as the minimum information structures which a person needs to represent a group of objects, phenomena, or processes. A frame depicts the basic properties of an object or phenomenon. The gesture frame is represented as a unity structure of knowledge, which describes the similarity and differences of language tools for gesture manifestation.

As for its structure, the gesture frame can be presented as a set of obligatory components and optional components (the last are called slots). The activation of these components allows to simulate a lot of different situational models. Obligatory components of the gesture frame form a cognitive-propositional scheme, thus representing any situation associated with the use of a gesture. The obligatory and optional components are closely connected with each other within the gesture frame.

The general gesture frame includes the following obligatory components:

- 1) the subject (the communicant);
- 2) the predicate (the verb describing the gesture);
- 3) the method / tool (a hand or hands).

The obligatory components of the gesture frame can be described as fixed. Any situation where hand gestures are used, suggests the presence of a subject, a predicate and a method of using a gesture. A person or a group of people act as the subject of the gesture frame.

The optional components of the frame include:

- 1) the quality of a gesture;
- 2) the reason for using a gesture;
- 3) the purpose of attracting a gesture;
- 4) the object that a gesture is aimed at;
- 5) the gesture function in terms of its interaction with a verbal message: addition, contradiction, substitution, confirmation.

Using the same language devices for gesture representation in different situational models can be explained by the so-called “perceptiveness” when only some components are activated and put into the centre of the speaker’s attention depending on the purpose of the communication.

The gesture frame has a flexible structure, which means that the ratio of its components can be rearranged when a person focuses his attention on another part of the frame. Thus, the division of gestures according to their language manifestation requires knowledge of various gesture types and their characteristics, knowledge of the purpose and reasons for using the gesture. All these features supplement the gesture frame and are verbalized in communication in different ways depending on what frame component is put into the focus.

In the frame structure motivating elements can be distinguished which are usually represented as optional components (slots) as they often specific a gesture in a situational model separating them from the rest of components belonging to one semantic field.

At the same time, E.A. Schegloff noted that hand gestures usually refer to the speaker. It can be explained by the fact that the addressee usually does not involve hand gestures in the communication process. Therefore, we can distinguish the sender gestures and the addressee gestures including their language manifestation in the process of communication. Moreover, inside the groups there can be further distribution of gestures which are aimed at the speaker himself and at the addressee of the utterance.

### **Situational models of the hand gesture frame**

The “waving hand” gesture is verbalized by the noun “hand” in the singular and plural and the verb “wave”. The quality of the gesture as one of the optional components of the frame is contained in the semantics of the verb, i.e. the multiplicity and frequency of action.

In this group three situational models of the gesture are possible.

#### **1. K<sub>1</sub>-I-K<sub>2</sub>-G (E)**

In this situational model the communicant (K<sub>2</sub>), having received information (I) from the communicant (K<sub>1</sub>) non-verbally (G) expresses emotions (E). In this situational model the motivating component of the frame is the reason for using a non-verbal tool, in particular the emotional state of the gesticulating person.

The gesture can be manifested by the verbal phrase “wave hands” and its meaning “joy” is decoded by the communicative context. Determining factor here is the interaction of people who have close relationship and this gesture shows their emotions. The frame can be specified due to the representation of the optional component – the reason (the arrival of relatives) which is revealed contextually:

*And suddenly [Manyushka] waved her hands:*

*– My mother, why am I losing my mind with joy? Dunyarka, put the samovar as soon as possible and run into the shop – buy pretzels! [7, p. 52].*

Gestures can describe a person’s emotional state showing the expressiveness of the speech and conveying the emotional state of the addressee, his personal attitude to the content of his utterance. The emotional state of the communicant, which is determined by the language manifestation of the gesture “waving hands”, can serve as a reason for using this non-verbal means.

## 2. K<sub>1</sub>-I-K<sub>2</sub>-V+G (R)

The communicant (K<sub>1</sub>) sends information (I) to the communicant (K<sub>2</sub>) which verbally (V) and non-verbally (G) expresses its relationship (R) to what has been said or done.

In this situational model the frame structure is made up of three optional components: the gesture quality, the reason for using the gesture which is manifested in the emotional state of the subject, and the purpose of using the gesture, i.e. expressing the attitude to what is happening.

The gesture verbalized by the expression “waved his hands” attracting a communicative context represents the purpose of using the gesture (disagreement) and the reason (the emotional state of the addressee, i.e. fright):

– *Take away your present. I will not take it...*

– *Why? – the doctor said fearfully.*

– *Because ... My mother, clients come here ... and the servants are ashamed.*

– *No, no, no ... You dare not refuse! – the doctor **waved his hands**. – This is disgusting on your part! This is the art thing ... how much movement in it ... expression ... And I do not want to discuss it! It's offensive to me!* [8, p. 295].

The purpose of using the following gesture acts as the motivating component of the frame which is revealed contextually. The gesture of waving hands in example (1) expresses consent while in example (2) – prohibition”:

(1) – *I ... it may look like imposture ... but if the local committee doesn't mind, I'd like to be Santa Claus ... But, if they do not trust me, then ...*

– *Oh, what are you saying! – the chairman of the local committee **waved his hands** having regained consciousness. – What are we talking about? On the contrary ... Comrades, who is for Vadim Petrovich? Unanimously* [9, p. 90].

(2) *Makar moved to look at his son, but the sister [nurse] **waved her hands**:*

– *Where are you going! The child will be frightened ...* [10, p. 14].

The quality of the gesture plays a determining role in the formation of the exponential plan of the kinema and allows to distinguish between the means of the gesture verbalization.

In English the gesture of spreading hands is verbalized by the phrase “to spread one's hands”. The language manifestation of this gesture includes the circumstance “wide”, which clarifies the quality and exponential plan of the gesture:

*“I would like you to go to a hotel in Zurich and spend the night and come to see me in the morning.”*

*Doctor Dohmler **spread his hands wide*** [11, p. 159].

The content plan of kinema can be verbalized by means of language manifestation of a gesture, e.g. the expression “poke one's hand to the side” includes the emotionally marked verb “to poke” and represents the neglect of the sender to the recipient of the utterance:

*The contractor glanced at Galya and Oksana and **poked her hand** in their direction* [7, p. 200].

The content plan of the gesture can be explicated by circumstances that are part of the language manifestation of hand gestures. The gesture of splashing hands is verbalized in Russian with the expression “to splash one's hands”. The circumstance “sad”, which is part of the language manifestation of this gesture, explicates the emotional state of the communicant (grief):

*Zoe splashed her hands moaning in a crying voice:*

– *God, Makar, why should I look into their eyes? Never, never!* [12, p. 97].

In German the waving gesture is manifested by the verb “abwinken”. The circumstance “mißmutig” (displeased), which is part of the language representation of this gesture, clarifies the emotional state of the communicant (discontent):

*Ich winkte mißmutig ab: “Mir würde es auch großartig gehen, wenn ich mehr verdiente. Stell dir vor, zwei ganze Fünfzigpfennigfuhrer heute”* [10, p. 288].

The composition of the language manifestation of hand gestures, as a rule, includes the designation of the hand and the verb that describes the action. The analysis allowed to reveal some examples where the part of the body by which the action is performed was indicated, e.g. the phrasal verb “to wave away”, the verbalizing gesture “to wave one’s hand”, the verbs “applaudieren”, “to applaud”, “to clap” implicitly clarify the indication of the gesture being made by means of the hand / hands.

### 3. K-V+G

The communicant (K) supplements the verbal utterance (V) with a nonverbal means (G) to strengthen what was said. The purpose of using the gesture is the motivating component of the frame in this situational model.

The verbalization of the gesture, in addition to the expression “waved his wound hand”, may include various definitions and circumstances for the explication of the intense plan of the kinema. Thus, the definition of “wound” fills the slot “gesture quality”. The meaning of the gesture “confirmation of what was said” is specified contextually:

*Zoe exclaimed scarily:*

– *Oh, what happened, Oleksan?*

*Oleksan waved his wound hand, smiled wryly:*

*“Nothing serious, I just cut it ... The jams were cut with a sickle, my hand was hurt”. Trivia, it will heal soon* [12, p. 20].

The frame structure in the following example is presented by four optional components in addition to the obligatory components:

– the quality of the gesture:

1) multiple actions;

2) the hand as the working part of the body;

3) the direction of the movement;

4) the reason for attracting non-verbal means of communication (communicants are separated by a distance);

– the purpose of using the gesture (attracting attention);

– the object that the non-verbal action is directed at.

Moreover, the quality of the gesture depends on the purpose and reason for using a non-verbal tool.

In English this gesture is manifested in linguistic form with the verb “to wave” in the meaning “wave one’s hand”. The meaning of the “goodbye” kinema is determined by the communicative context:

*She [Rebecca] waved him [her husband] an adieu from the window* [13, p. 320].

Thus, the considered gesture meaning can be defined not just by its linguistic representation but with the help of contextual characteristics. Verbalization of gestures always shows the attitude of the sender and the recipient of the utterance to each other. It is revealed in the degree of their acquaintance and the frequency of using gestures towards each other, their ages, gender and social statuses, e.g. colleagues often shake hands when meeting in the morning but family members who live together in one house do this rarely.

### **Teaching non-verbal means of communication**

Interacting with other people and entering the communication process a person satisfies his needs. This generates the speaker's need to transfer and share information [14, 15]. Taking into consideration the situation of teaching a foreign language, it is important to deal with knowledge of national culture already at the initial and secondary stages of the language acquisition. Thus, for creating a communicative situation the teacher should make a careful selection of the teaching material, including non-verbal content, considering the studied foreign language as a guideline for establishing the dialogue with native speakers.

Non-verbal content in teaching a foreign language includes the use of such non-verbal means of communication as:

- paralinguistic (intonation modes and tempo-rhythmic features of speech);
- proxemic (moving around the classroom);
- extralinguistic (sighing, crying, laughing);
- kinesic (using gestures, mimics, facial expressions).

Using non-verbal content in foreign language teaching makes the learning process more productive as situational models describe natural communicative situations, everyday speech activity.

The selection of the non-verbal content should be made according to the principles cognitive value since it is necessary to select the teaching material depending on the learners' level of the language training, provide communicative situations connected with the learners' life or professional experience, thus motivating them and stimulating their learning activity.

Non-verbal means of communication help foreign language students cope with various communicative situations and build their own communicative behaviour when talking to native speakers, understand them and quickly perceive social norms used in the society.

Speaking about exercises aimed at developing non-verbal communication skills in a foreign language, a complex of tasks can be offered. At the beginning and pre-intermediate level of the language training these tasks usually include knowledge of the cultural information. Communicative movements and gestures which are closely connected with the speech message are sometimes different in the students' mother tongue and the studied foreign language. For example, during the lesson the teacher can teach students counting on fingers performing the gesture correctly (in Germany they bent fingers of the left hand starting with the thumb and unbent by the fingers of the right hand, while in the Russian gesture we start with the little finger). Another example is attracting the



teacher's attention in the lesson – when a Russian student wants to answer a question he raises his hand, while a German student raises two fingers. Thus, non-verbal behavior is communicatively and nationally determined.

Tasks on training non-verbal communication skills can be distinguished into three groups:

1) grammar, phonetic, intonation tasks (visual tasks using fingers, hands and body language), e.g. explaining or describing something without using words, playing the game “The broken phone” when students whisper some sentence to each other and the last student should repeat it aloud, etc.;

2) comprehension tasks (tasks on developing language conjecture), e.g. playing different visual games, pantomimes, using pictures and trying to guess the emotional state or character traits of people, etc.;

3) tasks on using gestures as a cultural sign, e.g. greeting and goodbye communicative situations taking into account personal space between speakers, imitation games employing images of Russian, English and German native speakers, etc.

These tasks not only teach students non-verbal communication and introduce cultural information, but also develop their teambuilding skills and remove the language barrier during foreign language communication.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, teaching students non-verbal content is important not only for productive communication but also for enriching their inner world and developing their socio-cultural competence since ignorance or failure to use the rules of gestures and other non-verbal tools of the studied language leads to serious misunderstanding or even conflicts.

The frame approach to the analysis of the language representation of hand gestures and the identification of situational models made it possible to reflect the means of the language manifestation of gestures in the dialogical discourse. The study of non-verbal means of communication reveals the character's participation in creating his image, i.e. to establish what belongs to the personage himself and what comes from the narrator. The allocation of the frame structure and situational models in the characters' dialogues help understand the character's image and makes it possible to more accurately determine the intention of the author of the text.

The means of non-verbal communication hide a large amount of information, including the deep cultural layer which reflects the speaker's mentality and the intellectual operations performed by him. Thus, a good command of the natural language implies not only the ability to use language nominations as elements of a verbal semiotic code, but also the ability to recognize the gestures behind them by language manifestations. The conducted analysis allowed us to state that even generally recognized gestures can easily change their meaning or acquire additional meanings. In this regard it is also important to note that different gestures can be compatible, e.g. the use of concomitant gestures, which can significantly affect the whole communication process.

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### **Анализ невербальных средств коммуникации и его роль в преподавании иностранного языка**

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**Ключевые слова:** преподавание иностранного языка; жест; жестовый фрейм; языковая манифестация; невербальные средства коммуникации; факультативный и обязательные компоненты фрейма: ситуационные модели.

**Аннотация:** Рассмотрен подход к анализу речевого представления жестов рук в рамках жестового фрейма, где подчеркивается метаязыковой характер средств невербальной коммуникации, а также поднимается вопрос обучения средствам невербальной коммуникации на занятиях по иностранному языку. Установлено, что на язык тела влияют различные факторы, такие как культура, индивидуальные особенности человека и т.д. Проанализированы средства лингвистической репрезентации жестов рук в диалогической речи персонажей литературных произведений с точки зрения прагмалингвистики, их системообразующих, лексико-семантических и коммуникативно-прагматических свойств. Дано описание обязательных и дополнительных компонентов жестового фрейма. Дан анализ ситуационных моделей, являющихся основой изучения невербальной части общения в диалогическом дискурсе. Рассмотрены задания на отработку навыков иноязычной невербальной коммуникации.

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