Importance of High-Quality Communication Skills in all Human endeavours

(Especially Education at all levels)

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Abstract

Communication skills allow you to understand and be understood by others. These also include effectively communicating ideas to others, effectively communicating ideas to others, actively listening in conversations, giving and receiving critical feedback and public speaking. Communication can be done vocally (through verbal exchanges), through written media (books, websites and magazines), visually (using graphs, charts and maps) or non-verbally (body language, gestures, pitch of voice and tone). All of these means of communication are essential *soft skills* that are vital for anyone in all kinds of human endeavors.

Human beings are the primary components of terrestrial life positively as well as negatively. All life is inherently social in nature. Humans are markedly so and thus their presence on the earth has given rise to a remarkable phenomenon that of civilization. All intelligence is directly linked to a basic capability termed *Pattern Recognition & Heuristics* (which enable quantum jumps in learning and its applications – games like chess where humans have created AI capable of beating even themselves!).

At the root of all civilizations there is a remarkable & subtle supporting factor linked mainly to the sense of sound – Languages – both spoken & heard / listened, to enable the individuals to put across to others their thoughts & feelings systematically. (Like a bridge interlinking all the minds resulting in a global intellect) For this human have been able to develop languages with words and rules or grammar. (Mandarin Chinese is one of the most popular one - B) This sound component is further extended to sight too, with symbols or alphabets, based on reading and writing. (Linguistics – A)

Examples of Communication skills

There are different types of communication skills you can learn and practice to help you become an effective communicator. Many of these skills work together making it important to practice communication skills in different contexts whenever possible.

Active Listening

Active listening means paying close attention to the person who is speaking to you. People who are active listeners are well-regarded by their co-workers because of the attention and respect they offer others. While it seems simple, this is a skill that can be hard to develop and improve. You can be active listener by focusing on the speaker, avoiding distractions like cell phones, laptops or other projects and by preparing questions, comments or ideas to thoughtfully respond.

Adapting your communication style to your audience

Different styles of communication are appropriate in different situations. For example, if you are communicating with a potential employer, it is better to write a formal email or make a phone call. In a workplace, where explaining a complex information, you may like to make a PowerPoint presentation or via a video conference.

Friendliness

Exhibiting positive traits such as honesty and kindness foster trust and understanding, which is hallmark of good workplace relationships. Such friendship gestures as asking someone how they are doing, smiling as they speak or offering praise for work well done can help you foster productive relationships with both colleagues and managers.

Confidence

In the workplace, people are more likely to respond to ideas that are presented with confidence. There are many ways to appear confident such as making eye contact when you are addressing someone, sitting up straight with your shoulders open and preparing ahead of time so your thoughts are polished. Confident communication is not only useful in job situation but during job interview as well.

Giving and receiving feedback

Strong communication can accept critical feedback and provide constructive input to others. Feedback should answer questions, provide solutions or help strengthen the project or topic at hand.

Volume and clarity

When you are speaking, its important to be clear and audible. Adjusting your speaking voice so you can be heard in variety of settings is a skill and its critical to communicating effectively.

Empathy

Empathy means you can understand and share the emotions of others. This communication skill is important in both team and one-on-one settings. In both cases, you will need to understand other people's emotions and select an appropriate response. For example, if someone is expressing anger or frustration, empathy can help you acknowledge and diffuse their emotion.

Respect

A key aspect of respect is knowing when to initiate communication and respond. In a team or group setting, allowing others to speak without interruption is seen as a good communication skill. Respectfully communicating also means using your time with someone else wisely – staying on topic, maintaining brevity, asking clear questions and responding fully to any questions you have been asked.

Understanding nonverbal cues

A great deal of communication happens through nonverbal cues such as body language, facial expressions and eye contact. When you are listening to someone, you should be paying attention to what they are saying as well as nonverbal language. Similarly, you should be conscious of your body language when you are communicating to ensure you are sending appropriate cues to others.

Responsiveness

Whether you are returning a phone call or sending a reply to an email, fast communicators are viewed as more effective than those who are slow to respond. So, we should decide beforehand as to how long we should take to make a return call or sending reply to an email.

A thrilling modern brach of communications – Man-Machine relationship

Further with the advent of Information Technology (IT) & Artificial Intelligence (AI) man has been able to extend the concept of common languages to Programming languages - (to enable communications with the machines – for the newbies in the field of software development – we have some intermediary forms too like Assembly language and Machine language – This latter is actually digital or binary that is only zeroes and ones…that is low or high voltage) – High-level languages (D, E) like Java for one, even as subsets of English mostly. These are like instructions for the machines in simplest possible form. These man-machine interactions are formally more logical and structured.

Languages, its genesis and growth

Many old languages are struggling little against the onslaught of other modern popular languages such as English and French etc. One of these is Hindi from India where people are influenced strongly and naturally – modern trends, to replace many words of Hindi by the ones of English while speaking. Our government is trying its best to overcome these trends as much as possible in the official circles and documents as well as possible.

Another such case is that of the ancient and very rich language – Sanskrit. It is almost extinct now if one notes that it's no longer spoken. This is strange and highly pitiable as all the ancient cultures of India, including all the religious mantras in temples and occasions such as marriages are in Sanskrit. So, the Hindu priests (many from Nepal even in the North) have good practical knowledge or of important mantras like a good common example is the Gayatri mantra. Also, it is believed that this language was very strong & popular in olden times 5000-10000 (The great times of Krishna and Rama) years back.

Further lot of very rich and deep Hindu mythology and the scriptures like the Vedas, Puranas, the Ramayna, The Mahabharata, the great Gem - Bhagwad Gita – (C) etc exist in the old languages.

Like the case of Sanskrit there are two languages in the West too – Greek and Roman which influence and are at the root of so many words and concepts in English (In the Sciences too like Biology, Chemistry and Physics etc.) and others. And these also are not part of commonly spoken language at present.

Even many other life forms like dogs and cows etc. rely on some common sounds and gestures to express feelings to others around them. But we can guess that it is beyond these faunas to have intelligence to devise

systematic ways like languages like us. (Can we be 100% sure of this) Take the marvellous case of so many bees in a single hive doing something so well and also the case of ants in their nests being so systematic. And it is obviously beyond humans to decipher these systems and the basic almost invisible communications at the base, exactly.

Communications logically and naturally are obviously based on the five basic senses of life which are to see (eyes), to speak (Throat, Vocal cord and Tongue), to hear (ears), to taste (tongue) and to touch (Skin).

One basic characteristic of communities like cities, towns and villages is obviously communications. This great property of the civilized world lets the members communicate with each other (mainly spoken & written as well as listened and read inherently) in systematic ways based on languages. Languages have come into existence in different global regions in very intricate and rich ways. These complex entities are dynamically & continuously changing and growing in complex ways. This is more so when the whole world has become like a small village due to Information Technologies, Digital media and Artificial Intelligences like Google (A very intelligent search engine to start) for one.

In general, and by default the principal component of communication skills is speaking based on languages and dialects. But if we look more deeply there are so many other important components like listening & hearing (in some cases preceding the primary one) and the facial expressions. In this latter the eyes also play a great role apart from each part of the face. Then there are the gestures made by the hands, limbs and the body or the torso too.

Languages are ways to represent the interactions (like verbs) between subjects and objects (like nouns, pronouns). English is based on the SVO (Subject – Verb - Object) structure which is the most common one existing in Linguistic typology (Typology is the study, classification or interpretation of types and symbols; Morphology is a particular form, shape or structure and refers to formation of words and their relationship to other words; It also helps the analysis of parts of words like stems and roots including suffixes and prefixes).

Mainly languages consist of words with particular meanings and this is part of vocabulary. Then there is the grammar or the set of rules based on which clauses, phrases and sentences are built up.

The languages are based on three components – Syntax (which is basically grammar or rules linked with words order and agreement when these are put together to make sentences), semantics (This is linked to meaning – Logical and Lexical – meaning and vocabulary) and pragmatics (Part of linguistics which deals with language in use and the context in which it is used).

The basic building blocks for the words are the alphabetic symbols or letters. Like in English and most European languages there are 26 of these. These symbols and the grammatical rules are very different in Hindi and other Indian & Asian languages.

Intonation – pitch, tone

Accentuate - accent

Amplitude – size or magnitude of vibration, Frequency – speed of the vibration

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