

**МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ**  
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**ЯКІСНА МОВНА ОСВІТА**  
**У СУЧАСНОМУ ГЛОБАЛІЗОВАНОМУ СВІТІ:**  
**ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ, ВИКЛИКИ, ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ**

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## **NON-VERBAL BEHAVIOR IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

The implementation of intercultural communication, the achievement of mutual understanding between peoples are important factors of stability and cultural exchange against the background of the diversity of cultures, traditions, religions, business, and technologies. Productive intercultural dialogue is largely possible not only due to knowing foreign languages, but also non-verbal communication that helps to overcome cultural barriers.

**Key words:** intercultural dialogue, non-verbal communication, cultural and language barriers.

A study of body language is a study of the mixture of all the body movements, both deliberate and totally unconscious ones. Each nationality has its own language of posture and gesture. Words are beautiful, exciting and important, but we tend to overestimate them badly since our research suggests that up to 80% of any piece of communication is non-verbal, i.e. everything but the content of the message – the way the person looks, dresses, sounds, is positioned, etc. In our culture where verbal behavior is closely observed and carefully edited, only body movements remain to communicate our message to the rest of the world. People are very open in communicating their inner thoughts and feelings non-verbally. Non-verbal messages are conveyed both through the person as such as through the setting. Tone and quality of voice (pitch, rate, volume, and articulation), silence or speech, way of standing or sitting, eye contact, touch, body sounds, body odours, gestures and movements, physique, way of dressing, colours, facial expressions and the physical setting are all messages that can be fitted together to provide the receiver with a complete picture of those being observed. Some gestures are universally recognized. For instance doodling, drumming your fingers or tapping your feet usually indicate boredom. Shrugging your shoulders means indifference, fidgeting in your chair, biting your lip, picking at fingernails express nervousness, folding your arms, moving the body away, crossing your legs express rejection, and sitting forward in your chair, tilting your head, maybe even occasionally nodding indicate that you are listening and ready to cooperate. When two people are sitting on a sofa and turn their legs towards each other, this indicates that they exclude other persons in the room. Unbuttoning your coat – or even

taking it off – open-arm movements and leaning back in the chair are gestures that indicate that you are open for negotiation. Silence, however, may be interpreted as a sign of hostility and cause great anxiety. A person who extends his lower arms and turns his palms out expresses helplessness or resignation.

Still we cannot say that certain gestures mean the same all the time. It is important to remember that, just as the spoken language, body language can be accurately understood only in the context of the entire pattern of behavior of a person.



*Pic.1* And let`s take the famous fingering gesture (*picture 1*), which in the USA means «A-OK». To a Japanese it means money, to a Frenchman «zero», and to a Tunisian it implies «You`re worthless, I`m going to kill you!» But a Colombian sees deadly obscenity in the gesture. If you touch your nose with your finger and thumb, a Syrian gets the message to «go to hell». And there is hardly a greater insult you can offer a Greek than to turn the palms of your hands towards his face.



*Pic.2* That`s why also the British «Victory-V» is improper in Greece, as it shows half the palm (*picture 2*). And the common «thumbs up» is interpreted by a Sardinian woman as a devastatingly obscene suggestion – this is why it is inadvisable to hitchhike in Sardinia!

Like animals we human beings have a personal space, zone of territory, which we guard with great zeal. The way individuals react to invasion of their territory is related to body language. There are four distinct zones of operation: intimate distance, personal distance, social distance and public distance. Intimate distances may be close (actual contact) or far (from 6 to 18 inches). The close intimate zone is accessible only for very close friends, for our children, and husband or wife. An interesting factor is that cars are often seen as part of the personal zone – hence the aggressive reactions when other car drivers get too close. Also social distances have a close and far phase. The *close* phase is 4-7 feet, a distance at which impersonal business is conducted. This zone may vary depending on the culture (and population density!)

of the country your business partner comes from, that is why at a business conference you may see a Japanese unknowingly invading the personal zone of an American who will react by stepping backwards, and the Japanese moving forward again to adjust to his spatial need.

Both tourists and businessmen travelling in foreign cultures need to be very observant as to social differences concerning zone distances as they may otherwise unknowingly indicate e.g. sexual availability or seem very aggressive. Although all people have personal space, the amount of space or distance is influenced by both sex and age. In most cultures male-male pairs require more space, perhaps because of society's negative view of men who have close relationships with other men. Female-female pairs require less space and can touch, hug and express more in public. Male-female pairs require least personal space of all – maybe with the exception of young children-parents. As the children grow up, the demand for more space (on the part of the child) gradually increases to reach its peak at adolescence. A final component of non-verbal communication is time and the way it is handled. In most cultures an immediate response to a letter conveys interest and even respect (not so, though, in India where priority is given to the affairs of relatives). Likewise coming early to a conference may suggest high interest, whereas being late may indicate just the opposite. In most of the western world keeping someone waiting for a business appointment or a conference indicates lack of interest and may offend the person kept waiting. In international relations understanding non-verbal behavior is of extreme importance. Inappropriate non-verbal behavior and general cultural insensitivity will lead to poor communication or, even worse, a total breakdown of communication.

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## **METHODISCH-DIDAKTISCHE GRUNDLAGEN DER TESTERSTELLUNG FÜR EINEN FREMDSPRACHENUNTERRICHT**

Die Beurteilung der Studentenleistungen beim Fremdsprachenlernen gilt als ein wichtiger Bestandteil des akademischen Ausbildungsprozesses und fordert bestimmte Veränderungen und Neuorientierungen im Zusammenhang mit fortschreitenden wissenschaftlichen Forschungen in der Lernpsychologie. Infolgedessen sind die Fragen über die Funktionen,