

Types of Non-Linguistic Means in Communication with Children and Their Characteristics

Abduvaliyeva Nodirakhon Alisherovna

Associate Professor, Fergana State University, Doctor of Philosophy in Pedagogical Sciences, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: In modern pedagogy and child psychology, non-linguistic means of communication play a significant role in children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. Communication with children is not limited to verbal interaction; gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, posture, intonation, and visual elements strongly influence children's understanding and emotional responses. This article examines the types of non-linguistic means used in communication with children and their specific characteristics. Through qualitative analysis of pedagogical and psychological literature, the study explores the role of nonverbal communication in emotional support, language development, social interaction, and educational effectiveness. Particular attention is given to gestures, mimics, paralinguistic elements, proxemics, and visual communication tools as important factors in child-centered communication. The findings indicate that effective use of non-linguistic communication creates a psychologically comfortable environment, improves children's engagement, and strengthens interpersonal relationships between adults and children. The article concludes that integrating communication-oriented pedagogical approaches with emotional and visual interaction significantly supports children's holistic development.

Keywords: Non-linguistic means, nonverbal communication, children, gestures, facial expressions, communication skills, pedagogy, emotional development, visual communication, child psychology.

Introduction: Communication is one of the most important factors influencing children's intellectual, emotional, and social development. In early childhood, communication serves not only as a means of information exchange but also as a tool for emotional connection, behavioral regulation, and social adaptation. Children often perceive emotional meaning more effectively through non-linguistic communication than through spoken language [1;126p]. Non-linguistic means of communication include gestures, facial expressions, body language, eye contact, intonation, touch, spatial interaction, and visual symbols. These elements support verbal communication and help children understand emotions, intentions, and social behavior [2;153p]. Since young children may not fully understand complex verbal explanations, nonverbal interaction becomes especially important in educational and family

environments.

Modern pedagogical approaches emphasize child-centered communication, where emotional support and interactive engagement are essential components of effective teaching and upbringing [3;214p]. Teachers and parents use various non-linguistic means to encourage learning, maintain attention, reduce anxiety, and create positive emotional environments.

The development of multimedia technologies and visual learning tools has further increased the importance of visual and non-linguistic communication in education. Educational cartoons, visual presentations, interactive games, and digital learning resources help children perceive information more effectively and participate actively in learning processes [4;241p]. This article analyzes the main types of non-linguistic means used in communication with children and examines their pedagogical and

psychological characteristics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scientific research confirms that nonverbal communication plays a fundamental role in child development and interpersonal interaction. Psychologists emphasize that children interpret emotions and attitudes primarily through facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice rather than through verbal explanations alone [1;126p].

Researchers identify several main categories of non-linguistic communication. These include kinesics (gestures, posture, facial expressions), paralinguistics (intonation, voice tone, speech rhythm), proxemics (spatial interaction), haptics (touch), and visual communication [5;87p]. Each category influences children's emotional state, behavior, and learning processes differently. Facial expressions and gestures are especially important in communication with children. Smiling, supportive eye contact, and open body language create feelings of safety and trust. Negative facial expressions or aggressive gestures may increase fear and emotional tension [6;58p]. Paralinguistic elements also play an essential role in children's perception of communication. Voice tone, rhythm, and emotional intonation help children understand approval, encouragement, or warning [7;44p]. Younger children often react more strongly to emotional tone than to the literal meaning of words. Educational researchers emphasize that visual communication tools improve children's cognitive development and learning motivation. Pictures, diagrams, animations, and interactive media support comprehension and memory retention [8;36p]. Constructivist theories suggest that children learn more effectively through active and emotionally engaging interaction [3;214p]. Touch and physical proximity are additional important components of child communication. Appropriate physical contact and supportive gestures strengthen emotional attachment and provide psychological comfort [9;71p].

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative analytical methodology based on the systematic review of scientific literature related to pedagogy, developmental psychology, communication studies, and child education. Academic books, journal articles,

and theoretical studies focusing on non-linguistic communication and child development were selected according to their relevance to communication with children. The research analyzes the main types of non-linguistic communication, their pedagogical functions, and their psychological characteristics in educational and family environments. Comparative and descriptive methods were applied to identify effective communication strategies used in interaction with children. Rather than conducting empirical experimentation, the study synthesizes theoretical findings from previous research to provide a comprehensive understanding of non-linguistic communication in child-centered interaction.

RESULTS

The analysis demonstrates that non-linguistic means significantly influence children's emotional stability, communication behavior, and learning effectiveness. Positive nonverbal interaction creates a psychologically supportive environment where children feel secure, motivated, and emotionally connected [6;58p]. Facial expressions were identified as one of the most influential forms of communication with children. Smiling, eye contact, and encouraging facial reactions increase children's confidence and emotional comfort. Teachers and parents who demonstrate positive emotional expressions establish stronger interpersonal relationships with children. Gestures and body language also contribute to communication effectiveness. Open posture, supportive hand movements, and expressive gestures help children better understand instructions and emotional messages. Such communication is especially important in preschool and primary education, where visual perception dominates cognitive processes. Paralinguistic elements—including intonation, voice rhythm, and emotional tone—strongly affect children's attention and emotional responses [7;44p]. Calm and expressive speech improves understanding and maintains children's interest during educational activities. Monotonous or aggressive intonation may reduce motivation and create emotional discomfort. Visual communication tools were found to be highly effective in supporting learning processes. Pictures, animations, multimedia presentations, and interactive educational games improve information comprehension and memory retention [8;36p]. Visual

materials also support children's creativity and imagination. The findings indicate that touch and proxemic interaction influence emotional attachment and social behavior. Appropriate physical closeness and supportive touch help children feel emotionally secure and socially accepted [9;71p].

The integration of traditional face-to-face communication with digital visual technologies creates favorable conditions for children's emotional and cognitive development.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that non-linguistic communication is an essential component of effective interaction with children. Communication with children should not rely solely on verbal explanations because emotional and visual interaction strongly influence understanding and behavior [1;126p]. Teachers and parents need to develop communication skills that include positive facial expressions, supportive gestures, emotional intonation, and appropriate visual communication strategies. Such approaches strengthen children's emotional well-being and support active participation in educational activities. Modern educational environments increasingly integrate multimedia technologies and visual communication tools. Interactive educational resources allow children to learn through observation, emotional engagement, and active participation. Therefore, communication-oriented and visually supportive educational methods should become central elements of child-centered pedagogy. Professional preparation for educators should include communication psychology, emotional intelligence, and nonverbal interaction strategies. Teachers who possess effective communication skills can create positive classroom environments and support children's social and emotional development more effectively. Overall, effective use of non-linguistic means contributes to improved communication, emotional stability, learning motivation, and social adaptation among children [3;214p].

CONCLUSION

This article examined the types of non-linguistic means used in communication with children and their pedagogical and psychological characteristics. The findings demonstrate that gestures, facial expressions, body language, intonation, visual communication, and

touch play essential roles in children's emotional, cognitive, and social development. The study revealed that positive nonverbal interaction creates emotionally supportive learning environments and strengthens interpersonal relationships between adults and children. Visual communication tools and multimedia technologies further enhance children's engagement, understanding, and creativity. A communication-oriented pedagogical approach that integrates emotional interaction and visual support should become an important component of modern child education. By effectively using non-linguistic communication, educators and parents can support children's holistic development and create positive conditions for learning and social adaptation.

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