

12 - Persuasive communication

Persuasive communication

© SPMM Course □ Fatuous love: passion and commitment but no intimacy seen. According to SVR theory, - relationships proceed from Stimulus (external attributes) to Values to Role stage.

Linguistics of interpersonal communication Some linguists view language as a “system of signs that have been developed to serve the communicative needs of people living in a social context”. Thus language is a product of sociocultural evolution. In this context, language serves 3 functions:

1. Ideational Function: enable people thinking with language to interpret experience.
2. Interpersonal Function: enable people acting with language to communicate experience and thoughts
3. Textual Function: enable people organise of a message with language.

Fields of enquiry in linguistics • Phonology: The study of sound structure • Morphology: The study of sound structure • Syntax: The study of sentence structure • Phonetics: The study of physical act of speaking • Semantics: The study of the connection of language to meanings. Semanticists consider that meanings are inherent in sentences; while communication-intentionists consider that meaning is not inherent but comes from something that people do when using language • Pragmatics: The study of the connection of context to meanings. • Sociolinguistics: The study of the connection of language to social situations • Semiotics: The study of signs and symbols in relation to their form and content Whorfian hypothesis or Sapir-Whorf linguistic relativity hypothesis states that the semantics of a language can affect the way in which its speakers perceive and conceptualize the world. Language determines the basic categories of thought and that, as a consequence, speakers of different languages think differently. This extreme position is also called linguistic determinism. Noam Chomsky argues against this stance (see Language Development section in the notes on Human Development).

Persuasive communication Techniques of persuasive communication (e.g. used by sales representatives) include

1. Ingratiation: eliciting likeableness

© SPMM Course 2. Reciprocity: doing a favour first, making one indebted. 3. Arousal of guilt 4. Scarcity: 'offers valid only till stocks last; so hurry!' 5. Social validation: 'everyone is going to Argos? What about you?' 6. Multiple requests

1. Foot in the door technique: if one agrees to small request this increases the likelihood of saying yes again.
2. Door in the face technique (concession effect): when a larger request is turned down initially this increases the likelihood of agreeing to a smaller subsequent request.
3. Low-ball tactic: hiding the costs and disadvantages initially but revealing after an agreement is reached. When attempting to persuade others, one-sided arguments may strengthen existing beliefs but two-sided arguments more effective in changing beliefs/attitudes. Similarly, highly fear-inducing messages may increase anxiety but may not result in behaviour change (Jansis & Feshback 1953); while moderately fear-inducing messages can produce greater behaviour change in some instances. Thus, an inverted U-shaped curve relates fear and attitude/behaviour change. Feeling vulnerable also increases behaviour change. The credibility of a perceived message has been found to be a key factor affecting persuasive communication (Hovland & Weiss, 1951); if we read a report about health in a professional medical journal, we are more easily persuaded than if we read it from a tabloid. Propaganda refers to mass suggestion or influence via emotional manipulation of an individual. While educating an individual about an issue gives independence for making a judgment, propaganda over an issue provides ready-made judgments to be adopted by the individual. This may be done using
4. Induction of stereotypes
5. Substitution of names to facilitate scapegoating and scaremongering
6. Selected facts presentation
7. Repeating same messages in various forms
8. Presenting assertions instead of rational arguments
9. Pinpointing an enemy

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