

***Tema 2***

***LA COMUNICACIÓN EN LA CLASE DE LENGUA EXTRANJERA: COMUNICACIÓN VERBAL Y NO VERBAL. ESTRATEGIAS EXTRA-LINGÜÍSTICAS: REACCIONES NO VERBALES A MENSAJES EN DIFERENTES CONTEXTOS.***

***Topic 2***

***COMMUNICATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS: VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION. EXTRALINGUISTIC STRATEGIES: NON-VERBAL REACTIONS TO MESSAGES IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS.***

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication among humans is a basic need and a complex phenomenon. We communicate feelings, moods, attitudes and factual information in an interconnected way as we attend to different variables; the context, the participants, the channel or the purpose of the message are some of the factors that influence the forms of our utterances, either oral or written. However, we do not only use linguistic signs to communicate. Speakers also share a non-verbal code that conveys meaning. Both listeners and speakers use non-verbal resources to communicate their purpose and many of these extralinguistic signs are unconscious and cultural-bound. Either linguistic or non-linguistic, we use signs to express and interpret meanings. Acquiring a foreign language means learning a new system of signs to transmit a message effectively, in an accurate and appropriate way.

In the context of EFL classrooms, non-verbal communication is one of the first ways of expressing and understanding messages, as it is also in native speakers children. The next sections will look at verbal and non-verbal communication in the EFL classrooms and to some extralinguistic strategies for messages in different contexts.

## 2. VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

As we have just stated, communication among humans involves the use of signs and the need to express and receive a message. Senders and receivers of messages may choose a verbal or a non-verbal code according to the intervening factors in any communicative act and to psychological factors, being both codes shared among the participants.

### 2.1. VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Language is the main means by which people communicate. There have been many different definitions of what a language is throughout history but language can broadly be defined as a ruled system of signs that are combined to transmit a message. According to Hockett, some of the main **features of a human language** are the following

**Arbitrariness:** we can say that there is not a link between the linguistic signs and the reality to which they refer to. For example, there is no intrinsic link between the word “book” and the object it represents.

**Feedback:** speakers (and writers) can reflect upon everything they say. Feedback is a basic to maintaining a conversation, for instance.

**Traditional transmission:** language is acquired by a long and complex learning process. This language acquisition capacity is innate to human beings and developed in society.

**Productivity:** humans can understand and produce sentences which they have never heard or said before. Human language is essentially creative.

**Structure dependence:** the language elements are related to each other and language operations depend on an internal understanding of its system and structure.

This human resource of the language to communicate messages is also influenced by several **psychological factors**, which, of course, are also present for EFL learners. Among them, we will signal the next ones:

**Desire to communicate:** spontaneous verbal expression is not only the product of knowledge or a skill. It is not only assumed that the speakers (and the EFL learners) have something to communicate, but also that the hearers want to listen to the message, understand it and react to it. Language learning activities must direct the students to have the desire to communicate a message to a person or group of people in the target language. Designing significant activities based on learners' needs will promote meaningful interactions and communication in class in the target language.

**Comprehension as well as expression:** learners need to be exposed to lots of meaningful input before attempting verbal responses. Understanding is a receptive skill which comes earlier than speaking; therefore, EFL learners may use other non-linguistic signs to show comprehension of messages and to answer to them.

**Personality factors:** teachers and learners are influenced by their personalities in verbal and non-verbal interactions. Some students are talkative, others are shy or cautious; the learner's nature somehow affects participation and interactions in classrooms.

**Limitations of expression:** it may be an inhibiting factor as learners could feel unable of expressing themselves effectively in the target language. Acquiring a language is a very complex process and teachers should promote communication through tasks and activities which are appropriate to the learners' developmental stage.

Verbal communication is a complex phenomenon in which many factors intervene. The language system, the communicative setting and the psychological features of the participants are some of them.

## 2.2. PROSODIC ELEMENTS

Stress, rhythm and intonation are the three prosodic elements that form the phonological system of a language. **Stress** refers to the relative prominence of syllables; it is about the force, in terms of air pressure, with which a sound or syllable is uttered. **Rhythm** is about the relative pattern of the stresses, which are perceived as peak of prominence at more or less regular intervals of time. **Intonation** is related to the melody of every language; to the sequence of stressed and unstressed syllables.

### a) STRESS

It is usual to distinguish between **lexical stress** and **sentence stress** (also called **rhythmic stress**).

#### 1. Word stress

It may be thought of as a syllable's potential to receive prominence and the latter as the actual degree of prominence observed when a word is uttered as part of a longer utterance. This section will look at word or lexical stress. In English the difference between stressed and unstressed syllables is stronger than in Spanish, this being one of the reasons why Spanish speakers usually sound flat when speaking in English. In isolation, every word carries at least one stress, but in connected speech word stress changes in order to pace and mark the rhythm, and often the meaning, of the utterance.

Basically, content words are stressed words, such as nouns ('kitchen, engi'neer...), principal verbs ('visit, under'stand), adjectives ('interesting, photo'gráfico...) and adverbs ('carefully, 'ever...). Question words ('who...) and negatives ('not) are also stressed words. On the other hand, function words are usually unstressed, such as determiners ('the, 'a, 'some), auxiliary and modal verbs ('could, 'am...), prepositions (be'fore, 'opposite...), conjunctions ('but, 'while...), and pronouns ('they, 'she, 'us...).

Stress applies to individual syllables, and involves, most commonly, a higher pitch. Stress is an essential feature of word identity in English.

#### 2. Sentence stress

English is a stress-timed language. This means that stress in a spoken sentence occurs at regular intervals and the length it takes to say something depends on the number of stressed syllables rather than on the number of syllables itself. There are two aspects to this, 1) important words and 2) meaning, so much deeply related. Therefore, the stressed lexical item in an utterance usually carries the information, the communicative intention and purpose.

Therefore, sentence stress provides vital clues as to the speaker's message. Thus, variation in stress affects the message. Sentence stress will be dealt more deeply in the next section, rhythm.

Example: Didn't you know? There were **ten** dead people in the bus accident in Madrid! ("ten" here becomes the main word, although it's not set at the end of the sentence, as new information normally is).

## **b) RHYTHM**

Rhythm is both a feature of and a product of the phonological structure of English. The phonology of any language is a system, so that a change in one part of the system will affect some or all of the other parts. Rhythm is produced by the combination of stressed and unstressed syllables and it is a major characteristic of spoken English, which makes English a **stress-timed language**. In stress-timed languages, there is a roughly equal amount of time between each stress in a sentence, compared with a **syllable-timed language** (such as Spanish or French) in which syllables are produced at a steady rate which is unaffected by stress differences.

The use of stress in speech helps us both deliver and understand meaning and it is closely linked with intonation. Within utterances we emphasise tonic syllables to highlight new information. A simple sentence like "I love you" may carry up to three different meanings, depending on the stress:

I love you (it's **me**, there's someone who loves you!)

I **love** you (and I want you to know this)

I love **you** (and I don't love John, Peter or any other)

## **c) INTONATION**

It is defined as the use of pitch variation in phrases and sentences to signal such things as speaker attitudes, sentence type (e.g. statement versus question), and information structure. Intonation is different to word stress or rhythm, in that it does not signal differences of word meaning, but contributes to the interpretation of utterances. Intonation is often at an unconscious level; we perceive it, understand it and use it without examining it. Intonation does not only help to determine meaning, but also gives clues about the speakers' attitude or feelings. Primary schoolchildren should practice intonation patterns for a better understanding and expressiveness when communicating in the English language. However, the teaching of intonation is not an easy task; not only because of its "unconscious" element, but also because of its connection with grammar, pragmatics and discourse.

### 2.3. VERBAL INTERACTIONS

There are two major types of verbal communication within classroom interaction: student-to-student and teacher-to-student. Student-to-student interaction is based on peer relationships, which allows the maximum degree of communication. On the other hand, teacher-to-student relationship is based on superior knowledge and authority. The teacher is a language expert; however, the teacher's superiority does not prohibit effective interaction provided that there is the will to communicate naturally with the student.

**Student-to-student interactions** develop speaking fluency and the use of communication strategies. In pairs or groupwork, there is a chance for everyone to use the language and feel involved; learners feel more secure and help each other, sharing ideas and knowledge. The learning activities may be really varied, from dialogues to conversations, drama or information-gathering.

Interactions among students at the early steps of foreign language acquisition are still dominated by their incipient knowledge of the target language system and its resources. In addition, the age of the students is a key factor to be accounted for, as their knowledge about the world around is limited. Therefore, the language and the topics around any interaction among students must be carefully planned and correspond to the learners' background knowledge and experiences. However, teachers should also provide pupils opportunities to use the language among themselves as much as possible: greetings, congratulations, thanking formulas or simple requests may be easily internalized by students and used in class almost from the very beginning. Although yet inappropriate or inaccurate, student-to-student interaction promotes language acquisition.

Since dialogue represents the most common form of oral communication, it may be fairly used in communicative activities within the classroom. Activities based on dialogues may take different forms, such as dialogues with visual aids or directed dialogues. Within the first stages of foreign language acquisition, dialogues should always be based on a model, as the learners' production competence is still quite limited. Poetry and drama activities are also rich vehicles for encouraging students play and learn language in a personal way. So do information-gathering activities, like interviews or guessing games.

Teacher should also promote student-to-student interaction using the written code once they have mastered a bit on it. Collective writing or note-leaving are two of the techniques we can use in the EFL classroom.

**Teacher-to-student interaction** is, of course, basic in the EFL classroom. Teacher-students conversation is asymmetrical; for example, pupils do not give directions to their teachers or elicit words from them. EFL teachers adjust their language to the learners's level by

simplificating their discourse, a strategy that is also used by native speakers when talking to children and foreigners. In addition, **teacher talk** has its own features, which have been the object of several studies within the field sociolinguistics. Research shows that:

- Classroom language is mainly dominated by the teacher, who selects the topics and decides how they will be discussed. The teacher often controls the turn-taking, the beginnings and endings of the conversations, too.
- Teachers use special frames, regularly and very often, to pass from one verbal transaction to another. The favourite frame used by teachers is “now”. These frames form a closed set (well, okay, right, look, now, all right) and they are followed by a pause. The frames indicate different meanings. For example, “well” can mean okay, agreement, or a request. They give learners clues to the structure of the discourse and refer to the different aspects of teaching –content, organization and discipline.
- Non verbal elements like hand gestures or glances are complementary features in classroom discourse.

Surely, the most extended type of verbal interaction among teacher and students includes **questions** for many different purposes: eliciting, language practice or raising awareness, for example. There is also quite a lot of giving **directions** on part of the teacher mainly to organize activities, to show how to do a task or to keep discipline in classrooms.

Following a communicative approach to language teaching will mean increasing both the amount and the quality of verbal interaction in the EFL class on part of the learners.

## **2.4. VERBAL STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES.**

### **a) Cooperative speaking-based strategies.**

When students are put into groups where they can talk freely, they can bring aspects of their background, potentially leading to more understanding among the members within a group. Students also learn to interact with a group of people that they may not generally work and can engage in conversation even if it is outside of their comfort zone.

An example is gamification.

Some examples of gamification:

- Rezzly.

Teachers can customize quests and achievements to motivate their students to learn. By doing these quests, students are capable of mastering different skills and subjects.

- PlayBrighter.

It allows teachers to create a game environment in class. Students can answer multiple-choice tests and when answered correctly, they will be awarded with virtual money to improve their avatar.

### **b) Strategies to foster speaking inductively.**

Too often, teachers follow the basic lesson plan: engage or prepare, next study and finally practice. However, the most important stage, free production, almost never happens. So why not turn your lesson plan upside down?

An example is flipped classroom.

### **c) Activities for pronunciation.**

*For accuracy*

- Talkit.

It is a TTS app. If you type in text and click on "Talkit" you can hear words or phrases pronounced in different ways.

- SitePal.

It works as the previous one. You can choose the speakers' gender and nationality.

- Vocaroo.

This is a voice recorder available on line. Once the audio is recorded, it can be downloaded as an MP3 player.

- Voki.

This website offers talking avatars and you can also record your voice. It is a good tool to listen to texts read aloud with different avatars and it can be used to record your voice to practice pronunciation and reading aloud.

*For fluency.*

- Voice Thread.

It is for older students. It is a site and an app that allows kids to create and share dynamic conversation about images, diagrams and videos. Kids upload content already saved to a device and then create audio / video comments reacting to each.

- Peek-a-Zoo.

It is for younger students. It is a question-based app that helps to link sounds and visual cues with vocabulary. Who is yelling? Who is sad? It also encourages young students to analyse the animals for clues to answer questions and come to an easy conclusion.

Thanks to these apps, the digital competence is put in practice.

### **3. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN EFL CLASSROOMS**

The use of non-verbal resources is one of the defining characteristics of the oral language. It is the way people reinforce the spoken messages, or even it replaces the spoken word by using the body to make visual signs. Non-verbal communication helps us to manage our social relationships and, broadly speaking, it helps to present the self that we want others to see – social status, group membership, personality (appearance). We can suggest that non-verbal communication serves three main **functions** in oral interactions:

- Speakers and hearers convey their mood and interpersonal feelings.
- Supports the verbal message and
- Provides feedback.

Nonverbal communication has received much attention in the areas social psychology, business presentation, sales and marketing. In this sense, it can be analysed as an area of study by itself. However, as we pointed above, non-verbal signs constitute a part of the language and intervenes in the communicative act as one of the elements that form the context and the shared knowledge. One of the most significant characteristics of this paralinguistic phenomenon is that, as language itself, it is **culturally-dependant**. Every language (or culture) has its own non-verbal resources to communicate different meanings. It is well known, for example, that the speaker of Greek will throw his head back to show disagreement or dissent, instead of moving it from side to side. Therefore, non-verbal communicative strategies are not always transferable from the L1 to the L2. In the first place, like speech, non-verbal communication has both form and function, and, secondly, it is not always directly translatable. It is the first of these factors which makes nonverbal communication difficult to teach, and the second which leads to breakdowns and misunderstandings in intercultural communication.

When analysing non-verbal communication, we see that it can be conscious or voluntary sometimes, but, quite often, it is involuntary or **unconscious**. Hearers or speakers use body language to show they are shocked, embarrassed or amused, for example, in an unconscious way. On the other hand, we can also use non-verbal reactions in a more conscious manner as to reinforce a message or to attract somebody's attention.

Non-verbal communication includes three main areas.

- a) **Kinesics**
- b) **Proxemics.**
- c) **Paralinguistics.**

#### a) **Kinesics.**

Kinesics refers to the use of body movements and gestures. In fact, gestures are part of the human nonverbal communication system. Sometimes, they are referred to as "the silent language". Apart from gestures, body movements and postures are considered effective means of communication that enliven interactions. That is probably why a telephone conversation is much more difficult to hold than a normal face-to-face conversation. In the first one the interlocutors have access only to verbal language. This obliges them to make more effort to transmit their messages and to check whether their addressee received their own. In a face-to-face conversation, however, interlocutors have access to a wide range of means of communication, including gestures and body movements.

Formally speaking, kinesics includes, therefore, gestures and body movements and postures. However, we will also look at eye contact and facial expression since the four of these elements play an important role in the process of language teaching and learning.

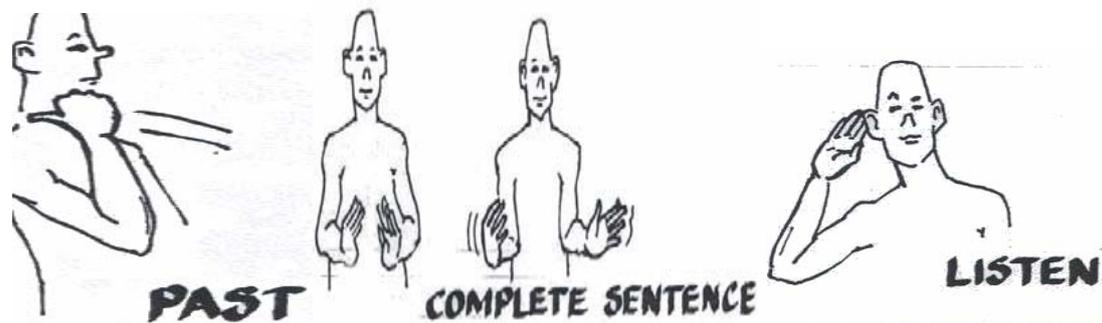
#### a) **Gestures and body movements**

Gestures are important in human communication in that they animate conversations, clarify misunderstandings, and express feelings deeply. Roger E. Axtell (1998, p4) classifies gestures into three main categories: Instinctive, Coded, and Acquired.

**Instinctive gestures** are the kind of gestures that we perform almost unconsciously. For example when a person crosses his/her arms, this is usually a sign of defensiveness. People also tend to slap the back of their heads unconsciously when they are suddenly surprised or shocked. This category of gestures is more universal than any of the other categories.

**Coded or technical gestures** are more specialized gestures. They are agreed upon by groups of individuals sharing the same activity. Examples of these are hand signals used by football referees, film makers, stock brokers, and airport attendants. These gestures are often used and understood only by exclusive groups of individuals. They can be compared to jargon or specialized vocabulary in verbal

language. For example, it is not uncommon that in the English classrooms teacher and students soon agree on a set of hand gestures which helps student's self-correction, or conversation flowing.



**Acquired gestures** are socially generated gestures. They differentiate societies and communities. The origin of these gestures is quite difficult to trace. Examples are the "O.K" sign, the hand wave as in Hello or Goodbye. Just like language, the relationship between these gestures and their meaning is usually arbitrary. These gestures tend to outnumber the other categories.

FORM	FUNCTION (in English cultures)
Nod (yes)	Repeating
Shrug (I don't know)	Substituting
Hand raised	Regulating turn-taking
Head shake	Contradicting

It seems, therefore, that differences between one's own culture gestures and the second culture ones is a major source of misunderstandings as the following pictures show.

<b>Perfect</b>	<b>Thumbs up</b>	<b>Stop</b>	<b>The 'fig'</b>
Commonly – everything's all right perfect France – worthless Japan – money Germany – rude Malta, Greece, Brazil – obscene	Commonly – all OK Australia, Iran – rude Nigeria – very offensive Japan – five Turkey – political rightist party	Commonly – stop, enough (person, car, action) Turkey – You get nothing from me W Africa – You have 5 fathers!	Turkey, Greece, Tunisia, Holland – obscene Russia – you get nothing from me Yugoslavia – you can't have it Brazil – good luck

**Figura 1.** DARN, S. (2005). Aspects of non-verbal communication. The Internet TESL Journal, vol. XI, nº 2, February

**b) In relation to postures,** they also convey several meanings which change, not only across different cultures but also in a given culture across time or gender. For example, some decades ago it was not socially acceptable for Spanish women to sit with their legs crossed at the ankles. As it was mentioned before, postures and body movements also convey meaning and function as a whole with the verbal language system in oral communication. We almost unconsciously sit forward to show keen interest in a conversation, or teachers standing erect, but not rigid, and leaning forwards, are more open and approachable than the ones who stand rigid and cross their arms.

Gestures, expressions and all other forms of nonverbal communication have functions, which, as with language, need to be taught along with their forms. In the same way as language items, some paralinguistic expressions have several functions, while nonverbal communication in general performs the three basic functions of managing identity, defining relationships, and conveying attitudes and feelings (but not ideas). At the time of talking of oral discourse, and according to Gregersen and other scholars, there are **four types of gestures** important for **effective communication**: illustrators, regulators, emblems, and affect displays.

- Those behaviours that complement or accentuate the verbal message are called **illustrators**. For most individuals, these are the natural hand and body gestures that accompany speech, such as gesturing, smiling, frowning, or pointing to illustrate a point. These nonverbal cues convey the same meaning as the verbal message, and either complete or supplement it. For an English language learner, these greatly aid in understanding a speaker's message as they supply extra context clues for determining the meaning of an utterance. When asking for directions to a particular location, the speaker will most likely point in the appropriate direction as the verbal message is communicated.
- Body language cues that serve to control turn-taking and other procedural aspects of interpersonal communication are called **regulators**. As turn-taking is one of the fundamental organizations of conversation and interaction patterns, it plays a key role in the process through which participants interpret each others' meanings and intentions. A practical requisite of every conversation is the determination of who speaks when, and this is usually done unconsciously and quite smoothly because of regulators like the termination of a gesture, changes in gaze direction, or the speakers' looking away from the hearer as an utterance ends. Turn-taking in conversations is guided by transition signals. The signals that end an L1 English speaker's contribution might not be recognized by non-native speakers which may result in unwanted interruptions in communication and confusion among language learners, thus affecting their participation in a conversation.
- **Emblems** are nonverbal behaviours that can be translated into words and that are used intentionally to transmit a message. Because these gestures can substitute words, their meaning is widely understood within a culture. The meaning of these emblems, however, can be quite different in another country. English language learners must learn the meaning of the emblems just as surely as they learn the new vocabulary of spoken English.
- Finally, **affect displays** are another type of body language necessary for language learners to process. These are behaviours that express emotion. Most commonly, these displays are communicated through facial expression, like smiling, laughing or crying. Posture is also a conduit through which emotion can be communicated. The norms for expressing emotion differ among cultures. Miscommunication of emotional states can result when affect displays (or lack thereof) are not understood in cross-cultural interactions.

### c) Eye contact

The eyes are important organs in the human body, not only for sight but for communication as well. Due to their communicative importance, the eyes are sometimes referred to as “mirrors of the soul”. In addition to that, many myths have been knitted around the human eyes to show their power.

The eyes converse as much as the tongue; and when there is a conflict between what a person’s tongue and eyes say, it is always the eyes which are trusted. Through the eyes, people can communicate fear, joy, and anger. It is amazing how humans communicate with their eyes. Whereas people in some cultures teach their children to avoid looking directly in adults’ eyes as a sign of respect, others keep telling them “look me in the eyes, son!”, During a conversation, the messages of the eyes might sometimes be misleading, that is why the general context of the conversation and the accompanying gestures should be taken into consideration.

In general, when two people get involved in a conversation, they look at each other or to a third person, if there is any. Eye contact, in this sense, plays the role of **turn organizer**. The speaker usually looks at his interlocutor in the eyes when he wants to stop or when he wants him to take the next turn. However, it happens that the speaker averts his eyes when he wants to talk longer or when he feels that his talk is unclear. In addition, the listener tends to look at the speaker’s eyes when he speaks fluently, and he avoids his eyes when the latter stammers. A good use of eye contact is often necessary for some professionals, such as TV presenters, animator, actors, and teachers. When we look at the speaker’s eyes, we usually communicate interest in what he or she says. Avoiding eye contact, on the other hand, might be a sign of boredom or embarrassment. Nevertheless, this should not be taken as a general rule, especially when communication takes place among multicultural participants who are not fully competent in the language used.

Knapp and Hall (2006) define five functions of gazing: Regulating the flow of conversation, monitoring feedback, reflecting cognitive activity, expressing emotion, and communicating the nature of interpersonal relationship. Like all of the other kinesic behavior already discussed, all of the functions of gazing behavior contextualize the verbal message and aid in understanding the spoken word.

First of all, **the flow of conversation** is regulated through visual contact in two ways: it indicates that the interlocutors are open to communication, and it manages turn-taking by sending and receiving signals. Individuals who seek visual contact with another are signalling that they want to engage in communication, and those who obviously avoid eye contact are sending the opposite message. In terms of turn-taking, listeners look more at their interlocutors than speakers do. Speakers who do not want to give up their turn considerably reduce eye contact with their listener; whereas, listeners who want the speaker to continue usually seek greater visual connection. When speakers are willing to yield their turns, they usually indicate this by turning their head towards the other participant and increasing eye contact.

Another function of gaze behaviour is **monitoring feedback**. When speakers gaze in the direction of their listeners, they are seeking visual confirmation that the person is actually listening, as

well as try to get feedback on what is being said. In many cultures, listeners who do not make eye contact with their interlocutor will be perceived by their conversation partner as not being attentive. Language learners who are not familiar with the cultural codes of eye behaviour in Western countries and divert their gaze for other reasons dictated by their L1 culture (such as showing respect for authority, for example) may find themselves sending the wrong message both in the classroom and outside that they do not want to participate in a conversation.

Eye contact also signals **cognitive activity**. When one of the interactants looks away during a conversation, it may be due to complex information processing. There is a shift in attention from the external conversation to internal cognition.

**Expressing emotion** is another function of eye behaviour. Since individuals have less control over the eyes than other parts of the face, the eyes will more accurately reflect what people are truly feeling. For example, FL learners who are feeling anxious tend to maintain less eye contact with the teacher than those whose FL anxiety is low.

Eye contact can serve as a means to communicate the nature of **interpersonal relations**; that is to say, it shows the relationship between the speaker and the listener and their social status. Research has proved that when the interlocutors belong to different statuses, it is often the one who has a lower status who looks at the other. The person with the high status does not look at his inferior interlocutor when he himself talks or listens. Conversely, direct eye contact can also show dominance as in the case of adult-child interaction. Eye contact can also have negative consequences when it is persistent, or when it is directed to a stranger or to a person of the opposite sex. The present situation may cause embarrassment or may even provoke a violent reaction.

#### **d) Facial expressions**

Facial expressions are essential means of communication, not only within the same community, but throughout the whole world. The basic expressions are the primary facial expressions that all humans, including very young children can produce. These can be either positive expressions, like tenderness, curiosity, and frankness; negative expressions like anger, disgust, and terror; or mixed expressions such as astonishment, impatience, and submission. In fact, some facial expressions which express basic emotions are innate universal: happiness, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, and surprise.

According to Gregersen, the face is a primary means of managing interaction, complementing a response, and replacing speech. Through facial expression, we can **open and close channels of communication**. For example, in turn-taking, interlocutors will open their mouths in anticipation of their words, signaling readiness. Smiles and flashes of the brow are used in greetings, and although the smile is usually perceived in the communication of happiness, it is also associated with signaling attentiveness and involvement in the conversation, similar to the head nod, facilitating and encouraging the interlocutor to continue.

The face also **complements or qualifies a message**. When as a speaker or a listener we want to emphasize, diminish or support the spoken word, a flick of the eyebrow or the lips curling into a smile may temper an otherwise negative message. In terms of **replacing speech**, the face can function similarly to the emblem gesture where there is a general understanding of what the display means. The conspiratorial wink of the eye, the wrinkling of the nose in disgust, or the eyebrows meeting in the middle communicating “what?” are all facial displays that replace a spoken word and will usually be interpreted consistently and correctly.

In short and as Gregersen puts it, the main values of nonverbal communication in the discourse are those of substitution, complementation, accent, regulation and contradiction. Substitution of a nonverbal message occurs when we use a nonverbal cue instead of a verbal one as when a language teacher gives the thumbs up signal to a student for using the correct verb tense. A nonverbal message complements the spoken word when it completes or supplements it as is the case when the words, “good job” are accompanied by the teacher’s smile in praising students’ group work. Accenting occurs when the speaker stresses a specific word in the message. An emphasis on the word, small in the sentence, “Please put yourselves into *small* groups for the next language activity,” indicates to the learners that less than four or five students per group is indicated. Nonverbal messages also regulate conversational flow as is the case with the teacher who nods her head as a student is speaking to encourage more talk, or the learner who is working in a group and who leans forward and inhales, signaling that he would like his turn to speak. Lastly, nonverbal cues contradict spoken messages when the verbal and nonverbal interpretations of the message are at odds with each other, as exemplified by the language learner who says, “I love grammar, Dr. Gregersen!” but whose voice makes me believe it is the last thing they would want to be spending their time on.

### **b) Proxemics.**

The term Proxemics was first coined by Edward T. Hall (1959). It usually refers to the way humans manage **space** during interaction. The way people stand from their interlocutor conveys something about their personality, attitude and relationship with the interlocutor. Moreover, the sense of territoriality that humans instinctively entertain does have an impact on the way they communicate.

Hall suggests that Proxemics is the hidden dimension of human culture which we practise unconsciously all the time. He argues that it is impossible for man to divest himself of his own culture. Culture has penetrated to the roots of man's nervous system and it determines how he perceives the world. Hall argues that by examining proxemic patterns we will be able to reveal hidden cultural frames that determine the structure of a given people's perceptual world. Proxemics research looks for patterned distinctions while studying individual differences and it aims to identify the role of proxemic behaviour as an unconscious behavior. Being built into the language, these features are hard for the speakers to consciously manipulate. Likewise proxemic behaviour, born of culture and built into social matrix, is an unconscious behavior, and is hard to manipulate consciously.

Based on observation of human beings in social situations, Hall (1969) classifies the distances maintained by humans, first, into two main areas: personal space and territoriality.

### a) Personal space

Humans manage space during an interaction according to different variables that range from the social status of the interlocutor to the nature of the interaction itself. The personal space is not a fixed or static zone. It is often compared to “an invisible bubble” that surrounds the individual and moves with him or her. This bubble gets smaller or bigger depending on different variables such as gender, age, and the degree of intimacy with the interlocutor. People usually like to stand closer to someone they like or they know well, whereas someone they do not know or they do not like is kept at a further distance. People tend to secure their personal space using all means. They can sit far apart of the others in a meeting or they sometimes use objects, like chairs and tables, as a barrier to prevent any intrusion or violation of their personal space. When personal space is violated, people react differently. Their reaction may vary from withdrawing from the place to verbal or even physical violence. The personal space can also differ according to the place in which the individual is located: a lift, a restaurant, home, an office, or a park. Based on observation of human beings in social situations, Hall (1969) classifies the distances maintained by humans into intimate, personal, social and public distances. Space can also be analyzed in terms of horizontal distance and vertical distance. The first category denotes the type of distance at which people stand from their interlocutors.

- *Intimate distance*: ranges from actual touching to eighteen inches. This zone is reserved for very intimate interactions. At this distance the physical presence of the interlocutor is overwhelming: we can smell, feel the heat of the other, for example.
- *Personal distance*: from eighteen inches to four feet. This is the distance of interaction of good friends. This would also seem to be a most appropriate distance for teacher and student to discuss personal affairs such as grades, conduct, private problems, etc.
- *Social distance*: from four to twelve feet. It seems to be an appropriate distance for casual friends and acquaintances to interact. It is the usual distance at which the individual communicates with people met for the first time. In the social distance, intimate visual details in the face are not perceived, intimate nobody touches or expects to touch another person unless there is some special effort. The boundary line between the far phase of personal distance and the close phase of social distance marks the limit of domination. People who work together tend to use close social distance. It is also a very common distance for people who are attending a casual social gathering. Impersonal business occurs at this distance.
- *Public distance*: from ten feet and beyond. This distance is used in very formal interactions. It is also often used in public gatherings and lectures.

Though these zones are reported to be the convention of interaction in North America, other western cultures manage space in quite a similar way. People in other cultures tend to manage space differently. Arabs or Spanish, for example, are known to favour dealing with people at a closer distance even if they are met for the first time than British or North Americans.

The second category of personal space concerns *vertical space*. It refers, basically, to how a person is elevated. It is used to show dominance in the relationship between the individual and his or her interlocutor. This can be noticed in courtrooms, classrooms, and houses of parliament. The more the individual is raised, the more authority he or she is supposed to exert.

### **b) Territoriality**

One of the most shared aspects between human beings and animals is the instinct to secure space for oneself and to defend that space against potential intruders. Scientific research on how humans communicate in private and public spaces began with studies of animal behavior (ethology) and territoriality in the 19th and early 20th centuries. People's sense of territoriality becomes evident in certain places like an elevator, an office, a parking lot, or even a library. The experience of using the lift is, in fact, more interesting of all. Researchers in the domain noticed that when there is only one person or two in an elevator, they usually lean against the walls of the elevator. If there are four people, they occupy the four corners of the elevator. However, if there are five or six people, they all turn to face the door and stand tall and thin. It is almost like a ritual or a dance (Axtell, 1998 p6). In a restaurant, corner tables and wall tables are occupied first and then tables in the middle. Another instinctive behaviour is that after coming back home – usually after hours of absence – people tend to wander all around the house as if looking for intruders who might violate their domain.

People in some cultures have a stronger sense of territoriality than others. Thus, Americans are known more for the use of fences around their houses. The sense of territoriality is manifested by the individual but it can take a national aspect. This is reflected in the fact that most countries have border conflicts and sometimes fail to reach a compromise.

At the time of looking at the EFL classroom, we can analyze how Proxemics among students and between the teacher and the students may vary through a lesson and be used to facilitate interaction or to manage discipline, for example. Students, in general, like to sit close to each other to help each other, or exchange comments and jokes. This is probably why some teachers, as a kind of punishment, ask disruptive students to sit alone. More important is the way distance is managed between students and the teacher as it also reflects the role of the teacher in the classroom. The teacher, in communicative language teaching is a kind of monitor and guide. The change of the role of the teacher necessitates a change in his/her 'proxemic' position in the classroom. In the traditional classroom, where the teacher was considered the unique source of knowledge, he/she sits or stands at the head of the classroom and delivers his 'lecture'. But the new roles that the teacher acquired necessitate that he/she should move around the classroom to help individual students and answer their needs. From this came the concept of '*teacher visibility*' in the classroom, which is a major practice and requirement. Not less important is '*class coverage*' which means that the teacher should cover and know all that happens in the classroom. These two aspects of classroom management can be achieved through a good use of Proxemics. The most important remark here is that, according to research, students usually like the teacher to be within reach but not too close to them.

As a way of conclusion to this chapter, it can be mentioned that in the EFL classroom there are several techniques, communicative activities and procedures which facilitate learners' awareness of Kinesics and Proxemics issues in addition to favour bound verbal and nonverbal communication as a single act which sometimes varies across cultures:

- One of the most extended activities in classrooms is pantomimes, a scene in body language which can be used to elicit oral or written language.
- Techniques from the Total Physical Response method or from the Silent Way are also quite used in many EFL lessons, as well as the use of cuisenaire rods, colours and charts.
- Other techniques include the discussion of the meaning of gestures and expressions after the watching of a video clip without sound; or the acting out of a dialogue using gesture and expression only. The following sample dialogue is taken from Darn:

- 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.

### c) **Paralinguistics.**

*Paralinguistics* is the study of vocal (and sometimes non-vocal) signals beyond the basic verbal [message](#) or [speech](#). Also known as *vocalics*.

Paralinguistics, says Shirley Weitz, "sets great store on *how* something is said, not on *what* is said" (*Nonverbal Communication*, 1974).

Paralinguistics studies the following elements:

- 1) Volume of voice.
- 2) Speed of voice.
- 3) Intonation.
- 4) Tone of voice.

- 5) Pronunciation.
- 6) Articulation.
- 7) Pause.
- 8) Punctuation marks.
- 9) Forms of paralinguistic respiration.

1) Volume of voice.

It is not just what you say, it is how to say it. When one whispers something, it implies one wants to hide something. When speaking aloud, it means one wants to be heard by all.

2) Speed of voice.

The speed of voice should be such that the listener can follow everything that is said.

3) Intonation.

Stress and intonation blend together to lend charm to English speech.

It tells the listener if the message is in form of a question, statement or exclamation.

4) Tone of voice.

It has to do with the attitude of the speaker. The tone can be sarcastic, aggressive, critical, friendly...

5) Pronunciation.

It is the first thing that people notice during the conversation. For correct pronunciation, knowledge of phonetics is essential.

6) Articulation.

It refers to the clarity in one's voice. Clearly articulated message indicates competence and confidence.

7) Pause.

The break a person takes while speaking and its duration is known as pause. A pause shows hesitation, tension, agreement or disagreement.

8) Punctuation marks.

They are very helpful in written form. Appropriate use of punctuation marks brings clarity to the content and prevents confusion.

## 9) Forms of paralinguistic respiration.

Some examples are: gasps (they occur from a shock, disgust or surprise), sighs (they often arises from a negative emotion), a throat-clear (it shows disapproval).

On the one hand, the functions of non-verbal signs vary from culture to culture, although there are some universal nonverbals such as smiles, laughter and sour expressions. There are also differences according to gender and age. On the other hand, nonverbal communication tends to be relatively ambiguous and open to interpretation, but it is an essential part of the 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).

Since the interpretation of non verbal communication depends on the culture is necessary to mention the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR). According to the CEFR, a speaker must develop linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences, each of which are interrelated and comprise knowledge, skills and know-how (strategies and attitudes):

“Sociolinguistic competences refer to the socio-cultural conditions of language use. Through its sensitivity to social conventions (rules of politeness, norms governing relations between generations, sexes, classes and social groups, linguistic codification of certain fundamental rituals in the functioning of a community), the sociolinguistic component strictly affects all language communication between representatives of different cultures, even though participants may often be unaware of its influence”.

The document then goes on exemplifying some of those socio-cultural conditions of **language use**. For example, the following features of the cultures (and languages) can be mentioned:

- Every day living (meal times, table manners, leisure activities, public holidays, working hours...)
- Interpersonal relations (family structures and relations, relations of power and solidarity...)
- Values, beliefs and attitudes (in relation to tradition, humour, arts, religion...)
- Social conventions (punctuality, presents, meals...)

- Ritual behavior (in birth and death, festivals, discos...)
- Body language.

Non verbal communication is also present in the official framework, which sets its importance in the communication process. RD 126 /2014, 28<sup>th</sup> February, which establishes the basic curriculum for Primary Education, in the heading “Understanding oral texts”, in Contents (strategies for understanding), where non verbal communication is required to be taught along with verbal communication. Likewise, Decree 89 / 2014, 24<sup>th</sup> July, which establishes the curriculum in Madrid (*MENTION THE CURRICULUM OF YOUR COMMUNITY*) in third course, block of content “Oral expression”, non verbal communication is included. And finally, in order to develop the key competence “Linguistic competence” non verbal communication undoubtedly play a remarkable role to deal with language diversity in different contexts.

#### **4. EXTRALINGUISTIC STRATEGIES: NON-VERBAL REACTIONS TO MESSAGES IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS**

Nonverbal and verbal communication are normally inseparable, and, therefore, both need to be taught and practised situationally, in the right contexts, and with plenty of cultural input and awareness.

An important aspect in the use of non-verbal codes within the EFL classrooms is that they have to be shared by teachers and learners. Non-verbal strategies fairly used by EFL teachers respond to what is generally accepted as **classroom language**. They constitute an efficient and quick system of gestures to deal with aspects of classroom management. Gestures for 'work in pairs', 'open your books', 'listen' and 'write' are universal, while individual teachers have developed nonverbal repertoires involving systems for instruction (for example, the use of fingers to represent words), correction (gestures to indicate time, tense and other linguistic features), and management.

As Darn points out, the effective use of nonverbal cues assists in a wide range of classroom practices by adding an extra dimension to the language:

- Reducing unnecessary teacher talking time.
- Increasing learner participation.
- Confidence building.
- Reducing fear of silence.
- Clear instructions.
- Efficient classroom management.
- Classroom atmosphere.

- Improving listening skills.
- Improving performance in pair and group activities.
- Self and peer correction.
- Avoiding misunderstandings.
- Improving intercultural competences.

The following paragraphs will show how non-verbal strategies are used by learners to send and react to messages which will also help them in the development of their communicative competence. According to Ellis, **communication strategies** are “psycholinguistic plans which exist as part of the language user’s communicative competence. They are potentially conscious and serve as substitutes for production plans which the learner is unable to implement.” (Ellis, 1985; p.185). Many of the communication strategies are verbal, but some of them include the use of extra-linguistic devices. These communication tools used by speakers in order to cope with difficulties in communicating in the foreign language are problem-oriented, and look for a short-term answer. Most of the non-verbal strategies used by primary school EFL learners will be compensating strategies and they will be used when participating as speakers and as hearers, too.

From the earliest stages of FLA, learners may use non-verbal devices to **express messages and show their understanding of messages**:

- By physically responding to orders (“Sit down, stand up), directions (“Go to the blackboard and take a piece of chalk”), requests (“Can you close the door, please?”), questions (“How many boys are there?) or words of a song (“You put your right foot in/ you put your out/ you put your right foot in/ and you shake it all about/...”).
- By pointing to objects and drawings (“Which one is red?”, “Can you see the flowers?”).
- By sequencing or ordering elements (from oral narratives or dialogues, for example).
- By drawing (“The alien has a very big head and three eyes”).

In addition, EFL learners employ non-verbal strategies when they are **interacting** with others and maintaining conversations, for example by using gestures to ask for repetition or clarification, or to show they do not agree, or they do not know an answer, etcetera.

Finally, there are communicative activities which are based on the use of non-verbal devices and **techniques** in the EFL setting and which are part of the classroom procedures:

- One of the most extended activities in classrooms is pantomimes, a scene in body language which can be used to elicit oral or written language.
- Techniques from the Total Physical Response method or from the Silent Way are also quite used in many EFL lessons, such as the use of cuisenaire rods, colours and charts.
- Other techniques include the discussion of the meaning of gestures and expressions after the watching of a video clip without sound; or the acting out of a dialogue using gesture and expression only. The following sample dialogue is taken from Darn:

- A: Excuse me. Can you take a picture of me?
- B: Yeah, sure.
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- 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.

In spite of non-verbal communication being an indivisible element of oral language, the teaching of a foreign language must promote the acquisition of the communicative competence in verbal communication, in its oral and written forms. Therefore, learners will progressively be led to make use of their linguistic resources, as body language and non-verbal communication do not domain human interaction, except in specific cases such as in the language of signs among deaf- mute people. Teachers should also be aware that target cultural aspects are a part of the communicative competence in a language, and the transferability or not of those culture-bound features need to be raised and taught.

### 3.1. Activities and Strategies.

Having discussed some of the main features and purposes of nonverbal communication, the following paragraphs will offer some related activities and strategies suggested by the CEFR (chapter 4, p. 88-90), which already signal some of the meanings and discourse values they convey.

A) **Practical actions** accompanying language activities (normally face-to-face oral activities) include:

- **Pointing**, e.g. by finger, hand, glance, nod. These actions are used with deictics for the identification of objects, persons, etc., such as, ‘Can I have that one? No, not that one, that one’;
- **Demonstration**, accompanying deictics and simple present verbs and proverbs, such as, ‘I take this and fix it here, like this. Now you do the same!’;
- **Clearly observable actions**, which can be assumed as known in narrative, comment, orders, etc., such as, ‘Don’t do that!’, ‘Well done there!’, ‘Oh no, he’s dropped it!’. In all these cases, the utterance is uninterpretable unless the action is perceived.

B) **Paralinguistics** includes:

– **Body language**. Paralinguistic body language differs from practical actions accompanied by language in that it carries conventionalized meanings, which may well differ from one culture to another. For example, the following are used in many European countries:

- gesture (e.g. shaken fist for ‘protest’);
- facial expression (e.g. smile or scowl);
- posture (e.g. slump for ‘despair’ or sitting forward for ‘keen interest’);
- eye contact (e.g. a conspiratorial wink or a disbelieving stare);
- body contact (e.g. kiss or handshake);
- proxemics (e.g. standing close or aloof).

– **Use of extra-linguistic speech-sounds**. Such sounds (or syllables) are paralinguistic in that they carry conventionalized meanings but lie outside the regular phonological system of a language, for example, (in English):

- ‘sh’ requesting silence

- ‘s-s-s’ expressing public disapproval
- ‘ugh’ expressing disgust
- ‘humph’ expressing disgruntlement
- ‘tut, tut’ expressing polite disapproval

– **Prosodic qualities.** The use of these qualities is paralinguistic if they carry conventionalized meanings (e.g. related to attitudes and states of mind), but fall outside the regular phonological system in which prosodic features of length, tone, stress may play a part, for example:

- voice quality (gruff, breathy, piercing, etc.)
- pitch (growling, whining, screaming, etc.)
- loudness (whispering, murmuring, shouting, etc.)
- length (e.g. ve-e-e-ery good!)

Many paralinguistic effects are produced by combinations of pitch, length, loudness and voice quality.

It goes without saying, therefore, that from the earliest stages of FLA, learners may use non-verbal devices to express and show their understanding of messages:

- By physically responding to orders (“Sit down, stand up); directions (“Go to the blackboard and take a piece of chalk”); requests (“Can you close the door, please?”); questions (“How many boys are there?); or words of a song (“You put your right foot in/ you put your out/ you put your right foot in/ and you shake it all about/...”).
- By pointing to objects and drawings (“Which one is red?”, “where are the flowers?”)
- By sequencing or ordering elements (from oral narratives or dialogues, for example)
- By drawing (“The alien has a very big head and three eyes”).

In addition, EFL learners employ non-verbal strategies when they are interacting with others and maintaining conversations, for example by using gestures to ask for repetition or clarification, or to show they do not agree, or they do not know an answer, etcetera.

As it has been just pointed, nonverbal communication is as large, complicated, and articulated as language. That is one of the reasons why it is difficult to categorize the main components of this system. For the sake of clarity, a tentative classification of the major components of nonverbal communication is presented in the following figure. It is adapted from Steven Darn’s (Internet TESL Journal, 2005) classification.

Component	Description
Kinesics	Body movements and gestures
Proxemics	Space management in relation to social and physical environment
Haptics	Use of touch
Oculesics	Use of eye contact
Vocalics	Tone, pitch, timber, volume, and speed of the voice
Facial Expressions	Gestures produced by the muscles of the face
Posture	The position and orientation of the body
Olfactics	Use of smell
Silence	Absence of linguistic words or forms
Adornment	Clothes, jewelry, and hairstyle
Chronemics	Time management

**Table 1.** Components of nonverbal communication

## **SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- Both listeners and speakers use non-verbal resources to communicate their purpose many of which are unconscious or cultural-bound. Either linguistic or non-linguistic, we use signs to express and interpret meanings.
- In the context of EFL classrooms, non-verbal communication is one of the first ways of expressing and understanding messages, as it is also in native speakers children.

### **2. VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS**

#### **2.1. Verbal communication**

- Language: a ruled system of signs that are combined to transmit a messages.
- Main **features of a human language**:
  - Arbitrariness: there is not a link between the linguistic signs and the reality to which they refer to.
  - Feedback: speakers (and writers) can reflect upon everything they say; basic to maintaining a conversation.
  - Traditional transmission: language is acquired by a long and complex learning process, innate to human beings and developed in society.
  - Productivity: human language is essentially creative.
  - Structure dependence: the language elements are related to each other and language operations depend on an internal understanding of its system and structure.

- Language is influenced by several **psychological factors**: desire to communicate; comprehension as well as expression; personality factors and limitations of expression.

## 2.2. Prosodic elements

Stress, rhythm and intonation are the three prosodic elements that form the phonological system of a language.

**Stress** refers to the relative prominence of syllables; it is about the force, in terms of air pressure, with which a sound or syllable is uttered.

**Rhythm** is about the relative pattern of the stresses, which are perceived as peak of prominence at more or less regular intervals of time.

**Intonation** is related to the melody of every language; to the sequence of stressed and unstressed syllables.

### a) **STRESS**

It is usual to distinguish between

#### 1. **Word stress**

In English the difference between stressed and unstressed syllables is stronger than in Spanish, this being one of the reasons why Spanish speakers usually sound flat when speaking in English

#### 2. **Sentence stress**

English is a stress-timed language. This means that stress in a spoken sentence occurs at regular intervals and the length it takes to say something depends on the number of stressed syllables rather than on the number of syllables itself.

### b) **RHYTHM**

Rhythm is produced by the combination of stressed and unstressed syllables and it is a major characteristic of spoken English, which makes English a **stress-timed language**. In stress-timed languages, there is a roughly equal amount of time between each stress in a sentence, compared with a **syllable-timed language** (such as Spanish or French) in which syllables are produced at a steady rate which is unaffected by stress differences.

### c) **INTONATION**

It is defined as the use of pitch variation in phrases and sentences to signal such things as speaker attitudes, sentence type (e.g. statement versus question), and information structure.

Intonation is different to word stress or rhythm, in that it does not signal differences of word meaning, but contributes to the interpretation of utterances.

### 2.3. Verbal interactions in EFL classrooms

**a) Student-to-student interactions** are based on peer relationships and allow a maximum degree of communication. They develop speaking fluency and the use of communication strategies:

- There is a chance for everyone to use the language and feel involved; learners feel more secure and help each other, sharing ideas and knowledge.
- The learning activities may be really varied, from dialogues to conversations, drama or information-gathering.
- Interactions among students at the early steps of foreign language acquisition are still dominated by their incipient knowledge of the target language system and its resources.
- The age of the students is a key factor to be accounted for, as their knowledge about the world around is limited.
- The language and the topics around any interaction among students must be carefully planned and correspond to the learners' background knowledge and experiences.
- Teachers should also provide pupils opportunities to use the language among themselves as much as possible.
- Student-to-student interaction promotes language acquisition.
- Dialogue represents the most common form of oral communication; Poetry and drama activities are also rich vehicles for encouraging students play and learn language. So do information-gathering activities, like interviews or guessing games.

**b) Teacher-to-student interaction** is, of course, basic in the EFL classroom. Teacher-students conversation is asymmetrical as it is based on the teacher's superior knowledge and authority. EFL teachers adjust their language to the learners's level by simplifying their discourse. **Teacher talk** has its own features:

- Classroom language is mainly dominated and controlled by the teacher.

- Teachers use special frames, regularly and very often, to pass from one verbal transaction to another. These frames form a closed set (well, okay, right, look, now, all right) and they indicate different meanings. They give learners clues to the structure of the discourse and refer to the different aspects of teaching –content, organization and discipline.
- Non verbal elements like hand gestures or glances are complementary features in classroom discourse.

Types of verbal interaction among teacher and students include **questions** for many different purposes: eliciting, language practice or raising awareness, for example. There is also quite a lot of giving **directions** on part of the teacher mainly to organize activities, to show how to do a task or to keep discipline in classrooms.

## **2.4. VERBAL STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES.**

### **a) Cooperative speaking-based strategies.**

When students are put into groups where they can talk freely, they can bring aspects of their background, potentially leading to more understanding among the members within a group. Students also learn to interact with a group of people that they may not generally work and can engage in conversation even if it is outside of their comfort zone.

An example is gamification.

Some examples of gamification:

- Rezzly.
- PlayBrighter.

### **b) Strategies to foster speaking inductively.**

Too often, teachers follow the basic lesson plan: engage or prepare, next study and finally practice. However, the most important stage, free production, almost never happens. So why not turn your lesson plan upside down?

An example is flipped classroom.

### **c) Activities for pronunciation.**

*For accuracy*

- Talkit.
- SitePal.

- Vocaroo.
- Voki.

*For fluency.*

- Voice Thread.
- Peek-a-Zoo.

Thanks to these apps, the digital competence is put in practice.

### 3. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

The use of non-verbal resources is one of the defining characteristics of the oral language. It is the way people reinforce the spoken messages, or even it replaces the spoken word by using the body to make visual signs. Non-verbal communication helps us to manage our social relationships and, broadly speaking, it helps to present the self that we want others to see – social status, group membership, personality (appearance). We can suggest that non-verbal communication serves three main **functions** in oral interactions:

- Speakers and hearers convey their mood and interpersonal feelings.
- Supports the verbal message and
- Provides feedback.

Nonverbal communication has received much attention in the areas social psychology, business presentation, sales and marketing. In this sense, it can be analysed as an area of study by itself. However, as we pointed above, non-verbal signs constitute a part of the language and intervenes in the communicative act as one of the elements that form the context and the shared knowledge. One of the most significant characteristics of this paralinguistic phenomenon is that, as language itself, it is **culturally-dependant**. Every language (or culture) has its own non-verbal resources to communicate different meanings. It is well known, for example, that the speaker of Greek will throw his head back to show disagreement or dissent, instead of moving it from side to side. Therefore, non-verbal communicative strategies are not always transferable from the L1 to the L2. In the first place, like speech, non-verbal communication has both form and function, and, secondly, it is not always directly translatable. It is the first of these factors which makes nonverbal communication difficult to teach, and the second which leads to breakdowns and misunderstandings in intercultural communication.

When analysing non-verbal communication, we see that it can be conscious or voluntary sometimes, but, quite often, it is involuntary or **unconscious**. Hearers or speakers use body language to show they are shocked, embarrassed or amused, for example, in an

unconscious way. On the other hand, we can also use non-verbal reactions in a more conscious manner as to reinforce a message or to attract somebody's attention.

Non-verbal communication includes three main areas.

- d) **Kinesics**
  - e) **Proxemics.**
  - f) **Paralinguistics.**
- 
- d) **Kinesics.**

Kinesics refers to the use of body movements and gestures. In fact, gestures are part of the human nonverbal communication system. Sometimes, they are referred to as “the silent language”. Apart from gestures, body movements and postures are considered effective means of communication that enliven interactions. That is probably why a telephone conversation is much more difficult to hold than a normal face-to-face conversation. In the first one the interlocutors have access only to verbal language. This obliges them to make more effort to transmit their messages and to check whether their addressee received their own. In a face-to-face conversation, however, interlocutors have access to a wide range of means of communication, including gestures and body movements.

Formally speaking, kinesics includes, therefore, gestures and body movements and postures. However, we will also look at eye contact and facial expression since the four of these elements play an important role in the process of language teaching and learning.

#### a) Gestures and body movements

- Instinctive gestures.*
- Coded or technical gestures.*
- Acquired gestures.*

#### b) In relation to postures.

According to Gregersen and other scholars, there are **four types of gestures** important for effective communication: illustrators, regulators, emblems, and affect displays.

- Those behaviours that complement or accentuate the verbal message are called **illustrators**.
- Body language cues that serve to control turn-taking and other procedural aspects of interpersonal communication are called **regulators**.

- **Emblems** are nonverbal behaviours that can be translated into words and that are used intentionally to transmit a message
- Finally, **affect displays** are another type of body language necessary for language learners to process.

### c) Eye contact

The eyes are important organs in the human body, not only for sight but for communication as well.

The eyes converse as much as the tongue; and when there is a conflict between what a person's tongue and eyes say, it is always the eyes which are trusted.

Eye contact, in this sense, plays the role of **turn organizer**.

Knapp and Hall (2006) define five functions of gazing: Regulating the flow of conversation, monitoring feedback, reflecting cognitive activity, expressing emotion, and communicating the nature of interpersonal relationship.

### d) Facial expressions

Facial expressions are essential means of communication, not only within the same community, but throughout the whole world.

According to Gregersen, the face is a primary means of managing interaction, complementing a response, and replacing speech. Through facial expression, we can **open and close channels of communication**

The face also **complements or qualifies a message**.

### e) Proxemics.

The term Proxemics was first coined by Edward T. Hall (1959). It usually refers to the way humans manage **space** during interaction. The way people stand from their interlocutor conveys something about their personality, attitude and relationship with the interlocutor. Moreover, the sense of territoriality that humans instinctively entertain does have an impact on the way they communicate.

Hall suggests that Proxemics is the hidden dimension of human culture which we practise unconsciously all the time.

### **a) Personal space**

Humans manage space during an interaction according to different variables that range from the social status of the interlocutor to the nature of the interaction itself. The personal space is not a fixed or static zone.

Hall (1969) classifies the distances maintained by humans into intimate, personal, social and public distances. Space can also be analyzed in terms of horizontal distance and vertical distance. The first category denotes the type of distance at which people stand from their interlocutors.

- *Intimate distance.*
- *Personal distance.*
- *Social distance.*
- *Public distance*

The second category of personal space concerns *vertical space*. It refers, basically, to how a person is elevated. It is used to show dominance in the relationship between the individual and his or her interlocutor. This can be noticed in courtrooms, classrooms, and houses of parliament. The more the individual is raised, the more authority he or she is supposed to exert.

### **b) Territoriality**

One of the most shared aspects between human beings and animals is the instinct to secure space for oneself and to defend that space against potential intruders. Scientific research on how humans communicate in private and public spaces began with studies of animal behaviour (ethology) and territoriality in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

People in some cultures have a stronger sense of territoriality than others. Thus, Americans are known more for the use of fences around their houses. The sense of territoriality is manifested by the individual but it can take a national aspect. This is reflected in the fact that most countries have border conflicts and sometimes fail to reach a compromise.

At the time of looking at the EFL classroom, we can analyse how Proxemics among students and between the teacher and the students may vary through a lesson and be used to facilitate interaction or to manage discipline, for example. Students, in general, like to sit close to each other to help each other, or exchange comments and jokes. This is probably why some teachers, as a kind of punishment, ask disruptive students to sit alone. More important is the way distance is managed between students and the teacher as it also reflects the role of the teacher in the classroom.

As a way of conclusion to this chapter, it can be mentioned that in the EFL classroom there are several techniques, communicative activities and procedures which facilitate learners' awareness of Kinesics and Proxemics issues in addition to favour bound verbal and nonverbal communication as a single act which sometimes varies across cultures:

- One of the most extended activities in classrooms is pantomimes, a scene in body language which can be used to elicit oral or written language.
- Techniques from the Total Physical Response method or from the Silent Way are also quite used in many EFL lessons, as well as the use of cuisenaire rods, colours and charts.
- Other techniques include the discussion of the meaning of gestures and expressions after the watching of a video clip without sound; or the acting out of a dialogue using gesture and expression only. The following sample dialogue is taken from Darn:

f) **Paralinguistics.**

*Paralinguistics* is the study of vocal (and sometimes non-vocal) signals beyond the basic verbal [message](#) or [speech](#). Also known as *vocalics*.

Paralinguistics, says Shirley Weitz, "sets great store on *how* something is said, not on *what* is said" (*Nonverbal Communication*, 1974).

Paralinguistics studies the following elements:

- 10) Volume of voice.
- 11) Speed of voice.
- 12) Intonation.
- 13) Tone of voice.
- 14) Pronunciation.
- 15) Articulation.
- 16) Pause.
- 17) Punctuation marks.
- 18) Forms of paralinguistic respiration.

Mention the official framework, CEFR and linguistic competence.

#### **4. EXTRALINGUISTIC STRATEGIES: NON-VERBAL REACTIONS TO MESSAGES IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS**

- **Classroom language:** an efficient and quick system of gestures to deal with classroom management, instruction and correction.
  
- Learners use **extralinguistic communication strategies:** plans and tools used by speakers in order to cope with difficulties in communicating in the L2. They are problem-oriented.
  - a) Students may show message comprehension by:
    - Physically responding to orders, directions, requests, questions, etcetera.
    - Pointing to objects or drawings.
    - Sequencing or ordering.
    - Drawing.
  
  - b) Learners maintain interaction by the use of gestures to ask for clarification or repetition, to show agreement, etcetera.
  
  - c) Techniques:
    - Pantomimes.
    - Techniques from the TPR and the Silent Way.
    - Silent video watching.
    - Dramatizations, mimed dialogues, etc.

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