

ROLE AND FUNCTION OF META COMMUNICATION CONCEPT AS NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN TEACHING EFL

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines and focuses on some issues and questions related to effective use of meta communication concept as nonverbal communication in teaching English as a foreign language by giving some language tips on how to teach meta-communicative items in the foreign language class. "Meta Communication" is the process between message designers when they are talking about the learning process, as distinguished from their articulation of the "substantive" learning, itself. Like verbal communication, nonverbal communication exists in a context, and that context determines to a large extent the meanings of any nonverbal behaviors. The same nonverbal behavior may have a totally different meaning when it occurs in another context. It is also important to mention culture in teaching meta-communication as the nonverbal behaviors are generally culture specific. Thus, there can be misunderstandings in communication. It is essential to remember that the meta-communication which accompanies any message is very powerful. The receiver will use these clues to help them to interpret what you mean, but more importantly they will often take the meaning from the meta-communication rather than from the words themselves, particularly when what you are saying conflicts with what you are doing. Hence, understanding or interpreting nonverbal messages accurately is especially important for second/foreign language (L2) learners whose comprehension skill is more limited. Thus, this paper aims to demonstrate authentic uses of meta-communication by showing some visual and written materials to be used in class to increase students' awareness of the target language.

Key Words: Meta communication, nonverbal communication, teaching English as a Foreign Language, critical thinking.

INTRODUCTION

Communication not only lies at the heart of the teaching process, but it also emerges as the most basic requirement of a liveliness and existence. In fact, "living is to communicate" in a sense. The humankind, since his/her species began to live as a social being, has used communication for maintaining his/her liveliness, for sharing what they have produced, for transferring some of his/her values, settled opinions, knowledge to the coming generations. Its history begins with the history of humankind. We live in a kind of message web at every moment in our everyday lives except for the sleep, ringing of the alarm clock, the sound of the azan coming from loudspeaker, shouting of the salespersons in the street, billboards, while greeting each other, in schools, on the street, while turning the heads, maintaining attitudes and so on. It would be a great mistake to describe communication as being static; it should rather be defined as a process. The transferring of knowledge, emotion, opinion, attitude or beliefs with behaviors, from one person to another (between the source and the

receiver), by using some channels that aims at change, occurs as a process rather than having a static and fixed form and quality.

In other words, communication is a process of transferring information from one entity to another. Communication processes are sign-mediated interactions between at least two agents, which share a repertoire of signs, and semiotic rules. Communication is commonly defined as "the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs". Although there is such a thing as one-way communication, communication can be perceived better as a two-way process in which there is an exchange and progression of thoughts, feelings or ideas (energy) towards a mutually accepted goal or direction - information- (Schwartz and et. al., 2008, p. 129). Since the process indicates dynamism all the time from moment to moment with the framework of its own rules and communication structures as a process, it entirely has a dynamic structure by the cause of its existence. Therefore, what must be understood from the suggestion? It should be understood that, communication is circular process for the better quality of communication.

FORMS OF COMMUNICATION: NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION VERSUS VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Communication is a process whereby information is enclosed in a package and is channeled and imparted by a sender to a receiver via some medium. The receiver then decodes the message and gives to the sender as a feedback. All forms of communication require a sender, a message, and a receiver. Communication requires that all parties have a space of communicative commonality. There are auditory means, such as speech, song, and tone of voice, and there are nonverbal means, such as body language, sign language, paralanguage, touch, eye contact, as well as writing.

Communication is thus a process by which meaning is assigned and conveyed in an attempt to create a shared understanding. This process requires a vast repertoire of skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating. It is through communication that collaboration and cooperation occurs (<http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/Communications/default.aspx>).

Over time, technology has progressed and has created new forms and ideas about communication. These technological advances revolutionized the processes of communication. Researchers determine that communication was transformed in three revolutionary stages that are:

1. The 1st Information Communication Revolution, in which the first written communication began, with pictographs.
2. The 2nd Information Communication Revolution, in which writing began to appear on paper, papyrus, clay, wax, etc. Common alphabets were introduced, allowing the uniformity of language across large distances.
3. The 3rd Information Communication Revolution, in which information can be transferred via controlled waves and electronic signals.

The complicated nature of communication results from its relatedness to human nature. Essentially, communication skills are particularly important when communicating or contacting with people who are very sensitive to verbal and nonverbal nuances due to their emotional distress. Communication always develops in a given situation or context. If the subject, the speaker talks about and the situation he/she is in is not known precisely or the context in which a message is transferred is not understood, the meanings may not be clearly conceived and may be analyzed wrongly. It is possible to categorize communication depending upon various criteria such as the number of participants, materials and medium that is used. Communication can be categorized structurally into two according to the codes used in it:

- Verbal Communication which contains oral-audial and written items and
- Nonverbal Communication

Verbal Communication

The basis of communication is the interaction between people. Verbal communication is the most well known way for people to communicate face-to-face. Some of the key components of verbal communication are sound, words, speaking, and language (http://www.cobweb2.louisville.edu/faculty/regbruce/bruce//mgmtwebs/commun_f98/Verbal.htm).

While the term "verbal communication" seems almost self-explanatory, it is indeed far more complex in its appearance. By definition, verbal communication includes not only oral discussions, but also written messages and mediated communications. The most apparent type of verbal communication is oral, and a number of examples of oral communication are readily available. Speeches, presentations and announcements are all forms of verbal communication, as well as casual conversations between friends.

In addition to standard verbal communication, most communication models also include verbal feedback from the receiver, which may be in the form of questions or comments, but also in shorter forms such as "Yes" or even a nondescript "Uh-huh."

While specific examples of oral verbal communication are virtually unlimited, any conversation involving at least a receiver and a sender that are using spoken words can be considered an example of verbal communication. While it may seem counterintuitive, written communication is deemed as a form of verbal communication, under most commonly accepted definitions of the term. For this reason, a plethora of seemingly nonverbal communication forms can be used as examples of verbal communication, including written letters, memos, newsletters, newspapers, journals and even personal notes. Textbooks, novels and other literature also serve as examples of verbal communication, because they use words as the medium through which a message is conveyed. Even though the field of mediated communication is a separate branch of communication study, it contains examples of both verbal and nonverbal communications. Most World Wide Web content consists of either typed text or videos, both of which rely heavily on verbal communication to convey their messages.

Likewise, webcasts and other online interactive media use verbal communication, as do emails, telnet sessions and newsgroup postings. Mediated communication does not stop with the Internet, of course; television broadcasts use a combination of verbal and nonverbal communication, and radio broadcasts rely on verbal communication (Evans, 2010).

Crucial components of verbal communication include language, sound, words and speaking. The emphasis in verbal communication is the act of speaking. Words alone are not enough to put across the gravity of the message or the real meaning. The uttering part makes verbal communication a distinct type. Basically intent or purpose of verbal communication is to provide the necessary information and direction.

When a person employs verbal communication, he delivers information. Speaking about something means clarifying or stating how things are. Thus, there is the direction part. Through verbal communication, it's possible to direct perception into certain thoughts and meaning and people have the ability to manipulate things using words (http://www.ehow.com/about_6763748_difference-between-verbal-nonverbal-communication.htm).

Nonverbal Communication

A person may use his/her body language effectively in everyday life intentionally or unintentionally and mostly unconsciously. Beyond that, a person can not control his/her body as he/she controls the words. Our body gives much more spontaneous reactions against events or situations. It is possible to hide our actual feelings and thoughts behind the words; however it is most of the time not possible to conceal our body language. A good listener perceives not only the words of the person with whom he/she communicates, but also the things

he/she has performed by his/her face, hand, arm and body. Because, communication is possible by using nonverbal messages such as facial expressions, hand and arm movements, posture of the body, tone of the voice. In fact in such forms of communication, only a little part of the message interaction is made up of verbal messages.

At this point, the question of how to define nonverbal communication should be touched upon. It is possible to make various definitions with different perspectives. It is possible to come across some approaches that define a communicational form beyond verbal, and enacts not by words or voice, but any other thing such as body language, facial expression, way of dressing and environmental factors while communicating. This form of communication consists of the codes which occur naturally such as intonation, facial expressions, mimics, gestures, body movements, colours, accessories. In other words, it consists of the communication codes made up of nonverbal signs, involves also the voices other than words. A given situation or context, is a dynamic process in which, nonverbal behaviors are performed individually or as a group together with verbal behaviours during the exchange, interpretation or analysis of meanings.

Nonverbal behaviours, experiences and communication occurs all day long on TV, in cinema, radio, newspapers, magazines, during speeches that take place in front of a community, private meetings, classrooms, in short in every field and at every moment of life and they are effective. They are enacted to identify definite behaviours or codes of nonverbal communication and help people to improve their communication skills.

There are five major characteristics of nonverbal communication: it is present in most interpersonal communication; it often conveys more information than verbal communication; it is usually believed to be more effective than verbal communication; it is a primary means of communicating emotions and finally, it is meta communication.

Nonverbal communication engages in most of our senses, therefore we experience many different forms. Nonverbal communication involves **facial** -displays, identity, attraction, emotion-, **eye behaviors** -eye contact and pupil size-, **movement and gestures** -emblems, illustrators, affect display, regulators, adaptors-, **touch behaviors** -affection, care giving, power and control, aggression, ritual-, **vocal behaviors** -pitch, inflection, volume, rate, filler words, accent, silence, etc., **the use of smell** -memories and sexual attraction-, **the use of space** -four distances-intimate, personal, social, and public-, **physical appearance**-attractiveness=positive qualities-, **the use of time** -send messages of value and power **the use of artifacts** -selection and **placement of objects, use of light**, as well as **use of color**.

Nonverbal communication intends to put more meaning into verbal communication. In some cases, the use of words or manipulation is not enough to emphasize the emotions or thoughts behind the message. The use of other objects, facial expressions and hand gestures provides a different kind of clarity. Nonverbal communication provides clues and hints to the real meaning behind the words used (http://www.ehow.com/about_6763748_difference-between-verbal-nonverbal-communication.htm).

Nonverbal vs. Verbal Communication

It is widely debated which form of communication is more persuasive and the underlying reasons by scholars. It seems that verbal communication is seen as a more persuasive form in general and that nonverbal communication exists just to supplement verbal communication. But also, some are wondering whether if these two forms are equally effective on their own ways. Verbal communication is about the content, and can be persuasive depending on how it articulates, proof, logic and emotional appeal. Whether or not verbal communication is persuasive depends largely on the bias and receptiveness of the listener. Non verbal communication is separate from content, and communicates vocally through pitch, tone, cadence and motion, like posture, physical appearance, gesture, and facial expression.

Unlike verbal communication, perceptions based on non verbal communication tend to be qualitative and descriptive, like honesty, confidence, intelligence, authority, and credibility. However, it is not possible to persuade anyone for anything without verbal communication, because there must always be a message. Despite all these, we may still argue that in the presence of a truly unbiased and receptive listener, nonverbal communication can be the main tipping point to decide, whether the person across knows what he is talking about or not. Precisely because nonverbal messages are more primitive, uncontrollable, believable, continuous, unstructured, they are more efficiently and widely understandable.

Similarities between verbal and nonverbal messages are symbolic, individually produced and subject to interpretation. While both verbal and nonverbal communication serves as reflections of people's thoughts, ideas and emotions, they vary in the extent of use. For instance, nonverbal communication is imprecise and explains certain things, but maybe not in its entire complexity. Verbal communication can explain complex ideas because the use of words and speaking are the main forms of communication that people use to get any message across. Regardless of how complex the idea is, people can always explain it verbally. Further, nonverbal communication is only possible within a certain distance.

Unless there is some form of video conversation, nonverbal communication cannot be applied over great distance. Verbal communication does not exactly need visuals to be able to convey thoughts. Therefore, verbal communication can transmit factual information whereas, nonverbal cannot (http://www.ehow.com/about_6763748_difference-between-verbal-nonverbal-communication.htm).

In what comes next, we will develop 'meta communication' as a concept to convey the ways in which these two forms of communication may indeed envelop on each other in multiplicity of ways in order to think further on the ways in which this meta communicative strategies could be useful in the teaching process.

META COMMUNICATION AS A CONCEPT

The prefix can have various meanings but as used in communication, philosophy and psychology its meaning is best recognized as *about*. Thus, *meta communication* refers to communication about communication; *meta-language* is language about language; *meta-message* is a message about a message. In the same way, you can use language (i.e., meta-language) to talk about language (i.e., object language). And you can talk about your messages with meta-messages.

For example, when you send someone an e-mail with a seemingly sarcastic comment and then put a smiley at the end, the smiley communicates about your communication; it says something like "this message is not to be taken literally; I'm trying to be humorous." The smiley is a meta-message; it's a message about a message. When you say, in preface to some comment, "I'm not sure about this but...." you're communicating a message about a message; you're commenting on the message and asking that it be understood with the qualification that you may be wrong. When you conclude a comment with "I'm only kidding" you're meta-communicating; you're communicating about the communication.

"Every communication has a content and relationship aspect to such an extent that the latter classifies the former and is therefore a meta-communication." Each person responds to the *content* of communication in the *context* of the relationship between the communicators. The word meta communication is used in many different ways, but Watzlawick uses it to refer to the exchange of information about how to interpret other information (http://www.im.ovgu.de/im_media/downloads/lehre/ws1011/l_deckers/Watzlawick+5+Axioms.pdf).

Just as the interpretation of the words "What an idiot you are" could be influenced by the following words "Just kidding", it could also be influenced by the relationship between the communicators. In the example given, the

word "idiot" might be accepted quite happily from a close friend, but convey an entirely different meaning in other circumstances (Coates, 2009).

De Vito (2000) suggests that for a message to have meaning, both elements, verbal and nonverbal, need to be present. He defines nonverbal communication as communicating without words: "You communicate nonverbally when you gesture, smile or frown, widen your eyes, move your chair closer to someone, wear jewellery, touch someone, raise your vocal volume, or even when you say nothing" (DeVito, 2000, p. 130). According to DeVito, meta communication is "communication that refers to other communications" (2001, p.136). In other words, meta communication is talking about 'talk' or 'communication'.

For example, if two married people sit-down to talk about an argument they just had, they are meta communicating because they are talking about the communication that happened in the argument. Meta communication can be communication about both verbal and nonverbal communication. If a girlfriend is talking to her boyfriend and she complains that her boyfriend does not seem to be listening to her and judging from his lack of eye contact (nonverbal communication), then the girlfriend is meta-communicating because she is talking about her boyfriend's nonverbal communication.

'Meta communication' is therefore something that occurs 'in addition to the communication' and we must always be aware of its existence. It is essential to remember that the meta communication which accompanies any message is very powerful. The receiver will use these clues to help them to interpret what you mean, but more importantly they will often take the meaning from the meta communication rather than from the verbal words themselves, particularly when what one is saying conflicts with what he/she is doing. If, for example, you are angry but trying to hide your anger, you must be aware of your body posture, the way you use your eyes, gestures and facial expressions, and the tone of your voice, which may well give you away. Similarly, in writing, the 'tone of your voice' may show, show your attitude/character. In addition meta communication is to create meanings by solving relationships of body language (Demiray, 2009).

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING PROCESS WHILE LEARNING AND TEACHING

To understand knowledge building process it is essential to distinguish learning -"the process through which the cultural capital of a society is made available to successive generations" from knowledge building- "the deliberate effort to increase the cultural capital". This, in turn, requires distinguishing knowledge building from a broad range of activities that share its constructivist underpinnings, but not its focus on the creation of new knowledge. These include collaborative learning, guided discovery, project-based learning, and communities of learners, communities of practice, and anchored instruction, distance learning as well as learning a foreign language. Knowledge building teaches students how to develop a repertoire of skills that allow them to become experts in the art of learning, a skill that, once developed, can be used across their academic and working lives. In a knowledge-building environment, structured assignments can assist learning for students, rather than teachers, are invested with the individual and collective responsibility to identify holes in their knowledge, develop plans to close them, and assess progress in attaining their goals.

Learning needs, discovered through structured assignments, which determine the activities students perform in order to master a specific subject. Knowledge building may bridge the chasm between the classroom and the corporation, because it allows students to develop the skills involved in learning, thinking critically and working co-operatively with others (<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/LessonsInLearning/>). The same principles apply to learning a foreign language as well.

DYNAMICS OF KNOWLEDGE BUILDING PROCESS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH META COMMUNICATION

The dynamics of knowledge building process has social aspects such as the creation of public knowledge. In contrast to knowledge situated within the individual mind (the traditional concern of education) and knowledge situated in the practice of groups (the concern of situated cognition and communities of practice), public knowledge has an out-in-the-world character. Public knowledge can itself become an object of inquiry and the basis for further knowledge building. Thus there is the possibility of a knowledge building dynamic that drives the continual creation and advancement of new knowledge. What makes knowledge building a realistic approach to education is the discovery that children as early as grade one can engage in it. Thus there is a clear developmental link running from childhood education on into advanced education and adult knowledge work, in which the same process is carried out at increasingly high levels (<http://ikit.org/kb.html>).

Like all your communication, your meta communication may be used both effectively and ineffectively. Generally, it's helpful to analyze your talking patterns and the ways in which you and your partner or management and workers, say, relate to each other. This is good; this is the effective use of meta communication and can often lead to significant improvements in your own relationships. But, when you substitute talking about your communication for talking about a problem, you're likely to create more problems than you had originally.

The conversation (and soon-to-be argument) is now between the parents and their view of each other. When this type of talk becomes the sole or main topic of conversation, you're into what is called a *meta communication spiral*, with your talk focusing more and more on the ways you talk and less and less on the problem of the child. So, the lessons to be learned from meta communication are two fold: Use meta communication to improve your interpersonal and relationship communication -to preface important messages or to analyze and ultimately improve relationship communication- for example, and avoid meta communication when it substitutes for addressing an immediate problem (<http://tcbdevito.blogspot.com>).

As it is mentioned above the most important phase in building knowledge—is using meta communicational element. We can discuss many examples as meta communicational elements in education materials which are produced for traditional or distance education environments, domestically and universally. But we should discuss the exact universal examples here rather than domestic ones. For example let's look at the traffic education course. Some symbols talk us universally.



For example “**DO NOT HORN**”, means not disturb here, please be careful, there is some sensitive thing around here like school, hospital etc. The meanings of these symbols and their function for our life with correct running of the traffic system talk us from various aspects of possibilities as described by the teachers. Also this would mean to discuss with learners for receiving their critics and thoughts during this traffic education period. Learning of other signs and rules of traffic education are similar on using meta communication process and its function. Since, we have to learn and teach these certain

rules and values via signs and symbols by the same meaning. These meanings do not change in different societies or in between different regions of the same society. In this context maybe life sciences have more advantages than the social ones like history, philosophy, geography or literature. In social sciences terms and concepts appear more abstract and we have to think more in abstract terms. However the terms of life sciences like chemistry, physics or math have more definite signs, symbols and icons for their contents. So that we can use meta communicational elements more often and also functionally while producing educational materials in instruction for these fields.

Other examples are useful to clarify understanding of meta communication concept and its function in life long learning process with our daily life. For example, some signs dealt with disabled person which are conveniently understand each others in same the meaning of parking for disabled person, toilet for disabled person, meal for disabled person, path for disabled person, reserve for disabled person, line for disabled person which we can meet anywhere. The word 'disabled' is unnecessary. We understand meaning of these symbols very briefly and then behave how it is necessary in social perspective.



Let's have look deeper to examples from the math course world. Usually 2×2 is 4 or $2+2=4$ in every corner of the world or to take area of square into consideration can be formulating square of on side length in everywhere (Reynard, 2009).

Another example deals with etiquettes. Etiquettes are practicing in good manners or to know how to behave in given situation and to know how to interact with the people or others. Proper etiquette helps you make a great first impression and stand out in a competitive with others. From point of communication science, etiquettes have meta communicational function in communication process. In this process etiquettes are verbally have a meaning dealt with what you say and how you say it and nonverbally Etiquette has a handshake, posture, eye contact, facial expressions meaning, In other words etiquette is defined as the forms, manners, and ceremonies established by convention as acceptable or required in social relations, in a profession or in official life.

Textbooks make claims about how meta communication betters relationships in various ways; however, research is not cited to uphold such claims. Therefore, since studies in the past have not examined the possible link between meta communication and relationship satisfaction within romantic relationships, a relationship between the two concepts must be addressed and tested (Alexander, 1972). Although online learning offers a more direct mode of communication between the learner and the instructor than in many in-class situations, many students and educators feel that a deeper interaction is needed to feel part of a group dynamic online. However, does this actually help the student learn, feel part of the class, and control the attrition rate? What value does a photograph add to online learning (Hand, 2000)?

The knowledge builder must have the knowledge and experience of various forms of activities such as reviewing Experience, attitude Questions, finding Things Out, finding and using Information, role Play, preparing Written Information and problem solving and planning action: (Rashid, 1998).

Indeed some principles may apply to teaching English as a foreign language, therefore this process could be enhanced by use of meta communicative techniques. In order to develop this argument, first we need to consider the structure and system of 'language' as a social phenomena briefly and show the ways in which 'English' language came to be a commonly learned and spoken language in our global world.

ROLE AND FUNCTION OF META COMMUNICATION CONCEPT FOR TEACHING ENGLISH

Language may refer either to the specifically human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication, or to a specific instance of such a system of complex communication (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language>). People have always been interested in learning a language by using linguistic or extra linguistic means of communication. Learning a language involves:

- Paralinguistic and extra linguistic means of communication (i.e. the function of gestures, mime, prosody, etc.).
- Linguistic means of communication (including knowledge about items belonging to the levels of phonology/graphology, morphology, syntax, lexis).
- Pragmatic and discourse knowledge (e.g. knowledge how to express speech acts by linguistic and paralinguistic means, knowledge about the structure of different discourse types, knowledge about co-occurrence restrictions on speech acts (possible adjacency pairs).
- Socio-interactional knowledge, refers to the knowledge on general social rules for interaction in a given society or situation (Faerch & Kasper, 1986).

By metacommunicating we imply the learners' activity in analysing, monitoring and evaluating those knowledge systems implicit within the various text-types confronting him during learning. Such metacommunication occurs within the communicative performance of the classroom as a sociolinguistic activity in its own right. Through this ongoing communication and metacommunication, learners not only become participants in the procedures and activities, they may also become critically sensitised to the potential and richness of the unified system of knowledge, affects and abilities upon which their communication depends (Breen & Candlin, 1980). Metacommunicative function indicates how the referential meaning of a message is to be interpreted and it relates to the speaker's subjective intentions or the hearer's subjective interpretation thereof when using the code. Nonverbal communication which involves conveying messages to an audience through body movements, head nods, hand-arm gestures, facial expressions, eye gaze, posture, and interpersonal distance can be given as an example of meta communication (Kellerman, 1992). Goldin-Meadow (1999) suggested that "gesture serves as both a tool for communication for listeners, and a tool for thinking for speakers". For speakers, gestures facilitate retrieval of words from memory and reduce cognitive burden. For listeners, they can facilitate comprehension of a spoken message (e.g., Cassell, McNeill, & McCullough, 1999) and convey thoughts not present in speech. Although nonverbal communication gives clues to what speakers are thinking about or enhances what they are saying, cultural differences may interfere with understanding a message (e.g., Pennycook, 1985). Facial expressions in Korean culture are different from those in Western cultures in terms of subtlety.

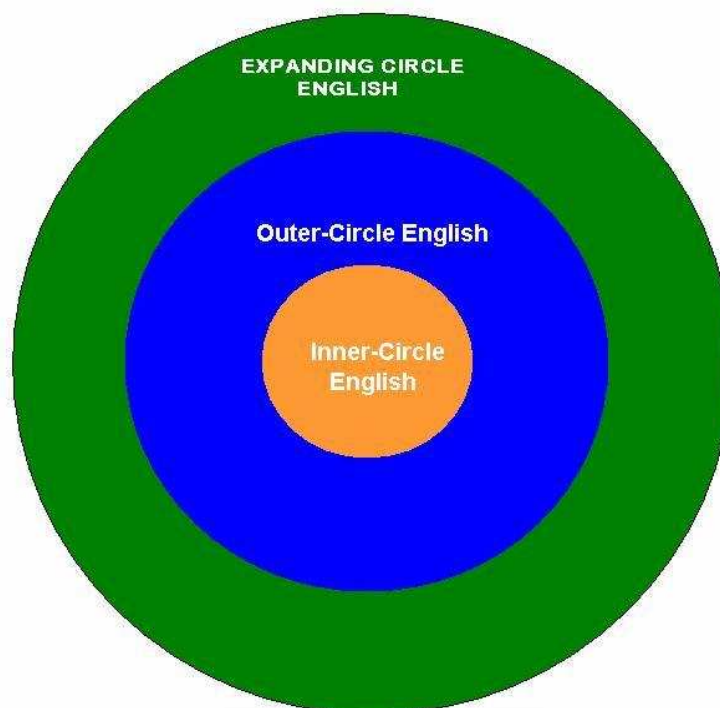
Perceptiveness in interpreting others' facial expressions and emotions is an important element of nonverbal communication (Yum, 1987). In Japan, gestures and facial expressions sometimes serve social functions such as showing politeness, respect, and formality. Bowing or looking slightly downward shows respect for the interlocutor (Kagawa, 2001). Engaging eye contact is often considered rude in Asia culture.

Various studies with native speakers have shown that the presence of gestures with a verbal message brings a positive outcome to both speakers and listeners. Morrel-Samuels and Krauss (1992) found that a gesture functions as a facilitator to what a speaker intends to say. In narration, gestures are synchronized with speech and are conveyed right before or simultaneously with a lexical item. They facilitate negotiation of meaning and help speakers to recall lexical items faster (Hadar, Wenkert-Olenik, Krauss, & Soroket, 1998). Gestures are

particularly effective for listeners when the intelligibility of the speech is reduced, as in noisy conditions. Other studies focusing on gesture use by L2 learners have found that those learning English as an L2 in a naturalistic setting have the benefit of greater exposure to nonverbal communication features such as gestures and tend to acquire more native-like nonverbal behaviors in contrast to learners of English as a foreign language (EFL; McCafferty & Ahmed, 2000). Learners also use more gestures when producing L2 English than their L1s (e.g., Gullberg, 1998).

Learners with higher proficiency, perhaps in conjunction with more L2 exposure and interaction experience (McCafferty & Ahmed, 2000), might have a greater ability to use gestures as one of their communication strategies. Nonverbal cues may play an important role in interactions that promote interlanguage (interlangua) development for L2 learners by facilitating negotiation and comprehension as well as output (Sueyoshi, A. & D. M. Hardison, 2005).

English, as the most commonly spoken language across the world, has become an international language in the course of time. Kachru (1985) classifies the spread of English in three circles. The first one is inner circle which illustrate the conventional essence of English. The United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia are inner circle countries. The other category is the outer circle which refers to the countries where English is taught as a second language because of the official status given to English. People living in these countries such as Nigeria, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Singapore and India have to learn English because they will need it in a state office anyhow. In other words, people have a chance to use English every time and everywhere in these countries. The last category is called expanding circle which involves the areas where English language is not used for official purposes, but rather as an international language and taught in institutions of education. Learners' interaction in English is limited to school environments and they do not have many chances to communicate in English in their daily lives. Some of these countries can be lined up as Turkey, Greece, France, Germany and Japan.



Kachru's "Circles" Theory

A new term has come into existence by the spread of English worldwide. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) can be described as an international medium of communication which has no native speakers and no proper culture of its own to speak of (Alptekin, 2011). Alptekin says that ELF is everyone's property and lacks idioms, puns, connotations, slang, humour, and culture-specific pragmatic dimensions. As the forms and conventions of ELF transforms and transpositions in speech acts and cultural contexts and interact and influence one another, each variety itself becomes multicultural in the process and gradually fosters a multicultural identity among its speakers (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). Jenkins (2004) claims that learners need to learn not only variety of English, but about Englishes; their similarities and differences; issues involved in intelligibility; the strong links between language and identity rather than conforming to a native standard such as British English.

Today it is possible to mention about Chinese English, Japanese English, Thai English which have different syntactic, lexical and meta communicative characteristics. As Smith (1983) states no one needs to become more like the Americans, the British, the Australians, the Canadians or any other English speaker in order to lay claim on the language.

No matter what kind of English that aimed at teaching, we cannot escape the need to decide on the variety or varieties which students are exposed to and have to learn.

The choice seems to be between adopting one (perhaps native speaker) variety, or, raising students' awareness and 'plucentricity', so that they can adjust their speech 'in order to be intelligible to interlocutors from a wide range of L1 backgrounds, most of whom are not inner circle native speakers' (Harmer, 2007). Harmer further claims that for beginner students, whether from the inner circle or from anywhere else, presenting the language in its variety will be an appropriate pedagogical model. As the students become more advanced, the variety's richness – including metaphors and idioms- should also be offered in order to make them absorb better, unless they are not too culture-specific. Jenkins states that (2004) our students should be made more and more aware of different Englishes as they become more advanced.

The more students are exposed to the varieties of meta communicative elements, the better they can understand and be aware of varieties of English language. Meta communicative abilities may serve students as an effective method to allow the students to systematically examine texts in a critical manner. Here it is inevitable to mention about critical thinking. From a practical perspective, Haskins (2006:2) states that critical thinking is "a process by which we use our knowledge and intelligence to effectively arrive at the most reasonable and justifiable positions on issues, and which endeavors to identify and overcome the numerous hindrances to rational thinking." A critical thinker, according to Birjandi & Bagherkazemi (2010:137), is someone who among other characteristics:

- has a strong inclination to notice the prominence of good thinking;
- describes problems and concentrates on related topics and issues;
- differentiates between logical and illogical inferences;
- postpones judgments and decisions in the absence adequate proof;
- comprehends the difference between logical reasoning and rationalizing;
- knows that one's comprehension is restricted and that there are degrees of belief;
- distinguishes between facts, views and suppositions;
- watches out for authoritarian effects and specious assertions;
- predicts the results of alternative actions.

It should be stated that critical thinkers are also good at understanding meta communicative concepts and use them in communicating in the target language. Good language learners make guesses about the language, use reasoning and they are good at making inferences.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

As is emphasized in the text, meta-communication is a very important, powerful and functional concept during knowledge building for preparation of the course materials in education field. In this meaning, concept is becoming a more carefully designing course for language learners. Good language learners are the ones who can understand and use meta communicative elements in communicating in English. The more students are exposed to meta communicative elements, the better they can understand the dynamics of good communication skills.

The implications of such a method that makes use of critical thinking and meta communication will accompany teachers who inform their students that other nations are also using English as an official language. Some other supportive techniques and strategies may be developed as well. For instance, teachers may bring some videos to the class on which Indians, Africans and other people from different nationalities using English either as a foreign or second language. In this way, students will better understand the internationality and multiplicity of the ways in which English language is performed through different agents across cultures. Most of the students and teachers think that the USA and the UK impose their culture via their language. Teachers may bring reading texts related to the other cultures just to show that English can be used as a tool to learn something that is not related to the USA and the UK culture. Teachers may bring extra reading texts apart from the ones in their course book materials to familiarize students with other cultures and make them competent interculturally (Tomak 2011). By doing so, students will also improve their intercultural competence by acquiring information about other cultures as well.

Teachers can create a holistic environment (by not focusing exclusively on language forms), they can interact naturally with the meaning students want to create. In this experimental curriculum native speakers may be invited to enroll in the class or assist in the lessons.

Teachers may create blogs or carry out online activities as well in order to support and develop students' critical thinking capacities. English textbooks and materials should be written which reflect other cultures and identities so the students can engage in relating the texts books into their own cultural terms and expressing their identity rather than mimicking the others. By gaining awareness of meta communicative aspects of target language, students may communicate with other speakers of English whether they use English as ESL, EFL or ELF.

In conclusion, curriculum developers and material designers may discuss their educational course materials for re-building (at any level such as printed, audio, visual, electronic and verbal) from point of function of meta communication and knowledge building theory perspectives according to recent developments and learners' needs. Lesson materials and course books may be prepared to include instances of meta communication in order to raise students' awareness. Students may be exposed to natural language use by ESL, EFL and ELF learners. They may be helped to be critical thinkers by applying language learning strategies.

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