PARALINGUISTIC FEATURES AS AN EXPRESSION OF METACOMMUNICATION IN MODERN LINGUISTICS

Muydinova Yulduz Akramjon kizi
Master's Student at Tashkent International University of Chemistry
Email: adkhamovastar@gmail.com

***Abstract:** This article examines the role of paralinguistic features as an expression of metacommunication within modern linguistics. Roman Jakobson's communication model serves as the theoretical framework for analyzing the functional significance of paralinguistic tools in the communicative process. The study highlights the importance of intonation, pauses, tempo, pitch, facial expressions, and gestures in shaping the semantic, pragmatic, and emotional layers of speech. The findings demonstrate that paralinguistic features constitute an integral component of metacommunication, clarifying meaning, revealing implicit messages, and regulating social interaction.*

***Keywords**: paralinguistics, metacommunication, intonation, pragmatics, communication model, discourse, emotional expression.*

***Annotatsiya:** Mazkur maqolada zamonaviy tilshunoslik doirasida paralingvistik xususiyatlarning metakommunikatsiya ifodasi sifatidagi o'rni tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda Roman Jakobsonning kommunikatsiya modeli nazariy asos sifatida olinib, paralingvistik vositalarning kommunikativ jarayondagi funksional ahamiyati yoritiladi. Paralingvistik belgilar — intonatsiya, pauza, temp, ovoz balandligi, mimika va jestlar — nutqning semantik, pragmatik va emotsional qatlamlarini shakllantirishda muhim rol o'ynashi asoslab beriladi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, paralingvistik vositalar metakommunikatsiyaning ajralmas tarkibiy qismi bo'lib, ular xabar mazmunini aniqlashtiradi, yashirin ma'nolarni ochadi hamda ijtimoiy-munosabatlarni tartibga soladi.*

***Kalit so'zlar:** paralingvistika, metakommunikatsiya, intonatsiya, pragmatika, kommunikatsiya modeli, nutq, emotsional ifoda.*

Introduction

In modern linguistics, communication is regarded as a complex and multilayered process that extends beyond the mere exchange of verbal information. Alongside lexical and grammatical structures, various non-verbal and vocal signals

significantly contribute to meaning construction. One of the central theoretical frameworks for understanding communication is Roman Jakobson's model, which identifies six essential components: addresser, addressee, message, code, channel, and context.

While verbal language plays a dominant role in transmitting information, effective communication cannot be fully understood without considering paralinguistic elements. These elements function at the metacommunicative level, shaping how a message should be interpreted. The concept of metacommunication, first introduced by Gregory Bateson (1951), refers to communication about communication — signals that accompany verbal messages and clarify their intended meaning.

This study aims to analyze paralinguistic features as manifestations of metacommunication and to determine their functional role in shaping meaning, emotion, and social relations in discourse.

Reasearch methodology

The research is based on qualitative descriptive analysis within the framework of modern linguistic and psycholinguistic theories. The following methods were employed:

•Theoretical analysis of linguistic literature on paralinguistics and metacommunication.

•Functional analysis of paralinguistic elements within communicative situations.

•Comparative-cultural observation to examine differences in interpretation across cultures.

The theoretical foundation includes Roman Jakobson's communication model and Gregory Bateson's concept of metacommunication. Empirical observations from psycholinguistic research, including Mehrabian's (1971) study on emotional communication, were also considered.

Analysis and results

The analysis demonstrates that paralinguistic features function as primary indicators of metacommunication in discourse. These features can be divided into two categories:

1. Vocal Paralinguistic Features

• Intonation

• Pitch

• Loudness

• Tempo

• Pauses

• Timbre

2. Non-vocal Paralinguistic Features

• Facial expressions

• Gestures

• Eye contact

• Body movements

The findings reveal that paralinguistic elements perform several essential communicative functions:

1. Clarifying semantic meaning — Intonation and stress determine the informational focus of an utterance.

2. Facilitating comprehension — Rhythm and pauses structure discourse into logical units.

3. Expressing emotional states — Vocal variation conveys excitement, dissatisfaction, irony, or empathy.

4. Indicating pragmatic intention — The same utterance may function as a request, command, or irony depending on tone.

5. Revealing implicit meaning — Hesitation, voice trembling, or unusual pauses may signal uncertainty or hidden attitudes.

6. Regulating interaction — Paralinguistic signals organize turn-taking in conversation.

7. Reflecting social relationships — Tone and voice control indicate social distance or hierarchy.

Mehrabian's research (1971) supports the predominance of non-verbal elements in emotional communication, demonstrating that only 7% of emotional meaning is conveyed through words, while 38% is expressed through vocal tone and 55% through body language.

Cross-cultural analysis further shows that paralinguistic interpretation varies significantly across societies. For example, silence may indicate respect in Eastern cultures but discomfort in Western cultures. Loud speech may be perceived positively in Latin or Arab societies, while considered inappropriate elsewhere.

Discussion

The results confirm that paralinguistic features are not secondary or optional elements of communication but integral components of meaning construction. They operate at the metacommunicative level by providing interpretative guidance for verbal messages.

From a pragmatic perspective, paralinguistic cues function as contextualization signals that shape how utterances should be understood. Without these cues, communication becomes semantically incomplete or ambiguous. For example, the phrase "I am fine" may express sincerity, irony, anger, or sadness depending on vocal and facial signals.

Furthermore, paralinguistic tools contribute to discourse organization. They segment speech, highlight thematic shifts, and signal conversational boundaries. In professional settings—such as diplomacy, education, medicine, and psychology—mastery of paralinguistic competence significantly enhances communicative effectiveness.

The study also emphasizes the intercultural dimension of paralinguistics. Misinterpretation of paralinguistic cues can lead to communicative failure. Therefore, awareness of cultural variability in paralinguistic expression is essential in global communication.

Overall, paralinguistic features function as metacommunicative markers that enrich speech, regulate interaction, and convey emotional and social meaning.

References:

1. Jakobson, R. (1960). Linguistics and Poetics. In T. Sebeok (Ed.), Style in Language.

2. Bateson, G. (1951). Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry.

3. Mehrabian, A. (1971). Silent Messages.

4. TeachingEnglish (British Council). Paralinguistics. Available at: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/knowing-subject/n-p/paralinguistics

5. Rahimova, N. (2025).