



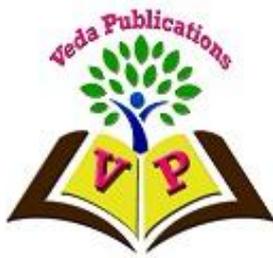
## NEW DIMENSIONS OF ENCODING MESSAGES

Dr.Jeyashree G

(Vice Principal/HOD English Department, Dr.Ambedkar College of Commerce and Economics, Mumbai.)

Email: [jeyashreeiyer@gmail.com](mailto:jeyashreeiyer@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT



Today in the age of globalization, communication across the world has become a challenging task as professionals from varied fields have to communicate with people from other countries whose culture and practice are different. The paper focuses on encoding as it is the base of communication. The success of the communication depends on how messages are encoded effectively. Apparently, the process of encoding is surmised as an easy simple process that the message sent out in a code is encoding. But encoding is multifaceted and the paper illumines the various aspects of encoding with suitable references. The paper does not deal with technical aspects of encoding instead it accentuates that exposure to classics of literature will improve the language and communication skill. Language and literature is the base of communication. Young budding scholars should be exposed to literary texts to obtain world knowledge. The paper deals with three aspects of communication, Intra personal, interpersonal and group communication.

**Keywords:** *Communication, encoding, literature, skill, language, knowledge.*

### Citation:

**APA** Jeyashree,G.(2017) New Dimensions of Encoding Messages.Veda's Journal of English Language and Literature-JOELL, 4(4), 228-232.

**MLA** Jeyashree,G." New Dimensions of Encoding Messages" Veda's Journal of English Language and Literature JOELL, Vol.4, no.4, 2017, pp. 228-232.

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## INTRODUCTION

Communication is the heart and soul of human lives and social interactions substrate human development. Verbal and non verbal components are the major components of communication. Non verbal communication is the primary means of communication. Some researchers speculate that humans' word formation were *onomatopoeic* pertaining to sound. Words like swoosh, quack, gurgle are closely associated to sounds. Word formations at the primitive stage might have evolved with sound related words and communication with hand gestures could have been widely used. Humans' desire to share different information with their companions had paved way to the development of *Talking Culture*.

Man deserves no pre-Darwinian exemption, with face-to-face interaction accorded some minor, secluded status. While there are certainly other legitimate concerns for social science, face-to-face interaction is the constitutive substrate of social phenomena.

Social interaction between individuals provides a firm base for the development of a society and in the past, anthropological researchers accentuated the importance of communication in social interaction. Encoding, decoding and feedback are the major ingredients of communication. While exploring the trajectories of encoding messages the researchers do peruse the history of communication to evince the various factors that influence the messages. Encoding apparently appears to be a simple term where a message is transmitted from the sender to the receiver. But encoding is multifaceted and the success of the communication depends on how a message is delivered effectively. Encoding messages can be broadly classified into three sections:

- Intrapersonal communication
- Inter personal Communication
- Group communication

## INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Scholars from old schools dismiss the theory intrapersonal communication as *just thinking* and opine that communication scholars *need not think about thinking*. Hence no proper guidelines had been framed to gauge intrapersonal communication. But recent studies have started focusing on the intrinsic quality of intrapersonal communication. Thinking and talking are interrelated. Thought process cannot be dismissed as something irrelevant as it precedes speech and influences encoding. Any art or a work is the product of imagination but not autonomous being bombarded by different sources like environmental, cultural and psychological factors.

## GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Human brain is conditioned by environmental factors influencing the thoughts. This results in different perceptions. The environment in which a child dwells constitutes different perceptions. These perceptions resonate in the thoughts and actions of a person. For instance if a girl child is exposed to a domineering father or brother, she will certainly develop inhibitions in her mind regarding men in general. Her perception is conditioned by the prejudiced inference that *All Men are bad*. This influence is reflected not only at her personal space but also at her working place. The messages she encodes to her male colleagues result in bipolar presentations. She will be either diffident in expressing her ideas clearly or imperious by not paying heed to any valuable advice given by her male counterparts. Diffident people who are brought up in strict environment resort to pauses, gaps, clumsy sentences where messages encoded are substandard and vague. Superiors may not be happy with such subordinates. Strong willed women bosses are a nightmare to her subordinates. *Women bosses are strict* is the general perception of people. A girl child is brought up in strict environment and in the later stages the communication becomes rigid and hostile. It is a defense technique of women to safeguard themselves from male domination.

But the second generation of educated women is more confident and skilled. Their commendable contribution to the development of the society is duly acknowledged by social media.



Sacha Strebe in her article, *What You Need to Know When Your Boss Is a Woman*, observes that according to survey in 2015 of U.S. adults, 39% of women wanted to be led by a man and a study published in the journal *Society for Personality and Social Psychology* found that men feel threatened by female bosses struggle with "power dynamics". She opines that *Women are Powerful but not bossy*. Yet sometimes women face trying situations where they have to manage challenging tasks simultaneously subverting and conforming to parochial standards. Women are often looked as weak and emotional objects and to change this perception women have to assert their power through better communication. In the past the communication of women is often dismissed as *small talk or woman's talk*, a derogatory term used to imply the inferior status of women. But amidst all pressures women have managed to climb up successful careers.

Research scholars widely observe that most of the women writings are autobiographical intensely effusing the thoughts and feelings of the writer. The feelings of the Empress in *Pearl S. Buck's* novel, *The imperial Women*, thus reads,

.....when a woman rules there is none she can trust, for though a man who sits upon a throne has his enemies, he has also those loyal to him for their sakes but a woman knows no such loyalties (*The imperial Women*, 263).

The inner feelings of a woman caught in power struggle are encoded powerfully.

In literature novelists, dramatists, poets are adept at imparting their feelings and views to the readers and the audience; hence communication and literature are inseparable. Encoding in communication is multifaceted and one has to understand the situation and the psychology of the sender for better interpretation as the success of communication certainly depends on the impact of encoding. Such understanding will establish harmony in the society. Hence *gynocritical* approach facilitates understanding women communication. The inner feelings of a character are communicated to the readers effectively. A novel can always be successful only when the readers and the novelists establish a

tacit understanding of the theme and characterization of a novel.

*Monologues and soliloquy*: Monologues and Soliloquies are the major devices of drama to convey the thoughts process of characters to the audience. Soliloquies are externalized versions of internal thoughts and feelings. This communication stems from solitude. In literature soliloquies are one of the mechanics to express the inner emotions of a speaker. It is nothing but thinking aloud and thereby messages are encoded and decoded by *one*.

The soliloquy of the queen Isabella in *Christopher Marlowe's Edward the Second* vividly portrays the thoughts of the character. The king accuses Isabella of adultery. She meets Mortimer secretly and shares the information about king's suspicions. Her feelings are thus vividly portrayed in her soliloquy.

So well hathst thou deserve sweet Mortimer  
as Isabella could live with the forever.

In theatre monologue is a speech delivered by single characters to express their thoughts aloud. In other words monologues are bridge that links the character and the audience. The monologue from the play of Christopher Marlowe's *Edward the Second* where the king Edward thinks aloud,

King Edward: Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me,

Thy speeches long ago had eas'd my sorrows,  
For kind and loving hast thou always been.

The griefs of private men are soon allayed; but not of kings.

The mental agony that the king experienced is thus communicated to the audience effectively through monologue. The thoughts of the people cannot be just dismissed as something irrelevant as they are base of the encoding process. To hone communication skills exposure to literature is very important to learn how people encode messages complimenting the environmental climate. Soliloquy and monologues are the major devices in literature firmly anchored in intrapersonal communication. Thus the translation of thoughts into words is called encoding. When words are translated back into thoughts then the process is called decoding.

**INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION**

Communication between two individuals is interpersonal communication. Dialogues, conversations are informal and Interviews, meetings are formal. It's a challenging task for the communicants to encode messages effectively to a heterogeneous group. The below giving arenas should be focused while encoding messages.

**Socio cultural background:** When the participants of the communication belong to different cultural background, the encoder of the message should be conversant with Socio-Cultural background of the recipient of the communication.

Erin Meyer in her book *The Culture Map* expounds the theory of encoding unpleasant messages to different culture groups. Unpleasant news has to be given *slowly, over a period of time so that it gradually sinks in*. In the west unpleasant news are conveyed directly without mincing words but in countries like India, it has to be conveyed implicitly *over food and drink to blur unpleasant message*. For example, when a superior has to inform about the termination of an employee, he breaks the news gradually mentally preparing the receiver to accept the unpleasant message,

Erin Meyer thus observes, "We interviewed Jing Ren, a thirty five year old Chinese manager, who was taken back to learn how little a personal relationship meant when working in the United States". (Meyer, 169). In China business relationships are built through personal interaction paving way for developing better relations between the two communicants.

**Body language:** While communicating a message, the receiver keenly observes the body language of the sender. For example, when the police and lawyers cross examine the accused, messages are decoded not only through their ears but also through their eyes. Body language of communicants has a strong impact on both the encoder and decoder of the message. Let us examine the following situation, One of the executives of Marketing Department eagerly visits his superior to share an innovative design that has embedded in his thoughts which would be very beneficial for the development of the company. When he approaches his superior's office, he eyes his superior sipping his tea nonchalantly. His

body language emanates the message that he does not have the mood for any serious discussion. The executive realizes the situation and returns to his seat without sharing the information. His morale deflated, yet waits for a suitable situation to share his views with his superior.

Barriers at all levels do erupt while encoding the message and the participants of communication is expected to be adept at reading the receivers mind set and the situation before encoding the message.

**Hierarchy:** Stratification in society creates discrimination and the messages are encoded according to the status of the speaker. Some countries are incredibly hierarchical where the boss makes the decisions and the staff has to follow. Messages are encoded and decoded without any feed back as the consensus of the staff has not been taken into considerations in many companies.

Erin Meyer illumines the problems of egalitarian leader in hierarchical society. Steve Henning shares his experience in China with the author, "In China the boss is always right.....And even when the boss is wrong, he is still right". He further expounds, "When I would ask my staff members for their thoughts, advice or opinions, they would sit quietly staring at their shoe laces". (Meyer,139)

In India, the term *sir* is used to address superiors. Unlike England where the form *Sir* is honorific title bestowed on executive class, the *Sir* is a symbol of respect in India. For example, the prefix of *sir* is used to refer to Sir Alexander Flemming. Sir C.V.Raman etc. It is the title of significance but in post colonial India the term *Sir* is used as a symbol of respect for someone in general. The term *sir* is derived from the Middle French honorific title *sire*. Superiors are not called by their names in India whereas in Western countries such hierarchical terms are not in practice. Hence while encoding messages socio cultural factors of the environment should be taken into consideration.

**GROUP COMMUNICATION**

The main objective of group communication is to inform, to persuade, to motivate and to elicit response from the audience. Seminars, conference, group interviews are different forms of group communication. Speaking to a group is an



exigent task and requires thorough practice. Some people are natural speakers. Building up confidence in speaking stems from the subject knowledge of the speaker. Moreover the speaker should study the audience and environment before encoding the message.

In one of the Orientation Programmes for college teachers in Bharathiyar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, the resource person from the Economics Department proudly claimed that his wife was also a professor but the bank details along with ATM card of his wife remained with him and she always withdrew money only with his permission. He further stated that too much financial independence of women lead to divorce. The participants of programme were silent; extending a tacit support to the speaker but a professor from Mumbai mulled over this issue and tried to envisage the reaction of the participants in Mumbai. The message would have elicited strong objections from the participants of Mumbai. Hence the communicants have to take cognizance of socio-cultural situation as the messages are encoded based on cultural environment.

Stuart Shuttleworth, the CEO, owner and founder of small British investment firm explains to Erin Meyer, the author of the book the *Culture Map*, the cultural quandaries created for him while expanding his business internationally, "Take for example, the simple process of recapping a meeting. In the U.K. it is common sense that at the end of a meeting you should verbally recap what has been decided.....Clarification, clarification, clarification – in the U.K. this is simply good business practice".

"I attended a meeting the other day in Paris.....I awaited the final.....recap of the meeting. Instead, one of the clients announced dramatically *Et voila!* (there it is) as if everything is clear".(Meyer, 46)

Stuart Shuttleworth surmises from the response of the French client that they do not follow the practice of recapping the resolutions that had been taken at the meeting.

While communicating to different culture groups the sender of the message should be conversant with the culture and practice of the audience.

## CONCLUSION

Encoding, decoding and feedback are the major ingredients of communication. Encoding is the base of building communication. Today, the curriculum designed on Communication Skills does not give much importance to literature. English language learning has become a dull exercise and these books tend only to educate. Learning tenets of language without any exposure to literary concepts is like a body without soul. The theories of communication skills focus more on technical aspects and thereby do not kindle the aesthetic sense of young budding scholars. Students cannot master communication unless they are exposed to literary texts. Philip Sidney in his "An Apology for Poetry" asserts that Poetry aims to *teach and delight* the readers. When young learners are exposed to classics, they can certainly develop a special skill to deal with emotional crisis. Humanity subjects like Philosophy and literature teach how to perceive life in positive manner. Exposure to classics provides them an opportunity to know about the world.

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