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SPEECH COMMUNICATION CULTURE NORMS AS CRITERIA FOR SELECTING THE VERBAL COMPONENT IN THE FORMATION OF A TEACHER'S PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

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Abstract: This article examines the norms of speech communication culture as criteria for selecting the verbal component in the formation of a teacher's professional image. Rather than reducing verbal image to grammatical correctness or eloquence, the study conceptualizes it as an integrated system comprising clarity, intelligibility, linguistic normativity, pragmatic appropriateness, ethicality, dialogicity, audience accommodation, and constructive feedback. Recent studies published mainly between 2021 and 2025 were analyzed together with foundational meta-analytic evidence on teacher immediacy and classroom communication. A 2024 meta-analysis synthesizing 16 studies and 51 effect sizes found that dialogic teacher talk was positively associated with student achievement (r = .25), while inviting students to share ideas showed a stronger association (r = .40). A 2025 study involving 422 university students demonstrated positive relationships between perceived teacher communication accommodation—including verbal adaptation, instructional content, and emotional support—and communication satisfaction, teacher credibility, and reported learning effectiveness. Based on this evidence, the article proposes a seven-criterion analytical model for evaluating the verbal component of a teacher's professional image.

Keywords: teacher image, verbal component, speech communication culture, speech norms, teacher talk, dialogic communication, verbal immediacy, teacher credibility, communicative competence.

Annotatsiya: Mazkur maqolada pedagog professional imijini shakllantirishda verbal komponentni tanlash mezoni sifatida nutqiy muloqot madaniyati me'yorlari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot verbal imijni faqat grammatik to'g'rilik yoki chiroyli nutq bilan cheklamasdan, nutqning aniqligi, tushunarliligi, adabiy me'yorlarga muvofiqligi, pragmatik mosligi, etikligi, dialogikligi, tinglovchiga moslashtirilishi va konstruktiv qayta aloqa berish qobiliyatini yagona mezonlar tizimi sifatida ko'rib chiqadi. 2021–2025-yillarda chop etilgan zamonaviy tadqiqotlar hamda o'qituvchi immediacy, credibility va teacher talk bo'yicha tayanch meta-tahlillar qiyosiy tahlil qilindi. 2024-yilgi meta-tahlilda 16 tadqiqot va 51 ta effekt o'lchami asosida dialogik o'qituvchi nutqi o'quvchilarning akademik natijalari bilan r = 0,25 darajada bog'langan, o'quvchilarni fikr bildirishga taklif qilish esa r = 0,40 bilan bog'langan. 2025-yilda 422 talaba ishtirokidagi tadqiqotda o'qituvchining verbal moslashuvi, mazmunni tushunarli yetkazishi va emotsional qo'llab-quvvatlashi kommunikativ qoniqish, o'qituvchi ishonchliligi va o'rganish samaradorligi bilan ijobiy bog'liqlik ko'rsatgan.

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Maqolada ushbu dalillar asosida pedagog verbal imijini baholash uchun yetti mezondan iborat integrativ model taklif etiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: pedagog imiji, verbal komponent, nutqiy muloqot madaniyati, nutq me’yorlari, o‘qituvchi nutqi, dialogik muloqot, verbal immediacy, teacher credibility, kommunikativ kompetensiya.

Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются нормы культуры речевого общения как критерии отбора вербального компонента при формировании профессионального имиджа педагога. Вербальный имидж трактуется не только как грамматическая правильность или выразительность речи, а как интегративная система, включающая ясность, понятность, соответствие литературным нормам, прагматическую уместность, этичность, диалогичность, адаптацию речи к аудитории и конструктивную обратную связь. Проанализированы современные исследования 2021–2025 гг., а также базовые метааналитические данные по педагогической коммуникации. Метаанализ 2024 г., включивший 16 исследований и 51 размер эффекта, выявил положительную связь диалогической речи учителя с учебными достижениями (r = 0,25), а приглашение учащихся к выражению собственных идей показало связь r = 0,40. Исследование 2025 г. с участием 422 студентов показало положительные связи воспринимаемой коммуникативной адаптации преподавателя с удовлетворённостью общением, доверием к преподавателю и эффективностью обучения. На основе анализа предложена интегративная модель из семи критериев оценки вербального компонента профессионального имиджа педагога.

Ключевые слова: имидж педагога, вербальный компонент, культура речевого общения, речевые нормы, речь учителя, диалогическое общение, вербальная непосредственность, доверие к преподавателю, коммуникативная компетентность.

INTRODUCTION

A teacher’s professional image is produced not only by appearance, professional status, or subject expertise, but also by the way competence, goodwill, authority, and respect are communicated in everyday interaction. In the classroom, speech is one of the most frequently perceived components of this image because the teacher continuously explains, asks, responds, evaluates, corrects, encourages, and manages interaction through language. Consequently, the verbal component of professional image should be selected according to communicative norms that make speech simultaneously correct, comprehensible, ethically acceptable, pedagogically purposeful, and responsive to learners.

The contemporary communication literature supports this broader interpretation. Zheng’s functional review identifies teacher clarity, immediacy, and credibility as interrelated interpersonal communication constructs connected with student motivation and engagement [1]. More recent empirical evidence strengthens the importance of dialogic and adaptive speech. Tao and Chen’s 2024 meta-analysis found that dialogic teacher talk, unlike predominantly monologic talk, was positively related to achievement, and that specific moves such as inviting students to share ideas and asking uptake questions were particularly relevant [2]. These findings shift attention from the amount of teacher speech to its communicative quality and interactional function.

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For professional image formation, this distinction is essential. A teacher may speak fluently yet create distance through excessive monologue, categorical evaluation, unnecessarily complex wording, or language that does not accommodate the learner's level and communicative needs. Conversely, precise explanations, respectful address, dialogic questioning, active listening, and appropriately formulated feedback can signal competence, fairness, goodwill, and communicative control. Thus, speech communication culture functions not merely as an aspect of language proficiency but as a criterion system through which the verbal component of teacher image can be consciously designed and evaluated.

The purpose of this study is to substantiate the norms of speech communication culture as criteria for selecting and evaluating the verbal component of a teacher's professional image and to develop an evidence-informed analytical model suitable for teacher training and professional development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on instructional communication has repeatedly shown that students respond not only to instructional content but also to how teachers formulate and relationally position that content. The concepts of teacher clarity, immediacy, credibility, communication accommodation, and dialogic teacher talk provide complementary perspectives for understanding this process.

Teacher clarity concerns the extent to which instructional messages are organized, understandable, explicit, and accessible. In image terms, clarity communicates professional mastery because the teacher demonstrates an ability to transform disciplinary knowledge into learner-accessible discourse. Zheng [1] argues that clarity, credibility, and immediacy are central communicative resources associated with motivation and engagement. This is particularly important because professional image is formed through repeated student judgments about whether the teacher is understandable, trustworthy, supportive, and competent.

Teacher immediacy describes verbal and nonverbal behaviors that reduce psychological distance. The foundational meta-analysis by Witt, Wheeless, and Allen synthesized 81 studies involving 24,474 participants. Verbal immediacy correlated substantially with perceived learning ($r = .49$) and affective learning ($r = .49$), although the association with objectively measured cognitive performance was much smaller ($r = .06$) [3]. This distinction is methodologically important: positive communicative impressions should not automatically be equated with large gains in objective achievement. For teacher image research, however, immediacy remains directly relevant because perceived accessibility and relational openness are themselves components of how a teacher is socially evaluated.

Tao and Chen [2] provide newer evidence focused specifically on teacher talk. Their 2024 meta-analysis synthesized 16 empirical studies published between 2010 and 2023, yielding 51 effect sizes. Overall teacher talk was associated with achievement at $r = .19$. Dialogic teacher talk showed $r = .25$, whereas monologic teacher talk was not significantly associated with achievement ($r = .05$). Inviting students to share ideas showed $r = .40$ and uptake questions $r = .26$. Student engagement mediated the relationship between dialogic teacher talk and achievement. These findings suggest that a professionally effective verbal image is not created by teacher dominance of classroom speech but by discourse that opens space for student contribution and develops ideas interactively.

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Communication accommodation adds another criterion: adaptation of speech to the listener without loss of professional normativity. Ji, Giles, and Hu [4] analyzed 422 valid responses from university students in Shanghai using structural equation modeling. Students' perceptions of teachers' accommodative behaviors—including verbal behavior, teaching content, nonverbal behavior, and emotional support—were positively associated with communication satisfaction, teacher credibility, and reported learning effectiveness. The verbal indicators used in the study included articulating words clearly, using simpler language when appropriate, and pronouncing words correctly. This evidence is particularly useful for teacher image analysis because it connects speech adaptation with credibility, a core reputational dimension.

The relevance of credibility is also supported by Wang and Kruk [5], who used a sequential mixed-methods design with 1,168 English-major students and interviews with 40 participants. Their findings indicated strong associations between academic engagement and both teacher confirmation and teacher credibility. Thus, a teacher's verbal behavior should be assessed not only for linguistic correctness but also for whether it confirms students as legitimate participants in classroom communication.

Recent research has also examined verbal immediacy in technology-rich environments. Hou [6] studied 855 Chinese primary-school teachers and used structural equation modeling to examine the formation of verbal immediacy behaviors in smart classrooms. Attitude toward verbal immediacy, perceived behavioral control, personal norms, and subjective norms positively influenced behavioral intention, while the smart-classroom environment moderated the relationship between intention and behavior. This indicates that verbal culture is not a fixed personal trait; it is a professional behavior shaped by norms, perceived responsibility, context, and communicative affordances.

Taken together, the literature suggests that the verbal component of teacher image is multidimensional. Normative correctness is necessary but insufficient. Professional verbal image also depends on clarity, dialogicity, ethical positioning, accommodation, credibility-building language, and feedback practices.

METHODOLOGY

The study employs an analytical literature-review and conceptual-synthesis design. It does not report a new experiment with teachers or students; therefore, no original causal or prevalence claims are made. The evidence base was constructed around peer-reviewed research addressing teacher talk, verbal immediacy, communication accommodation, teacher credibility, clarity, and classroom interaction. Priority was given to recent publications from 2021–2025, while one foundational meta-analysis was retained because it provides a large cumulative evidence base for verbal immediacy.

The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, empirical findings were extracted according to five categories: sample/evidence base, verbal behavior examined, outcome variable, reported association, and limitation of interpretation. Second, recurrent communicative characteristics were grouped into norm-based criteria. Third, these criteria were synthesized into a practical model for selecting the verbal component of teacher image. The model is interpretive and methodological rather than a validated psychometric scale; its empirical validation in Uzbek educational settings remains a task for subsequent research.

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To prevent overgeneralization, correlations reported in source studies are interpreted as associations rather than proof of causality. Results obtained in China, EFL settings, or technology-rich classrooms are treated as context-specific evidence and not as universal estimates for all teachers or for Uzbekistan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evidence-based criteria for the verbal component of teacher image

The synthesis identified seven criteria that can be used to select and evaluate the verbal component of a teacher's professional image: linguistic normativity, clarity, pragmatic appropriateness, dialogicity, ethical-respectful positioning, audience accommodation, and constructive feedback. These criteria are mutually reinforcing. For example, simplified wording without terminological accuracy may reduce professional credibility, while grammatically flawless but excessively complex speech may reduce clarity and communicative accessibility.

Linguistic normativity refers to pronunciation, lexical choice, grammatical accuracy, and stylistic appropriateness. In professional image formation, normativity signals linguistic discipline and respect for the communicative situation. However, normativity should not be confused with excessive formalism. The criterion is fulfilled when correct language remains natural, precise, and suitable for the learner group.

Clarity is the ability to organize and verbalize content so that the learner can follow the teacher's reasoning. It includes explicit definitions, coherent sequencing, purposeful repetition, appropriate examples, and avoidance of unnecessary ambiguity. The 2025 communication-accommodation study is relevant here because its verbal dimension explicitly included clear articulation, simple language, and correct pronunciation [4].

Dialogicity is the criterion most clearly supported by the 2024 meta-analysis. Dialogic teacher talk was associated with achievement more strongly than monologic talk, while inviting student ideas produced the largest reported association among the analyzed teacher-talk moves ($r = .40$) [2]. For professional image, dialogicity communicates confidence without communicative domination: the teacher retains instructional leadership while recognizing learners as active meaning-makers.

Ethical-respectful positioning concerns forms of address, evaluative language, correction strategies, avoidance of humiliation or stigmatizing labels, and the verbal expression of goodwill. This criterion is closely connected to credibility because credibility is commonly conceptualized through competence, trustworthiness, and goodwill. A professionally strong verbal image therefore requires not only being correct but also communicating correction, disagreement, and authority in ways that preserve student dignity.

Audience accommodation means adjusting lexical complexity, explanation depth, examples, pace, and interactional style to the learner group. Ji, Giles, and Hu [4] showed that students' perceptions of accommodative teacher communication were positively linked with teacher credibility and communication satisfaction. Accommodation should not be understood as imitation of every student speech pattern; it is a purposeful adjustment that preserves professional standards while increasing accessibility.

Constructive feedback completes the model. Feedback contributes to verbal image when it is specific, behavior-focused, actionable, and proportionate. General labels such as "weak" or "careless"

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communicate judgment but little instructional direction. In contrast, identifying the precise error, explaining its consequence, and indicating the next step presents the teacher as both demanding and supportive.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of empirical evidence

Study	Evidence base	Verbal/communication focus	Key result	Image-related interpretation	Caution
Witt et al. (2004)	81 studies; N=24,474	Verbal immediacy	Perceived learning r=.49; affective learning r=.49; cognitive performance r=.06	Relational accessibility strongly shapes perceptions	Perception effects exceed objective-performance association
Tao & Chen (2024)	16 studies; 51 effect sizes	Dialogic vs. monologic teacher talk	Dialogic r=.25; monologic r=.05; inviting ideas r=.40	Dialogicity strengthens an interactive professional image	Associations do not establish causality
Wang & Kruk (2024)	1,168 survey participants; 40 interviews	Credibility and teacher confirmation	Strong associations with academic engagement	Credibility and confirmation reinforce professional authority	EFL/Chinese context
Ji et al. (2025)	422 university students	Communication accommodation	Positive effects on reported learning effectiveness, credibility and communication satisfaction	Adaptive verbal behavior supports credibility	Student perceptions; Shanghai context
Hou (2025)	855 primary-school teachers	Verbal immediacy in smart classrooms	Attitude, control and norms predicted intention; environment moderated intention-behavior link	Verbal behavior is trainable and context-sensitive	Behavioral model, not direct achievement test

Table 1 shows a consistent pattern across different research traditions: the most defensible verbal-image criteria are those that connect linguistic form with relational and instructional function. The evidence is strongest for the proposition that dialogic, clear, accommodative, and credibility-supporting communication is associated with positive learner perceptions, engagement, and—in the case of dialogic teacher talk—academic achievement. At the same time, the Witt et al. meta-analysis warns against treating a positive verbal image as synonymous with objective learning gains: the

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correlation between verbal immediacy and cognitive performance was only r = .06 [3]. Therefore, professional image should support pedagogical effectiveness, not replace it.

Table 2. Proposed criterion model

Criterion	Observable verbal indicators	Professional-image signal	Risk when violated	Suggested self-check
1. Linguistic normativity	Correct pronunciation; precise vocabulary; grammatical and stylistic appropriateness	Professional discipline and competence	Carelessness; ambiguity; loss of authority	Is my wording correct and professionally appropriate?
2. Clarity	Logical sequencing; definitions; accessible explanations; purposeful examples	Mastery and pedagogical competence	Confusion; cognitive overload	Can the learner restate the key idea accurately?
3. Pragmatic appropriateness	Speech matched to purpose, situation, age and task	Situational intelligence	Formalism or overfamiliarity	Does this form of speech fit this pedagogical situation?
4. Dialogicity	Open questions; uptake questions; invitations to explain; active listening	Confidence without domination	Teacher-centered monologue	How much space do students have to construct meaning?
5. Ethical-respectful speech	Dignified correction; non-stigmatizing evaluation; courteous address	Goodwill, fairness, trustworthiness	Fear, resistance, reputational damage	Does my wording evaluate the work rather than label the person?
6. Audience accommodation	Adjustment of complexity, examples, pace and terminology	Responsiveness and accessibility	Distance; misunderstanding	Have I adapted without lowering professional standards?
7. Constructive feedback	Specific, actionable, balanced, task-focused comments	Supportive authority	Vague judgment; demotivation	Does the learner know what to improve and how?

The proposed model treats verbal image selection as a sequence: normative correctness → clarity → contextual appropriateness → dialogic organization → ethical positioning → audience accommodation → constructive feedback. The sequence is analytical rather than rigid. In real communication these dimensions operate simultaneously. Its practical value lies in converting the abstract notion of a "good teacher's speech" into observable criteria that can be used in lesson observation, microteaching, self-reflection, mentoring, and professional-development programs.

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A further implication concerns digital teaching. Online and smart-classroom environments do not reduce the importance of verbal culture; they change its conditions. Hou's findings [6] suggest that perceived behavioral control and contextual affordances influence whether teachers enact verbal-immediacy intentions. In online environments, therefore, clarity of instructions, concise turn-taking cues, explicit acknowledgement of student contributions, and timely feedback become especially important image-forming behaviors.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis demonstrates that speech communication culture can serve as a theoretically grounded criterion system for selecting the verbal component of a teacher's professional image. A professionally effective verbal image cannot be reduced to eloquence, grammatical correctness, or a pleasant tone. It is formed through the interaction of linguistic normativity, clarity, pragmatic appropriateness, dialogicity, ethical-respectful positioning, audience accommodation, and constructive feedback.

The strongest recent evidence in the reviewed literature concerns dialogic teacher talk and communication accommodation. Tao and Chen's 2024 meta-analysis showed that dialogic teacher talk was associated with achievement ($r = .25$), whereas monologic talk was not significantly associated ($r = .05$); inviting students to share ideas showed $r = .40$ [2]. Ji, Giles, and Hu's 2025 study of 422 university students linked perceived communication accommodation with credibility, communication satisfaction, and reported learning effectiveness [4]. These results support a shift from evaluating teacher speech merely as "correct/incorrect" toward evaluating what the speech accomplishes pedagogically and relationally.

For teacher education and professional development, it is recommended that verbal-image training include recorded microteaching with criterion-based analysis; exercises in transforming monologic explanations into dialogic sequences; practice in respectful correction and feedback; adaptation of explanations for different learner levels; and reflective analysis of credibility-building and credibility-damaging expressions. Assessment rubrics should separate linguistic correctness from clarity, dialogicity, ethicality, and accommodation so that teachers receive diagnostically useful feedback.

For future research, the proposed seven-criterion model should be empirically tested in Uzbek educational settings. A suitable design would combine expert observation, teacher self-assessment, student perception scales, and lesson audio/video analysis. Reliability and construct validity should be examined before the model is used as a standardized assessment instrument. Such research would allow the general communication evidence reviewed here to be calibrated to Uzbek linguistic norms, pedagogical traditions, age groups, and institutional contexts.

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