


MIĘDZY NAUCZYCIELEM A UCZĄCYM SIĘ: W STRONĘ SKUTECZNEJ KOMUNIKACJI

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NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN THE TEACHING OF POLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE USING THE EXAMPLE OF ASIAN GROUPS. THE DIFFICULTIES, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

(THIS ARTICLE WAS TRANSLATED FROM POLISH BY JAKUB WOSIK)

Keywords: non-verbal communication, verbal communication, body language, gestures, foreign language teacher error, Japanese gestures

Abstract. There exists a major gap in the teaching of Polish as a foreign language. It applies to the teaching of extra-verbal communication. It would seem that the acquisition of the extra-verbal code of Polish can occur in students in parallel with the development of their linguistic competence, however, the level of interference between the non-verbal code taken from the country of origin and the code typical for the country of the target language is so high that it distorts communication. That is also just as often the cause of teacher errors caused by a teacher's lack of awareness that this aspect of communication should also be taught in class. Therefore, this article is intended to indicate those areas to which a teacher should pay particular attention in the teaching process in order to limit as much as possible any communicative problems experienced by students from various cultures.

Teachers of Polish as a foreign language devote much time and energy in the educational process to conveying knowledge about Polish grammar, vocabulary, phonetics and culture. They train their students in reading, writing, speaking and listening. They show how to correctly construct utterances and texts, and how to avoid grammatical, spelling or lexical errors. That requires a considerable amount

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of work, while developing in students correct linguistic habits is, in itself, a major achievement for a teacher. In the multitude of exercises and problems raised in class, teachers usually omit one major skill: non-verbal communication. If one were to consider the matter from the point of view of Albert Mehrabian, it would appear that we, teachers, teach how to convey a mere 7% of a message which reaches us (Głażewska, Kusio 2012, p. 29). However, considering the fact that Mehrabian's study was rather limited (the majority of responses were triggered by *like-dislike* questions and thus his calculations cannot be applied to other models), it would be better to refer to work by Ray Birdwhistell who estimated that no more than 30–35% of the meaning included in a conversations is conveyed using words (Głażewska, Kusio 2012, p. 29), while Edward T. Hall argued that “only 10% of acts of interpersonal communication are consciously controlled by people, while the remainder is unconscious and acquired by people through socialisation” (Głażewska, Kusio 2012, p. 29). [Unless indicated otherwise, quotations in English were translated from Polish]. From the point of view of the teaching of a foreign language it seems important that “in the first 30 seconds of an interaction, between 6 and 8 conclusions about a person are formulated by interlocutors before the person utters a single word; therefore, the first impressions formulated by people based on their interpretation of the interlocutor's body language may be decisive about the further course of an interaction” (Głażewska, Kusio 2012, p. 30).

1. ABSORPTION OF BODY LANGUAGE VS. THE PROCESS OF TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

However one considers the calculations of the researchers based on the results discussed above, a major problem is clear: in the teaching of Polish as a foreign language we omit a major portion of communication, assuming that students can naturally decode our message and correctly interpret it, and that their own body language complies with our own. While that may, to some extent, be true in relations with representatives of European cultures or cultures close to our model of behaviour, it cannot be expected in the case of contacts with distant and obscure cultures, or with cultures known (even if only based on stereotypes) for their isolationism. The expectation that students originating from those are going to absorb the correct forms of non-verbal communication during the process of linguistic education is false. Many researchers have indicated that body language is absorbed by a participant in the culture in which she/he grows up even faster than the verbal code, while the development of habits for decoding body language in a specific manner often leads to communication misunderstandings at various levels. Those may be minor, only slightly distorting communication,

but they may also lead to a total lack of communication between the participants. At this point it is worth referring to an experiment conducted as early as 1931 in the Soviet Union. The subjects were asked to try avoiding any gesturing while talking. The result was surprising and none of the persons participating in the experiment managed to reach the intended objective as it turned out that the blocking of gesticulation caused major distortions in the construction of utterances (Orzechowski 2007, p. 62). This example clearly indicates that it is not possible to separate the verbal and the extra-verbal codes; on the contrary, it is necessary to strive to unify both codes within the language we use so that both communication channels are compatible and do not interfere with each other. Thus, it would be difficult to agree with the position of Robert Andrzej Dul, who argued that:

We can generally assume that the whole of humanity has a common rather extensive array of motions, expressions and gestures (ever extending thanks to the development of mass communication), which does not yet protect us against misunderstandings caused by failure to understand or correctly read someone's behaviour or motions. In the case of intercultural communication, the gestures being used should possess a distinct shape, they should be poignantly presented, clear in their expression, and difficult to mistake with other gestures. (Dul 1995, p. 64).

That seems an excessive simplification and overestimation of the importance of mass communication, which, despite its strong impact on the universalisation of behaviour, does not possess such a reach nor such an ability to standardise models. It would be also difficult to talk about intercultural gestures which should possess a distinct shape, and which should be poignantly presented, as such a statement entails an assumption that there exists a stock of gestures which are always obvious in interpretation and known to all participants of a communicative situation. That is not the case, while any attempt at distinctly performing a gesture may rather appear to all teachers as the behaviour of who someone tries to explain something to a foreigner, not by clarifying it or simplifying the structures they use, but by repeating the same words only louder.

A teacher working with a group of foreigners from various cultures is not able to learn the extra-verbal codes of all students. That is simply impossible, due to the multitude of cultural and gestural differences in individual cultures for a start. How can the problem be solved then? It seems that what is most important is the awareness that such discrepancies do exist and that in the teaching process one has to pay attention to them. However, since it is unclear where the differences between Polish and other cultures lie, it would be beneficial to use other methods. A good solution seems to be to begin with Polish culture while bearing in mind the areas where differences may exist, and to indicate specific behaviour or habits of Poles which will provoke students to indicate differences between their cultures and the Polish culture, and thus to help them realise the disparities between their extra-verbal codes.

2. THE NECESSITY OF COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND BODY LANGUAGE

The lack of compatibility between language and body language appears at various levels. To indicate them I suggest considering both the disturbances in teaching of specific types of expression, e.g. labels and illustrators, and to consider student behaviour in terms of proxemics, kinesics, olfactics, etc., to understand their cultural dissimilarity. Correct communication occurs only when the verbal and extra-verbal codes complement each other forming an impression of coherence. Krystyna Jarzabek has argued for the co-existence of unintentional gestulatory-expressive motions performed by persons engaged in a conversation, and purposeful and intentional motions, the meaning of which is known to senders and recipients because they operate a common convention, which every person learns from their childhood by imitating other members of the community in which they live (Jarzabek 2002, p. 5). Dale G. Leathers posited that:

there are so many intercultural differences in non-verbal communication that it is impossible to offer any comprehensive description of them. Suffice to say that each culture has its own separate system of communication. Children acquire it before they acquire verbal skills and they use it as their basic means of communication. As they grow up, their non-verbal behaviour becomes so ingrained in their minds that they engage in it rather unwittingly” (Leathers 2007, p. 391). Considering those conditions, one should agree with Aneta Załazińska’s conclusion that “a successful communication is co-created by words and content conveyed extra-verbally. They do not function as separate codes, but they rather co-create a message and complement each other (Załazińska 2001, p. 13).

3. RELATIONS BETWEEN EXTRA-VERBAL AND VERBAL BEHAVIOURS

When considering the relations between extra-verbal and verbal behaviours, one conclusion which immediately comes to mind is that it is impossible to separate those forms of communication. Paul Ekman (Ekman 1965, pp. 440–441) indicated the possible relations between them. Their analysis is a good starting point for a discussion of lapses or errors in teaching extra-verbal communication within the teaching of a language as a foreign because it enables one to realise the basic mechanisms which govern that dual-channel system of communication. Thus, there might occur a *repetition* between the extra-verbal and verbal communications, which exists when a verbal signal becomes amplified by a gesture, e.g., when we motion towards something while talking about it. In the case of combination of both forms

of communication, there might also occur *contradictions*, as in a situation when, while conveying a positive piece of information, one shakes one's head. There may also occur a *supplementation* when an extra-verbal communication supplements or expands the verbal one – such a situation occurs when, e.g., a person says that their tooth aches and at the same time they place their hand at the location from which the pain radiates, and usually further amplifies the message with a pained facial expression. *Substitution* occurs when a non-verbal message exists instead of a verbal one, e.g., when after passing an exam a student exits the room and gives a thumbs up to his colleagues. *Accentuation* also plays a major role in co-creating a message. It occurs when some elements of an expression are amplified by specific movements – that can be, e.g., motioning to a specific place on a board while talking about it. And, finally, the last element indicated by Ekman: *the regulating function*. It covers the coordination of one's own behaviour (when one counts something and amplifies the effect by counting on the fingers), and the coordination with the behaviour of others (when listening to someone's else's speech one nods one's head in agreement or maintains eye contact, which, at the same time, offers feedback to the speaker).


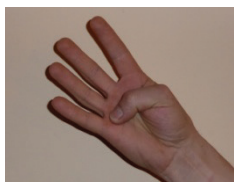


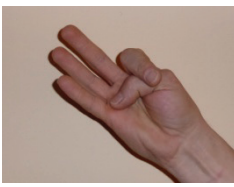

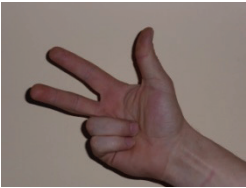
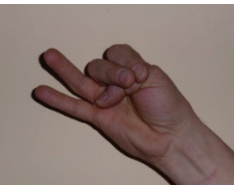










How do elements which regulate both codes apply to the situation common in teaching Polish as a foreign language? To indicate the possible problems, I shall refer to the specific example of a linguistically homogeneous group in the teaching of which I have the largest experience: the Japanese. It would be a cliché to mention the cultural remoteness between our countries. Therefore, I shall immediately transition to specific solutions and potentially difficult situations which are noteworthy when considering the fact that we transfer non-verbal behaviour from our own language to the language which we teach. In the case of repetitions, I do not identify any major dissonance which might cause problems in receiving messages by Poles. When agreeing to something students additionally nodded their heads, when giving directions they motioned towards the place they were referring to, etc. Contradictions emerged when they argued that something was interesting while trying to mask their drowsiness or yawning (sometimes they did not even attempt to conceal the latter). That was where the impact of the Japanese culture was major, as in Japanese it is not polite to express negation directly, so it can only be read from extra-verbal signals. Supplementation occurred when students said where a group member was, and emphatically looked towards the side from which she/he was supposed to come. The most interesting and, as it turned out, the most problematic, was the situation of replacement. I can distinctly remember two situations when, due to the lack of a verbal message, I was not able to decode the message which seemed obvious to my interlocutor. That happened when I stood with my manager, a Japanese, on a riverbank and the professor instead of shouting over the hum of the river motioned towards me, a gesture which in Japanese body language means: “come here”. I was not able to decode it correctly since its performance differed from

the variants I was familiar with (the Japanese gesture is a one-handed gesture, but the fingers are directed downwards which seems as if sweeping something towards oneself, but if performed quickly, it may be misleading as quick progressing motions may appear to an observer, if she/he can infer the meaning even slightly, that they are supposed to move away, not closer [vide Photo 1]). The other situation occurred when while organising something before a youth festival, a student who was standing far away made a gesture which in Japan means money because, as it later turned out, he had to go into the classroom where he had left his bag, but I interpreted it as the “OK” gesture and I was very surprised when the student left for the main building instead of coming towards me (we were supposed to go to a shop for the missing products together) [vide Photo 2].



Photo 1 [author: Barbara Morcinek-Abramczyk] Photo 2 [author: Barbara Morcinek-Abramczyk]

Similar misunderstandings may occur when applying the regulating function (especially when enumerating elements). When a Pole adds something up using their fingers during a presentation (firstly, secondly...), they begin with the thumb, continue with the index finger, etc. In the same situation, a Chinese begins with the index finger and continues through the middle and the ring finger, while a Japanese bends the thumb towards the inside of their palm, then the index finger and so on. It would seem that a teacher who knows the system of counting on fingers in Japanese would have an easier time in contact with the representatives of other Asian countries, but once again it is necessary to refer to a remark by Tokimasa Sekiguchi that there is no such thing as Asia (Sekiguchi 2008, pp. 48–75): it is enough to compare the modes of counting used in Japan and in China to see that the knowledge about one Asian country cannot be transferred to other countries in the region. It is enough to compare the Polish, Japanese and Chinese systems of counting on fingers to see clearly how divergent they are. It turns out there is no one number which is represented in the same way in all three languages. The biggest similarity exists in the case of the number 10, though only in Polish and Japanese as Chinese number 10 differs greatly from the pattern.

number/ country	Poland	Japan	China
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			




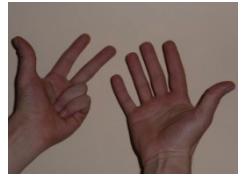


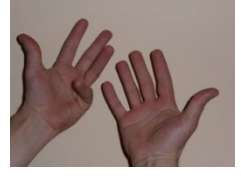





number/ country (cont.)	Poland (cont.)	Japan (cont.)	China (cont.)
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

Photo 3 – systems of counting on fingers in Polish, Japanese and Chinese
[author: Barbara Morcinek-Abramczyk]

Actually, there is no need to compare different languages; it is enough to analyse the representation of the numbers 3 and 10 in Chinese to see their variant instances which do not increase clarity of communication: the number 3 can be presented in two ways [Photos 4a and 4b] while the number 10 in a total of three ways [Photos 5a, 5b and 5c].

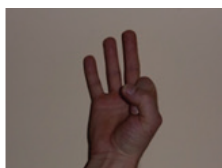
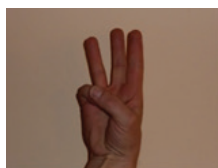


Photo 4a and 4b – the number 3 in Chinese Photo 1 [author: Barbara Morcinek-Abramczyk]



Photo 5a, 5b and 5c – the number 10 in Chinese Photo 1 [author: Barbara Morcinek-Abramczyk]

When a teacher realises the fact that such communication misunderstandings may occur while teaching a foreign language, they will be more careful and if only they identify discrepancies between their students' verbal and extra-verbal codes, they will indicate those and strive to ensure the transparent association of both codes in the communication directed towards students, and to focus on the gestures specific to Polish body language.

4. DIFFERENCES IN TERMS OF PROXEMICS

When considering possible errors in communication one should analyse the individual domains of non-verbal communication, as it is within them that the differences between individual cultures become clear. Thus, proxemics defines the usage of space and territory in interpersonal contacts. Edward T. Hall, the originator of the term, thus defined its scope: proxemics is “the study of how man in an unwitting manner constructs (organises) micro space – the distance between people in everyday activities, the organisation of space in their homes and buildings, and, eventually, in their cities” (Hall 1963, p. 1003). When considering the differences between the Polish and Japanese cultures, very quickly one will notice significance discrepancies as space in the two cultures has completely different functions. In the Polish culture it is rather a backdrop for everything else, while in the Japanese culture it is a significant element which carries meaning. Compare even the sizes of flats (most Polish flats are larger than Japanese ones), interior design – e.g., the Japanese fondness for minimalist aesthetics, the distribution of pieces of furniture in a room, the manner of sitting (the Japanese sitting on the floor covered with tatami mats and the Polish sitting on chairs around a table), and decorations (the amount of trinkets in Poland versus the centre-piece calligraphic signs in Japan). It is also worth noticing the organisation of cities, particularly easy to notice in Tokyo which generally lacks any street names, and where addresses are defined in a very peculiar manner, i.e. starting with the name of the borough, then the quarter and finally the house, and only then the specific flat. To complete the analysis of proxemics, it is also important to consider the communication distances defined by E. T. Hall. Those

are: the intimate distance (from touching to 45 cm), personal distance (from 45 cm to 1.2 m), social distance (from 1.2 m to 3.6 m), and public distance (over 3.6 m). Differences in that respect are most visible in terms of the intimate and personal distances. Polish culture being a much more tactile culture than Japanese culture fits the definition presented above. In the case of Japanese culture, the representatives of which avoid touching, especially in public areas (couples holding hands or kissing in public are still a rare sight), the distance would have to be expanded considerably, but one cannot forget about such extreme touch-related experiences as riding Japanese public transport (the metro particularly), where it would be difficult to talk about any kind of distance when it is difficult to move at all. To cope with that highly inconvenient situation, the Japanese have developed a habit of not noticing their fellow passengers and thus isolating themselves from others to, seemingly, retain their proxemic independence. Mark Knapp and Judith Hall noted that: “when the setting forces us into close quarters with other people not well known to us, such as elevators or crowded buses, we try to increase distance psychologically to reduce threatening feelings of intimacy. We can do this through less eye contact, body tenseness and immobility, cold silence, nervous laughter, jokes about the intimacy, and public conversation directed at all present” (Knapp, Hall 1997, p. 161) [English version: Knapp M. L., Hall J. A., Horgan T. G., *Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction*, 2014, Boston, p. 97]. Japanese carriages intended for women only are an extreme form of avoiding inconvenience caused by forced physical closeness. Due to the not always gallant behaviour of some men in those crowded places, in Tokyo there operate in morning and evening rush hours special carriages (their characteristic pink markings are easily noticeable in every station), from which men are banned, which improves the psychological comfort of travel for women, who no longer have to worry that their privacy might be violated when they travel to work or back home.

How does that translate into the situation in class and the possible communication interference? One can identify two main aspects of the problem: Japanese students may find it difficult to become accustomed to the Polish system of addressing, finding their way around cities, but also to the organisation of interiors, so different from what they are used to (though it may not be such a major problem as they often visit interiors designed in the Western fashion, e.g., restaurants); they may also have a problem with Polish friendliness, shaking hands when greeting people, hugging, and patting on the back, which infringes their intimate and private spaces. Therefore, it is also worth making sure during classes that one respects the norms and feelings of one’s students, but also that one helps them realise the fact that our culture is different from theirs in this respect, which often helps them open up to cultural otherness and results in many of them absorbing not only the language, but also the proxemic behaviour of Poles (it would be difficult at

this point not to mention work with students from Arab countries for whom the proxemic behaviour of Poles may seem to be cold and to create distance when compared to their much more touch-based cultures, in which proxemic distance is reduced considerably).

5. DIFFERENCES IN TERMS OF KINESICS

Another major area for the teaching of a foreign language is kinesics, i.e. the science of body movements, gestures, and facial expressions, which form a significant element of communication. Ray L. Birdwhistell indicated in his studies of the Kutenai peoples the difference in their behaviour when they communicated in their own language and in English. His observations showed that as they acquired the new language, they also acquired the non-verbal behaviour related to it (Głążewska, Kusio 2012, p. 41). From the point of view of the teaching of Polish as a foreign language (and surely of any foreign language teacher), such a process would be ideal: a language learner acquiring a language together with the set of gestures and behaviour typical for it. In theory, that seems simple enough, yet practice shows it is not that obvious. The first obstacle is that in one's mother tongue a person acquires the body language unwittingly from the earliest childhood (in some elements one becomes proficient even before one begins to speak) – through observation of the closest environment. That simultaneous acquisition of the verbal and extra-verbal codes is so deeply rooted in the mind of a language user that very often there exist clear instances of interference of the extra-verbal code, the one which is less conscious and more ingrained in one's subconscious, onto new languages which the person tries to learn. That may lead to strong distortions of a message which is why the role of the teacher is so important, as it is she/he who notices those discrepancies in time and corrects them, indicating gesture behaviour matching the Polish language in order for a student's non-verbal message to be in line with her/his verbal one. One must remember that an interlocutor of the student we are teaching, when faced with an instance of a distorted message, will most probably subconsciously lean towards extra-verbal communication, and if the interlocutor is unable to decode it, communication will fail. It would be a good idea if students learnt, and teachers remembered, that the harmony between both types of communication is important not only in order to achieve communicational success, but also because it impacts on one's credibility (Leathers 2007, p. 41) in the eyes of the recipient. As Krystyna Jarzabek noted: "non-compliance between the meaning of an utterance and the accompanying gestures and facial expressions decreases the credibility of the utterance" (Jarzabek 2002, p. 6).

Research shows that the combination of expressions and gesticulation, properly amplifying and supplementing verbal communication, helps the sender of a message achieve full credibility, while their message is properly read at all levels. It is worth remembering at this point that the extra-verbal code is not universal. It is typical for a given culture, and, according to Edward T. Hall, determined culturally, meaning it must be read exclusively based on a specific culture (Hall 2001, p. 80), and, therefore, as the distance between cultures grows, the probability of a correct reading of signs decreases.

6. DIFFERENCES IN TERMS OF CHRONEMICS AND HAPTICS

Chronemics and haptics are two other domains where cultural differences may arise between learners of Polish and its native users. Chronemics is a discipline focusing on the use of time by the representatives of individual cultures, the ways in which they classify, define, and perceive it, and may offer a teacher of Polish as a foreign language explanation of some instances of students' behaviour, and help students better understand the very restrictive observance of its norms. Of course, that applies to the observance of norms as perceived by Western people, i.e. precise submission to the rules of punctuality and making sure specific tasks are performed "on time". The knowledge may also enable teachers to better understand the attitudes of students from southern or Arab countries. There is a preconception that a student who comes late for class or treats the necessity to keep time frames lightly thus displays a lack of respect; allow me to reiterate: that is true only from the Western point of view. In reality, that is not the case, as those persons simply transfer their chronemic habits onto our culture and the major discrepancies in approach to time cause conflicts. Once again the role of a Polish teacher is significant, as she/he has to become a bridge sometimes between many cultures and establish with students at the start clear rules applicable to all (how many minutes is considered as being late? how long does a whole group wait for someone if they are supposed to go somewhere together?) to avoid misunderstandings, but also to indicate the rules which exist in Polish homes and institutions, so that a student finds her/his way around in them and avoids making gaffes (that would most certainly be the classification of tardiness of an hour or more, which is absolutely normal in Latin American countries, but in Poland would be considered in very negative terms, especially if it was an invitation for dinner and the hosts waited over an hour for their guests as the meal was getting cold). Similar problems may be caused by an incorrect interpretation of the haptic aspect, i.e. the touch-based relations during communication. Polish body language in terms of the frequency and intensity of touch falls somewhere in the middle of an axis

where at one extreme there are cultures as reserved as the Japanese or the Scandinavian cultures, and at the other cultures very much focussed on touching, e.g., the Arab or South American cultures. For a learner of Polish, that means that if she/he is a representative of the Japanese culture, she/he will have to become accustomed to shaking hands when greeting people or to friendly hugs with their colleagues and not to see in that any intention to violate her/his privacy, and to understand that maintaining her/his distance will not always be considered as a mark of respect, rather an attempt at keeping away or elevating herself/himself. Then, if a student comes from an Arab country, she/he should realise that, e.g., the image of two men hugging tightly or holding hands while walking down the street (Cohen 2010, pp. 231–232) does not evoke in Poland associations of friendship, but rather of a homosexual relationship, which is worth highlighting to students so they try paying attention to their behaviour in public places and are not surprised when their behaviour is read according to Polish norms. Bearing that in mind, a teacher may once again facilitate her/his students' immersion into the Polish culture by helping them avoid the discrepancies between the verbal and extra-verbal messages, and showing them how to properly use touch and what its appropriate intensity should be.

7. DIFFERENCES IN TERMS OF OCULESICS AND OLFACTICS

Oculesics and olfactics are two significant domains of communication. The former consists of the construction, creation and interpretation of eye contact in communication, while the latter applies to the scent-based relations which exist between people. It would seem that both domains are quite distant from traditionally understood body language, which is mainly associated with expressions and gesticulation. However, if one considers the fact that many students come from distant cultures, this aspect also requires attention. Eye contact plays an important role. When considering once again the example of Japanese students, it is easy to notice their divergence in terms of oculusics. It is often the case that a student instead of looking a teacher straight into her/his eyes (which we expect subconsciously, capitalising on the pattern we know from our own culture), the student's sight lingers somewhere around our neck or to the side of it (Cohen 2010, pp. 233–235). A Pole not used to such behaviour would consider that a lack of the required attention, disregarding that which the Pole says, or the situation may cause the Pole to doubt whether her/his interlocutor has understood what she/he said. In fact, in the Japanese system of politeness, that is the behaviour which is considered appropriate and suitable in the situation. A similar problem applies to Japanese students nodding off in class (Tomański 2001, pp. 243–243). That barrier

is particularly difficult for a teacher who arrives in Japan from Poland, as students' active participation in class in Poland is indicated by the students' eyesight being directed at the teacher, often amplified by nodding one's head in agreement or other marks of receiving a message. When standing in front of a group where a few students have their eyes closed, a few others have absent facial expressions and the rest coyly establish eye contact, a teacher can doubt her/his own teaching skills and the allure of the classes they are delivering. However, when the teacher realises that such behaviour results from the culture of a specific country, she/he will understand that the group's behaviour is not intended against her/him. Nonetheless, the teacher somehow has to cope with such a situation as it is nothing new for Japanese teachers, but it may seem even rude to teachers in Poland. Therefore, if the teacher ignores the students' sleeping in class, she/he thus harms those of them who consider Polish as part of their future, as that type of behaviour is not going to be received well during classes at a university or in other official situations. That constitutes a task for the Polish teacher who should indicate the places of divergent behaviour to her/his students, thus ensuring their body language is received favourably and the underlying message is understood well.

It is a good idea to supplement those observations with a few remarks on scent. Olfactics seems to be the least discussed of all the domains of extra-verbal communication. It is understandable considering the fact that scent as something volatile and passing seems to have little to do with communication. Then again, that is odd since scent is one of the first memories people store in their minds (regardless of their cultures). Every child differentiates from the very beginning the scent of their mother, they learn easily that there are pleasant and unpleasant scents to later become ever more efficient in finding their way around the significance of and symbols behind scents. It would seem, however, that scent has no place as regards the teaching of a foreign language, yet that is not completely true. Just consider once more the example of the Japanese and the culture of their country to quickly see, or rather smell, the differences. On Japanese public transport one does not actually have to worry about the smell of one's fellow passengers, as the whole nation is well-known for their particular focus on personal hygiene (not only their own, but, e.g., in public toilets). When riding one of the last evening trains it is possible to smell the scent of partly digested sake (many people are at that time returning home from dinners with their colleagues, which are traditionally accompanied by much alcohol), yet one does not have to worry about what they may face at any time of the day on Polish public transport: the scent of sweaty unwashed clothes combined with the scent of not sufficiently cleaned bodies. There is no need for explaining how such scents are received by the Japanese accustomed to impeccable cleanliness. Although those elements are difficult to include in the process of teaching, it is important to be aware of how much the representatives of different cultures may differ in this domain.

8. DIFFERENCES IN TERMS OF PARALANGUAGE

Finally, it is worth considering the last component of non-verbal communication, that is the so-called paralanguage, i.e. the study of non-verbal elements of voice which include: “vocal qualities, e.g.: intensity, pitch, reach and sound distinctness; vocal characteristics, such as laughter and weeping; sounds separating words, e.g., “uh”, “um”, hisses, sighs, etc.” (Głażewska, Kusio 2012, p. 69).

Those elements of communication are very easily observable while working with foreigners. They seem particularly distinct in the case of the Japanese. Pitch is the easiest to grasp. Europeans who grew up on Akira Kurosawa’s films have in their heads a certain model of a male voice, i.e. low, assertive, interrupted, almost domineering. Today, the samurai-derived models seem grossly exaggerated, though one can still easily notice the division in terms of timbre between men and women. A male voice is by default lower, and the more official a situation is, the more attention is paid to that, while women’s voices seem, to the European ear, excessively high, shrill, and unduly sweet. It was a shock to me when I first noticed that aspect of communication. I was travelling with my friend, a Pole who for over 30 years had been living in Japan and was fluent in Japanese. We were talking in Polish and, obviously, we both spoke in our regular pitches (we both have more of an alto voice), when my friend’s husband called. Imagine my surprise (at that time I had not lived in Japan long, so I had not yet had a chance to observe that) when suddenly I heard my friend speaking in a completely different voice raised by a few tones. I was very much surprised by that, and wherever I had the chance I tried to notice the vocal behaviour of women. After some time, I had a considerable set of observations. I did notice that women spoke much higher, yet I also noticed that the pitch of their voices differed depending on the situation: the more official a situation was and the more men were within the range of their voices, the higher their voices were, while when women were in their own company at dinner or during shopping, they lowered their pitches, as if they no longer had to play the part of the sweet little defenceless damsel. My female students also displayed similar inclinations, though when they were imitating the sounds of Polish they did try to reproduce them with the melody it entails; those who came back from yearlong scholarships in Poland had almost completely acquired the melody of Polish and they very rarely displayed any instances of interference in terms of pitch.

Only after gathering all the aspects analysed above is it possible to have a roughly holistic view of the non-verbal behaviour of students making the effort to learn Polish. The reception of a message formulated by a student can be, as it turns out, distorted not only by lexical or grammatical shortcomings, but also by students’ unfamiliarity with the Polish extra-verbal code. That is where the role

of the teacher is invaluable, as she/he has to anticipate the still neglected part of the teaching process and help students integrate verbal and extra-verbal skills as much as possible.

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KOMUNIKACJA NIEWERBALNA W NAUCZANIU JĘZYKA POLSKIEGO JAKO OBCEGO NA PRZYKŁADZIE GRUP AZJATYCKICH –TRUDNOŚCI, WYZWANIA, ROZWIĄZANIA

Słowa kluczowe: komunikacja niewerbalna, komunikacja werbalna, mowa ciała, gesty, błąd glottodydaktyczny, gesty japońskie

Streszczenie. W nauczaniu języka polskiego jako obcego można zauważyć znaczną lukę. Luka ta obejmuje nauczanie komunikacji pozawerbalnej. Wydawać by się mogło, że przyswojenie kodu pozawerbalnego polszczyzny nastąpi u studenta synchronicznie z rozwijaniem sprawności językowej, ale okazuje się, że interferencja pomiędzy kodem niewerbalnym wyniesionym z kraju ojczystego i kodem typowym dla kraju języka docelowego jest na tyle duża, że powoduje zakłócenia w komunikacji. Na tym polu również często pojawiają się błędy glottodydaktyczne wynikające z braku świadomości, że ten aspekt porozumiewania się powinien być też nauczany w trakcie zajęć dydaktycznych. Artykuł ten ma zatem na celu wskazanie miejsc, na które należy zwrócić szczególną uwagę w procesie nauczania, by w miarę możliwości ograniczyć problemy komunikacyjne studentów z różnych kultur.