



Department of
Education

Year 12 ATAR Psychology

Communication Styles



OTHERS –
Communication

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Year 12 ATAR Psychology

OTHERS – Communication

Communication Styles

Instructions to Students

This resource package provides you with learning materials for the Psychology ATAR Year 12 course. The package focuses on the **Topic OTHERS – Communication – Communication Styles**.

This package is designed to support the program you are completing at your school. If feedback is required when completing this package, you should consult your teacher.

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It is recommended that students further investigate concepts covered in this resource package by conducting their own research using the text/s that they use at school or the internet.

Syllabus Points Covered

- *communication styles*
 - *impact of social background – Bernstein, Labov*
 - *examples of gender differences – Tannen*
- *features of persuasive communication*
 - *source of the message*
 - *nature of the communication*
 - *characteristics of the audience*

Learning Content and Activities

COMMUNICATION

Communication involves the transmission of a message from one person to another. If the intended recipient does not receive the message, there is no communication. Communication can be visual, spoken or written. Language is central to communicating.

Why do we need to communicate?

Communication is a tool for socialisation and language is essential for all human activities. Humans need language to:

- **communicate** with others (share knowledge, instruct, learn, cooperate, discuss and argue)
- **develop** social relationships and friendships
- **perform** daily transactions in shops, banks, at the gym.

Children learn language and how to use language through communication and social interaction.

Communication involves the social and cultural aspects of language. The style in which we speak depends on:

- the culture in which we were raised
- our socio-economic background
- our gender.

Style involves:

- accent
- vocabulary
- grammar
- ideas we try to express.

COMMUNICATION STYLES – SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Basil **Bernstein** (1971) claimed that our communication style depended on class. He proposed that -

- working-class people use a **restricted code**
- middle-class people used an **elaborated code**.

He stated that this was because working-class people wanted to preserve traditional roles and interpretations while middle-class people wanted to develop ideas in relation to personal experience.

Restricted v Elaborated Codes

Restricted Code	Elaborated Code
Short, simple sentences	Complex, precise sentences
Meaning understood only if context is known	Meaning clear from the sentence
Few descriptive words	Highly descriptive language
Commands used to gain compliance	Emotions used to gain compliance
The here and now is stressed	Past and future referred to
Few abstract ideas	Abstract ideas, future possibilities expressed

Example from Bernstein's research - a group of children were shown a strip cartoon and asked to say what it depicted.

Restricted code answer – *“They're playing football and he kicks it and it goes through there. It breaks the window and they're looking at it and he comes out and shouts at them because they've broken it. So, they run away and then she looks out and she tells them off.”*

Elaborate code answer – *“Three boys are playing football and one boy kicks the ball and it goes through the window. The ball breaks the window and the boys are looking at it and a man comes out and shouts at them because they've broken the window. So, they run away and then a lady looks out of her window and she tells the boys off.”*

Bernstein considered that children from working-class backgrounds had limited benefit from education because of a **language deficit**. This is because the education system is devised and conducted by educated middle-class people, who use a different language code.

Opposing View to Bernstein

William **Labov** (1970) opposed Bernstein's view. He stated that language was **different** not deficit. Labov studied with black children from New York who spoke in Black English Vernacular (BEV). Labov found that the BEV was just as rule governed and complex as traditional English.

Linguists now accept that language styles are different, and no style is more superior to another. However, prejudices in understanding language still exist. Professor Ian Malcolm (2003) found that the Australian education system has little appreciation for the different speaking and listening styles of Aboriginal children. For example, in Aboriginal culture, children asked a question have the right to decide if they want to reply or not. Malcolm points out the importance of understanding different communication styles for effective interaction.

ACTIVITY ONE

1. A child wanted to tell her mother that she would like a ham and cheese sandwich for lunch. She also wanted a drink of milk and she wanted to eat her lunch in front of the TV. Write 1-2 sentences to show how this would be said in restricted code and another 1-2 sentences to show it in elaborate code.
2. Educational institutions can blame BEV so called "mistakes" on laziness. Why is this incorrect and how could this potentially damage student learning?

COMMUNICATION STYLES – GENDER DIFFERENCES

Studies of language and gender often make use of two models - that of **dominance** and that of **difference**.

Dominance is an approach whereby the female sex is seen as the subordinate group whose difference in style of speech results from male supremacy and also possibly an effect of patriarchy. This results in a primarily male-centered language. Zimmerman and West's (1975) study concluded that, since men interrupt more often, then they are dominating or attempting to do so. Spanner's (1980) theory reads that since males were the authors of dictionaries, they invented a male language. Men have the power to order the structure of language, thought and reality, and they are the central figures.

The **Difference** model centres on research from **Tannen** (1990). Tannen looked at the differences in conversation styles that lead to a breakdown of communication in men and women.

- Men use **report talk** – types used in public speaking, gaining and holding attention, holding centre stage, imparting information and maintaining status.
- Women use **rapport talk** – based on establishing relationships, developing understanding, negotiating, private conversations and sharing experiences.

Tannen described a set of six gender differences in communication –

- **Status vs support** - Men seek status while women seek support
- **Independence vs intimacy** - Men desire independence, while women desire intimacy
- **Advice vs understanding** - Men focused on fixing, while women focused on understanding
- **Information vs feelings** - Men talk in grunts of information, while women talk about feelings
- **Orders vs proposals** - Men give orders, women make proposals
- **Conflict vs compromise** - Men willing to fight, while women willing to compromise

Friction occurs because a lack of understanding between the different styles because men and women belong to different sub-cultures.

ACTIVITY TWO

1. Lee was giving a presentation at a work conference. Lee enjoyed taking centre stage and gaining everyone's attention. Once the presentation was over Lee mingled with members of the crowd and was seen to make confirmatory tones such as 'mmm' to indicate listening.

Explain why, given the above example, Lee could be either male or female.

PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

Persuasive communication involves trying to change people's beliefs, values, thoughts or behaviours. It is important to gain and maintain the audience's attention. To gain attention, one must use an appropriate/effective method to get the attention of the viewer/listener. Also, timing is critical. For example, think about picking the right time to ask Mum for money, when she is not busy or angry!

Cacioppo and Petty (1986) state that there are two modes of persuasion –

- **Central route** – thoughtful consideration of the content of the message by an active listener. Both presenter and listener are motivated and care about the topic.
- **Peripheral route** – when the listener decided to agree or not with the message based on other cues. Eg. Listening because the person looks attractive. Peripheral is a more passive mode.

There are three important features of persuasive communication –

- Source of the message
- Nature of the message
- Characteristics of the audience

Source of Message

Smith and Mackie (2000) suggest we are likely to accept the information presented by **experts** in the field – even without assessing the validity of their claims. Smith and Shaffer (1995) suggest that we attribute expertise to fast-talkers. We assume **fast-talkers** are more knowledgeable. Also, it is more difficult to evaluate what they say. **Trustworthiness** is highly important because we believe those we trust. This is why politicians refer to their opponent's "broken promises." **Likeability** (including more physically attractive individuals) and degree of **similarity** to the audience increases persuasiveness.

Nature of Message

When people understand a message, it is more likely to be persuaded. Printed messages are more easily understood than television.

Persuasive messages often aim for an **emotional** reaction not a logical one. If the audience is happy, they are more likely to examine the information and not be swayed by rational arguments. Although, the audience can still be swayed by experts. **Fear** is often used to persuade. Political and health campaigns try to arouse anxiety just enough to spark interest. If it is too negative the audience avoids the message. This avoidance tactic is why they put the terrible and graphic images on cigarette boxes in Australia, so people don't want to buy them and avoid the product.

Characteristics of the audience

Content and style of communication will change depending on the audience characteristics. Features of the audience that should be considered:

- age
- relationship to messenger
- personality
- level of education
- culture.

People with a “high need for cognition” will examine issues and weigh up pros and cons and are more likely to be persuaded by strong arguments (Cacciopo & Petty 1982). People with a low need for cognition are less likely to be persuaded by argument and more likely to be swayed by perceived expertise or trustworthiness of the presenter.

Here’s a great article to read about why (believe it or not) Donald Trump is a very good communicator <https://newrepublic.com/article/146872/donald-trump-great-communicator>

ACTIVITY THREE

1. In 2004, the company ‘Dove’ launched the campaign for Real Beauty, after findings suggested that only 2% of women worldwide described themselves as beautiful. The campaign included promoting six real women with curves as beautiful as well as producing a short film called *Evolution* that demonstrated that average looking women could be photo shopped to look like a model. In regard to persuasive communication, suggest why these advertisements were successful.

2. Go to the website <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/best-advertisements>

Select two different ads from the 18 presented. Discuss how each ad uses persuasive techniques to convey their message.

Additional Resources

Textbook work

If you have a copy of *Nelson Psychology WA ATAR Unit 3&4*:

- read pages 64-73
- complete end of chapter questions on page 80 - Terminology 1-3, MCQ 1-4 and SAQ 1-3

If you have a copy of *Nelson Psychology WA ATAR Unit 3&4 student workbook*:

- read and complete pages 73-83.

Additional reading/weblinks

Check out the additional reading in the following links to help you clarify your understanding.

- Spanner (Dominance theory of gender differences in language) <https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ot/spender.htm>
- Tannen <https://aggslanguage.wordpress.com/you-just-don%E2%80%99t-understand-by-deborah-tannen/>
- Tanner <https://www.youtube.com/embed/tUxnBZxsfoU>
- Persuasion in Apple advertising <http://yokedesign.com.au/blog/cialdini-six-persuasion-techniques-that-apple-uses-to-influence-you/>

Exam Practice Questions

Answer the following questions taken from 2016 ATAR Psychology 12 exam paper

Source: <https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/further-resources/past-atar-course-exams/psychology-past-atar-course-exams>

A husband and wife are talking to each other after a day at work.

Wife: I feel so stressed because I am worried that I am not going to get that report finished this week.

Husband: You should delegate some of the work to your team members. When my team had a big report to do, we all contributed and finished it the day before the deadline.

Wife: There's so much to do and I feel so overwhelmed. The rest of the team doesn't have the background knowledge about the project like I do.

Husband: Well, you could ask your boss for an extension until next week.

- (a) (i) Name the communication style shown by the wife according to Tannen's theory, and describe this communication style, using an example from the scenario. (3 marks)

- (ii) According to Tannen's theory, identify how the wife might be feeling at the end of this conversation and provide a reason for your response. (2 marks)

- (iii) According to Tannen's theory, identify how the husband might be feeling at the end of this conversation and provide a reason for your response. (2 marks)

Answer the following questions taken from 2019 ATAR Psychology 12 exam paper

Source: <https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/further-resources/past-atar-course-exams/psychology-past-atar-course-exams>

Question 9**(17 marks)**

- (a) Define what is meant by 'communication style'. (1 mark)

- (b) Other than accents, list **two** aspects of language that are affected by our communication style. (2 marks)

One: _____

Two: _____

- (c) Describe the 'restricted code' as proposed by Bernstein. (2 marks)

When it comes to persuasive communication, we must consider three main features: the source of the message, the nature of the communication and the characteristics of the audience.

- (g) Explain **two** different aspects of 'the source of the message' that increase the likelihood of someone paying attention to the message. (4 marks)

One: _____

Two: _____

'Nature of the communication' may include the medium (e.g. television, radio, newspaper) used to convey the message.

- (h) Give an example of how the medium used can increase a person's motivation to pay attention to the message. (2 marks)

ANSWERS TO WORKBOOK ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY ONE

1. A child wanted to tell her mother that she would like a ham and cheese sandwich for lunch. She also wanted a drink of milk and she wanted to eat her lunch in front of the TV. Write 1-2 sentences to show how this would be said in restricted code and another 1-2 sentences to show it in elaborate code.
RC – Ham and cheese sandwich please Mum. A cup of milk too and I am gonna watch TV, okay?
EC – Can I please have a ham and cheese sandwich for lunch Mum? I would also like a cup of milk to go with it. Is it okay if I watch TV while I eat?
2. Educational institutions can blame BEV so called “mistakes” on laziness. Why is this incorrect and how could this potentially damage student learning?
BEV is just as rule governed and complex as traditional English. Laziness label can restrict learning. Students may be forced to change and modify their language and affect their literacy. All of this can make educational attainment difficult.

ACTIVITY TWO

1. Lee was giving a presentation at a work conference. Lee enjoyed taking centre stage and gaining everyone’s attention. Once the presentation was over Lee mingled with members of the crowd and was seen to make confirmatory tones such as ‘mmm’ to indicate listening.

Explain why given the above example Lee could be either male or female.

Showed male characteristics of language when He enjoyed taking centre stage and gaining everyone’s attention.

Showed female characteristics of language when She used confirmatory tones such as ‘mmm’ to indicate listening.

ACTIVITY THREE

1. In 2004, the company 'Dove' launched the campaign for Real Beauty, after findings suggested that only 2% of women worldwide described themselves as beautiful. The campaign included promoting six real women with curves as beautiful as well as producing a short film called *Evolution* that demonstrated that average looking women could be photo shopped to look like models. In regard to persuasive communication suggest why these advertisements were successful.
 - The source of the message included normal, everyday looking women that the public could identify with.
 - The nature of the communication appealed to women's emotions and body satisfaction.
 - The characteristics of the source included women worldwide who were dissatisfied with their appearance.
2. Go to the website <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/best-advertisements>

Select two different ads from the 18 presented. Discuss how each ad uses persuasive techniques to convey their message.

Various answers – must include information about source, nature and characteristics of audience.

EXAM PRACTICE QUESTIONS – ANSWERS

Source: SCSA Past Examination Marking Keys for ATAR Psychology, 2016 and 2019.

<https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/further-resources/past-atar-course-exams/psychology-past-atar-course-exams>

- (a) (i) Name the communication style shown by the wife according to Tannen's theory, and describe this communication style, using an example from the scenario. (3 marks)

Description	Marks
Names and describes communication style	2
Names or describes communication style	1
Refers to an example from the scenario	1
Answers could include, but are not limited to the following: Name: • Rapport talk Description: • The wife's communication is focused on sharing feelings and experiences. For example, she talks about feeling stressed/overwhelmed/ worried meeting a deadline at work.	
Total	3

- (ii) According to Tannen's theory, identify how the wife might be feeling at the end of this conversation and provide a reason for your response. (2 marks)

Description	Marks
Identifies feeling	1
Provides reason for response	1
Answers could include, but are not limited to the following: • the wife might be feeling like her husband did not understand her/was not really listening to her/did not really care/more upset at the end of the conversation • because the husband did not acknowledge her feelings/he did not show any sympathy/because he just focused on suggesting solutions to the problem.	
Total	2

- (iii) According to Tannen's theory, identify how the husband might be feeling at the end of this conversation and provide a reason for your response. (2 marks)

Description	Marks
Identifies feeling	1
Provides reason for response	1
Answers could include, but are not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the husband might be feeling happy that he was supportive to his wife. because he provided her with some suggestions about how she could help the problem she was telling him about or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the husband might be feeling frustrated with his wife because she didn't seem to be interested in listening to the solutions to her problems that he was offering because she kept on talking about how stressed she felt rather than ways that she might be able to help the problem. 	
Total	2

Question 9**(17 marks)**

- (a) Define what is meant by 'communication style'. (1 mark)

Description	Marks
Cultural and social aspects of language/way/manner in which people share information through language	1
Total	1

- (b) Other than accents, list **two** aspects of language that are affected by our communication style. (2 marks)

Description	Marks
One mark for each aspect	
Answers could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grammar vocabulary ideas expressed. 	1-2
Total	2

- (c) Describe the 'restricted code' as proposed by Bernstein. (2 marks)

Description	Marks
Primarily used by working class	1
Short, simple sentences	1
Total	2
Note: Accept other relevant descriptors of restricted code. For example, relies on shared and assumed knowledge of language with a particular social group.	

- (g) Explain **two** different aspects of 'the source of the message' that increase the likelihood of someone paying attention to the message. (4 marks)

Description	Marks
Two marks for each aspect	
Answers could include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expertise - we assume someone who is an expert in the area would provide appropriate advice 	1-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fast talker - we do not have time to consider content of message so assume it is accurate 	1-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> trustworthiness - unlikely to believe the word of someone we do not trust. 	1-2
Total	4

- (h) Give an example of how the medium used can increase a person's motivation to pay attention to the message. (2 marks)

Description	Marks
Example includes:	
a plausible context covered (news, gossip, message, instruction, etc.)	1
an inference that the communication climate increases the motivation to pay attention	1
Total	2
Example of a two mark response:	
Young people are more likely to pay attention to a message from social media rather than something they hear on the radio.	