



**THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF PARALINGUISTIC, FOOHOLD IN
TEACHING SPEAKING SKILL.**

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Abstract: When learning a new language, real communication goes far beyond just knowing words and grammar rules. In teaching how to speak well, *paralinguistic features*—like facial expressions, hand gestures, tone of voice, pitch changes, and even posture—play a very big part, even if sometimes they don't get the attention they deserve in the classroom. These non-verbal signs help learners speak more clearly, show how they feel, and support the meaning of what they're saying. Also, they help speakers connect better with others and sound more natural and fluent. Even though these tools are so useful, many speaking lessons don't really focus on them properly. This paper looks at how paralinguistic elements work and gives some ideas for how teachers can include them in speaking activities. Some methods include things like acting out scenes, using videos to study body movements, and giving feedback not just on what students say but *how* they say it. Of course, there are some challenges too—like cultural differences or student discomfort—but these can be managed with careful teaching. In short, speaking without gestures and expression feels flat. So, teaching these non-verbal parts of speech is not just a good extra—it's actually key if we want learners to speak confidently and naturally in different situations.

Introduction

Teaching speaking skills in a second language is a multifaceted process. While vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation are fundamental, paralinguistic features are often overlooked. However, they form an essential aspect of natural communication.





According to communication theorists, up to 70% of human communication is non-verbal. This article examines the importance of paralinguistic cues and proposes methods to incorporate them in teaching speaking effectively.

Paralinguistic Features Defined

Paralinguistics refers to the aspects of spoken communication that do not involve words. These include:

- Facial expressions – showing emotions and reactions.
- Gestures – using hands and body to convey meaning.
- Eye contact – maintaining connection with the listener.
- Posture and movement – expressing confidence or uncertainty.
- Tone and pitch – signaling mood or intention.
- These cues help speakers express meaning more clearly and enable listeners to interpret the message more effectively.
- The Importance in Speaking Skills Development

In speaking instruction, especially for language learners, paralinguistic features serve several functions:

- Compensating for linguistic gaps: Learners can use gestures or intonation to compensate for unknown vocabulary.
- Enhancing message clarity: Non-verbal cues reinforce spoken content and make it more understandable.
- Building listener engagement: Eye contact and expressive delivery keep listeners involved.
- Cultural fluency: Understanding and using paralinguistics helps learners adapt to sociocultural norms of communication.

Teaching Strategies To integrate paralinguistic elements into the classroom, educators can:

Use video recordings to analyze body language.

Encourage role-playing with expressive gestures and voice modulation.

Provide feedback on posture, facial expressions, and tone.





Include drama and storytelling activities.

Train students to identify and interpret non-verbal cues in dialogues.

Challenges and Considerations

Even though bringing paralinguistic features into speaking lessons has many positives, it doesn't come without a few complications. A major issue is the role of **culture**. What counts as a friendly gesture in one country might seem rude or strange in another. For example, in the West, looking someone in the eyes is usually seen as confident. But in some Asian cultures, the same eye contact might be considered too direct or even aggressive. This means that teachers need to think carefully and help students understand the background and meaning behind these non-verbal actions depending on where they're used.

Then there's the matter of how **comfortable** students feel. Not every learner is okay with acting out emotions or making big gestures during class. Some may feel shy, especially in front of classmates, or simply not be used to showing so much expression while speaking. They might also come from more reserved cultures. This can make it hard for teachers to fully apply methods like drama or expressive role-plays, no matter how effective these might be.

Also, some **teachers themselves** might not feel ready to teach this side of communication. If instructors haven't been trained to notice or explain gestures, tone, or facial expressions, they might leave these out altogether. That's a missed opportunity. Paralinguistics is often seen as something "extra," but without proper guidance, students don't always realize how important it really is.

Lastly, there's the issue of **assessment**. It's much easier to grade grammar and vocabulary than it is to evaluate how well someone uses gestures or changes their tone. Most language exams don't even consider these parts of communication, so both students and teachers may not give them much attention during preparation.

Conclusion

To sum it up, non-verbal communication—or what we call paralinguistics—is more than just an add-on to spoken language. It's a core part of how people really talk in everyday life. We don't only use words to say what we mean; we use our hands, our face, our voice,





and even silence. These features help learners sound more natural, more confident, and more connected to the people they're speaking with.

If language teaching focuses only on grammar and vocabulary, students may end up speaking correctly but sounding flat or awkward. But when we train learners to notice and use things like gestures, facial expressions, or voice changes, they start to communicate on a deeper, more emotional level. This kind of training doesn't just help them talk—it helps them connect.

Of course, teachers should be careful with cultural differences, and not force students into expressions that feel uncomfortable or unnatural to them. The goal isn't to copy a culture perfectly but to build awareness and flexibility, so learners can choose how they want to express themselves depending on the situation.

In the end, teaching paralinguistics isn't just a "nice extra"—it's something that gives students a fuller set of tools to speak like real people in real life. If schools want to prepare learners for actual conversations, then non-verbal communication deserves a proper place in the speaking curriculum.

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