



OPOSICIONES AL CUERPO DE MAESTROS DE ENSEÑANZA PRIMARIA

INGLÉS

TEMA 2

La comunicación en la clase de lengua extranjera: comunicación verbal (las 4 destrezas) y no verbal. Estrategias extralingüísticas: reacciones no verbales a mensajes en diferentes contextos.





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1. INTRODUCTION

We have to think that communication is used in everyday life situations. When we wake up in the morning we start to communicate with other people using language. When we go out we watch the advertisements in the street that communicate something. When we go to school or work we use communication.

There are many different types of communication and our life involves communication. Even animals communicate between them with different sounds, movements and reactions. We do the same. We use language mainly to communicate with people. This language could be divided into two groups: the **verbal communication** when we use the language and the **non-verbal communication** when we use gestures, body movements and so on. But we also use other kinds of communication that is traffic signs, deaf-mute language, Braille language, flags language, smoke language and so on.

In this unit we will analyse the first two types: the verbal and non-verbal communication very useful in the English classes and to communicate with others.

2. COMMUNICATION IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASS

2.1. COMMUNICATIVE FEATURES

We are going to explain the psychological features that influence in communication. The explanations given below are applied to the development of communication in the foreign language class.

1.- Desire to communicate

The main motivation for language learning has to be the desire to communicate. Children want to communicate if they have something to say to each other. We have to determine what language the children will want to use and how they will enjoy it using it. This means that the teacher must design the content and methodology according to the student's interests. If we do not do so students would



think that they know very little, and as a result, they have nothing to express whether in the native language or the language they are learning.

For young children the central interest is themselves. They love telling you about themselves, their possessions and their immediate surroundings. You, as teacher, can exploit this interest by personalising many of the class activities. As children get older their field of interest becomes wider and more varied. At the beginning of the school year we should spend some time in getting to know our students interests.

It is also necessary to motivate the children individually. Encouragement is by far the best tool for promoting and retaining a child's interest in English. Children are encouraged when they succeed but not when they fail. If a student fails once, he or she perceives himself/herself as a bad learner. This discourages the student and makes him or her less likely to try because they believe that the failure is inevitable.

2.- Expression

Things are easier if our students have a desire of communication. Now they are going to express themselves. They will make mistakes when saying things but this is the normal process of learning a language. When they learnt their first language they had similar errors. It is good to correct them in some situations but not always. Let them express freely and the correction will come later. Sometimes the students would ask you when they realise there is something wrong. It is good to give them self-confidence to communicate. If not, it would be very difficult for them to express in a foreign language.

3.- Personality factors:

In a class group, the teacher must be alert to recognise personality factors that are affecting participation in discussion the language. Some students are talkative; others are shy or taciturn. These characteristics affect student performance in the oral part of the lesson. **Nida** noted among missionaries that the talkative extrovert learned the language faster than the quiet, studious person (Nida 1957, p. 26).

Some students are by nature cautious or meticulous; others are unduly sensitive and therefore easily embarrassed or upset. Students in these categories often prefer to say nothing rather than run the risk of expressing themselves incorrectly whether in a first or a second language.

4. Classroom Language

It is important to remember that for many students the only contact with the English Language is the teacher of English. So, if the teacher feels comfortable it is recommended the use of the foreign



language (L2). Speak clearly and not too fast and pay particular attention to your intonation and your gestures. The students when they get used to your voice will understand what you say and if you give them clue sentences such as, *What's the meaning of...?, Where is my pencil?, Excuse me, Can you repeat it, please?, How do you spell ...?, Good morning,* etc. they will try to do the same as you do.

On the other hand, sometimes it is necessary to spend a little time speaking in your mother tongue (L1) in order to introduce a particular subject or a grammatical point. You will almost certainly need to use L1 for serious discipline. If students are not used to hearing you speaking too much in L1 in the classroom, when you got to get serious it can have quite an effect.

2.2. THE ORDER OF ACQUISITION

Language is usually delivered in the classroom following an established belief regarding the order of language acquisition: **listening, speaking, reading and then writing**. This means that we present the language orally; the child listens, then we ask the children to reproduce this language orally; the child speaks, then we present the language in the written form; the child reads and finally we ask them to reproduce this language in the written form; the child writes.

The **four main skills in English** follow this established order because it means that the child experiences language before reproducing it and that he/she experiences it in the oral form before the written form. Learning a language is above all a slow process. We do not mean that they hear or read something and are able to reproduce it perfectly, this does not happen even with their first language and it certainly will not happen with the second language.

We can use the following steps for stimulating the learning process of our students:

- Present language orally. The children need to listen to language. Talk to the students in English.
- Spend a good part of your class time getting your students speaking.
- Then let them read some interesting material.
- Writing is the last skill because is the most complex skill for them. This stage cannot be performed successfully until the other three stages are in place.

Finally, do not expect your students to learn things in English which they have not mastered in their mother tongue. If they cannot tell the time in L1, do not try teaching them this in L2.

3. VERBAL COMMUNICATION (VC): THE 4 SKILLS

(See units 7 and 8 to enlarge)

We can distinguish two types of communications:



- **Verbal communication** that is communication by means of language, Ex.: speak a language.
- **Non-verbal communication** applied to behaviour in man and animals of a kind that, though it may be informative, is not necessarily communicative. Ex.: gestures.

Language is a system of perfectly well structured signs. There are many types of languages, for example: the animal language, the flags language, the traffic language, etc. The language that uses words to express a feeling, emotion, information, etc is the verbal language. **Verbal language** is a system of communication that uses words to talk or to write. In Latin “verbum” means, “word”.

Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) said that the linguistic elements (phonemes, words, and kinds of sentences) have balance or equilibrium as the chess figures. If you move one or if one figure disappears or if there is any chance this equilibrium is altered and you modify the system.

All languages can be analysed in four levels: **phonologic, morphologic, semantic and syntactic**. The linguistic signs are structured in these four groups.

The linguistic signs have an opposition to the rest of the signs that is why they worth and we can distinguish from saying one thing or another. For instance, the words “can” and “cap” mean different thing because it exists a **phonologic opposition** between the consonants “n” and “p”. The words “play” and “played” have a **morphological opposition** because the first one refers to the present and the second one to the past. The sentence “*I like potatoes*” has a **syntactic opposition** to “*I don't like potatoes*” because the second sentence has the negative syntactic feature. And the letters “A”, “B” or “C” are in **semantic opposition** to “D” because the first one means to pass an exam while the second one refers to fail an exam.

All the signs have a meaning but to keep a message in a sentence they must follow certain established rules. For example, you can say “*I like beans*” but it is not correct saying “*Like I beans*”. Or you can follow the rules but say thing with no sense, such as “*The orange smiled*”.

- *Knowing that the verbal communication is compounded by the four linguistic skills, now we are going to describe each skill separatly:*

LISTENING SKILL

Listening is an oral comprehension of the message or messages transmitted by a speaker.

A good listener must develop certain listening skills, such as:

- Concentrate. It is difficult to give full concentration for longer than 10 minutes.

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- Be prepared to listen: physically, mentally and emotionally. You will not be able to listen carefully or interpret accurately if you are not in a good state.
- Listen actively. Listen and try to make sense of what you hear.
- Listening is a deliberate conscious “search” type of activity quite different from hearing, which refers to the incidental reception of information or sound waves.
- Use an appropriate listening strategy to meet your purpose. You can choose to listen:
 - For main points
 - For detailed information
 - For particular information, specific facts or the answers to specific questions.
- Practice deductive listening: inferring meaning from context and predictive listening: anticipating what the speaker is going to say next.
- Listen for content. Try to get the important information.
- Pay attention to any visual aids and the non-verbal communication. Up to fifty per cent of the impact of the speaker’s message is visual.
- Pay attention to the speaker’s voice and the way he/she emphasises what is important.

First of all, we must think that our students are children and these characteristics could be a bit difficult to practice them with the class, but if they are prepared for a listening they will get more information, details and step by step would understand better the foreign language.

Secondly, their attitudes to the listening skill are very important, so we can explain them some of these techniques in an intrinsic point of view.

Finally, if we let our students react to the listening physically will be helpful for them to understand the information given. This is called the **Total Physical Response (TPR)**. This theory suggests that children learn more easily if they react in a physical way to language stimuli. For example, the children hear a word and hold up a flashcard which corresponds to the word or point to the corresponding picture, act out the word or hold up a smiley/sad face in order to register their feelings and so on.

SPEAKING SKILL

Speaking is the oral expression of the message we need or want to transmit to someone.

Most teachers wonder how they can get their students talking more in class. First, we must remember that children at primary level are usually extremely limited in the amount of language they know. Free conversation is simply not possible, so all oral tasks have to take place in a very defined framework.



Apart from the oral exercises, it is good for our students to practise English with their classroom vocabulary. This is the only way to practise free communication with them. For this reason, insist on their using English whenever they can. The speaking in small groups has some advantages: they do not have to wait for their turn and they will feel more confident because they do not have to speak in front of the whole class.

There are certain characteristics in the oral communication that we must have into account if we want to develop the speaking skill on our students:

- We must try to organise the information we want to transmit.
- Changing the stress and tone can alter language. The meaning of a sentence or phrase in English can be changed considerably by altering the stress. Explain to the children that by emphasising a particular word in the sentence or phrase, they can change the meaning of their words. For instance, "*My cousin is **twenty?***" or "***My cousin** is twenty*".
- Try to use a wide range of vocabulary: synonyms, opposites, etc.
- Do not be limited with the number of adjectives and adverbs.
- Do not make repetitions.
- Try to make short sentences but with coherence.
- Let the speaker give the message.
- It is especially important to avoid interrupting the speaker.
- The use of non-verbal communication can help the speaker to express the message.

READING SKILL

Reading is the written comprehension of the language. Reading is getting a message from a text. Reading is an active and interactive process. It is you, the writer and the text. We have the problem of correctly interpreting the text, but there may be a wide gap between your knowledge, experience and resources of language and those of the writer. The writer encodes the text.

The reader has the problem of decoding. The intended meaning should be the same as the received meaning. The process involves the reader in a sort of psycholinguistic guessing game where he/she is making and remaking hypotheses about meaning.

We must understand that reading with children is a slow process. They would read the text first knowing and identifying the letters and words and then understanding the meaning of the text.

The characteristics of an efficient reader are:



- Preparation for reading. Choose an interesting book. Be honest and read what you enjoy. If it is not like this there is not going to be motivation and the reading would be hard.
- Be aware of your purpose both before and after the reading. E.g.: "Why am I reading this?, How should I read it?"
- Select an appropriate strategy for the text type and task type:
 - Surveying: Light surface reading
 - Skimming: Directed deep reading
 - Scanning: Deep level reading
 - Reading for understanding: Fast reading
 - Reading for knowledge: Slow reading
- Vary the level and speed of reading.
- Use word techniques: use of dictionary, guessing, and context.
- Use text techniques: analyse the organisation of the text.
- Predict. Think with the text and ahead to predict what is coming next.

There are six reading strategies to have into account:

- a. Scanning: when you want to find a particular item of information.
- b. Skimming: when you want to gain a quick impression of a text or article.
- c. Surveying: when you want to uncover the structure and topography of a text.
- d. Light Study Reading: reading passively for factual information, general background or for no specific purpose.
- e. Directed Reading: reading actively for specific knowledge acquisition or for grasp of predetermined concepts, procedures or theories.
- f. Deep Study Reading: reading actively to make connections, meaning, consider implications and to evaluate argument.

WRITING SKILL

The writing is the written expression of language. Free writing is developed very slowly. Do not expect students to write freely what they cannot say freely. All free writing must have a clear framework. Let them produce short pieces of work, making sure that you provide them with most of the vocabulary and all of the structure models they need.



Characteristics of writing:

- We must learn all the rules to develop a good text, even if it is short.
- When we write we can only use the linguistic strategies, that is why it results more complicated.
- Punctuation is very important to get the written message; otherwise there can be misunderstandings.
- When we write something the receiver is not present, so we do not know if the person would understand the message or not. If we are clear it will be easier.
- Give examples to facilitate your explanations.

4. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION (NVC)

The non-verbal communication plays an important role in the oral language.

Non-verbal communication may be defined as body language and paralinguistics as the study of how things are said. But whether we are studying a person's NVC or their paralinguistics our first problem is perception and the second interpretation. When we are talking to someone, we listen to what they say and how they say it and watch their NVC. As a result we get more or less clear messages about what they want to convey.

The signals taken together usually make the intended meaning unambiguous or at least acceptably clear. But if the signals are inconsistent - if someone says one thing but shows by their tone of voice or manner (NVC) that they mean something else - if there is VC NVC conflict, we may be left in doubt about what the speaker means.

In addition, we may be interested in the speaker's attitude, credibility and purpose in communicating. If we are we may want to know whether the NVC signals we are receiving are believable or fake. If we know this, we may be in a better position to interpret it correctly.

4.1. FUNCTIONS OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

1.- To express attitudes to the speaker, to the topic or views expressed and to the self.

"Most of our attitudes and characteristics are grounded in our family experience and family relationships" Robin Skynner and John Cleese (1983).

2.- To express positive or negative emotions. Actions speak louder than voice!

"People signal to each other their attitudes, needs, desires and feelings more powerfully through unconscious body movements than through word mouth." Desmond Morris (1977).



3.- To support the Verbal Communication message by:

- ◆ Influencing the verbal meaning
- ◆ Providing emphasis for important points or ideas
- ◆ Helping to achieve the VC purpose. For example: To inform, persuade, entertain, deceive, punish, influence, etc.

4.- To replace Verbal communication:

- ◆ When it is less important to convey factual information than it is to convey attitudes and emotions.
- ◆ When the use of verbal language is difficult, impossible or inappropriate.
- ◆ For conveying simple messages or ideas quickly and clearly.

5.- To help manage social encounters:

- ◆ To help start them and end them.
- ◆ To help manage the turntaking smoothly in conversation and discussion.

6.- To assist in control, influence and submission:

- ◆ Signs of an authoritarian leadership style.
- ◆ Signs of a democratic leader style.
- ◆ Signs of contextual manipulation.
- ◆ Signs of deference and submission.

7.- To assist in the presentation of the self:

- a) Our feelings, attitudes and emotions.
- b) Our values and beliefs.
- c) Our self-image and body image – both its cognitive and affective aspect.
- d) Self respect and self stem.
- e) Our personality traits.
- f) Our status symbols.
- g) Our tie signs (signs of group membership).
- h) Signs of our social role / occupation.

4.2. TYPES OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Michael Argyle talked in 1967 about the Non Verbal Communication codes very important to analyse the characteristics of the oral language.



1. Bodily and eye contact

We are constantly having contacts with people but who we touch, when, where, how, for how long and for what purpose is controlled by a surprisingly complex set of rules. For example, when meeting someone we shake hands, when you are cold you contact with yourself, when caring your baby you touch him/her, etc.

2. Proximity

The study of personal space is called proxemics. When regularly used both property and space become regarded as territory. We try to maintain control of our personal space and feel uneasy if this invaded. When talking to others we adjust the proximity. The appropriate zone distance will depend on the relationship between the people involved, the business in hand and cultural factors.

3. Body Orientation

Two people who are talking face to face and close to each other will discourage others from joining them. Body orientation is also a good guide to what people want to so as revealed by a person's intention movements.

4. Personal Appearance and Clothing

Careful observation of a person's personal appearance and clothing can convey quite a lot about them. On the other hand appearances sometimes lie about the character of that person. Nevertheless, many people take a lot of care over their personal appearance in order to convey a certain image or impression of themselves. They try to minimise leakage of information that might show them at a disadvantage. Otherwise, which signs are noted and how they signify will depend on the observer.

5. Head Movements

The head movements of the audience are especially important in providing feedback to the speaker.

6. Facial Expressions

The face is the specialised communications area of the human body. It is normally carefully controlled but least believable as a guide to a person's true feelings.

7. Gaze behaviour and Eye Movement

Gaze behaviour is closely related to facial expressions when a person wants to show interest in another. Appropriate gaze behaviour is a mark of politeness and a means of co-operation in turntaking. Control of direction and length and direction of gaze is important.

8. Conventional Gestures



The study of gestures is called kinesics. A gesture is any action that sends a visual signal to an onlooker. Conventional gestures convey generally agreed meanings. Many people use gestures with their hands (called baton movements) when they speak to help them convey what they want. Deliberate gestures should be distinguished from incidental gestures. The action of shaking hands is an interesting example of a gesture that often conveys more than a formal greeting.

9. Incidental Gestures.

They are habitual or occasional gestures that appear in moments of nervous tension. These gestures are not usually under people's control and not intended to convey information to an observer.

10. Body Movement and Posture.

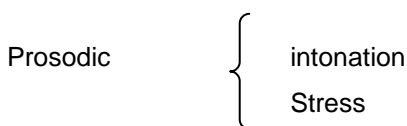
Posture is another important source of feedback to the speaker. Depending on your posture the speaker can understand your feelings of like or dislike.

4.3. PROSODIC AND PARALINGUISTIC FEATURES

Every normal English utterance is produced with a particular intonation pattern, which is determined partly by the grammatical structure of the utterance and partly by the attitude of the speaker (as ironical, surprised, etc.).

Moreover, each word is pronounced with a certain degree of stress, or emphasis, according to its grammatical function and a variety of other factors including the contextual presuppositions of the utterance, the attitude of the speaker, and so on.

Intonation and **stress** are the principal **prosodic features** operative in English. They are superimposed upon the string of forms, which constitutes the verbal component of the utterance. They may be non-verbal, in the sense that they do not serve to identify the word-forms of which the utterance is composed. And yet they are an essential part of what are commonly referred to as verbal signals.



The most typical form of language-behaviour is that which occurs in face-to-face conversation between members of the same culture.

Normal language-behaviour has a non-verbal, as well as a verbal component; the **non-verbal** component comprises a **prosodic** and **paralinguistic** part. It has already been pointed out that the term "paralinguistic" is used in a variety of different ways. It includes both **non-prosodic vocal phenomena**, that is, for example, variations of pitch, loudness, duration, etc., and **non-vocal**



phenomena, that is, eye-movements, head-nods, facial expressions, gestures, body-posture, etc. The latter will be referred to as paralinguistic only in so far as they are integrated with and further determine the structure or meaning of utterances and serve to regulate the development of a conversation and the interpersonal relations of the participants.

It is important to realise that paralinguistic signals, both vocal and non-vocal, are an essential part of all normal language behaviour. As Abercrombie puts it:

"We speak with our vocal organs, but we converse with our entire bodies... Paralinguistic phenomena... occur alongside spoken language, interact with it, and produce together with it a total system of communication... The study of paralinguistic behaviour is part of the study of conversation: the conversational use of spoken language cannot be properly understood unless paralinguistic elements are taken into account" (1968; p. 55).

If the appropriate paralinguistic elements are omitted, the participants in a conversation get confused, nervous or angry, they may stop talking altogether; in conclusion conversation is inhibited by the absence of the appropriate paralinguistic clues.

5. EXTRALINGUISTIC STRATEGIES

As part of our socialisation we learn to consider others and to be polite. Politeness often involves concealing our real feelings to avoid hurting other people's feelings and to avoid scenes and unpleasantness. Some degree of covering up and control of our NVC is part of early socialisation. We find out at a very tender age that it is best to be polite when we do not know people very well. We can only be really rude to good friends.

But people in some professions have to say lies as part of their job have to learn to fake NVC. They have to be impressive and look honest, trustworthy and reliable. They have to be polite and friendly concealing their true feelings. But these people are not the only ones in doing so we must sometimes represent a play in some social situations.

We have to:

- ◆ To impress.
- ◆ To keep up appearances and avoid making the other feel uncomfortable.
- ◆ To avoid display of strong emotions because it might suggest the lack of self-control.
- ◆ To communicate with appropriate open body language and honesty signals.
- ◆ To gain advantage in communicative situations. To be able to influence or control the different kinds of situations.
- ◆ When appropriate to use deliberately friendly non-verbal communication proximity, a warm smile, careful listening and appropriate body orientation and posture.

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6. CONCLUSION

Our main goal as teachers is to maintain communication in our English classes, Verbal or Non Verbal Communication. It would be easier for our students to use first the non-verbal communication or to speak with the help of the gestures, eye movements, head nods, etc. We can advice them to adequate this non-verbal communication to give their explanations, because it is also a communicative purpose.

We should teach communication in all senses, formal, colloquial, polite, etc. in the four main skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. It is not important what skills our students get first but we have to develop the four of them.

On the other hand, we can teach some things in our mother tongue (L1); for example, the difficult grammar points and use the foreign language (L2) for others. If we motivate and give to our students their needs and interests they would be more confident and they will have desire of communication. When the students say or do a right thing appreciate it. It is a good way of motivating them. Recognise their merits.

We as teachers would guide our students to get proper English and this would be worthy for their future.

7. SUMMARY

Language is an instrument of communication. Communication is to transmit any kind of information **intentionally**, by means of some established signalling- system.

Communicative features

Desire to communicate

Expression

Personality factors:

Classroom Language

The order of acquisition

- Present language orally. The children need to listen to language. Talk to the students in English.
- Spend a good part of your class time getting your students speaking.
- Then let them read some interesting material.
- Writing is the last skill because is the most complex skill for them. This stage cannot be performed successfully until the other three stages are in place.



We can distinguish two types of communications:

- **Verbal communication** that is communication by means of language, Ex.: speak a language.
- **Non-verbal communication** applied to behaviour in man and animals of a kind that, though it may be informative, is not necessarily communicative. Ex.: gestures.

Functions of non-verbal communication

- 1.- To express attitudes to the speaker,
- 2.- To express positive or negative emotions.
- 3.- To support the Verbal Communication message
- 4.- To replace Verbal communication
- 5.- To help manage social encounters
- 6.- To assist in control, influence and submission
- 7.- To assist in the presentation of the self

Types of non-verbal communication

Bodily and eye contact

Proximity

Body Orientation

Personal Appearance and Clothing

Head Movements

Facial Expressions

Gaze behaviour and Eye Movement

Conventional Gestures

Incidental Gestures.

Body Movement and Posture.

Prosodic and paralinguistic features

Intonation and **stress** are the principal **prosodic features** operative in English. They are superimposed upon the string of forms, which constitutes the verbal component of the utterance. They may be non-verbal, in the sense that they do not serve to identify the word-forms of which the utterance is composed. And yet they are an essential part of what are commonly referred to as verbal signals.

Extra-linguistic strategies

- ◆ To impress.
- ◆ To keep up appearances
- ◆ To avoid display of strong emotions.
- ◆ To communicate with appropriate open body language.



- ◆ To gain advantage in communicative situations.
- ◆ When appropriate to use deliberately friendly non-verbal communication proximity, a warm smile, careful listening and appropriate body orientation and posture.

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