

Nonverbal and paraverbal expression of emotions in the course of learning Russian as a foreign language

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Abstract

The article investigates nonverbal and paraverbal expression of emotions in the course of learning Russian as a foreign language. Emotiveness has a categorical status at various levels of language system and speech – phonological, morphological, and syntactical and etc. At each level emotiveness is conveyed by specific means and methods and their description and classification is a specific and a rather complex task.

Phonetic means of expression of emotions include phonological change of sounds, accentual and intonational means. Teaching phonetics, particularly pronunciation of sounds and intonation to foreign learners will certainly bring good results in the country of the object language. But it is intonation which the foreigners learning Russian in their home country find most difficult to acquire. People with a flawless pronunciation of separate words of a foreign language often make mistakes in intonation particularly when they deal with larger pieces of speech. For instance, it is difficult to catch a joke or irony or express various shades of surprise, irritation, disgust, trust, distrust and etc which are often conveyed only by intonation reflecting emotional state of the speaker.

Keywords: *emotiveness, nonverbal expressions, gestures, facial expression, paraverbal expressions, pause, intonation, intonational constructions.*

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Introduction

Currently, foreign language is studied “by scenarios”, i.e. using corresponding contexts. Interaction of people in a community at a linguistic level is carried out in the form of an utterance. Language utterances can be verbal (words), paraverbal (intonation, rhythm, and pause) and nonverbal (gestures, facial expression, body movements).

Merited Professor of Moscow State University Svetlana Ter-Minasova shows the following figures obtained as a result of researches of British psychologists. According to these results, communication is made up of: 7% - verbal means, i.e. words, 38% - phonetic design of speech (intonation, tone, pitch of voice, themes, i.e. comprehension of so-called extrasegment level); 55% - nonverbal means (facial expression, gestures, body movements, eyes, smile etc.). It appears that during oral and visual communication, in direct contacts, to the words, i.e. to what we say only 7% of communication is assigned, while 93% is how we speak. (S.G. Ter-Minasova. Conflict of cultures. Cross-cultural communications. Tbilisi, 2008, #4, p. 110).

Nonverbal expression of emotions

Sign language is definitely universal only in the part of descriptive gestures (lighting matches, shaving etc.) but in many aspects “communication by gestures is a national phenomenon like verbal languages” (E.M.Vereshyagin, V.G.Kostomarov. Language and culture. Linguistic and cultural studies in teaching Russian as a foreign language. Moscow, 1999, p. 43). Dual nature of somatic language helps this: on the one hand, biological, inherent (unintended, involuntary manifestations: face blanching, dilation of pupils, distortion of lips) and on the other part, social, acquired by a person in the socialization process (intended, voluntary manifestations: scratching one's head (while contemplating a problem); rubbing hands (with satisfaction or malevolence; punching oneself in the chest (proving one's truth). This duality of nonverbal communication explains existence of both universal, foolproof signs and specific signals used only within one culture. For instance, Turks express disagreement by a nod of head which means consent for Russians. Nonverbal means are entitled to thematize negative emotions independently. They often function in combination with linguistic means.

Here full emotive information is formed.

Particular and very significant role in the system of means of communication is played by gestures expressing consent and disagreement and gestures accepted as symbols during greeting, farewell, address and other communicative acts determined by etiquette. If a teacher as an orator is interested in success of his speech, then his/her facial expression can not be unexpressive. Students can always guess by facial expression how interested the orator is in success of his/her speech. If he/she has a «stupid glance» and an impenetrable countenance such indifference towards the ongoing situation will “infect” the group by all means.

Facial expression must be closely connected with gestures and it means that it must be “lively” i.e. changeable in the process of speech in the course of interaction with the audience. Only if a teacher has a command of his/her speech, accompanies it with appropriate gestures and facial mimic, if he/she “has a control over his/her body”, he/she will have a guarantee of the speech and psychological victory over the listeners, success for work on himself/herself, recognition for hard work. The teacher should describe peculiarities of gesticulation and mimic in the environment of the object language. For instance, Russian speech etiquette requires avoidance of an extremely lively mimic and gesticulation because they may have different meanings in different linguistic cultures.

Paraverbal expression of emotions

The problem of expression of emotions becomes more complicated when speech is carried out in a written form because here we lack such means of expression of emotions as intonation and other means without which it is practically impossible to express the emotional state orally. In this case emotional speech implies any speech products which aim at expressing emotional state of the speaker or influencing emotional sphere of the listener. It is evident that such comprehension of emotional speech is applied to language occurrences in traditionally emphasized expressive (emotive), esthetic (poetic) and some other functions. Nonetheless, text books intended for the initial stage of teaching Russian are limited to only four intonational constructions and leave emotionally tinted ones for next stages. Such attitude can not be considered as productive. It is considered that IC-5, IC-6 and IC-7 express emotions in respect to the object of the

speech but not information, because in Russia it is not common to conceal emotions and a foreigner has to be directed by intonation in order to differ phrases expressed with irony, pity, threat, praise, bewilderment etc.

Among components of intonation pause holds a special place. Physically it is a special, empty segment. Pause (Greek: “pauis” – break) – temporary interval in sounding which breaks the flow of speech caused by various reasons and performing various functions. The length of phrase depends on what causes the break and why this is done. Semantic meaning and so-called “psychological” pauses characteristic for particularly expressive and emotional speech are evident for instance, during particular emphasizing of a word by means of putting a pause in front of or after it. In any case, a pause is not just a break in the flow of speech, not only silence. This is continuation of conversation by other (nonverbal) means. It is not for nothing that such expressions as “eloquent pause”, “eloquent silence” exist. A pause often successfully replaces both separate words and expanded utterances. Ability not to say, to omit some word or even a phrase in a conversation sometimes enables to influence the interlocutor much stronger than by most vivid expressions. A pause in an oral speech when there is an opportunity of a direct contact between speakers is always filled by something: mimic, glance, gesture, deliberate immovability or on the contrary, movements of the speaker. Thus, we can talk about a pause as an intonational-syntactical phenomenon and an element of nonverbal communication.

Important place in the etiquette is occupied by intonation of utterance. Intonation (Latin “intonate” – utter loudly) is a phonetic form of utterance. In writing, intonation is expressed by punctuation signs and such graphic means as articulation of text by paragraphs, stressing words, variation of fonts. Oral speech is much more specific than written one owing to intonation.

Intonation is one of the most significant constituents of national culture, tradition, etiquette and speech behavior. It should be emphasized that intonation of representatives of oriental culture significantly differs from Russian culture so it is necessary to present to the learners the difference in the intonational picture of the languages in the process of teaching. For instance, it is not customary for Turks to express emotions

(especially negative ones) openly. Turkish women learning Russian are generally more reserved, “modest” when using Russian intonational constrictions even though they perceive and understand them correctly. In the opinion of Russians, Turks use polite intonations (IC-3) overmuch while it is customary for Russians to apply them only with respect to foreigners or older people (not all) or to those who are high in the social scale. In other cases (in the family, with friends, colleagues) equal tone (IC-2) is maintained. For instance, at the end of phone conversation or in other situations Turkish spouses politely say to each other “Take care”.

At the pronunciation level the purpose of learning of the Russian language is to work out rhythm and intonation inherent to the Russian speech. In respect with this, sound combinations of the Russian language are used which create emotional speech – interjections, word-feelings etc. Pure Russian speech is formed. It is known that in certain situations it is absolutely possible to explain oneself by interjectional phrases. On the other hand, we encounter sentences which may have the same syntactic structure and lexical composition with different meanings expressed by intonation. For instance: He is here. – Is he here? – What day is today? – What a day it is today! Such oppositions, juxtapositions of sentences serve as a basis for highlighting this or that intonation type and their quantity. Intonation utterance types are – incentive, question, exclamation, narration. Intonation is an active factor of emotional-esthetic influence on the listener; it reflects emotional state of the speaker. When it is said that some sentence was uttered “without any intonation” it is implied that it was uttered with monotonous intonation or the intonation was not expressive enough. Intonation can be diverse while uttering one and the same phrase but it must accurately convey the author's intent. A student may give different answers to the question: “Which city is most beautiful in Turkey?” – “The most beautiful city in Turkey is Istanbul”, “City of Istanbul” or just “Istanbul”. Semantic completeness of all of these questions is defined by the fact that they will be always uttered with an appropriate intonation. Connection between intonation and sense is one of the most significant factors of communication.

Intonational constructions

Therefore sentences are broken into several ICs. Seven intonational

a city. This is a city of Tbilisi. This is my friend. This is my friend Ivan).

IC-2 -- \ _ _ _

2 2

2

Кто это? Где университет? Куда пойти вечером? (Who is this? Where is the University? Where shall we go tonight?)

IC-3 _ /-- -- _ _ _ /--

3

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Это ваш дом? Вы говорите по-русски? Уже восемь часов вечера? (Is this your house? Do you speak Russian? It is 8 p.m. already?)

IC-4 _ _ _ /--

4

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Я читал эту газету, а вы? Мне двадцать лет, а вам? (I have read this newspaper and you? I am twenty and you?)

IC-5 -- \ _ _

5

5

Какой красивый город! Как хорошо здесь! (What a beautiful city! How good it is here!)

IC-6 _ /--

6

6

6

Куда-куда? Что-что? Кого-кого? (Where-where? What-what? Whom-whom?)

IC-7 _ /-- \ _ _ -- \ _ _

7

7

Да какой он врач! Где там отдохнули! (He is not a doctor! It was not a rest!)

While teaching IC we consider samples of intonation, for instance, on audio- and video materials. In this case the volume of phrases gradually increases. To the foreign students who are learning Russian in their home country and do not have command of intonational standards of the Russian colloquial speech we offer the following exercises for identification of intonation expressing for instance, surprise, indignation, sorrow or joy. For example: rewrite sentences, listen to them on magnetic tape and put the appropriate mark at the end of each sentence. Define the intonational construction. Explain the meaning or speech situation of each utterance (orally). Read correctly from phonetic and intonational point of view and record all utterances on magnetic tape.

1. You have already read this article.
2. You have already read this article.
3. You have already read this article.

The assignments can be made from the teacher's dictation. Here attention should be paid to the discrepancies between male and female intonations since many Russian language teachers are women and this poses a threat of involuntary conveyance of female intonations to foreign students. This can be avoided first of all by using diverse audio- and video materials where male and female speech is adequately presented. Secondly, we should use stereotyped intoning at the initial stage and in compact systemizing courses of intonation. Here attention of the students may be accentuated on the fact that in the course of teaching intonational constructions we consider “references”, patterns or templates of intonation by the example of standard phrases in typical situations. Such attitude enables to remember the intonational picture and identify it in speech.

Conclusion

The Russian language is rich in diverse intonations and in the course of teaching it is necessary to show the difference in the intonational picture of languages. Learning intonational constructions at the initial teaching stage “admits” the foreigner to a certain speech circle, creates a certain speech context and facilitates the cultural-speech adaptation in the environment of native speakers.

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