BUSINESS COMMUNICATION: NEW PARADIGMS

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ISBN: **978-93-91044-30-5**
Price Rs. 3000.00
US $ 125.00

Published By :
Imperial Publications
304 De ElmasSonawala Cross Rd 2
Goregaon E Mumbai-400063, Maharashtra India
info@imperialpublications.com, www.imperialpublications.com

Designed, Layout, Typeset Printed by: VPS **DIGITAL PRINT**
A-1/18, Ambedkar Nagar, BaprolaVihar, New Delhi-110043

Cover Page Designed by: VPS **DIGITAL PRINT**

Preface

A brief historical review of the definitions of "business communication" yields interesting insights into the nebulousness of this phrase. Not only have definitions undergone subtle changes over the years, but they have also shownmarked differences in their scope and thrust within the same era. The concept of effective business communication has also undergone a sea-change because of the intrinsically dynamic nature of communication itself. When one of the editors of this book began her career three decades ago, emphasis was laid on meticulously drafting reports and proposals in straightjacketed formats, formal speeches were peppered with commercial jargon, and woe betide those who sacrilegiously infringed these rules.

Slowly, ever so slowly, approaches to formal business communication paradigms changed with the onset of liberalization, increasing cross-cultural business relations, rapidly changing technologies associated with speaking and writing, and the ever-declining attention spans of audiences. Letters were replaced with emails, video-conferencing replaced expensive trips by the top brass of multinationals (with its accompanying sets of protocols), and landline telecons were replaced by on-the-go mobile calls and texts. Bulky hardbound reports are now replaced by dynamic dashboards, and in some companies, presentations slides are looked upon with horror. Presenters simply send their material to their audience in advance, and stand up and talk when the moment of truth arrives.

The pandemic accelerated the spin-off into the realm of virtual communication and hybrid workplaces today, while being supported by ostensibly seamless support for team meets and conference calls, have thrown up a new set of challenges as the millennials and Gen Z struggle to locate their blind communication spots and overcome barriers, both semantic and psychological.

The theme of this book dwells on the changing landscape of business communication for practitioners as well as teachers who will equip students for the workplace of the future. It offers an interesting array of qualitative research segments and analyses of the ever-changing terrains of business communication, bringing into its fold perceptions on listening, the psychology of persuasion, the science of natural language processing, the growing use of trending cues in the form of emojis, and the novelty of learning from pop culture and the literary classics.

Dr Madhavi Gokhale's chapter titled "Can the Timeless Transfigure the Temporal? Communication and Leadership through Literary Classics" attempts to create spaces for reflection on how one can address vexing problems in communication and leadership through the literary classics and their protagonists. This study resonates with current research on teaching communication and leadership in B-schools through the lens of complex and ambiguous narrative. Although the chapter focuses on stories of a bygone era, it showcases how learning moments can be unpacked in a B-school ecosystem to prepare students better for a world that is volatile and uncertain.

Professor Papiya De's research on the implications and connotations of using emojis for formal communication in the first chapter titled "Beyond Words: Exploring the Role of Emojis in the Professional Sphere in a Post-Pandemic World" throws light on interesting perspectives offered by her research group and useful indicative tips for using emojis appropriately and successfully. The chapter opens up possibilities of communication being aptly expressed efficiently with feeling – albeit with caution. While times change and effect corresponding changes in the ways in which we communicate, certain classic principles will never be relegated to the dark caves of yesteryears. Dr Purnima Mehrotra's detailed analysis in the chapter titled "The Power of Influence: Examining Pop Culture's Persuasive Edge" of how Aristotle's classic triad of ethos, pathos and logos can be integrated with Cicero's strategies, and the contemporary principles of persuasion by Cialdini. It demonstrates how enriching it can be when various theories of communication can be melded creatively for a modern audience. Continuing in the same vein of persuasive communication strategies, Dr Aparna and Soundari's chapter titled "Walking the Talk - The Power of Stories for Leadership" dwells on the power and potential of stories to effectively craft one's message in a way that will make an enduring impact.

With the growing interdisciplinary trends in various domains of research in the field of humanities, communication practitioners and experts are paying special attention to the interplay of psychology as well as linguistics. A similar dimension on using a scientific approach called "Neuro-linguistic Programming" with the appropriate intention while deeply studying the composition and the mindset of the audience is afforded by Gabrielle Heart's chapter titled "NLP in the BANI World: Transforming Group Communication in Modern Business" with a special focus on the domain of group communication.

However, no communication cycle is complete without attentive listeners. To address declining attention spans and their deleterious effect on the ability to listen, one needs to understand, first-hand, the present-day approach to this intricate and all-too-important skill. Professor Sreelekha's chapter on "Student Voices: The Dynamics of Listening Skills in Business Education" gives food for thought on how, the need to master the art of listening is theoretically perceived to be very significant, but not very arduously pursued.

This volume titled "Business Communication: New Paradigms" is the result of an ongoing effort by the faculty team at the School of Business Communication" to coalesce their individual research areas and domains of interest into a blended offering that aims to be comprehensive as well as variegated in its nature. With its diverse range of perspectives and future-oriented insights, this volume offers a roadmap for navigating the complex challenges and opportunities presented by the ever-changing realm of business communication. Whether you are a seasoned business executive, a communication specialist, or a curious student, this volume provides valuable glimpses of the shape and nature of business communication in the years to come.

Editors
Dr Madhavi Gokhale
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19th December 2023

Content

Chapter 1

CAN THE TIMELESS TRANSFIGURE THE TEMPORAL? COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP THROUGH LITERARY CLASSICS

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Introduction

The typical curriculum design of management schools in the area of communications focuses on the tenets of oral and written communication, with a few forays into more specialized domains such as negotiations, intercultural communication, and strategic communication.The demands of today's Violent, Unpredicatable, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) world becoming more and more complicated in terms of what is required as a relevant and updated curriculum for aspiring managers. Therefore,there is a need to make this design more inclusive and creative so as to create more spaces for reflection on the nuances of communication as well as leadership. Based on classroom interaction and the experience of teaching business communication, the researcher made the following observations that strengthened the rationale to include literary classics in the curriculum:

1. Lack of linguistic competence: Based on an assessment of both oral and writing skills, it is observed that management students do not read diverse literature and hence their word register is limited to corporate jargon and buzzwords or terms pertaining to the field of their

specialization; their reading is restricted to only business articles and case-studies. This, the researcher believes, deprives them of the prolificvocabulary and rich insights that only a wide array of books and material provide and lend a holistic perspective that a restricted repertoire of reading cannot.

2. One-dimensional nature of business communication literature: The principles of communication that young aspiring leaders should internalize cannot be framed and imparted in the cut-and-dried manner of case-studies in a classroom environment with a one-dimensional take on the "right" or "wrong" manner in which to articulate ideas and opinions at the workplace, or for that matter, in personal life, too. The field of communication is fraught with subjectivity and its dynamics are nebulous and complex.These cannot be fathomed fully within the prescribed curricula in business management. Leaders in the making need to evolve through life-experiences in real time.

The second observation has an important bearing on how experiential learning should be ideally positioned in a typical business communication course. In the light of the researcher's experience, the available study material on communication is severely limited in its approach by virtue of its one-dimensional nature. Most reference books on business communication strive to impart skills through functional templates, supply a checklist of techniques and attempt to offer a one-size-fit all solution to communication dilemmas in both personal and professional life. For instance, most books include a simplistic, uncomplicated diagrammatic representation of the communication process (Waymaker, n.d)where the barriers are represented simply as "noise" (please refer to Appendix A). It is a reductionist view of how communication ostensibly takes place; what happens in the spaces in between that should be addressed with perspicacity. In the discussion on tips for effective communication, the entire gamut of human experience in which individuals are walked through the realm of challenging situations that culminate in a denouement does not play any part in the proceedings. As instructors, we can train management students to articulate better, to use vocabulary, and to make high-impact presentations; but how do we teach students to develop sensitivity and empathy in the crucial module “Audience Analysis?” The topic so far has not broken its theoretical mould and straitjackets audiences as either hostile, or supportive or neutral, thus segmenting people into watertight compartments.

Secondly, communicative styles cannot be frozen into depersonalized bubbles of behaviour. Assertive behaviour, for example, is not manifested uniformly throughout the life-cycle of a CEO; and the assumption that a manager is aggressive does not hold true in all situations. The description of such behaviours in assertive training manuals is also riddled with generalizations, albeit with the worthy motive of clarity and simplicity; however, what lies at the heart of successful professional communication is a nuanced understanding of “softer issues” that cannot be crystallized into nuggets of practical remedies.

In the light of the classroom experience, it is found that students can at best only distally appreciate the complexity of the communication process through examples; the constraints of the curriculum and the limitations of time do not allow students to taste the flavour of this complexity.

It can be understandably argued that communication practitioners do discuss best practices in communication in their research and that these are available to students as excellent value-additions for emulation. For example, Nohria and Harrington in “Rhetoric of Change” (1993) explore how the Aristotelian model “ethos-logos-pathos” can be used by both communicators and communicates to champion and challenge organizational change. Categorizing the communicator’s stance as “Genres of Initiative” and that of the receivers as “Genres of Resistance” the authors offer a template on how best to use a particular rhetorical mode along with examples of how these were used to good effect by acclaimed leaders such as Jack Welch who used “ethos” to his advantage to bring about a change in General Electric post-1989.Although these examples helpfully indicate the contexts in which rhetorical modes can be successfully or unsuccessfully used, they can only be examples at best; the unfolding of the myriad little human dramas that played themselves out in the era of Welch are largely unavailable, both to the contemporary publics who were not privy to the events in GE and to present-day students who would largely subsist on the limited narratives that are offered in articles. This is an indication that although communication models purportedly impart skills to advice, inform and persuade, students can only distally visualize implementing these somewhere in a hazy future, unless supported by a rich insight into a narrative that exemplifies the working out of this skills through an unfolding of the inner life of the protagonist in a real life-situation.

A holistic course in communication skills for managers in a B-school should then necessarily lend itself to creating interventions to expose students to the nebulousness of communication events in which they need to persuade, or make an impact on the intended target audience and in a general sense, stand up and be remembered. And in this context, the conventional tools used to evaluate their performance fall woefully short of the expectations of learning outcomes.

The result of the above reflections led to a second-year elective titled "Communication and Leadership Through Literature". It worked on the premise that literary classics uphold a mirrorof human thought and feeling that could well represent life-experiences through variegated dimensions. The following sections discuss similar research by educators in the past, explain the limitations of the conventional pedagogy used in teaching business communication, and the rationale for bringing literary classics into the fold of a B-school curriculum. Three instances of how the elective translates learning from the classics into practical classroom learning moments have been included to explain the pedagogical approach. The paper concludes with a brief comment on the perils and limitations of this approach.

Literature Review

The concept of teaching management through literature to supplement and enrich it with a non-formal qualitative paradigmis not new; a week after Black Monday in 1987, the single largest one-day stock market crash in U.S. history, Harvard professor Robert Coles published a front-page article in the *New York Times* Sunday Book Review entitled "Books and Business: Gatsby at the B

School." Coles, a distinguished professor of psychiatry and medical humanities at Harvard, had recently joined Harvard Business School (HBS), where he was now course director of a brand-new class: "The Business World: Moral and Social Inquiry Through Fiction." (Merve, 2015). Coles's literature class emerged as one of the first successful experiments in HBS's fledgling Leadership and Ethics Program. Today, it is offered to the school's aspiring bankers, entrepreneurs, and management consultants under the catchier name "The Moral Leader."His intention was to invoke the magic of story-telling and that of "sympathetic identification; the afterglow felt by a reader absorbed in a narrative experience that seemed imminently relatable to his own". Three decades later,Bruce Craven, a novelist and Hollywood screenwriter turned business school administrator led a three-hour weekly course titled "Leadership through Fiction"in the Columbia Business School to prepare students for executive success. His syllabus outlines the rationale for repurposing literature as management shibboleth – a teaching philosophy that embraces everything from ordinary self-improvement to solipsistic delusion. He abides by novels which he maintains are narratives about characters in many different professions, who must find a balance between their professional obligation, their personal expectations, and goals. He avers that we learn through fictional characters who stumble like real people (Merve, 2015).

The clamor for infusing business management curriculum with lessons from good time-tested fictionhas been steadily increasing. Leadership gurus Warren G. Bennis and James O'Toole argue in their paper "How Business Schools have lost their way"(2005) that the problem lies in the scientific model that dominates business research and teaching.They aver that students could learn a lot more about leadership and organizational behaviour from a course in literature and not through formalized management tools that are more useful for subjects like financial valuation.The very fact that [MBA students] are already so familiar with the content of the traditional MBA program suggests that "[they] perhaps need a little less in the way of quantitative tools and a little more in the way of good judgement and self-knowledge, as well as a deeper understanding of human nature" (Coutu, 2006, p.2).Joseph L. Badaracco, Jr. at the John Shad Professor of Business Ethics at Harvard

Business School has been teaching this kind of course to the school's MBA students since 1996. He believes that fiction can be as instructive about leadership and organizational behaviour as any business textbook. In his book "Questions of Character: Illuminating the Heart of Leadership through Literature" (2006) he discusses how serious literature offers a view from the inside. It opens doors to a world rarely seen – except, on occasion, by leaders' spouses and closest friends. He states: "It lets us watch leaders as they think, worry, hope, hesitate, commit, exult, regret, and reflect. We see their characters tested, reshaped, strengthened, or weakened. These books draw us into leaders' worlds, put us in their shoes, and at times let us share their experiences" (Badaracco, p.3). In India, Professor S. Manikutty conducted a course titled "Leadership: Vision, Meaning and Reality" for the PGP students in Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. The course clearly defined a range of themes focussing on key concepts in leadership and mapped them to a curated assortment of novels, plays, and short stories by both Western and Indian writers. His book "Essence of Leadership: Explorations from Literature" (2015) closely documents and explains how literature helps the putative leader by offering, not anecdotes by virtuous role models, but insights into how protagonists struggle with their dilemmas and conflicts, make choices, grow in the process (or fail to grow), and arrive at an integrative vision that they are committed to (or fail to arrive at such a vision, and remain stuck in their mental blocks) (p.x).

The courses offered by both Professor Badaracco and Professor Manikutty concentre on leadership and organizational behaviour; however, there is very little scholarship in the possibilities of teaching communicative and leadership styles through literary classics.Although, as Craven does, the problems of ineffective communication and the implications for leadership are discussed as a sub-set of leadership skills, the researcher believes that it would be worthwhile to link communicative aspects to narratives from fiction to uncover learnings on articulation and the power of semantics for potential leaders. In a later section, we will also discuss how the narratives and the learnings can translate into pedagogical exercises that reinforce the philosophical reflections gleaned from the classics.

The enrichment of the communication offering through literary classics
As indicated in the preceding sections, a fictional rendition of the human drama with a storyline can bring to the classroom the finely nuanced nature of the communication landscape. The realm of literature abounds with instances of interaction that are fleshed out in detail, providing incisive insights into the inner life of the protagonists. Novels are a rich repository of such dialogues that unfold and uncover learnings that stay at the level of theory and praxis in typical classroom pedagogy. For example, a discussion on the initial conversations in William Golding's "Lord of the Flies" (elaborated in a later section) can lead to a understanding of how articulation and approach can define who has the potential to be a leader and who could fall from grace in spite of evident expertise and bravado. Monologues and spirited speeches by protagonists can be linked to the classical Aristotelian model of ethos, logos and pathos and persuasive strategies in communication based on the same. For example,Atticus's impassioned defence of Tom Robinson in"To Kill a Mockingbird" can be upheld as an instance of how a judicious combination of emotions and logic, supported by an established ethos, can influence a difficult, hostile audience. Although Atticus Finch loses the case, his credibility increases manifold and he is upheld as a hero in the eyes of the oppressed. Patterns of Assertive, Aggressive and Passive behaviour can be gleaned from the narrative of "The Warden"by Anthony Trollope in which the protagonist is portrayed as a seemingly meek individual who nonetheless evolves into an assertive being and shakes a system to the foundation with his decision to resign from his post. The intriguing interplay of human emotions can also be best witnessed in how the characters communicate both verbally and non-verbally in "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Poems such as "Charge of the Light Brigade" by Lord Alfred Tennysoncan uncover the perils of ineffective communication and poor listening and reading; "Do not go gently into the good night" can be mapped to the concept of "neotemy" outlined in the article "Crucibles of Leadership" with the subtle power of the poetic phrases increasing the retention of the concept.

Plays can also be a powerful example of how literature can contribute to the learning of a dynamic, complex interaction leading up to a denouement. George Bernard Shaw's "Joan of Arc"is an excellent example of how persuasion can be used as an effective tool to convince an audience. The arguments of the knights in "Murder in the Cathedral"by Thomas Becket can throw light on how various perspectives and standpoints can be framed for difficult negotiations.

Since the context is established by a narrative that leads to a denouement, students are able to follow the pattern of communication in its variegated nuanced forms to understand how certain communication strategies play themselves out against the characters involved and lend themselves naturally to the culmination of an event. As there is a natural level of involvement in a fictionalized narrative, the researcher believes that the learning has a greater impact than it would have had from trimmed, one-dimensional excerpts of quotations by leaders that are carefully edited for public consumption. The following sections describe the pedagogical techniques used in two instances: excerpts from Orwell's *1984* (1948)to discuss language distortion in an ambiguous world, and the conversations between Ralph and Jack in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) to better appreciate the struggles of a vulnerable leader in the making.

Orwell's 1984: Language Distortion in an Ambiguous World

Points of Discussion

Students were assigned the fourth chapter of the novel 1984 by George Orwell on the theme "Doublespeak". The chapter describes in detail a typical working day in the life of the protagonist Winston Smith who has resignedly accepted his fate as a native of Oceania under the leadership of a ubiquitously present tyrant who bears the title "Big Brother" to suggest a familial touch. The session began with a close reading of the chapter in which students were asked to identify the key words and phrases related to the theme and to comment on how these helped obfuscate the stark reality of a totalitarian regime as portrayed in the novel. Their attention was directed through a series of questions to the usage of words that cleverly appropriated reality or meant the very opposite of what was actually done; for instance, terms such as "memory hole" (for disposal of scraps that were meant to be forgotten), or "rectify" to distort or obliterate a fact, so that the mind is engaged with a new meaning that validates the act. The following statement was discussed extensively by linking it to current national and international trends in fake news and how some companies present a fabricated view of reality: "All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary." (Orwell, pg.51) Students were urged to contribute examples of falsification of data and how unethical communication can ruin companies, exaggeration in the media, slanting of headlines in print, overstating and understating of facts at the workplace, and also use of allusions where none are required to give reality a different colouring. The discussion also included reflections on how "wrong" is normalized merely by assigning official labels to atrocities as is exemplified in the chapter through references to "purges" and "vaporizations" as a necessary part of the mechanics of government. Attention was also drawn to the protagonist Winston Smith's ruminations as he goes through his motions as a "rectifier" of facts that could hurt Big Brother's image, especially the non-verbal cues expressed in the following line:

"With a deep, unconscious sigh which not even the nearness of the telescreen could prevent him from uttering when his day's work started, Winston pulled the speakwrite toward him, blew the dust from its mouthpiece and put on his spectacles." (Orwell, pg. 48)

In a regime that leads to a stifling of individuality, it is these subtle cues that hint to the potential mutiny on the part of Winston Smith, signalling thereby that individuality can be curbed only to a particular limit; sooner or later, the truth will be hankered after by the discerning individual and his desire to break free will be communicated through his change in demeanour and stance. A discussion was also invited on the dangers of blind conformity in professional and political domains especially under leadership that has dubious ethical merit. What helped the students understand these dangers was the dark atmosphere of the entire novel and how it brings home the entire gamut of weary resignation that is characteristic of the unauthentic life that the protagonist leads.

Supplementary Readings and Audio-Visual Aids

Since the pedagogical outcome of the session was not to analyse Orwell's satire, but to map it to learning communicative trends in the present and appreciating their implications, students were shown a video from the movie "Serendipity" where the hero talks about how doublespeak in modern times has created a Marketing Holocaust. They were also sent a satirical video by George Carlin on the American tendency to "sanitize" reality through meaningless euphemisms that have a sinister agenda: to lend a normal appearance to vicious and evil actions. The discussion was also mapped to two articles: "Doublespeak of Science" by Randy Moore and"Politics and the English Language" by George Orwell which cautions against the dangers of using jargon, gobbledygook, euphemisms and inflated language and defines doublespeak as a "language that is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure truth." The session ended with the lead question for discussion: "In an age where individual consciousness is bombarded either by the media or the government, spontaneity and the ability to think critically and objectively is stifled. How does one, then, counter the effects of doublespeak?"

The initial reading of Chapter 4 with examples from elsewhere in the book that reflected the scathing satire of the totalitarian regime envisaged by Orwell under Big Brother was extremely useful in conjuring up a picture not unlike contemporary times that was made to come alive because of the emotional connect with the protagonist Winston Smith who passively surrenders to the fabricated past and adds his own inventions to continually modify the present. This connect is possible because the notion of doublespeak unfolds against the context of a narrative that is not part of a theoretical framework but is engendered by the paralyzing thought of what life would be like if one had to work, survive and retain one's sanity in a totalitarian world.

Lord of the Flies:

Points of Discussion:

Second year students had already familiarized themselves with leadership theories and strategies as a part of their curriculum. The triggers of thought provided during this session were mapped to the qualities of a Level 5 leader (Collins, 2011)and the strategies used by real-life leaders in the article "In praise of an incomplete leader (Ancona et al, 2007). The following questions provided stimulation in terms of understanding the metamorphosis that both the protagonists, Ralph and Jack, undergo during their terrifying ordeal on the island. While Jack feeds on abject obedience and comes down harshly upon the slightest signs of mutiny, Ralph is less obsessed with autocratic control and uses influence rather than authority through the metaphorical conch.

Question 1: As a leader, you will almost always have opposition. What have been your communication strategies in past incidents to counter this? Jack encounters reluctance on the part of the group to accept him as a leader and turns aggressive and belligerent. Ralph does not exhibit any hunger for popularity and generates an aura of authoritativeness and direction.When the group decides to appoint Ralph as the chief, Ralph does not gloat over his promotion; he decides to co-opt his rival. His appeal to Jack to be leader of the choir is also rationally worded without smacking of condescension. How does this relate to your understanding of the qualities of a Level 5 leader?

The discussion hinged on the following excerpts to highlight the communication and leadership stances taken by the two boys during this crucial moment in the narrative:

“Jack's face disappeared under a blush of mortification. He started up, then changed his mind and sat down again while the air rang. Ralph looked at him, eager to offer something.

"The choir belongs to you, of course."
"They could be the army--"
"Or hunters--"
"They could be--"

The suffusion drained away from Jack's face. Ralph waved again for silence.
"Jack's in charge of the choir. They can be--what do you want them to be?"
"Hunters."

Jack and Ralph smiled at each other with shy liking. The rest began to talk eagerly.” (Golding, 1954, p.28).

The resultant discussion focused on key areas of communication related to a Level 5 persona: humility accompanied by a fierce resolve and an iron will (Collins, 2011). Ralph, through his immediate urge to “offer” Jack “something” takes the edge of what could have been a combative opposition and starts their sojourn on the island on a positive note, notwithstanding the collective bewilderment they both experience in their new roles. The students could relate the experiences of Level 5 leaders mentioned in the pre-read and their reluctance to be flashy, flamboyant, power-conscious figures of authority. The next trigger of thought and the accompanying excerpt threw light on how Ralph’s attempts to introduce civility and rationality amidst the dark forces of uncertainty on the island fail despite his best intentions.

Question 2: Can division of responsibility/personnel lead to cartelisation and consequently lay the seed for divisiveness in a team?Based on the given excerpt, the group discussed how the nature of communication undergoes rapid changes as the narrative progresses and eventually degenerates to a point where the two teams are pitted against each other: the former only concerned about keeping the fire going and the latter obsessed with the idea of hunting. Jack eventually turns rogue and Ralph is powerless to stop the “dark forces” within the seemingly civilized group of well-brought up English boys from creating mayhem on the island.

"All this talk!" shouted Ralph. "Talk, talk! Who wanted it? Who called the meeting?"

Jack turned, red in the face, his chin sunk back. He glowered up under his eyebrows.

"All right then," he said in tones of deep meaning, and menace, "all right."
He held the conch against his chest with one hand and stabbed the air with his index finger.

"Who thinks Ralph oughtn't to be chief?"

He looked expectantly at the boys ranged round, who had frozen. Under the palms there was deadly silence.

"Hands up," said Jack strongly, "whoever wants Ralph not to be chief?"

The silence continued, breathless and heavy and full of shame. *Slowly the red drained from Jack's cheeks, then came back with a painful rush. He licked his lips and turned his head at an angle, so that his gaze avoided the embarrassment of linking with another's eye.*

"*How many think--*"
His voice tailed off. The hands that held the conch shook. He cleared his throat, and spoke loudly.

"All right then."

He laid the conch with great care in the grass at his feet. The humiliating tears were running from the corner of each eye.

"I'm not going to play any longer. Not with you." (Golding, 1954, p.67)

Supplementary Readings
The behaviour of both Ralph and Jack displayed through their dialogues, responses, and non-verbal cues in the novel were closely analysed by the presenters and mapped to communicative and leadership traits of Level 5 leaders as well as the concepts of leadership outlined in the paper “Crucibles of Leadership” which had been assigned as a pre-read. The influence of semantics and symbolism was also touched upon as an effective influence on perspective and perceptions. In the novel, the conch stands for powers vested in the individual; it could easily be replaced by any artefact that leaders and communicators use to show influence and control.

Students realized how a variety of subtle connotations related to verbal and non-verbal behaviour can affect the quality of communication in a potentially threatening situation. Communicative strategies can never be planned; it is always important to start with people first and move to vision and strategy next.

The two instances cited above helped to create spaces for reflective thinking, purged of a template-driven structure that presupposes a universal solution. While the concept of "doublespeak" in 1984 in combination with the pre-reads and the video inspired discussion on the implications of distorted communication in an Orwellian world, the interaction based on the conversations between Ralph and Jack brought home the finely nuanced dimensions of leadership behaviour replete with verbal and non-verbal aspects.

Perils and limitations

Although it is very satisfying to correlate the humanities and management communication domains for the various refreshing alternatives it provides to create new dimensions in learning, we need to tread carefully lest the very motive that we started out with, i.e. making the curriculum relevant and holistic, is nullified. The following perils are foreseen in a class that would impart communication and leadership skills through literature:

1. Since the elective would be signed up for mostly by literature-lovers and a few curious readers who would like to enhance both their choices and communication skills, the danger is that the classes would turn into literature analysis if the material is not handled with the proper perspective. The temptation to view the work from the angle of aesthetics instead of utility, albeit through beauty, should be guarded against.

2. The limitation of this approach lies in its loosely segmented nature; although the researcher will strive to select only those literary classics that lend themselves to mapping with communication themes, one must keep in mind that this approach can only supplement and enhance but not substitute structured approaches in communication pedagogy.

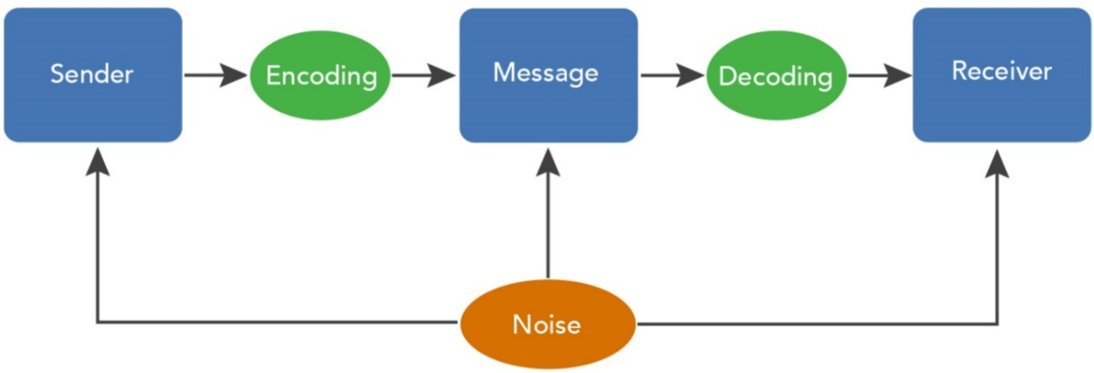
Conclusion

The pedagogical tools currently used in the classroom environment to evaluate expertise in communication skills include set prescriptions for ideal communication and leadership behaviour. Although enlivened by interactive and creative exercises where students apply a template to a range of situations and learn through experiential activities such as role-play and presentations, the learning experience is limited to the playing out of cut-and-dried situations with a predictable outcome that is carefully evaluated through pre-defined parameters. The emphasis on praxis leaves little room for unstructured conversations on the subjectivity of the real-world experience of communication; there is very little leeway in a carefully designed curriculum to understand and internalize through experiential learning the nebulousness of group dynamics.

Let us consider an example from the corporate world. When Dara Khushrowshahi's took over as the Chief Executive Officer of Uber, the first mail he wrote to all employees is a much-touted artefact in communication and leadership that has been hailed as an instance of higher emotional intelligence needed by contemporary leaders in an ambiguous and unpredictable world (Inc.com, 2017). However, the mail, by itself, does not reveal the inner life of the CEO or the thoughts that transpired before he penned the mail. In this little artefact, there is no protagonist save the writer himself; and the audience is largely invisible and inaccessible; so the efficacy of the impact measurement or assessment is also suspect.

It can be argued that reading biographies or autobiographies of leaders can make thoughts and emotions underlying the communication available and visible; however, since the motive of the leaders penning their life-stories is to inspire and encourage a certain level of emulation, the content carefully avoids bringing into the picture any semblance of diffidence, negativity, irony or lack of confidence which would counter the larger-than-life nature of the luminaries involved. Moreover, since the life-stories are viewed only through the lens of the writers, the interesting interplay of thoughts, responses and reactions of other characters play no part in the proceedings. If these stories are compared with the introspective reflections of various characters in classic novels or the asides made available in acclaimed plays, the latter emerge as a more life-like, more authentic representation of the human experience as the protagonists navigate an unsure terrain of personal and professional challenges, or are buffeted by fate, or threatened by circumstances or defeated by their own fatal flaws, or triumph over vicissitudes not of their making. Since literary classics are motivated, not by an agenda but by the writer's own creative oeuvre, the reader participates in a slice of life that is unfettered by purposiveness. The creative freedom that transfigures a literary classic into a cherished artefact thus not only enables students to relish the aesthetic nature of the reading experience, but also guarantees that it stays with them as a permanent lodestone of a meaningful and complex experience. What seals this experience is a "learning moment" in classroom interaction birthed through questions designed to trigger reflections, and not to impose regimented thoughts.

Appendix A



Source: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-organizationalbehavior/chapter/the-process-of-communication/

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Chapter 2

BEYOND WORDS: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF EMOJIS IN THE PROFESSIONAL SPHERE IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

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Background

The Oxford Dictionarynamed the "face with tears of joy" emoji as its "Word of the Year" in 2015 (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2015). The recognition signified the widespread global acceptance of emojis as a popular and expressive means of conveying ideas and sentiments in a world that can often feel dry with emotionless technocratic prose. However, emojis are not a recent phenomenon. The modest emoji, functioning as a pictogram or a visual representation of an object, and as an ideogram symbolizing more abstract concepts, boasts a lengthy heritage. It can be contended that the tradition of symbolic visualization traces its roots back to prehistoric cave drawings. Ancient tribal traditions primarily relied on oral transmission, but circa 3200 BC, a select group of educated scribes initiated the engraving of Egyptian hieroglyphics onto stone, portraying themes of nobility, conquests, and mysticism. Concurrently, Sumerian cuneiform, initially a pictographic script, evolved over centuries into a more symbolic mode of expression. Chinese calligraphy, emerging around 1200 BC, followed a similar pictographic script. Concurrently, in Mesoamerica, pre-Aztec cultures employed early pictograms with a distinctive illustrative writing style. During medieval times, learned monks crafted illuminated manuscripts, integrating symbolic visual artistry with written language to chronicle religious history. The visual rebus, a hybrid blend of emoji-like illustrations and words often presented as visual puzzles, also gained popularity during this period.

Symbolic alphabets paved the way for printing, enabling universal literacy-based education. After Gutenberg's invention in 1450, knowledge became reproducible, portable, and crucial. The linear nature of printing, influenced by Newtonian physics, gave rise to production lines and industrialized economies. Radio and television then reintroduced aural and visual dynamics. Around 1900, attention shifted from mass production to mass media, reaching its peak with the dynamic World Wide Web in 1999 (Hulbert, 2011).

In response, post-modernism turned consumerism into an art form in the late 1900s. The iconic smiley face pin emerged in 1963, and by 1982, emoticons—using fonts to depict human expressions—became trendy, injecting emotion into mundane texts. Inspired by Japanese graphics, Shigetaka Kurita created the first emoji in 1999, swiftly becoming an internet sensation.

Introduction

In the wake of the digital revolution, communication has emerged as one of the foremost areas experiencing a massive transformation. Even before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, digital interaction had already become a preferred mode, particularly among young adults (Hsieh andTseng, 2017). However, the pandemic necessitated organizations to fully embrace digital communication, leading to a significant surge in reliance on technology-mediated communication (TMC) and digital platforms. Post-pandemic organisations have consciously adopted work-from-home policies, and understood workplace productivity and time spent in the organisation is not correlated.

While face-to-face (FtF) communication is widely recognized as the most nuanced medium, encompassing nonverbal elements such as facial expressions, gestures, and voice intonations, which play a pivotal role in conveying intent (Hallet al., 2019), the growing use of email and other TMC channels has raised pertinent theoretical inquiries about interpersonal dynamics. These tools have the potential to reshape the way individuals communicate, make attributions, and establish relationships.

Erica Dhawan, the author of "Digital Body Language: How to Build Trust & Connection No Matter the Distance," asserts that workplace communication, including that of Generation-Xers and Boomers, has embraced a more informal tone, incorporating exclamations, emojis, and gifs to convey emotions in novel ways. This shift has been underscored by an increased reliance on instant messaging platforms. According to Microsoft, the average Teams user sent 32 percent more chats per week in February 2022 than in March 2020, a trend that continues to rise.

A survey conducted by OnePoll for Slack revealed that 75 percent of American workers, since transitioning to hybrid or remote work, have found that expressing their personality through informal work messages has facilitated stronger connections with colleagues. Additionally, 73 percent believe that this shift has aided them in adapting to the challenges of remote and hybrid work arrangements.

Given the sustained trend of hybrid working, the trajectory of this language evolution appears to be enduring. As evidenced by reduced reliance on jargon and formal language, the workplace has become more accessible for women and minority employees.

Though the prevailing attitude within business communication textbooks tends to discourage or criticize the use of these symbols in formal modes of communication, recent literature consistently calls for a re-evaluation of perspectives among educators. According to Krohn (2004), "Although college instructors may feel uneasy about using emoticons, they must adapt to the changing times or risk being disregarded as relics of another era." In his 2016 book, "The Semiotics of Emoji: The Rise of Visual Language in the Age of the Internet," Danesi puts forth a compelling hypothesis that suggests emojis could signify a revival of hybridity in writing. This hybridity involves blending pictorial writing with phonetic writing, connecting back to the origins of written language and persisting throughout its historical development.

The primary objective of this chapter is to share how graduate-level students at a business school perceive the utilization of emojis and emoticons in the realm of business communication. This exploration is particularly relevant considering that it aims to understand their attitudes, beliefs, and experiences in utilizing these visual elements in the context of professional communication. By examining this topic, the chapter aims to contribute valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of business communication practices and shed light on the students' perceptions in the face of traditional norms and contemporary trends.

Literature Review

The study of emoji usage has been predominantly centered on two key dimensions: the emotional and linguistic roles of emoticons and emojis in Technology-Mediated Communication (TMC), and the influence of various factors, such as individual preferences, cultural context, and platform differences, on users' adoption of emojis (Bai et al., 2019). For instance, the emotional significance of emojis was underscored in Jaeger and Ares’ (2017) analysis, which revealed that the majority of emojis convey one or more emotional connotations. Petra et al. (2015) categorized emojis into positive, neutral, and negative groups based on their emotional expressions. Consequently, emojis serve to fill the gap left by the absence of non-verbal cues in TMC, facilitating the communication of semantics, emotions, and interpersonal dynamics (Gülşen, 2016; Walther & D'Addario, 2001; Gibson et al., 2018).

Further studies have indicated that people tend to employ emojis more frequently in positive communications compared to negative ones. Emojis have the capacity to express a broad spectrum of emotions, both through facial and non-facial expressions (Herring &Dainas, 2018; Jaeger et al., 2019). Moreover, specific combinations of emojis can amplify the depth of emotional expression. Lopez and Cap's (2017) investigation delved into the effects of various emoji pairings on emotional perception, highlighting the contextual variability of emoji meanings (Gawne & McCulloch, 2019). However, this variability and open-ended interpretability of emojis might engender uncertainty (Jaeger et al., 2019), prompting considerable research into the challenge of disambiguating emoji meanings. Emojinet, developed by Wijeratne, et.al. (2017), is an example of an effort to mitigate this ambiguity by integrating textual context with emojis.

Recent research has suggested that emojis can enhance several aspects of digital communication by conveying information about the sender’s mood and personality. Additionally, incorporating a congruent emoji in a textual message has been found to improve the recipient's comprehension of the message content (Boutet et al., 2021). Hand et al. (2022) demonstrated the impact of written content and accompanying emojis on message perception and the formation of initial impressions, emphasizing the interplay between textual sentiment and non-verbal cues. They highlighted that the alignment or misalignment between these two types of information is pivotal in shaping message and sender perceptions. Furthermore, it has been proposed that emojis play a pivotal role in online interpersonal communication and potentially influence the initiation of new relationships (Rodrigues et al., 2022).

However, Tigwell and Flatla (2016) contested that emojis are frequently used in informal settings and by individuals who perceive themselves as close friends. Hence, it is worthwhile to investigate the practicality of utilizing emojis to influence interpersonal communication in professional settings, especially after the Covid 19 Pandemic significantly impacted organizational communication processes.

Methodology

A group of 28 students, pursuing various post-graduate management programs at an Indian university, took part in a focus group study (G1, G2, and G3). The participants were selected using a method known as convenient sampling. Those selected met two criteria: a) they had a background in business studies, and b) they had at least some exposure, though limited, to the corporate culture. The participants were all adults between the ages of 21 and 28, with an average of two years of work experience. The group consisted of slightly more men (57%, n = 16) than women (43%, n = 12). Although they were all pursuing post-graduate studies in business, their specializations varied, including Finance, Marketing, Operations, Human Resources, IT, among others. The focus group discussions were conducted between October 2022 and February 2023.

Focus groups were chosen in this study because they offer a valuable way to collect in-depth and detailed information (Morgan& Hoffman, 2018). Through this method, participants can freely express their thoughts, viewpoints, and preferences using their own words, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic at hand (Carey, 2015; Creswell, 2003). This approach was favoured over other methods as it closely mimics real-life conversations, stimulating the exchange of knowledge through what experts call "memory synergy" and "political synergy" (Kamberelis& Dimitriadis, 2014).

A thematic analysis of the focus group interviews was conducted to understand and interpret qualitative data in a comprehensive and insightful manner. A thematic analysis allows for a nuanced exploration of the data, enabling researchers to identify and interpret a wide range of themes, patterns, and underlying meanings that may not be initially apparent. This intimate engagement with the data allows for the capture of subtle nuances and complex interrelationships among the various themes, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. A predominantly inductive approach was adopted, allowing the analysis to recognize and reflect meaning from the data without referring to previous ideas or theories. This involved open-coding the data, with an emphasis on respondent/data-based meanings. However, a degree of deductive analysis was incorporated to ensure that the open-coding contributed to meaningful themes aligned with the research questions and relevant to the respondent/data-based meanings.

The themes identified through this approach were generally determined from the data set based on their alignment with participants' perceptions and dialogue. This allowed the analysis to extract explicit, detailed, and meaningful content from significant interpretations made from participant dialogue across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012; 2019). The data analysis included prevalent patterned responses from all participant responses to construct meaning for themes and sub-themes related to the research questions.This choice was made considering research questions related to perceptions of emoji/emoticon use and the motives underlying use.

The six-step process was followed. The process involved acquainting oneself with the data and applying initial codes to describe content, patterns, or themes across various interviews. Subsequently, the themes underwent review, received designated names, culminating in the production of this report.

Results & Analysis

The process of Thematic Analysis resulted in the identification of four key themes that encompass the practices and concerns surrounding the usage of emojis and emoticons, along with the underlying motivations driving these behaviours. Table 1 provides an overview of the themes and sub-themes.

Table 1: Themes and Sub-themes generated

	Theme	Sub Theme	Sub Theme
1	Axiology of Emojis	Clarifying Intent	Types of Emoji
2	Determinants of Emoji Use		
3	Impact on Self Image		
4	Fixed Mental Models and the Impact of Negative Priming		

Theme 1: Axiology of Emoji Usage

1.1 Clarifying Intent

In the absence of nonverbal cues and social context, emojis can express different meanings and language skills in many ways (Bachman and Palmer, 1996). They help us understand the meaning of a message by showing the tone, using specific language like jokes, teasing, and sarcasm, and making our emotions clear so the person reading it isn't unsure about what we mean. The participants (P) believed the emojis played a vital role in clarifying intent especially when social cues that dominate FtF communication are absent in digital communication.

G2P2: *This happened during my internship: I needed some data from my general manager, and I had already reminded him a couple of times, but he still hadn't sent it. I felt it would be impolite to ask again since he was a senior member. So, I sent him a message with a smiling baby face emoji, asking for the data. I added the emoji to make the message seem friendly and not rude.*

G2P5: *During an academic group discussion, I tried to use humour and sarcasm, but I forgot to add an emoji. This led to a significant argument, and it was hard for people to understand. Later, they mentioned that perhaps my intentions weren't mean, but it didn't come across that way without the emoji.*

G1P2: *I have experimented with different communication styles—using only emojis, only text, and both text and emojis. However, I have faced misinterpretations in all these scenarios. For example, when I used a smiley face with a sweat drop, I meant to avoid a particular situation, but it was understood as if I wanted more information about it. Similarly, during a conversation with a friend, when I suggested talking later using only words because it was too much to type, it was misconstrued as if I didn't want to talk and was ignoring them.I realized that combining text and emojis results in a more nuanced form of communication. It's not as open to multiple interpretations as compared to using just text or just emojis, as it provides a clearer context and conveys a higher level of communication.*

G3P2: *Prior to my MBA, I worked at Lafarge Holcim and had the opportunity to collaborate with one of the CEOs of our global hub business services. During our regular communications on official channels like Google Meet, I noticed his use of emojis, finding it to be quite friendly. In my view, as organizations transition towards more empathetic forms of communication, with empathy at its core, emojis serve as an expression of friendliness, humanization, and a down-to-earth approach to conversation, enabling better emotional understanding between individuals.*

G2P4: *If you got a congratulatory communication which had a "Congratulations" and a full stop vis-à-vis a 'Congratulations' and a party popper or a clap or a thumbs up, the latter would feel warmer for sure, it would invoke a personal touch to the message and it would feel more genuine.*

G2P1: *I saw a pattern that everyone would write "Greetings of the day" with a smiley, the normal smiley. And many times it was used if the message had a little serious tone to it, just to ensure that it doesn't come across as too harsh to someone.*

1.2 Types of Emoji

The discussions highlighted that while certain emojis were used unequivocally at the workplace, there were others that were subject to misinterpretation and therefore avoidable.

G2P4: *I use party-popper emoji to send out congratulatory messages at the workplace, but I will never use the whistle emoji at the workplace.*

G3P3: *Thumbs up would be perhaps the most commonly used emoji but I am comfortable using the normal smiley, the laugh-out-loud, party emojis.*

G2P5: *I use smiley, smiley with a sweat drop, whistle, 100%, thumbs up, and high five quite often in my official conversations but on instant messenger platforms.*

G3P1: *The most commonly used emojis are thumbs up, smiley, and cake. I think it is imperative to build a virtual personality in a virtual workplace and neutral emojis like the ones I mentioned, projects one as easy going.*

G1P1: *I will use specific emojis at work, mainly those that show approval or acknowledgment. I won't use them to express my emotions. While I'll use them with my colleagues, I might hesitate to use them in purely work-related communication. In informal groups at work, I'll freely use emojis, not limiting them to strictly professional relationships.*

Theme 2: Determinants of Emoji usage

The next theme that emerged was that the effectiveness and acceptance of emojis are intricately tied to the specific context and situation in which they are employed. As the analysis delved deeper, a noteworthy finding surfaced regarding the use of emojis in email communication—a domain where their incorporation appears to be met with disapproval. It becomes evident that certain contextual factors and situations create an environment that is less conducive to the acceptance of emojis, particularly within the formal setting of email exchanges. This aligns with findings by Kaye et al. that social networking is used more frequently than email. The pandemic required the use of various communication channels, and the decision of which channel to use also led to greater acceptance of using emojis, extending to other communication channels.

G3P10: *In a WhatsApp chat or in a mail chain when there are too many people involved we don't know what everybody is thinking about, or what is the room like. Emojis also help us in reading the face because when you can't see facial expressions you cannot understand the context, so emojis would be a better way to do it.*

GIP8: *Usage of emojis also increased because the amount of time we were investing working when we were working from home was way higher than what we used to do when we were going to office. What that does is it blurs the line between professional and personal lives and you also try to have some fun in your entire 12 -13 hours of work you are doing, so I think it came from that they wanted to make this informal while they were still working.*

G1P4: *To me, the platform makes a difference. When I'm on Slack or WhatsApp, I'm fine with using emojis, but if it's email, I would never use one. At most, I might use a semi-colon to convey a similar feeling.*

G3P1: *Even in the organisation I worked it was just like what P2 mentioned in all other channels except for emails. Business heads and MDs would use emojis in WhatsApp groups and other channels provided to us by the organisation.*

G3P5: *I think I am a Covid-era working person. Work primarily was online. I never went to office before I joined MBA. I was working for a consulting firm and the key to being in a team since you are not spending time as much time is via emojis and emoticons. I think my manager was three hierarchies up and she would send a message* *on WhatsApp like "meeting at 11 with a sad face". So she knows that's my eating time and she is showing empathy that she knows we are all in the same boat.*

G2P8: *After the pandemic, we shifted to platforms like Zoom, even Zoom has a feature with emoji reactions. The reason why Zoom has also adapted is that it gives an informal touch to having conversations with employees.*

G1P6: *Some people use emojis in emails, while others find it cumbersome from the keyboard.*

G1P3: *Usage of smileys in emails depends on the person and context.*

Theme 3

Impact on Self-Image

Another fundamental theme that surfaced from the analysis of emoji usage revolves around its influence on the user's image. Within this aspect, two contrasting perspectives became apparent. On one hand, there is a recognition of individuals actively shaping a professional persona, driven by the desire to control how they are perceived by others. This is manifested through a disciplined and strategic incorporation of emojis in communication, motivated by a fear of potential reputational damage. On the other hand, an alternative viewpoint highlights the affability of individuals, particularly those in leadership positions, who express warmth and approachability by freely and unreservedly incorporating emojis into their communication style.

G1P5: *With three years of work experience, I haven't mastered using emojis in formal writing. I avoid using them for professional communication, but I feel comfortable using them with colleagues who are also friends. In our office chats, I'm okay with using a thumbs-up emoji. I tend to avoid using emojis in formal communication because I don't want to come across as too casual or informal.*

G1P7: *Using emojis as a leader can make the team feel more comfortable and foster an informal relationship.*

G1P8: *Emojis make a leader more approachable, creating an environment where the team feels comfortable reaching out.*

G1P3: "*During my internship, my relationship with my immediate mentor was much more casual. Whenever I had a problem, I used emojis to express. He knew the intensity and understood the situation at that point in time.*"

G1P3: *Emojis can reveal more about a person's personality and help leaders connect with team members on a deeper level.*

G1P4: *Emojis are used sparingly in formal communication, mainly as a way to make the leader approachable.*

G2P10:*During WFH, emojis gave us a platform to express what we are feeling. It would have a better impact, as the other person is appreciative of his work. When we were not able to see each other during the pandemic, emojis played a good role in enabling these relations and making a positive impact when conversations were being done.*

G2P2: *When it comes to senior management, again it is a very professional setup so I would be a little restrained in my usage.*

G2P6: *If my senior manager would use an emoji, then I would go ahead, but I would not be the first one to use it in a conversation.*

Theme 4

Fixed Mental Models and the Impact of Negative Priming

Resistance to change is a significant obstacle, and entrenchment stands as a formidable barrier. Several participants exhibited entrenched thinking when it came to using emojis. Although the focussed group discussions thoroughly explored the appropriateness of usage at the beginning of the discussion, some participants demonstrated rigid thinking, associating it with a predetermined 'correct' approach.

G2P9: *In a workplace, using emojis can create a wrong impression about you as an employee. Secondly, the department using emojis also matters.*

G2P10: *I would be more comfortable using emojis when I am working with my team. But when it comes to senior management, it is a very professional setup, so I would be a little restrained in my usage.*

G3P7: *I guess I am more of a traditionalist when it comes to communication. I worked for one of the largest investment banks which is again a very traditionalist company. When I first worked it was in a more non-core operational segment, where communication is a lot more professional. There were WhatsApp groups but in those also you communicated very formally just the way one has been taught in schools with proper punctuation and using the full scope of the language.*

Curiously, the field of communication literature has played a role in perpetuating entrenched behaviours. Numerous business communication textbooks and educators from the past have adhered to principles discouraging the adoption of modern tools like emoticons and emojis. Munter et al. cautioned, "Emoticons such as :-) and :-(may add nonverbal cues in very informal e-mails, but they could harm your credibility with some readers. In most business e-mails, it is wiser to explain your views explicitly and make your tone clear with carefully crafted words." Kaye et al. noted that social norms and values related to professionalism significantly influence users' acceptance or rejection of emoticons in a business context. Despite acknowledging the positive interpersonal functions of emoticons across various platforms, users are discouraged from using them in professional situations, deeming them as unprofessional (Seaton, 2011). Interestingly, users recognize the vital personal and interpersonal purposes served by emoticons but emphasize that these functions are inappropriate for business-related communication, such as emails.

Conclusion

In conclusion, building on the foundation established by prior research, which underscores the effectiveness of emojis—especially positive ones—in enhancing communication, conveying emotions, and creating favourable impressions in technology-mediated social interactions, we advocate two key recommendations. Firstly, we propose that organizations consider developing training programs focused on modern communication tools, such as emojis, to enhance overall communication effectiveness. This proactive approach can empower employees to navigate the evolving landscape of communication styles.

Secondly, we suggest that faculty members overseeing communication courses take steps to integrate instructional interventions that sensitize students to the intricacies of emoji usage. Utilizing collaboration platforms for team assignments, engaging in joint projects with students from diverse backgrounds and countries, and incorporating simulations can provide valuable experiential learning opportunities. As one participant says:

G2P9: *...we acknowledge that emojis contribute to improved communication. Once a standardized framework is established, individuals will naturally personalize their emoji usage over time. Just as there are norms for verbal and nonverbal communication, including body language, people will develop their unique styles for incorporating emojis while adhering to standardized protocols.*

In conclusion, building on the foundations established by earlier research (Boutet et al., 2021), which underscored the effectiveness of emojis, especially positive ones, in elevating communication, conveying emotions, and cultivating positive impressions in technology-mediated social interactions, this chapter advocates for organizations to consider the creation of training programs centred on contemporary communication tools, including the judicious use of emojis. Such initiatives should aim to enhance communication efficacy within organizational contexts, recognizing the evolving landscape of digital communication and the potential benefits that thoughtful emoji usage can bring to interpersonal interactions. As we move forward in this technologically-driven era, embracing and integrating these new-age communication tools can contribute to more nuanced and effective communication strategies within organizational settings.

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Chapter 3

THE POWER OF INFLUENCE: EXAMINING POP CULTURE'S PERSUASIVE EDGE

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Introduction

Persuasive communication is a dynamic and complex area, where the ancient principles of the Greeks blend seamlessly with contemporary theory. This combination of time-tested wisdom and modern theory creates a powerful framework that explains the art of persuasion providing a roadmap for students and practitioners. There are numerous texts elaborating on the principles of persuasion; some concentrate on Aristotle's principles of rhetoric (Floyd-Lapp, 2014), others on Cicero's five-step method of constructing persuasive speech (Dominik, 1997), and still others on the more recent presiding high priest of the theory of influence, Robert Cialdini (2021). This can sometimes be confusing for learners looking to understand and practice the key principles of persuasion and therefore persuasive speaking.

In this chapter, we will draw on these three oft-quoted texts on persuasion and surface the connections among them. This will help readers grasp not only the principles advocated by the three sources but also understand how they draw upon each other. This is by no means a text on the theory of rhetoric. However knowing the basic principles clears some confusion while accessing texts on persuasion and is helpful as a pedagogical technique when, as you ascend the professional ladder, face an audience of learners to impart the basics of influence and persuasion. Let's take a closer look at all three, establish connections among them, and then study a few popular speeches and interactions to understand how these interconnected principles of persuasion have been leveraged to… well, persuade.

Rhetoric

Many ancient Greeks (Corax, Tisias, and the Sophists in the 5th century BCE) are credited with starting the study of rhetoric for legal argumentation and persuasion, it was Aristotle who formalized the principles in his still influential work "Rhetoric", a foundational text that outlines key principles and strategies for persuasion.While "Rhetoric" is a complex text, bringing together the teachings of Aristotle and all those who explained the idea of rhetoric before him, here we summarize the crux of the materials in the text – ethos, pathos, logos, and Kairos.

Ethos or credibility concerns the authority of the speaker, the trust that the speaker must establish with the audience for effective persuasion. Ethos is built upon the speaker's expertise in the subject matter, integrity, and authenticity established through previous association or behavior before the audience.

Pathos or emotional appeal focuses on the emotional connection between the speaker and the audience evoking empathy and shared values. Pathos perhaps is the most important principle in making a speaker's message relatable and memorable.

Logos or logical appeal helps an audience assess the validity of an argument through the structure, reasoning, and evidence presented. While ethos, pathos, and logos form the holy trinity of persuasion, there are some lesser-known principles that are equally important.

Kairos refers to the correct timing and relevance of an argument since persuasion works best when a message or argument is delivered at the right time in the right context. Apart from this “Rhetoric” also emphasizes the ideas of a clear **organizational structure** of one’s argument, a sound understanding of and adaptation to one’s **audience’s needs**, values, and beliefs, the ability to address counter-arguments and consider alternate viewpoints, and last but not the least **clever use of language** and an effective**style of delivery** for maximum persuasive impact.

These key principles of Rhetoric serve as a foundation for effective communication and persuasion. They continue to be valuable in various contemporary contexts, from political speeches and marketing campaigns to legal arguments and everyday discourse. Need a citation here….

Cicero’s Five-step method of persuasion

Marcus Tullius Cicero, a Roman statesman, and orator, learned from the teachings of the ancient Greeks who came before him and was influenced by the teachings of Aristotle’s Rhetoric among others. He enriched the world of rhetoric with his systematic approach to persuasive speaking. Cicero's 5-Step Method introduces structure and discipline into the persuasive process. Each step serves as a strategic step, fostering logical argumentation and enhancing the speaker's ability to craft compelling messages. His 5-step method includes:

Inventio (Invention): This is the step where you generate your ideas and arguments. You think about what you want to say, what points you want to make, and what evidence or reasons you have to support your message. It's like gathering all the building blocks for your speech

Disposito (Arrangement): Once you have all your ideas and arguments, it's time to organize them. You decide on the best order for your points. What should come first, what should be in the middle, and what should be at the end? This step helps you create a logical and persuasive structure for your speech

Elocutio (Style): In this step, you focus on how you express your ideas. You choose the words and language that will make your speech compelling and engaging. You might use vivid and persuasive language to capture your audience's attention

Memoria (Memory): Memory is about knowing your speech really well such that you remember the main points, examples, and arguments. This ensures that you speak in an extempore fashion displaying confidence and knowledge.

Pronuntiatio (Delivery): The final step is all about how you present your speech. You work on your speaking style, your tone of voice, and how you use gestures and body language to communicate your message effectively. Delivery is crucial because it's how you connect with your audience. Insert citation here…

Cialdini's Six Principles of Persuasion

Also known as the "Six Weapons of Influence," these are powerful techniques that help individuals communicate more persuasively. These principles are based on human psychology and can be applied to various contexts. Here is an explanation of each principle:

Reciprocity: People have a natural tendency to reciprocate when someone does something for them. In persuasive speaking, this means that if you do something for your audience, they are more likely to respond in kind. For example, offering valuable information, favors, or assistance can make your audience more receptive to your message

Commitment and Consistency: Once people make a commitment or take a small initial step, they tend to stay consistent with that commitment. In persuasive speaking, you can start by asking the audience to agree with a minor point or take a small action. Once they commit to this, they are more likely to accept bigger requests or ideas in alignment with their previous commitment.

Social Proof: People often look to others for direction when making decisions. Demonstrating that others have already accepted your message or idea can make your argument more persuasive. For instance, you can use endorsements, facts, or case studies to show that many people have found your solution valuable.

Liking: Persuading people is easier when they like or connect with those presenting or arguing a point.Therefore establishing a rapport with your audience is extremely important in persuasive speaking. Sharing parallels, making a connection, showing appreciation, and being friendly can make you more likable and persuasive.

Authority: People tend to trust and follow those they perceive as credible experts. In persuasive speaking, it is essential to establish your authority and credibility on the subjectmatter you are addressing. This can be achieved by sharing credentials, referencing significant experience, or quoting authoritative sources.

Scarcity: People are more driven to action when they perceive limited or scarce opportunities. You can be more persuasive when you create a sense of urgency or exclusivity in the product, service, or opportunity you may be arguing for. This might involve highlighting the limited availability of your solution or emphasizing the potential loss if the audience doesn't act.Insert citation.

Integration of Cicero's 5-step method with Aristotelian Rhetoric and Cialdini's Principles of Influence

Combining rhetorical principles like ethos, pathos, logos, and kairos with Cicero's five-step method of persuasive speech and Cialdini's principles of influence can create a powerful framework for crafting persuasive communication. Let's break this down step by step with a detailed example. Imagine you are a charity organization representative delivering a persuasive speech to raise funds for an important cause, such as providing clean drinking water to underserved communities. Here is how you can combine these principles:

Invention: You should identify the most compelling arguments or goal(s) for your cause: the scale of the problem, the impact of clean water on health and education, and how your organization is effectively addressing the issue. A clear understanding of your goals can help you structure your argument accordingly. During your speech, state your goals early and explain their importance. This allows the audience to appreciate your intent, which makes you appear goal-oriented and confident. Organize the main points of your speech according to the time allotted to you. Usually,you can make apersuasive argument in approximately 10 minutes, which is short enough to keep your audience's attention. Aim for at least 3-4 supporting points in aid of your main argument. It is equally important to understand your audience and their opinions on the subject of your primary goal. If they are not familiar with the extent of the problem of lack of drinking water among the underserved provide them with background information, but avoid using jargon. If they already agree with your stance, convincing them to donate funds should be easier and you can introduce additional evidence and avenues for donation earlier rather than later in your talk.

Arrangement: You should structure your speech logically, so that the audience is able to follow your arguments, emphasizing the urgency of the problem of scarce drinking water in poor communities. Determining the arrangement of your speech can help you outline your speech and create a compelling case for your argument. You can choose from among three major types of arranging a presentation or speech: (1) Sequential order: This is the most commonly used arrangement where the major points of the presentation are set up in the introduction and then each point is elaborated upon in the order in which it was introduced. (2) Problem and Solution: This arrangement involves first establishing a problem that the audience must grapple with and then providing the solution. You could even address several different problems associated with the major issue (e.g. water-borne diseases, resultant malnutrition, stunting among children) and reiterate how your solution addresses each one. (3) Compare and Contrast: This arrangement uses unique ideas and relates them to your primary statement establishing how your solution is a good resolution.

Style: Style has more to do with form than substance but is equally important for creating impact. Compelling arguments delivered in a monotonous and boring style may not have the desired impact. But when combined with flair and style, it can leave an audience impressed. Your introduction is the ideal opportunity to make a strong and positive first impression on your audience. The keyobjective of the introductory statement is to grab the audience's attention. You might start out with a joke, a story, an anecdote, or even a compelling visual followed by complete silence that produces an emotional response. Establish a connection with your audience, the importance of your primary thesis, as well as your credibility in the opening part of the speech.

Determine the appropriate method of engaging with your audience – whether through ethos, pathos or, logos – taking into account your audience's perspective on the subject. Once you have conducted thorough research on your audience, you will be better equipped to gauge whether they are more receptive to rational arguments, emotional appeals, or authoritative references. You then have the flexibility to employ a single approach or combine these strategies to devise the most compelling arguments.

You can use impactful stories of individuals who've benefitted from your organization's work to connect with the audience. Establish social proof by sharing testimonials and success stories to demonstrate that many others are already supporting the cause with spectacular results for the underserved. Cite endorsements or partnerships with well-known experts and institutions.

Close your speech with a call to action that recaps what you told your audience and what you hope they do next. This action might be voting for a particular candidate, expressing interest in an event or purchasing a product. Reiterate your key points and how they underline the call to action.

Memory: You rehearse your speech and make sure you know your content inside out. This gives the impression that you are speaking from the heart rather than reading from notes. A heartfelt, emotional appeal in a case like this is likely the most important factor in connecting with the audience. Outlines can be an important part of creating, practicing and presenting a powerful speech. They help to organize thoughts and supporting material and ensure the chosen delivery method is the most effective choice. There are two types of outlines that can be used. (1) A **preparation outline** is a document used when initially writing a speech. It can help with structuring a presentation's main points and figuring out the most efficient way of presenting your argument. When creating a preparation outline, organize the information in the order it will be delivered including transitions from point to point. It can also be beneficial to write out major points and supporting evidence using complete sentences. This can help you identify how the speech flows and if there are areas that need further adjustment. (2) A **speaking outline** is a document that lists the major points in a speech using brief descriptive language. When giving a speech or presentation, using a speaking outline rather than a written script helps the presentation feel more natural and conversational.

Delivery: You should speak with passion and conviction, maintaining eye contact and using appropriate gestures. Ensure that the audience likes and respects you so that they can relate to you and therefore the cause you are espousing. Make the session interactive with participation from the audience in the form of questions, inviting personal anecdotes of community work

By integrating these elements, speakers can create persuasive speeches that are not only rooted in classical rhetorical principles but also leverage Cialdini's insights into human psychology and persuasion. This combination can enhance the effectiveness of persuasive communication.

<u>How has Popular Culture Leveraged Principles of Persuasion</u>

In the last part of this chapter let us examine a few famous speeches (find them here) which transcended their immediate audience and captured the imagination of the zeitgeist. Pop Culture figures, whether they are actors, musicians, or public personalities, often excel in persuasive speaking for a variety of reasons. Here are a few handpicked instances that have been analyzed from the lens of principles of persuasion as outlined in this chapter.

Gordon Gekko's speech in the movie "Wall Street" is an iconic example of persuasive communication (in the context of a large audience sitting in an auditorium), albeit for unethical purposes. Let's analyze his speech using Cicero's five-step method of persuasion, along with the principles of ethos, pathos, logos, and Cialdini's principles of influence.Here it would be useful to give a brief insight into the context against which the speech is delivered…if not the contents of the speech.

Principles of Rhetoric

Ethos: Gekko establishes credibility by presenting himself as a successful power player in the financial world. His track record and reputation within the movie's context add to his authority.

Pathos: He evokes the audience's emotions by portraying a bleak picture of the company's current state and offering hope for a brighter future through his aggressive tactics. He stokes fear and greed as emotional drivers.

Logos: While his argument is morally questionable, he uses a semblance of logical reasoning by stating that greed, in his view, drives innovation and economic growth. He presents the idea that by seeking profits and being aggressive in the market, they can achieve financial success.

Cicero's five-step method of persuasion

Invention: Gordon Gekko, a corporate raider and stock trader, opens his speech by addressing the shareholders of the company he intends to take over. His argument is that the company is underperforming and needs a change in leadership to increase shareholder value. This argument is based on the potential for increased profits through aggressive financial strategies

Arrangement: Gekko structures his speech effectively by starting with a bold and attention-grabbing statement about the concept of greed being good. This captures the audience's interest and sets the tone. He then proceeds to explain why he believes greed is essential in the business world. His speech flows logically, building his argument step-by-step.

Style: Gekko employs a confident and authoritative tone. His speech is full of rhetorical devices, such as metaphors and vivid language, which make his message compelling and memorable. He uses winning language to make the listeners feel like they are part of anhonored group that appreciates the reality of the business world

Memory: Though not explicitly demonstrated in the movie scene, it is implied that Gekko has prepared his speech well and has memorized key points. His delivery is impassioned and convincing, adding to his credibility.

Delivery: Gekko's body language, facial expressions, and vocal tone exude confidence and authority. His charisma and delivery style capture the audience's attention and keep them engaged.

Cialdini's principles of influence.

Reciprocity: Gekko offers the promise of financial success and wealth, creating an expectation of reciprocity from the shareholders, who are enticed by the prospects of increased value.

Commitment and Consistency: By taking a firm stance and advocating greed as a virtue, Gekko encourages the shareholders to commit to this mindset, fostering consistency in their actions and investment decisions.

Social Proof: Gekko presents himself as a successful and influential figure in the financial world, serving as social proof that his strategies work.

Authority: His position of authority as a corporate raider and his confident demeanor enhance his influence over the audience.

Liking: While Gekko isn't necessarily portrayed as a likable character, his persuasive skills and charisma make him appealing to those who might be drawn to his message.

Scarcity: Gekko creates a sense of scarcity by implying that this opportunity is unique,and those who don't seize it miss out on potential profits.

Gordon Gekko's speech in "Wall Street" is persuasive due to his effective use of rhetoric, his portrayal of ethos, pathos, and logos, and his alignment with Cialdini's principles of influence. His speech showcases how persuasive techniques can be used for both ethical and unethical purposes, making it a classic example of persuasive communication.

Shahrukh Khan's "Sattar minute" (70 minutes) speech in "Chak De! India" is a prime example of effective persuasion in a small group scenario under extreme pressure – pressure to win the first World Cup for the women's hockey team of India. Let us analyze his speech using Cicero's five-step method of persuasion, along with the principles of ethos, pathos, logos, and Cialdini's principles of influence.

Principles of Rhetoric

Ethos: Khan's character, Kabir Khan begins by establishing ethos through his personal background. As a former national hockey team captain, Khan intrinsically conveys the highest level of credibility and authority in the context of the sport. This credibility is further reinforced by his dedication to coaching the team, symbolizing a commitment to their success. The team members look up to him as a role model.

Pathos: The emotional appeal in Khan's talk to his team in the locker room just before the team files out to face their fiercely competitive opponent taps into the players' shared identity as Indians who are here to do their nation proud. The emotional connection is heightened when Khan mentions the significance of "sattar minute", highlighting that this limited time presents them with an unprecedented opportunity to face down adversity, overcome their personal limitations, interpersonal squabbles and make this scare resource of 70 minutes resonate with pride throughout their lives. The emotional intensity of his words ignites a sense of unity, patriotism, pride and determination among the audience and the audience.

Logos: Khan skillfully weaves a clear path to success in his talk when he specifically calls out the importance of unity, strategy and teamwork. He uses historical references, like the Indian cricket team's 1983 World Cup cricket victory against all odds due to the enlightened captaincy and strategic use of players' strengths. The logical structure of the argument helps the players and the audience understand the rationale behind his motivational message.

Cicero's five-step method of persuasion

Invention: Kabir Khan begins by sharing his own narrative, from a successful national team captain to a coach seeking redemption. This personal journey serves as a compelling backdrop for his motivational message. Khan frames the team's struggles as a shared challenge, aligning their goals with his own journey and fostering a sense of unity.

Arrangement: Khan's speech is well-structured, adhering to Cicero's second step of arrangement. He begins with an attention-grabbing statement, "Sattar minute," which piques the team's curiosity and the audience's interest. Khan then proceeds to discuss the team's struggles, their diverse backgrounds, and the external pressures they face. The speech concludes with a powerful call to action, uniting the team and audience in a common purpose.

Style: The style of the speech, Cicero's third step, is marked by Khan's effective use of rhetorical devices. He employs repetition to emphasize the importance of "Sattar Minute," creating a memorable and motivational catchphrase. Through vivid language and impassioned delivery, Khan heightens the emotional impact of his words. His tone evolves from reflective to inspirational, engaging the audience's emotions.

Memory involves referencing shared cultural experiences to enhance persuasiveness. Khan invokes the memory of India's cricket team's victory, a familiar event to the audience. This reference instills hope, illustrating that India is capable of achieving greatness in sports. Khan's words become memorable by connecting with the collective memory of the Indian people.

Delivery: Shah Rukh Khan's charismatic and passionate performance captivates the audience. His body language, gestures, and vocal tone reflect authenticity and conviction, reinforcing the credibility of the message. His ability to connect with the audience on both emotional and intellectual levels is a testament to his persuasive delivery.

Cialdini's principles of influence.

Cialdini's first principle, **reciprocity**, asserts that people tend to respond to kind actions with kindness. In Khan's speech, he offers his time, knowledge, and unwavering support to the team. By demonstrating his commitment to their success, Khan encourages the players to reciprocate with their dedication, ultimately fostering a sense of mutual obligation.

The principle of **social proof** suggests that individuals are more likely to conform to the behavior of a group when they see others doing the same. Khan taps into this principle by referencing the success of other Indian sports teams, including the cricket team. By showcasing these triumphs, he encourages the players to believe in their own potential, drawing strength from the collective success of their potential, drawing strength from the collective success of their compatriots.

Cialdini's third principle, **authority**, posits that people tend to follow the lead of those they perceive as experts or authorities. Khan, as the former national hockey team captain and a respected coach, embodies this principle. His credibility and expertise in the sport establish him as a trusted authority figure. The team is more likely to heed his guidance and believe in the path he lays out for them.

Consistency, the fourth principle, suggests that individuals tend to act in ways that align with their prior commitments. Khan encourages the team to make a commitment to the sport and their success. By vocalizing their dedication in response to his call to action, the players are likelier to follow through and work diligently to achieve their goals.

The fifth principle, **liking**, posits that people are more likely to be persuaded by those they know, like, and trust. Khan's charismatic portrayal of Kabir Khan fosters a connection with the players and the audience. His charm and genuine concern for the team create a sense of liking and trust, making the message more persuasive.

The principle of **scarcity** suggests that people are more motivated by opportunities that are scarce or time-limited. Khan underscores the importance of "Sattar Minute" (seventy minutes), emphasizing the limited time the team has to prove themselves. This time constraint serves as a motivational trigger, urging the players to act swiftly.

Through his character, Kabir Khan, Khan established credibility, creates powerful emotional connection, and presents a rational argument that resonates with the Indian women's hockey team and the viewers alike. By drawing upon these fundamental elements of rhetoric, Khan's speech transcends its cinematic context and continues to inspire and motivate individuals to this day. It serves as a testament to the enduring power of persuasive communication in both film and real-life scenarios.

"What's the Right Thing to do?" by Harvard professor Michael Sandel is the most viewed TED talk ever. In this interaction he addresses a classroom full of students while also engaging in active discussion and debate. Let's see how this interaction (as opposed to a one-way communication we saw in the previous two examples) leverages the principles of persuasion.

<u>Principles of Rhetoric</u>

Logos, the use of logical reasoning, plays a central role in Sandel's talk. Throughout the presentation, he systematically presents various ethical dilemmas, encouraging the audience to think critically and engage with the material. By dissecting real-world scenarios and thought experiments, he encourages the audience to examine their own beliefs and values. For example, he discusses hypothetical situations like the "trolley problem" and the concept of "price gouging" to illustrate ethical conundrums. By breaking down these issues into logical components, Sandel provides a foundation for his argument and engages the audience's intellect, compelling them to consider the complexity of moral decision-making.

Pathos, the emotional appeal, is another key aspect of Sandel's persuasive strategy. While discussing ethical questions, he often shares anecdotes and real-life cases that evoke strong emotional responses. By doing so, he connects with the audience on a more personal level, allowing them to empathize with the dilemmas faced by individuals in these situations. For instance, when he tells the story of the organ transplant allocation debate, the audience can't help but feel the emotional weight of those life-and-death decisions. Sandel's ability to elicit empathy and compassion in the audience creates a deeper connection and investment in the subject matter.

Ethos: As a renowned Harvard professor and philosopher, he carries significant authority on matters of ethics and moral philosophy. His position as an expert in the field lends weight to his arguments and makes it more likely for the audience to trust his perspective. Additionally, he presents himself as an unbiased moderator, encouraging open dialogue and debate among his audience. This establishes him as a fair and credible source, enhancing his ethos and further persuading the audience to consider his perspective.

Cicero's five-step method

Invention: In his TED talk, Sandel meticulously crafts his arguments by presenting ethical dilemmas and utilizing real-world examples. He explores thought-provoking questions such as the "trolley problem" and "price gouging," forcing the audience to confront complex moral decisions. By presenting compelling scenarios, Sandel effectively sparks the audience's interest and curiosity, aligning with Cicero's first canon of invention.

Arrangement: Sandel's talk is well-structured, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. He starts by introducing the concept of ethics and outlining the dilemmas he will address. Then, he carefully leads the audience through various ethical scenarios and concludes with a call to action, encouraging the audience to reflect on their values and beliefs. This structured approach keeps the audience engaged and makes Sandel's message more persuasive.

Style: Sandel is an eloquent speaker, using clear and concise language to convey complex ethical concepts. He employs relatable anecdotes and real-life examples to ensure that his message resonates with the audience. By using accessible and relatable language, Sandel effectively communicates his arguments and engages his audience.

Memory: Although this canon may be less applicable to a TED talk, Sandel effectively uses repetition and clear summaries of key points to reinforce his message. This repetition helps the audience remember the ethical dilemmas and arguments presented in the talk.

Delivery: Sandel is an engaging speaker, using intonation and body language to emphasize key points. His passionate and empathetic delivery style helps connect with the audience on an emotional level, making the ethical dilemmas he presents more compelling.

Cialdini's principles of influence.

Reciprocity: Sandel engages his audience by offering them a thought-provoking journey through ethical dilemmas. By presenting these scenarios, he creates a sense of intellectual reciprocity – he is giving the audience valuable moral conundrums to ponder. As a result, the audience is more inclined to reciprocate by actively listening and considering the ideas he presents.

Sandel leverages **commitment** by encouraging the audience to reflect on their personal values and beliefs in the context of ethical scenarios. By doing so, he prompts the audience to reaffirm their commitment to ethical principles, making it more likely for them to be consistent with these values in the future.

Social Proof: Sandel often references real-world examples and anecdotes, illustrating the moral choices made by others. By doing this, he taps into Cialdini's principle of social proof, which suggests that people tend to follow the behaviors of others when uncertain. Sandel showcases how individuals, communities, and societies grapple with ethical dilemmas, implicitly encouraging the audience to consider their own choices within a larger societal context.

Liking: Sandel connects with the audience on an emotional level by sharing relatable stories and presenting ethical scenarios in a manner that reflects empathy and compassion. His likable and engaging persona makes the audience more receptive to his arguments.

Scarcity: While not as prominently featured in Sandel's talk, the principle of scarcity could also be applied. Sandel makes these ethical discussions feel like a unique and limited opportunity for intellectual growth. The audience may be more inclined to engage with the content because it's presented as a valuable and scarce resource.

Michael Sandel's TED talk, "What's the Right Thing to Do?" is a persuasive masterpiece that artfully leverages principles of Rhetoric, Cicero's method as well as Cialdini's arguments. Through logical reasoning, emotional storytelling, and ethical credibility, and brilliant structuring, Sandel engages the audience in a thought-provoking exploration of moral dilemmas. By skillfully weaving these persuasive elements together, he effectively encourages the audience to consider the complexity of ethical decision-making and invites them to question their own values and beliefs.

Conclusion

Becoming a persuasive speaker in a professional public speaking setting involves establishing credibility, connecting emotionally, delivering a clear and logical message, engaging the audience, and navigating challenges effectively. By mastering these skills and understanding the principles of persuasion, you can influence and inspire your professional audience to take action, support your ideas, or share your vision. The ability to persuade in a public speaking context is not only instrumental for your career but also for advancing important causes, disseminating knowledge, and inspiring change. Remember,–Persuasive public speaking, therefore, is about leaving a lasting impact and motivating your audience to embrace your message and vision.

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Should be arranged in alphabetical order. Also, give the source of Sandel's YouTube talk as well as the other videos used.

Chapter 4

WALKING THE TALK - THE POWER OF STORIES FOR LEADERSHIP

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"Stories constitute the single most powerful weapon in a leader's arsenal."
Dr. Howard Gardner

Abstract
Professional storytelling today is a growing trend, bringing in opportunities for analytical thinking and creativity and paving the way for discussions from varying perspectives. Stories told well can cast a spell on their audience, building a connection in a way no technology can, i.e., adding the human touch. Storytelling, as an age-old tradition handed down through generations across the world, much before the written word became prevalent, captivates audiences even in this age of technology. For example, the 1976 legendary novel 'Roots' by Alex Haley, considered a ground breaking portrayal of African American history, culture, and people, highlights the tradition of storytelling about one's predecessors and how this tradition helps to re-unite the author with his tribe in spite of the gap of several generations.

Today, this art has found its way into business functions. Why? The answer lies in the ever-growing demand for upskilling and continuous learning for professional growth, the complexity of messaging, exponentially changing technology, and stakeholder expectations from communicators. (Dennison, 2023). Right from business schools to businesses large and small, it is observed that there is a surge in the demand to teach leaders to tell stories to engage, inspire, and influence. Gardner's book 'Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership' (1996)traces stories right from J. Robert Oppenheimer to Alfred Sloan to Mahatma Gandhi. The book makes a strong case for storytelling and how leadership is all about the creation and embodiment of an effective story.

The case study methodology would be used as the paper explores the business case for storytelling. Caselets will be included, as follows:

1. Pixar: A case in building a data-driven narrative for organisational change
2. Storycircle Edusaarthi: Storytelling as a career and entrepreneurial opportunity
3. Soundbytes11 11: Business Storytelling for leaders

The authors analyze the application of this art for business purposes as the paper explores the role of storytelling in business and how it has emerged as an impactful tool in various management functions. This article will discuss the applications of this technique in business through two cases: one, a change in an international media house, driven mainly by data-driven storytelling, and one, an emerging business model around storytelling as an entrepreneurial opportunity.

Keywords: Storytelling, business strategy, management tools, data-driven storytelling, business models

Introduction and Background

Anecdotes and stories have the power to cast a spell on an audience, building connections in a way no technology does by adding the human touch. Storytelling has been practiced for ages, much before the written word came into existence—from age-old traditions of oral narratives about family histories across the world to the present day, where storytelling is driven by data and technology. While they weave a world of romantic ideals for children, stories are a powerful and systematic tool that lend themselves to a wide variety of situations to deliver business outcomes. Stories bring in elements of empathy even in these days of high automation as they provide a holistic experience of the three critical Cs (3Cs: connect, contextualise, communicate), or, in other words, Aristotle's Rhetorical Triad of Ethos, Logos, and Pathos.

Stories in Society

A fair question that comes up is, 'why storytelling? Combine this with the demands on one's attention… and the challenge of attention deficit: the average person checks a device about 300 times a day; this was pre-covid times. So, with the information overload and the fact that we are also in choice-rich environments—a plethora of shows on OTT platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Apple TV—the one way to cut through all the noise is to tell a story. This is borne out by the sudden spate of conversations around storytelling by parents, teachers, and business leaders. Soundari, one of the authors of this paper is a business coach and she has personally observed a surge in requests to teach leaders the skill of storytelling to engage, inspire, and influence in the backdrop of information overload, ever-changing technology, and the growing complexity of messaging.

Storytelling in our current reality at work

One evening, one of the authors caught up with a friend who had just returned from a company town hall and asked him "Tell me a few messages from the talk". The response triggered thinking about the general approach to presentations, "Oh, nothing, just a lot of data!" The amount of time, effort, and money invested in getting those decks together and how it is explained as 'a lot of data' where not much is remembered raises questions on what is missing. In various client discussions, people are often heard to say that "our leaders are not inspiring" or they don't recall the talk, or that "the sales teams sound like talking brochures" or "our technology teams are strong, but they can't communicate", or that "our values are on the walls, but we don't know what that means when translated into work." Does any of this sound familiar?

Stories can be an effective tool in such situations. Stories cut through the data, the jargon, and the confusing numbers and get to the action, the message, and empathy. And while facts and data connect to the head, stories connect to the heart, and they fire up your curiosity to get you to listen. As Christina Blacken shares in her article,Narrative intelligence is the ability to create patterns and attach meaning to what's happening in the world around us through stories." "When we hear a story, the neural activity in our brain increases fivefold. (Blacken, 2023) This incredible feature of storytelling is the result of two cognitive processes:narrative transportation" and "neural coupling." Narrative transportation, a phenomenon studied and coined by researchers T.C. Brook and M.C. Green, immerses you in a story. Your brain creates visuals from the story being told, your senses and emotions fire, and your values and beliefs shift with the narrative. Essentially, you adopt the themes and values of that story as your own. This process creates trust with the storyteller.

The second process, neural coupling, causes the neurons in your brain to fire in the same ways as the storyteller, creating a connection and even more trust with the storyteller. When we hear an emotionally compelling story, our brains become more engaged, triggering empathy, improving our memory and recall, and releasing the cuddle hormone oxytocin. Our brains live on and crave stories because they feel good and simultaneously engage so many of our senses." (Blacken, 2023).

Methodology

The paper is based on the premise that storytelling brings out the elements of head as well as heart, leading to informed decision-making at leadership levels. Empirical evidence is gathered from extant literature on the topic and related pieces of writing as well as experience sharing by practitioners, including the co-author, and other scholars. In addition, an interview of an entrepreneur whose startup business model is developed around the art of storytelling was conducted. The interview as well as the transcript are available with the authors.

This article explores storytelling from two angles - storytelling for business and storytelling as a business. Storytelling for business is analysed using empirical data and inputs from practitioners as well as industry professionals, and presented using the 3 Cs - Connect, Contextualize, Communicate. Storytelling as a business is presented through the example of a start-up focussed on this art, including excerpts of an interview with the founder of Storycircle Edusaarthi.

Findings

Findings are presented in two parts: storytelling for business and storytelling as a business.

I. Storytelling for Business

Telling stories to engage employees is a powerful way to improve trust, inspire commitment, and drive purpose. John Flint, former CEO of HSBC Group, said this in a podcast: “In my 30-year career, I have made over 1 million slides, and nobody remembers those. I have told stories along the way—personal stories, high points, low points, successes, failures, and people are still talking about it.” The 3 Cs—connect, contextualise, and communicate—are now explored from the lens of storytelling as a tool in the leaders’ toolbox through anecdotes as follows:

A. Connect: Example of the ex-CEO, Marriott Hotels, story to connect

Ursula K. LeGuin said: "Words are events; they do things and change things. They transform both speaker and hearer; they feed energy back and forth and amplify it. They feed understanding or emotion back and forth and amplify it." The late Arne Sorenson, ex-CEO of Marriott Hotels, exemplified this when he addressed his team at the start of the Covid crisis. In a search through Google Images of Arne Sorenson, one will most likely see a man who looks very different from the man who is seen delivering the video Covid 109: A Message from Arne. Even in his video interview in Davos in January 2020, just a couple of months before this video, he looked very different. It was likely that people had heard that he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2019, and his bald look may further add to the anxiety of the Marriott employees that, in testing times, they don’t have the best version of their leader leading them.

Sorenson acknowledged this but went live and shared in his video, "Our team was a bit concerned about using a video today because of my new bald look. Let me just say that my new look is exactly what was expected as a result of my medical treatments. I feel good, and my team and I are 100% focused on overcoming the common crisis we face. Now let's talk about that crisis." In such a situation, Sorenson turned up with humility and promised people he was well and 100% focussed on overcoming the crisis, sharing a strong personal message and using it to connect with his team.

B. Contextualise - The Pixar example of data storytelling to drive action
"Data doesn't change our behavior; our emotions do. Storytelling dynamically engages emotions and increases trust in the storyteller," writes Karen Eber in her book The Perfect Story: How to Tell Stories that Inform, Influence, and Inspire". "As you listen to stories, you gain empathy for the storyteller, particularly when sensing their vulnerability. As empathy increases, so does trust, creating more of the bonding neurochemical oxytocin to be released in your brain. Oxytocin indicates to our brain who is safe to know and be around and who should be avoided." We need data, we need context, and we need a clear narrative to influence people and an organisation, to move towards action.

The **Annenberg Inclusion Initiative** is a leading think tank in the world studying diversity and inclusion in entertainment through original research and sponsored projects. One research study evaluated females on screen, behind the camera, above and below the line across film and TV, and in the executive ranks at major animation companies. The research found that only 17% of 120 recent animated movies featured female characters as the lead or co-lead. For instance, if you have watched the movie *Cars*, would you be able to guess what the percentage of males talking in the movie was? It was 90% male talk in terms of male characters and their speaking lines. Only 10% were female characters' speaking lines, and that was *Car 3*.

Independent of this, Jessica Heidt, a script supervisor with Pixar, noticed a discrepancy between male and female characters and speaking lines in the company's films. She did a back check of the data across all the Pixar animation movies and discovered that it was stark—for Bo-peep, for instance, in *Toy Story*, there was only a mother character, a sister character, and Bo-peep, who was female. Why is this a problem?

We live in a world full of imagination; as humans, we are always projecting ourselves into the characters that we see. What happens as a result is that we look at Lighting McQueen from the movie *Cars*. What we see may be a car, but there is an association between Owen Wilson and a white male. So while we can imagine talking cars, we can't imagine female Nascar racers! Jessica's work was a penny-drop moment, and it helped Pixar increase diversity among characters created for its animated films and tell stories that look more like the real world. The narrative was backed up by charts and graphs to drive home her point with hard numbers and presented them to the executives, so the evidence was pretty much staring at their faces. The emotion was taken out of the narrative, but the message went across strong and clear. They put a plan in place to rectify their strategy, and all the technical folk, including Josh Miner, the CTO, rallied behind her. Every time there was a roadblock, they would come up with, "Oh, we can use a tool to make this work, to track data." Then they started creating things like Spark shorts to give room for diverse voices. All these efforts are now showing up in their newer movies like *Coco, Toy Story 4*, etc. Here you have a powerful example of data, shared in context, with a clear narrative that causes people in an organisation to move towards inclusive action. (Bloomberg News, March 2022).

C. Communicate: Ray Gilmartin, ex-CEO of Merck: An example of story versus data

Leaders, be they senior executives or middle managers, be they salespeople or consultants, are all guilty of spending an inordinate amount of time creating and brokering information. The authors plead guilty too. Craig Wortmann, in his book "What's your story?" talks about a time when he was in a meeting with Ray Gilmartin, the then CEO of Merck.

Ray was talking to the executives in the room about how the economy and regulation were affecting the drug industry. And he wanted to make sure that the people in the room really understood how Merck contributed to the world through the company's development of critical and life-saving drugs. So, “he went on to talk about the company's philanthropy policy and how they've been really contributing large amounts to good causes. He talked about the effort taken to treat river blindness. He talked about the programmes that were run to combat HIV and AIDS in Africa and China.” He started to quote a long list of impressive accomplishments, including 800,000 vaccines in Botswana in Africa, about 1.4 million vaccines that were used in the US, and so on. (Kolbert, 2017).

As he continued talking about more and more numbers, the people in the room started to tune out. What should have been a case of creating a wow about the work in the lifesaving drug industry had the audience thinking instead, “When would he stop?" Their eyes were glazing over. Ray, being the intuitive person he was, caught the mood in the room. He became reflective as he stood on the stage, took a pause, and pivoted to the following story: Back in 1942, there was a young woman who had contracted an infection after a miscarriage. And she was hospitalised in Connecticut for over a month. During that month, her fever ranged as high as 105 continuously. The doctors had tried all kinds of treatment, and nothing was working. At this point, they did not want to give up. They believed that a trial of an experimental drug that they had heard about being created by Merck was worth testing out. And while the tests have not been successful, they just felt that, given that they tried everything and this woman was about to die, it was worth trying that experimental drug. Therefore, they collected a small sample of that drug. But that was only half of the entire stock of that drug available in the US at that time. And they administered that drug to the patient. That woman, Anne Miller, responded positively to the treatment, and her life was saved due to that drug, penicillin. When Ray finished sharing this example, the audience went quiet. In their mind's eye, they were picturing this young woman who was about to lose her life; they were connecting back to her family and the emotions that overtook her family as they watched this happen. The audience's emotions resonated with the family over her survival.

The narrative positioned Rob's company as the force behind this new drug that could save her life. This anecdote really brings home the point about why companies like Merck develop drugs that save people. All the statistics in the world talk about the lives saved; nothing was as impactful as the effect that the narrative brought to the talk. That example from Rob really created the context for the audience to understand, relate to, and feel. That is the power of leaders using stories instead of just data points. (Mukherjea S., September 2023)

If our goal is positive behaviour change, then we should be creating amazing experiences that have the power to be ''sticky'' for people, says Brian Passon, MS, in "The Power of Storytelling for Behaviour Change and Business." So what if, as leaders and as people using just data, instead of just creating all these PowerPoint decks and bullet points thrown in, we go beyond it and ask those questions:

- What is the best way to communicate this data?
- What kind of insights do I want to leave this audience with?
- And what kind of business outcomes do I want to drive?

If we can bring out the answers to these questions through a story set in context, developed with emotion, and with the data as a backup point, we would, as Brene Brown says, have "data with a soul. (Gallo C., 2014). Brene Brown's TED Talk on The Power of Vulnerability, which garnered over 15 million views, upholds the power of anecdotes and storytelling in her 18-minute talk.

II. Storytelling as a Business

StorycircleEdusaarthi and Soundbytes11, built around the concept of storytelling, are two cases in point, as presented below:

A. StorycircleEdusaarthi

This startup may be described as an 'ed-tech' platform for skilling women homemakers and educators in creative teaching methods, thereby creating opportunities for women across India to become storytelling 'edu-preneurs,' while leveraging India's rich heritage and culture of stories handed down through the ages. (https://edusaarthistory.in/#, n.d.). The founder's work in change management, organizational culture transformation, and more had equipped her with a collection of stories that she had been intuitively using to help stakeholders understand each other's perspectives, fostering mutual understanding for beneficial decision-making, but she had never looked at it from the lens of storytelling.

The Genesis

A free-flowing interview with Yogita Ahuja, the entrepreneur who founded StorycircleEdusaarthi, led to some interesting insights on the space. The concept first came to mind about twelve years ago, when Yogita, a full-fledged management and leadership development consultant and mother of a toddler, was thinking about times when she was at her happiest, and the answer was a game changer. And I realized that when they were at their most 'engaged best' when I was doing a particular training or intervention with them, when I was telling them stories or when they were telling their stories, and this reflection prompted me to explore the concept of professional storytelling."

Storytelling as a learning method at school level

The journey began with a search for stories that could be adapted to school lessons and the scarcity of resources for quality storytelling experiences pushed her to open the "Story Circle Center for Storytelling and Training," with the key objective of bringing back joy into learning through storytelling for children, blending her training skills with storytelling, leading to her recognition as a 'corporate storyteller.' Mothers and children responded positively, prompting the next phase of training and hiring teachers for storytelling, opening up the vertical of certificate courses in storytelling pedagogy. Invitations to train teachers in storytelling as a pedagogy came in from some of the top schools in India. An example of how opportunity meets preparation: The 2020 National Education Policy hasrecognised the power of storytelling as a pedagogical tool in educational institutions. And Yogita is now preparing to meet this opportunity in education by offering certification programmes for teachers and homemakers in storytelling, thereby creating a niche for this activity.

Impact of storytelling in the corporate world

Yogita shares an experience from her work in corporate circles. There was initial skepticism about the applicability of storytelling in the corporate world, and she shares a memory from a project with senior leaders at Tata Steel in Jamshedpur. "Initially, they invited me to focus solely on storytelling as a leadership and communication tool. However, during the workshop, the participants connected on a personal level, sharing stories of change, transition, and grief, which created a powerful bond among them. This experience underscored the potency of storytelling, which transcended corporate boardroom conflicts and brought people together through empathetic listening."

B. Soundbytes11: A Case for Business Storytelling

Soundari Mukherjea, co-author of this paper, is an organisational consultant and a business storytelling coach by profession. The model of Soundbytes11 is designed around the concept of business storytelling for corporate messages on culture building, change work, diversity, inclusion, impact, empathy, governance, and more. The various verticals are focussed on three pillars: business storytelling, organisational consulting, and culture building. These are achieved through coaching leaders to set a context and share examples and anecdotes in the flow of work to drive business points. In her words, "Working with leaders, I realised that some of the most effective leaders share anecdotes to make their point. Working with clients, I heard statements such as:

"Our leaders are not impactful in communicating change and inspiring action."

"Sales folks are not connecting to our clients." "Analysts are only talking about data and not moving to insights." And thus started purposefully, deliberately, and systematically applying story techniques in an organisation to counter these problems and deliver business outcomes. Soundbytes11's "Big Hairy Audacious Goal of Bringing Humanity to the Workplace" (BHAG) is to help leaders and teams drive business outcomes, build a personal brand, and be more human at work through storytelling. Today, the practice ranges from coaching business leaders and teams in business storytelling to teaching in universities, sharing in publications, panel discussions, podcasts, social projects, and platforms like TEDx around the world. Non-fictional storytelling is defined by Annette Simmons as "Experience reconstituted." Annette identifies six common templates of storytelling in business and as Vision Stories, Who-I-am Stories, Why I-Am -Here Stories, Teaching Stories, Value-in-Action Stories and I-Know-What-You-Are-Thinking Stories (2023).

Conclusion

Gallo Carmine quotes Richard Branson, Virgin Group founder who says that his best ideas are sparked when he and his team sit around a campfire exchanging stories. ''Telling a story is one of the best ways we have of coming up with new ideas and also of learning about each other and our world. It's been happening since humans first inhabited the earth,'' says Branson.(Gallo, 2017).

The paper makes a case for storytelling as a pedagogy in schools as well as business education, as well as a tool for humanising business functions in days of increasing technology and growing communication platforms. Storytelling offers the inflection point for credibility, logic, and empathy in decision-making. This recognition of storytelling transpires into opportunities like talks like TED and TEDx, where there are content creators and curators bringing in the angle of storytelling to make the talks relevant and resonate with audiences. Opportunities for storytelling and story-writing present themselves in the growing knowledge economies, as well as the demand for content around non-fiction writing for children, graphic novels, e-sports, and video cases and more.

"The books we consider to be great, the talks we want to listen to, and the leaders we choose to follow all tell stories. Stories create meaning, evoke emotions, forge loyalty, and cement memories", says Laura Putnam. We couldn't agree more.

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Chapter 5

NLP IN THE BANI WORLD: TRANSFORMING GROUP COMMUNICATION IN MODERN BUSINESS

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Introduction

In the current corporate environment, which is characterized by its traits of fragility, anxiety, nonlinearity, and incomprehensibility, the importance of effective interaction cannot be overstated. According to Professor Jamais Cascio (2020) of the University of California, in his scholarly article titled "Facing the Age of Chaos," there is a shift occurring from the VUCA period (characterized by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) to what he refers to as the BANI (Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear and Incomprehensible) corporate world. In a very dynamic and uncertain context, it is imperative for businesses aiming for exceptional performance to prioritize the development of group communication skills as a fundamental competency, rather than consider it as a mere preference.

The notion of group communication, which is a fundamental aspect of communication studies, pertains to the sharing of information, ideas, and emotions among a collective of three or more individuals(Frey, 2002). This engagement can occur in several contexts, including business boardrooms, scholarly talks, workshops, and informal gatherings. The importance of effective group communication is crucial in promoting decision-making, aiding problem-solving, and developing cohesion among members. In the current BANI era, organizations are confronted with complex issues(Evseeva et al., 2022). However, a potential solution that warrants attention is Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), which offers novel approaches to improve group interactions and their resulting consequences.

NLP and Its Linguistic Marvels: An Overview

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), which was formulated in the 1970s by Richard Bandler, a mathematician, and John Grinder, a linguist, has emerged as a pivotal instrument for enhancing human communication, self-awareness, and the regulation related to negative emotions(Grimley, 2016). This approach is based on an examination of effective communication strategies employed by diverse professionals, with a particular emphasis on non-verbal cues and the cognitive representation of experiences. The origins of this wave of change are closely connected with the Human Potential Movement, which was influenced by significant figures such as Maslow, Rogers, Koerzybski, Satir, Perls, Bandura, Erickson, and Bateson(Grimley, 2016).

One noteworthy characteristic of NLP is its solution-oriented approach, which refrains from excessively focusing on the underlying causes of problematic behaviors(Kumar & Panda, 2020). On the contrary, it promotes a change in mindset, where obstacles are perceived as occasions for receiving feedback rather than being regarded as failures. This strategy develops a proactive and optimistic mindset, which is crucial for individual growth and transformation of behavior. Another essential premise of NLP is the impact that language has on cognitive processes and belief systems(Passmore & Rowson, 2019). Through its ability to assist individuals in recognizing and rectifying detrimental beliefs, NLP facilitates a deeper awareness of oneself and fosters one's own development. Originally developed for use in psychotherapy, the uses of this concept have expanded to encompass and benefit a wide range of professionals, including educators, business executives, healthcare workers, and lawyers, particularly in the United Kingdom (Grimley, 2016).

NLP pays considerable attention on the influential role of language in shaping cognitive processes, affective states, and behavioral patterns (Kumar & Panda, 2020; Bandler & Grinder, 1975). The deliberate use of languagehence characterized by two distinct components, which include the language employed in our internal dialogues, sometimes referred to as self-talk, as well as the language utilized in our interactions and communications with others (Bandler & Grinder, 1975).

The internal dialogue, also called self-talk refers to the ongoing flow of thoughts and narratives that individuals engage in within their own minds andit can encompass both positive and negative aspects, exerting a significant impact on our self-perception, mood, and confidence and NLP asserts that engaging in negative or constraining self-dialogue can give rise to harmful ideas and attitudes (Taniya Ahuja, 2018). Consequently, these adverse cognitions can have a negative impact on our behavior and decision-making processes(Frey, 2002). An instance of persistent self-doubt, characterized by the recurring thought pattern of "I am inadequate," has the potential to engender a dearth of self-assurance and a tendency to evade difficult situations (Taniya Ahuja, 2018).

NLP proposes that individuals can modify their attitude by recognizing and intentionally modifying undesirable habits(Weakland, 1976). The substitution of negative self-dialogue with positive affirmations or constructive narratives has the potential to enhance one's self-esteem and foster a more hopeful perspective(Taniya Ahuja, 2018).Interpersonal communication refers to the exchange of information, ideas, and messages between an organization and individuals or entities outside the organization(Evseeva et al., 2022).The utilization of certain features of language in interpersonal communication carries substantial significance(Evseeva et al., 2022). For instance, the lexical choices, vocal inflections, and organizational patterns employed in our verbal communication possess the capacity to impact the manner in which others see our character and can subsequently mold the dynamics of our social engagements.

Within NLP, professionals demonstrate a keen focus on choosing the right set of words and phrases, while also considering the implicit connotations and presumptions that they may encompass("TECHNIQUES OF NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING IN LEGAL DISCOURSE," 2023). For instance, the utilization of absolute phrases such as "always" or "never" during a discourse can unintentionally intensify a quarrel or misinterpretation.

The underlying concept of linguistics in NLP posits that humans have the ability to modify their perceptions and emotional reactions to various events by consciously structuring their language patterns, both in internal dialogue and external communication(Bandler & Grinder, 1975).One potential approach to address a negative experience is through the process of linguistic reframing, where the language employed to depict the experience is altered(Weakland, 1976). As an illustration, rather than expressing the sentiment of failure, one could articulate the notion of gaining knowledge about ineffective approaches(Weakland, 1976).The alterations in language have the potential to induce a transformation in emotional reactions and conduct. Rather than succumbing to a sense of defeat in a certain circumstance, an individual may be inclined to exhibit motivation in order to explore alternative strategies or derive valuable insights from the encounter(Kumar & Panda, 2020).

Functional Perspective of Group Communication

To uncover the transformative potential of NLP in elevating group communication, we've strategically focused on the functional perspective of group communication(Graham et al., 1997). This domain, renowned for its rich insights and extensive research, provides an ideal landscape for exploring how NLP can revolutionize the way groups interact and collaborate.

The functional perspective is a collection of theories that have similar approaches to studying group communication(Graham et al., 1997). At its foundation, this viewpoint aims to comprehend the factors that improve or degrade teamwork quality. Scholars employing this perspective, for example, seek to link leadership styles to the quality of group decisions and investigate the impact of communication technology on group brainstorming (HIROKAWA, 1988).

The functional viewpoint is a normative approach that seeks to explain and forecast group performance by studying the importance of specific inputs or processes(HIROKAWA, 1988). This viewpoint is generally held by individuals seeking to understand the effectiveness of collective performance.
The functional approach is based on three fundamental assumptions (HIROKAWA, 1988; (Frey, 2002):

Groups exist for a reason: This viewpoint holds that every group has one or more goals, whether they are social-emotional, like supporting group members, group-focused, like accumulating resources for continuity, or task-centric, like creating a certain product or decision. Much of the study in this field is focused on achieving task-oriented objectives, whether they are cognitive activities like decision-making or problem-solving or more concrete ones like building a product or performing a piece.

Evaluating group performance: There is always a baseline against which a group's performance is judged when using the functional lens. This could be based on the group's success in meeting its objectives. This benchmark frequently incorporates normative criteria that establish expectations for group performance. When a group's performance falls short of the required standard, steps to improve its performance are offered.

Internal and external factors influence performance: According to the functional approach, the performance of a group is determined by both internal aspects, such as member composition, and external conditions, such as external threats or time restrictions. This relationship, however, is not straightforward. A single factor can cause numerous outcomes, while multiple factors can produce a single outcome. Furthermore, these determinants may interact, resulting in specific group outcomes. Group interactions, such as communication methods or dispute resolution, mediate these linkages. A classic illustration of this topic can be found in the 1975 work of Hackman and Morris.

This document delves into the application of two notable NLP techniques, the Meta-Model and the Milton-Model, providing a comprehensive analysis of their potential in enhancing group communication. It systematically presents a range of ideas and suggestions, illustrating how these methodologies can be effectively integrated into group dynamics. The exploration is aimed at advancing the understanding of group communication through the lens of these sophisticated NLP techniques.

Meta Model

The Meta Model in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a set of linguistic tools designed to help clarify, specify, and bring forth greater detail in communication(Bandler & Grinder, 1975). The functional perspective of communication, on the other hand, views language as a tool that serves various functions, such as providing information, expressing emotions, or performing actions. Integrating the Meta Model with the functional perspective of communication can enhance the effectiveness and clarity of interactions(Taniya Ahuja, 2018). Here's how:

1. Identifying Vague Language:

Function: Providing Clarity

Meta Model Use: The Meta Model can be used to challenge and clarify vague language. For instance, if someone says, "I'm not comfortable with this situation," you can use the Meta Model to ask, "What specifically about this situation makes you uncomfortable?" This leads to clearer communication.

2. Challenging Generalizations:

Function: Avoiding Misunderstandings

Meta Model Use: Generalizations can lead to misunderstandings. The Meta Model encourages questioning generalizations. For example, if someone says, "You never listen to me," you might respond with, "Is there a specific time you're referring to when you felt I wasn't listening?"

3. Clarifying Deletions:

Function: Ensuring Complete Information

Meta Model Use: Deletions remove important details from communication. The Meta Model helps in recovering this information. For example, if someone says, "I'm upset," you might ask, "What specifically is making you upset?"

4. Addressing Distortions:
Function: Correcting Misinterpretations
Meta Model Use: Distortions can lead to false assumptions or misconceptions. The Meta Model allows you to clarify and challenge distortions. For instance, if someone claims, "My boss hates me," you might ask, "How do you know your boss hates you? What evidence do you have?"

5. Facilitating Emotional Expression:
Function: Emotional Articulation
Meta Model Use: The Meta Model can help individuals articulate their emotions more clearly. By asking specific questions, you can help someone move from a vague sense of emotion to a more precise understanding and expression of their feelings.

6. Improving Problem-Solving:
Function: Facilitating Understanding
Meta Model Use: When discussing problems, the Meta Model helps to identify the specifics of the issue, which can lead to more effective problem-solving. Questions like, "What specifically is the problem?" or "What outcome are you looking for?" can be instrumental.

7. Enhancing Persuasion and Influence:
Function: Persuasive Communication
Meta Model Use: In persuasive communication, the Meta Model can help uncover and address the specific concerns or objections of others. This can make your arguments more tailored and compelling.

8. Facilitating Goal Setting:
Function: Clarifying Objectives
Meta Model Use: For goal setting, the Meta Model assists in making goals more specific and achievable. Questions like, "What specifically do you want to achieve?" and "How will you know when you've achieved it?" are examples.

By using the Meta Model in line with the functional perspective of communication, you can enhance the clarity, specificity, and overall effectiveness of your interactions. It's important to remember, however, that the application of these techniques should be done with sensitivity and respect for the context and the individual you're communicating with.

Milton Model

The Milton Model, named after the psychiatrist and hypnotherapist Milton Erickson, is a set of linguistic patterns used in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). It is often considered the inverse of the Meta Model, focusing on the use of artfully vague and metaphorical language to bypass the conscious mind and speak directly to the subconscious. This approach can be particularly effective in certain aspects of communication, aligning well with the functional perspective of communication(Weakland, 1976).

Here's how the Milton Model can be utilized to address various functions of communication:

1. Building Rapport and Trust:
Function: Establishing Connection
Milton Model Use: The Milton Model's use of ambiguous and metaphorical language can create a sense of connection and understanding, as it encourages listeners to find their own meaning in what is being said. This can help build rapport and trust in a communication setting.

2. Facilitating Change:
Function: Encouraging Transformation
Milton Model Use: The model's suggestive and indirect language can be used to guide someone towards change or a new perspective without direct confrontation. This can be especially useful in therapy, coaching, or counseling.

3. Inspiring and Motivating:
Function: Provoking Action or Thought
Milton Model Use: The use of stories, metaphors, and analogies can inspire and motivate individuals. It allows listeners to draw personal connections and insights, which can be more motivating than direct advice.

4. Managing Conflict:
Function: Resolving Disputes

Milton Model Use: The Milton Model can be used to de-escalate conflict by using language that is less confrontational and more open to interpretation, allowing individuals to see issues from different perspectives.

5. Enhancing Persuasion:
Function: Influencing Others
Milton Model Use: The suggestive and often indirect nature of the Milton Model can be persuasive, as it allows people to feel that they are reaching conclusions on their own rather than being told what to think or do.

6. Encouraging Creativity and Problem-Solving
Function: Stimulating Imagination
Milton Model Use: By using metaphors and open-ended suggestions, the Milton Model can stimulate creative thinking and help individuals come up with innovative solutions to problems.

7. Managing Anxiety and Stress:
Function: Emotional Regulation
Milton Model Use: The model can be used in therapeutic contexts to help individuals relax and reduce anxiety through guided imagery and calming, rhythmic language patterns.

8. Facilitating Healing and Recovery:
Function: Supporting Health
Milton Model Use: In a therapeutic setting, the model can be used to encourage healing and recovery by promoting positive and healthful imagery and suggestions at a subconscious level.

Milton Model, particularly when required to gain advantage over trying to gain consensus amongst group of people, can present compelling opportunities in the context of the functional perspective of communication. The model's effectiveness lies in its ability to engage the subconscious mind, allowing for communication that can be deeply impactful and transformative.From the functional perspective, understanding and enhancing group performance is paramount. Group effectiveness is heavily influenced by communication patterns, conflict management, and other interaction processes(Wittenbaum et al., 2004) andin light of this, the Milton Model, with its emphasis on indirect communication and linguistic techniques(Weakland, 1976), can play a pivotal role in influencing group dynamics and outcomes.

Enhancing Group Cohesion: By using pacing of current experiences, a facilitator or leader can align with the immediate state of group members. This can foster a sense of unity and cohesion, helping the group to be more goal-oriented.

Promoting Diverse Thinking: The Milton Model's distortions introduce elements of uncertainty. In a group setting, this could encourage members to think outside the box, promoting creativity and a wider range of solutions to problems.

Facilitating Individual Input: The use of generalizations and deletions can allow group members to fill in details based on their personal interpretations, ensuring that each member has a personalized stake in the group's endeavors.

Encouraging Deeper Reflection: Techniques like embedded commands can subtly guide group members toward deeper introspection, helping them to internalize messages more profoundly. This can be essential when groups need to understand and align with core values or missions.

Influencing Positive Behaviors: Given its efficacy in individual therapeutic contexts, the Milton Model's linguistic patterns might also be leveraged in group settings to encourage positive behaviors and alignment with group goals. Its indirect communication style can subtly sway group cognition and behavior without appearing overt or forceful.

In conclusion, the functional perspective's emphasis on the determinants of group performance and the underlying processes aligns well with the Milton Model's strategies. By integrating these linguistic patterns into group communication, there's potential to enhance group cohesion, promote innovative thinking, and ensure a more effective group performance overall.

Conclusion

In the present-day business environment characterized by the BANI framework, encompassing brittleness, anxiety, nonlinearity, and incomprehensibility, the acquisition of effective group communication abilities is not merely a skill, but rather a need for achieving success in the realm of contemporary business(Evseeva et al., 2022). The use of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), together with its Meta Model and Milton Model, with group communication strategies offers a paradigm-shifting method for effectively navigating the intricate dynamics of this multifaceted domain.

The Meta Model, due to its emphasis on accuracy and particularity, efficiently addresses linguistic distortions, deletions, and generalizations, thus promoting clearer and more efficient group interactions. This method establishes an environment where individuals are motivated to express their thoughts and emotions with precision, hence promoting a deeper level of comprehension and engagement among participants.

In contrast, the Milton Model presents another approach by placing focus on the use of indirect and metaphorical language. It promotes a heightened level of unconscious involvement among individuals within a group, cultivating a setting that is favorable for the development of trust, creativity, and transformative processes. This particular model has demonstrated a high level of effectiveness in the resolution of conflicts, motivation of group members, and promotion of a shared vision, all of which are essential components in the successful attainment of group objectives.

When the alignment of NLP techniques with the functional perspective of group communication occurs, it presents a comprehensive framework that effectively enhances group performance. The functional approach places emphasis on the purpose-driven nature of organizations and the influence of both internal and external influences on their success. By integrating the principles of NLP, which emphasizes language and perception, group communication can be enhanced to successfully handle these aspects, resulting in enhanced decision-making, problem-solving, and overall group cohesion.

In practical application, these theories and models manifest their efficacy when used in real-world business contexts. The utilization of both the Meta and Milton Models has the potential to significantly transform group communication and functioning across various contexts, such as boardroom meetings, collaborative projects, and organizational change initiatives. By employing the Meta Model to enhance members' ability to express their views with precision and utilizing the Milton Model to access their underlying motives and beliefs, organizations can attain a state of synergy and efficacy that is important in the contemporary volatile corporate landscape.

In conclusion, the integration of NLP tools with the functional approach to group communication offers a potentially advantageous avenue for enterprises to effectively navigate the intricate dynamics of the BANI environment. This platform provides a range of resources that enable individuals to effectively navigate the complexities of contemporary business environments, thereby enhancing their ability to not only manage but also excel in these circumstances. Moreover, it facilitates the transformation of group communication into a valuable strategic resource that significantly contributes to the overall success of the organization. By researching and developing these methods further, there is a huge chance that they will completely change how we understand and use group communication in the business world. This holds great promise for a forthcoming era wherein cooperation and shared comprehension serve as fundamental pillars for the achievement of every prosperous organization.

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Chapter 6

STUDENT VOICES: THE DYNAMICS OF LISTENING SKILLS IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

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Introduction

This chapter presents the different perspectives of B School students on listening skills. The objective of this study is to provide some insights to business communication facilitators to make their training more effective based on the perceptions of B school students on listening.

Why listening matters

To begin with, let's discuss why listening skills matter.
The International Listening Association (ILA), defines listening as "the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages" (ILA, 1996, Bond, 2012).

Organizational success and achievement of goals is largely based on effective communication amongst the members of the team. According to Louis Allen, "Communication is a bridge of meaning. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding". Use of effective communication enhances the chances of individual success. Therefore, it stands at the forefront of great workplace skills. As teachers of effective communication with a collective experience spanning a few decades,we have noticed a considerable reduction in the attention span of students in classrooms. It is our observation that the constraints of individual attention span, the invasive nature of social media and other distractions have adversely affected students' ability to focus in the classroom. It is a common understanding that there is a lacuna in the training of listening skills though it is one of the most crucial communication skills every individual should possess.

Studies Pertaining to Listening Skills

"Most of the successful people I've known are the ones who do more listening than talking." – Bernard Baruch

Listening is one of the key communication skills; however, it is often considered a passive process that happens organically rather than an essential communication skill that needs training and development. It is especially so, in the realm of marketing. A study of the insurance industry showed that while experienced individuals considered listening as equally important as speaking, the student community gave more weightage to speaking (Goby & Lewis, 2000). It is clear that without training in listening, the students 'attitude to listening is unlikely to improve. Instruction in strategies of listening will help students employ this skill in an effective manner. Prediction and prelistening activities can be combined with strategies to verify predictions for improvement in the skill development (Graham, 2017).

The dearth of in-depth studies in listening points to its rather elusive nature. The concept of listening has been defined as one that involves *receiving, attending to, assigning of meaning to aural and visual* stimuli by the listener. The understanding of listening today refers to the cumulative effect of (1) taking in the verbal or nonverbal message (receiving); (2) engaging effort and desire to keep attention focused and complete on the message (attending to), and (3) interpreting or understanding the message through cultural contexts and personal intellectual and emotional processes (assigning meaning). It is a process that cuts across the dimensions of the listener himself or herself, his or her knowledge, skills and behavior. Based on the behavior of individuals, Brownell devised a model called HURIER which refers to hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating and responding to stimuli as components of effective listening. We can easily say that our perception of the world around us is largely based on the content and the method of listening. In a way, listening shapes our thoughts and our perceptions. The theory of multiple intelligences differentiates between different types of learners and lays stress on learners who imbibe knowledge through verbalization, therefore, it can safely be said that listening is indeed a key communication skill (Schwartz, 2004).

Significance of Listening well to instructions in Business Communication

Educators in business communication have noted the perception of employees that their managers listen to them better, when they exhibit appropriate behavioral indicators. Similarly, service employees listen better to their customers when they show appropriate behavioral indicators. However, it’s misleading to exhibit appropriate behavior while still not being engaged in active listening. The training in listening skills is therefore an area that requires continuous engagement and attention on the part of language and communication instructors. In an increasingly interlinked global existence, listening skill acquisition through training will enable better relationships at work and otherwise. One of the enduring models of listening skill instruction has been HURIER Behavioral model of listening instruction which is nothing but hearing i.e. concentrating or attending to a message, understanding, i.e., comprehension of the meaning of the message, remembering meaning recalling the message to be acted upon, interpreting, i.e., understanding the nonverbal and contextual cues of communication, evaluating, i.e., assessment of the value of the message and finally responding to the message. It is notable that there are many contentions with respect to the rather intangible nature of assessment of listening skill acquisition, considering various factors like the motivation of the listener at a given point of time(Brownell, 1994), and language skills of the speaker (Brindley,G. &Slatyer,H. 2002).

One of the key areas at the workplace where listening comes into play apart from regular interactions is feedback. In intercultural contexts, the manager may give the feedback but it is left to the listener as to how he/she will interpret it. In multicultural work places, for which the business students of today have to be prepared for, the pitfalls of inadequate training in listening could be many. As in the instance mentioned above, the manager may have conveyed the feedback correctly and the employee will have listened to it with dedication but how it is inferred will depend on the cultural background of the employee. Therefore, one can say that in a multicultural context, listening takes on a whole new intensity. The North American and the British cultures have entirely different cultural norms which have to be understood with painstaking effort to listen to the culture before interpreting communication. The same is true for the distinctly different cultures of the East Vs West. Without a reading of and listening to the cultural nuances pertaining to the background of the individual, inferences from communication could be as varied as it can get. Listening, then, takes a whole new dimension and requires an effort in the direction of listening to culture, to fully gauge the finer nuances and variations of cultural background of the individual concerned, which will then add meaning to communication(Purdy & Manning, 2015).

Training in listening skills is imperative for the students of business because it provides the ability to gain knowledge and other communication skills. It is the foundation of individual cognitive skills which are vital to students of business management as it is to others to select, organize and integrate information. There have been several models that have been developed to improve listening like the Grunkemeyer model (1992) which focused on enthusiasm, listening, picturing, elaborating and enjoying as key to listening. The Simms model, proposed in 1992, suggested focus on matters to be listened to, listening with an open mind and getting clarification on what has been listened to as key to effective listening (Rahimi et al., 2012) .

An interesting exploratory study on listening skills among 633 working professionals across three countries, India, Malaysia and USA conducted in the year 2014, found thatpeople in the age-group 61-65 were better at the skill. It showed that older individuals have grown to become better listeners than when they were younger though influence of age on listening skill abilities of a person is not significant enough. The comparative study of American managers, Indian managers and Malaysian managers showed that cultural backgrounds of the participants have an impact on their listening skills (Raina et al., 2014).

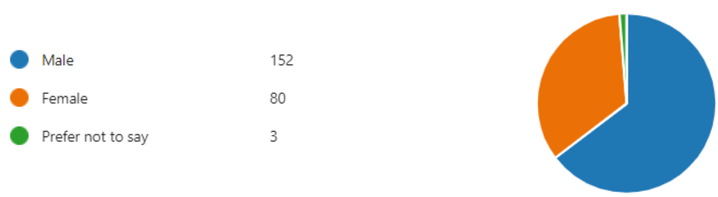
Our preliminary interaction with academicians and students brought out the immense impact of effective listening at work place including that of job performance, leadership, team building, emotional well-being, building of trust, work place ethics which is further emphasized in the 2022 study by Kluger and Itzchakov. In the study, they focus on listening to music, lectures, instructions, while learning a foreign tongue and hearing ability which encompasses the observable and unobservable behaviors of the listener like his/her comprehension, attitude and different aspects of the loosely termed phrase 'body language'. What makes listening a challenge is that its primary fuel is a very scarce and under threat resource called 'attention'. What can however, change the attitude of learners to listening is an experience of being 'listened to' (Kluger & Itzchakov, 2022).

Scope of this study

Our study attempts to capture perspectives of B school students onlistening skills. The research is based on collection of primary data via administration of a questionnaire to a sample size of 235 students of B-schools. A detailed semi-structured questionnaire was administered to select working professionals to understand their perspective on listening. The secondary data was derived from existing literature on training in listening skills. There have been many studies on the essential workplace skills of the B-school students. However, no study has addressed the perspectives of B- School students on listening.

The study for this chapter involved classroom activities, administration of a questionnaire, semi- structured interviews of experts to capture perspectives of B school students on listening skills and instruction in the same.

235 students participated in the study. Of the student group, 152 were, 80 female, and 3 did not prefer to state their gender.

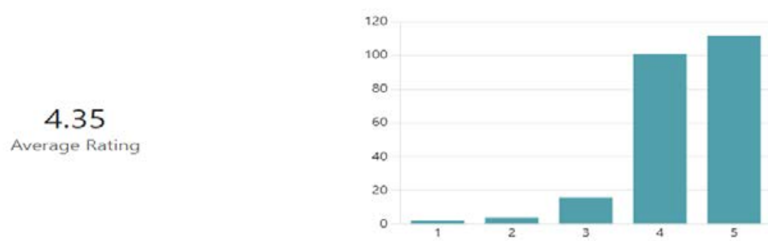


Gender bifurcation of respondents

Results of the Survey

Significance of listening skill

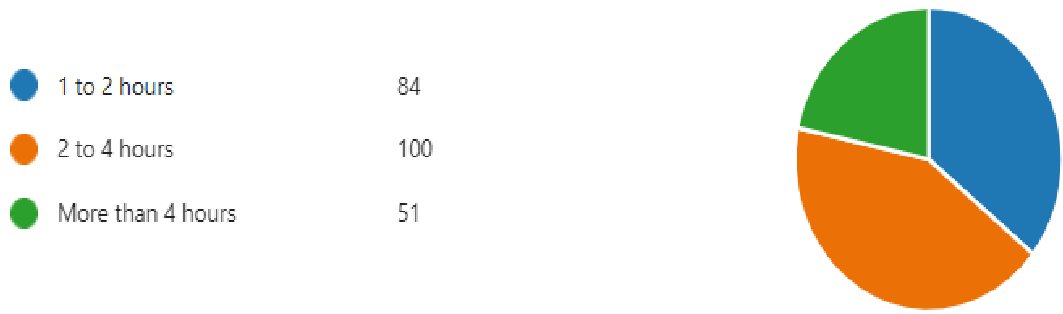
When asked about the significance of listening skill a majority of the participants, i.e, 48% of 235 participants rated it between 4-5, with an average rating of 4.5 out of 5. This shows that students consider listening skills to be of high importance to them.



Rating of listening skills out of 5

Hours spent listening using an audio listening device (earphones, air pods, headphones)

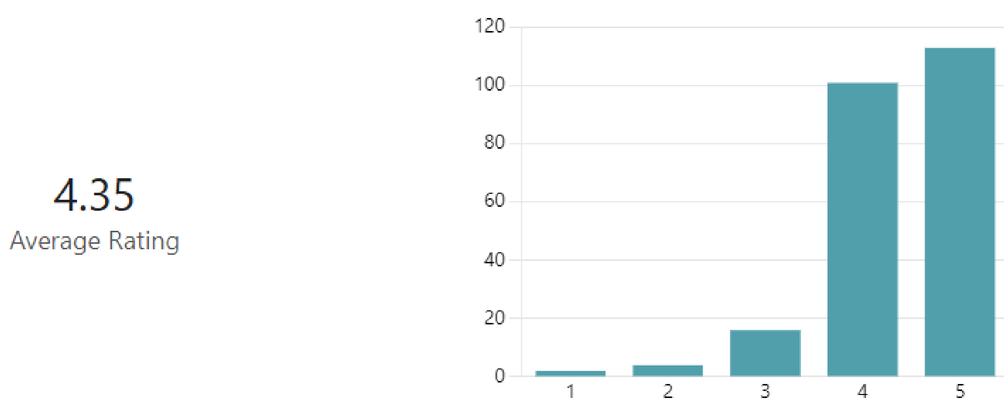
A majority of the student spent considerable amount of their free time listening in some way or the other. The free availability of digital gadgets has probably impacted the hours of listening. The graph below shows thatthe time spent is approximately four hours of day in listening.



No. of hours spent listening in a day

Significance of listening skills

The participants' high rating of the relative significance of listening skills corroborated this fact. A majority of them, i.e, 48% ranked listening as the top most communication skill.

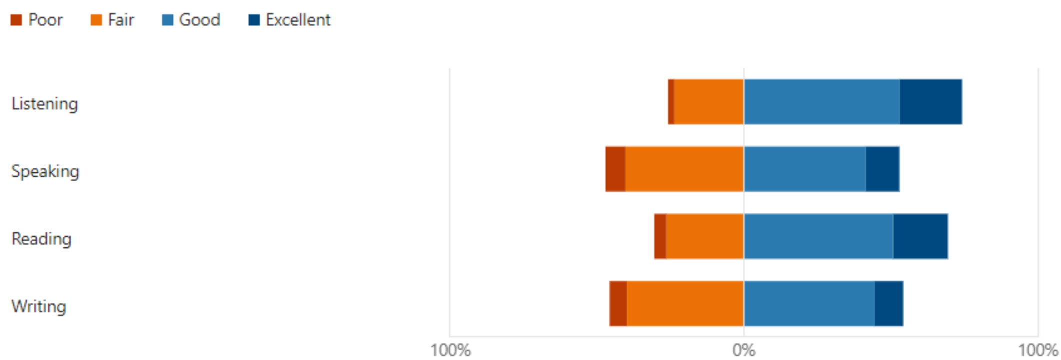


Significance of listening skills

Ability to listen in a classroom context

21.2 % students rated themselves excellent in terms of their listening skills in the classrooms, 11.4% rated themselves as being excellent at speaking, 18.6%

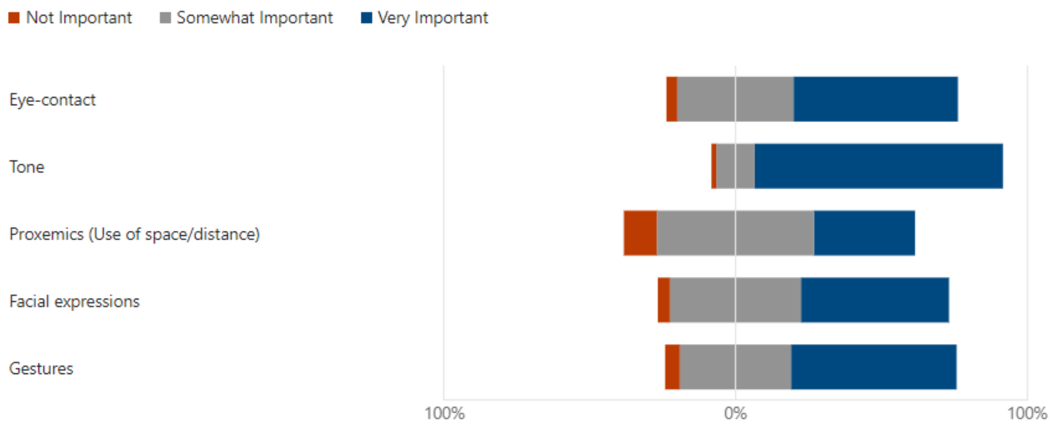
rated themselves as being excellent at reading and only 9.7% rated themselves as being excellent at writing. The results reinforce the idea that skills like listening and writing need more attention while designing the curriculum.



Comparison of communication skills in classroom context

Perceived significance of nonverbal cues of the facilitator

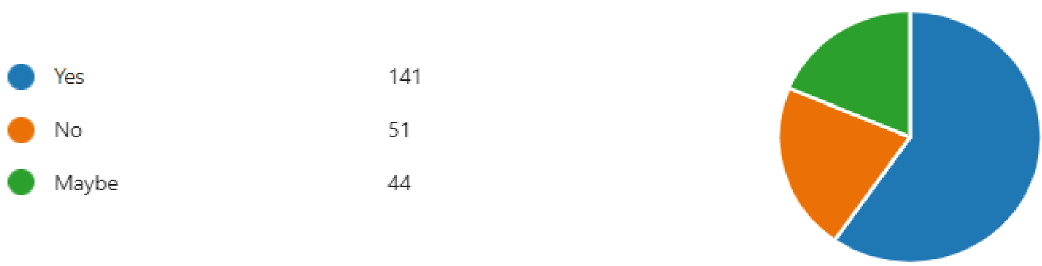
According to the study some factors that seemed to have an impact on the listening skills of students in the classroom included the non-verbal cues of the facilitator and their own seating position in the classroom. 56.4% rated use of eye-contact by the facilitator as being the most significant factor that impacts classroom interaction. 85.2% rated the use of appropriate tone as a significant factor in the classroom interaction. 34.7% rated use of distance of proxemics as a key factor in the classroom interaction. 50.8% rated use facial expressions as nonverbal cue used by the facilitator. 56.8% students rated use of gestures as being a highly significant nonverbal cue used by the facilitator. The study throws up interesting insights into what makes a classroom interaction successful and what factors can be better utilized by the facilitators for successful classroom interactions.



Significance of nonverbal cues in the classroom

Seating position in the classroom

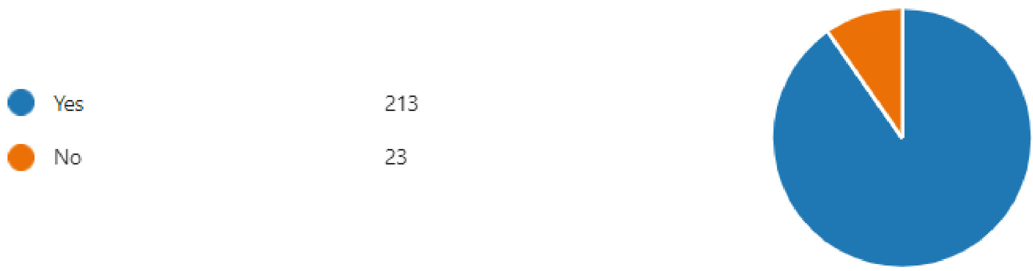
Clearly those who seated themselves in the last rows found it more difficult to keep their attention span and listen to the lectures.



Seating position in the classroom

Schedule and its significant impact on listening in the classroom

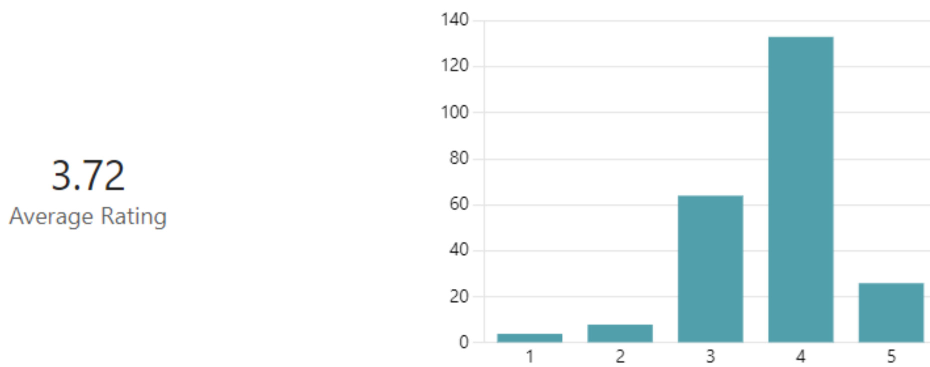
The time or the schedule of the lectures also had a significant impact on the ability of the student to listen attentively in a classroom. 213 of the total 235 participants opined that the timing of the class does impact their listening ability.



Significance of schedule

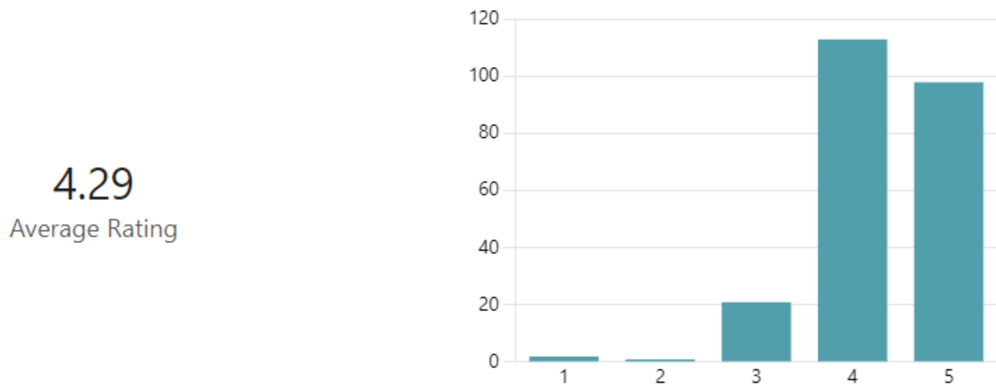
Listening skill on phone call Vs face to face interaction

Interestingly the average rating stood at 3.75, whenparticipants were asked to rate themselves on their ability to listen effectively on a phone call, where as in the case of a face to face interaction, it was significantly higher at 4.29. This data can also be interpreted as an indicator of the comparative benefits of face to face interaction in classrooms when compared to online or hybrid mode of teaching and learning.



Ability to listen effectively over telephone

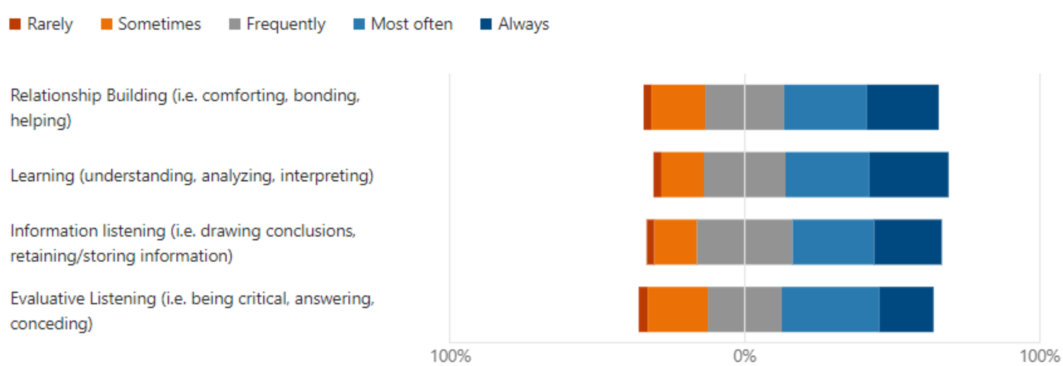
Students rated their ability to listen effectively at 4.29 with 42% rating themselves at 5 and another 48% rating themselves at 4 out of 5 in terms of their listening skill abilities in a face to face interaction.



Ability to listen effectively in face to face interaction

Understanding of significance of listening as a life skill

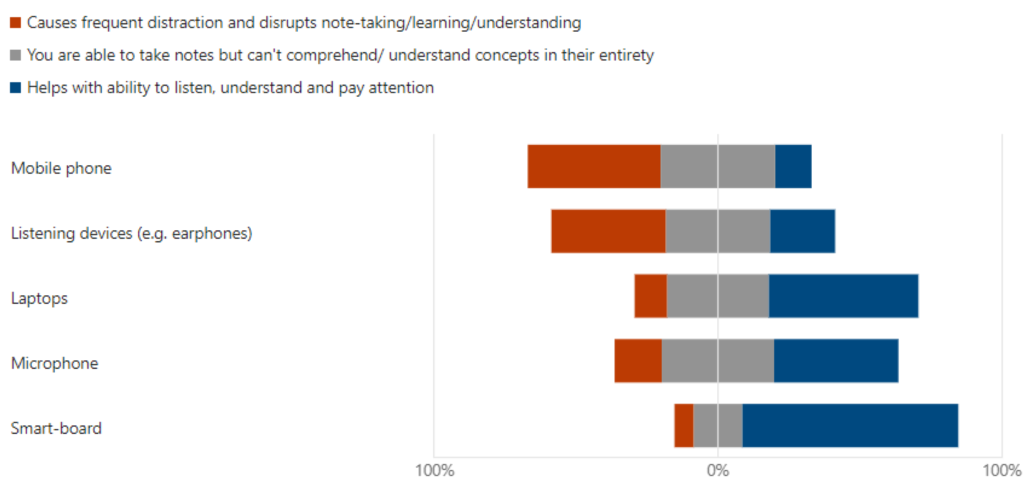
Students seemed to have a good understanding of the benefits of good listening skills with respect to the options listed. The student community clearly appreciatesthe significance of listening skill in building relationships, learning, and critical thinking.



Perception of listening as a life skill

Impact of devices on classroom listening

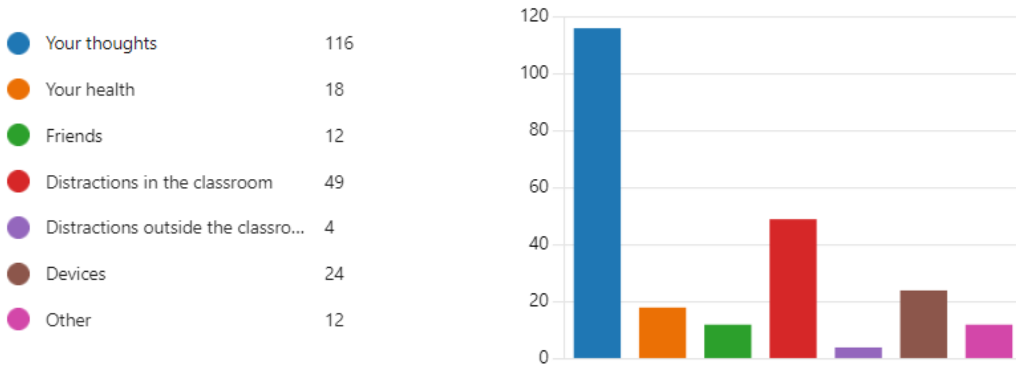
The student participants admit very openly that among mobile phones, listening devices like earphones, laptops, collar microphone and smart boards – it is mobile phones and listening devices that distract and disrupt their ability to listen, understand and take notes. However, it is intriguing to note that 16% of the respondents find the collar microphone as having a similar effect. They find that the use of microphones in the class room can be distracting to them. 52.8% of participants find the laptop as an effective aid with respect to taking notes and supporting learning, in classroom listening and opine that it helps them to listen, understand and pay attention. Which may be true in case of online learning as it may enable face- to-face interaction between the teacher and student or in case of technical subjects. Where the student can actually perform whereas the only 43.8% said that microphone helps them to listen, understand and pay attention. Interestingly, 72.8% participants found the smart board as a valuable aid in classroom listening and learning process. As expected, for 46.6% of participants, mobile phone is a source of distraction in a classroom.



Impact of devices on classroom listening

Thoughts as a distraction

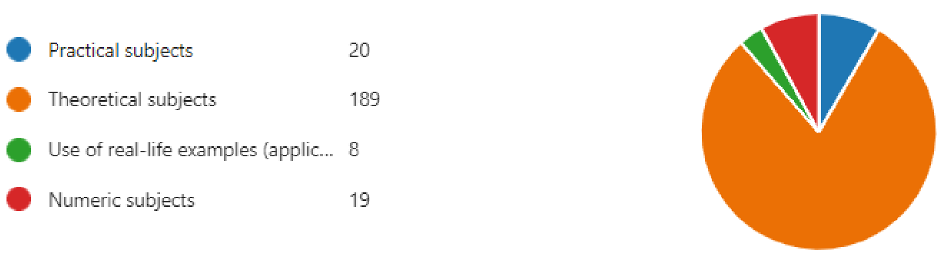
'Mind your thoughts' should perhaps be a good reminder in the classroom, as the participants admitted frankly that their thoughts were the main culprit in impacting their effective listening in the classroom.



Thoughts impact effective listening

Subjects that engage classroom listening

80% of the participants found it challenging to be activelistenerswhen theoretical subjects are taught. This is perhaps, an indicator for facilitators to use strategies other than lecture method in classroom teaching.



Subjects that engage listening

Suggestions and recommendations:

The study threw up interesting action items for students to work on to be better listeners in the classroom. These are as follows:

- Getting better sleep
- Reducing distractions
- Working on improving attention span

With respect to what can be done from the facilitator's end the study suggests the following actions:

- Restricting number of hours/ giving frequent breaks
- Delivering in an engaging style

- Making lectures conversational

Listening and speaking

Our study threw up new insights into how speaking and listening skills – though often perceived as individual cognitive process – are actually co-related. In our survey, we asked students to rate their abilities with respect to the four language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW). While a significant 74 per cent of the respondents rated themselves on the higher spectrum of the scale in listening, it was interesting to note that nearly 50 per cent of the respondents rated themselves on the lower spectrum of the scale when it came to their skill in speaking.

In a study titled 'An Evaluation of Oral Language: The Relationship between Listening, Speaking and Self-efficacy.' conducted by Sezgin Demir, Faculty of Education, Firat University, Turkey, it is stated that although speaking is involved in expressing and listening is involved in comprehension, speaking and listening must be considered as activities that form the communication process, complete each other and cannot be separated (Demir, 2017). It is also well documented that active listening involves paraphrasing, re-stating and summarizing of content. This presents us with an interesting point of analysis: though many respondents perceive themselves to be good listeners in the classroom, the same may not be true for active classroom engagement.

Multi-tasking not quite a boon

"As with a microprocessor, the interruption of one task requires us to remember where we stopped, so that when we return to this task we can resume the activity. The same is true, of course, for the alternate task(s). Now, whereas microprocessors are quite efficient at storing and retrieving these interruption points, brains are decidedly not"(Abate, 2008).The case for the flipped classroom approach is further bolstered with research findings on multi-tasking and its impact on listening. Multi-tasking involves completing/switching between tasks in rapid succession or performing activities simultaneously. While multi-tasking is often touted as a positive trait in today's demanding world,it does not seem to be as good as it is made out to be. Another study found that multitasking considerably decreases memory and performance on listening tasks as well as on writing tasks(Greene et al., 2021).This finding is a cause for alarm for

academicians as Gen-Z learners are a generation presented with ample means to slip into the temptation of multi-tasking (often in un-related tasks). The 'Fear Of Missing Out' or 'FOMO' as it is contemporarily termed and the fact that today's youth are living in times of overstimulation pushes today's learners into using their mobile phones and listening devices even in the classrooms. This coupled with shrinking attention spans and the conventional one-hour class lectures present even further challenges.

Among our respondents, we can see that a sizeable 57 per cent feel that they are comfortable and adept with multi-tasking using devices. Yet, 'devices' and 'one's thoughts' are included in the top three factors affecting classroom listening ability. Could this be a coincidence or clear correlation?

Mindfulness – Management's new mantra?

"Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lie our growth and our freedom." – Victor Frankl

The number one impediment to listening in the classroom as stated by our respondents is being distracted by their own thoughts. Effective listening takes place when there is both attention as well as an intention to listen. Scott Brueckner, in a lecture on Youtube on improving listening skills stresses the importance of setting listening goals. Others refer to this as priming for listening or find a motivation to listen (Brueckner, 2011).

Our student sample showed their mindfulness in providing the solutions to the fundamental problem of improving student classroom listening bystating threeareas that need focus:

- Getting better sleep
- Reducing distractions
- Working on improving attention spans.

So far, we have addressed impediments such as reducing distractions and working on improving attention spans. Let us shift to the major factor of adequate sleep. Does sleep have any co-relation with one's ability to listen effectively in the classroom?

Today it's hard to refute that our students are an increasingly technologically plugged-in generation. Ruthann Richter in her article in Stanford Medicine describes what researchers in the 1990s started to describe as 'sleep-phase delay' – wherein the circadian rhythm of teens tends to shift to a later time. Teens are also biologically disposed to a later sleep time because of a shift in the system that governs the natural sleep-wake cycle. Among older teens, the push to fall asleep builds more slowly during the day, signaling them to be more alert in the evening (Richter, 2015).

A similar study involving a multi-tasking activity under a sleep-deprived state noted that sustained attention is highly sensitive to sleep deprivation. It was also observed that performance decreased during the usual hours of sleep, followed by partial improvement during the biological daytime. sustained attention which is highly sensitive to sleep deprivation (Chua et al., 2017).

So what then? We are now faced with the classic chicken and egg problem. Do we shift classes to a later time in the evenings or do we insist even more strongly on students getting enough sleep? Or isthere a mid-way solution that can integrate the facts as they stand?

To face the facts,this research was conducted to help teachers of communication to understand barriers that students face while listening effectively in a classroom environment. Some measures can be taken to make classroom learning more effective and meaningful. Participants, who took the questionnaire, gave multiple suggestions on strategies to be used by teachers to help them engage students effectively during classes. These strategies include:

1. Being strict with students and prohibit them from using gadgets
2. Decrease the duration of the session or give short breaks during the session
3. Make sessions interactive or ask questions often
4. Understand students profile and develop and deliver content accordingly
5. Keep sessions fact based

6. Use visual aids
7. Assigning tasks and responsibilities in a time bound manner
8. Walk around and consistently monitor students' engagement
9. Use examples
10. Use storytelling techniques
11. Make note taking compulsory

The above suggestions on strategies definitely requires the teacher to be more than just deliver content. It also leads to understand effective class environment management. With this aspect in mind, we also need to look into teachers' accounts on what they think they do or can do to make classroom learning more effective and engaging, as effective communication is all about two-way communication. This study will hopefully pave way for more research to understand the factors that facilitate good classroom learning and how listening in classroom can further be strengthened or improved.

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