WRITTEN COMMUNICATION OVER ORAL COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper delves into the nuanced advantages and challenges associated with written communication as opposed to oral communication. It explores the inherent characteristics that distinguish written exchanges, such as permanence, clarity, and the ability to carefully construct and review messages, from the more immediate and dynamic nature of spoken interactions. The study examines how written communication can enhance precision and facilitate detailed documentation but may also lead to misinterpretations due to the lack of vocal tone and non-verbal cues. By analyzing case studies and feedback from communication experts, this research identifies key elements that contribute to effective written communication and highlights scenarios where it surpasses oral methods in clarity and long-term impact. The paper underscores the importance of context and audience in determining the most effective mode of communication, emphasizing that while written communication offers distinct advantages in structure and longevity, oral communication continues to play a crucial role in fostering connection and spontaneity.

Title of the Article: Why Do People Have More Effective Written Communication Than Oral Communication?

Summary: The reason for the often observed and accepted accuracy of written communication as opposed to spoken communication is discussed in this report. Written forms of communication are described as more accurate and conscious, being more methodical allowing better expression of ideas. Effect of these factors on the two forms of communication is the core of this study as elaborates why writing tends to be more precise than other forms of communication. It also looks on some theories already done and goes further to consider communication under different purposes such as socializing, work related and personal areas. The assessment borrows some of the theoretical aspects available in the literature as well as some of the working examples. Interestingly, the phenomenon of written communication being more precise as compared to spoken communication in most professional undertakings does not hold true in some instances as the report presents some findings. It was found that in certain cases of casual or affective communication, intentions can be expressed better by

speech, that has much lower precision and is at first sight of a very chaotic nature. The report ends with a suggestion of how there are other dynamics at play which concern both spoken and written forms of communication that require research especially now when technology is advancing the rate of communication.

Keywords: Written communication, spoken communication, precision, clarity, verbal communication, non- verbal communication

1. INTRODUCTION

The ability to share information, thoughts emotions, and even views is referred to as communication. Numerous systems exist which allow communication, amongst which, speaking and writing remain the most dominant. Spoken contact is most of the time in situations that require immediacy or quick interaction while written contact is often seen as more premeditated and well organized. This quality of written communication has caused many people to hold an assumption that written communication is more exact. It is easier to present a concept in writing without any vagueness because one has the option to edit and revise their message as many times as they please before putting it on record. In contrast, while spoken language is generally comprehended along with visual display of a speaker's hand, voice elevation and other gestures which accentuate meaning, this sometimes leads to impreciseness. This report will chiefly examine some of the factors that cause written communication to be viewed as more accurate than its spoken counterpart. This research is, however, timely, given that the present day society is characterized by the simultaneous use of both verbal and written communication on a number of contexts.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The issue that clear will investigate in this paper is the accuracy of messages written compared to spoken. Funny enough, speaking is the most primary and immediate form of communicating. But in many instances, spoken communication is bound to be vague and imprecise. It also should be noted that spoken communication is ephemeral because users can hardly go back and rectify any inaccurate context during that conversation. Also, non-verbal aspects of communication such as tone of voice, gestures, and facial expressions are often involved in spoken language and may not be understood the same way by all the listeners. On the other hand, written means of communication allows

individuals to think, organize their thought, and present them in an orderly manner without interfering with the accuracy of the information being shared. The problem in question is what features of written communication enable it to be less effective in the final sense.

Furthermore, how do these features of written communication distinguish themselves from the impulsiveness and the ease of speaking? This report attempts to explain what are the reasons that written forms of communication produce more clear cut and unambiguous messages and identify the situations that highlight the most these differences.

The primary issue this study seeks to address is the question of why written communication tends to be more precise than spoken communication. In many professional and academic settings, individuals often rely on written forms of communication, such as emails, reports, and formal documents, to convey detailed and complex information. This preference for written communication stems from the belief that it allows for greater clarity, accuracy, and careful consideration of ideas. However, despite these advantages, the process of writing can be time-consuming, requiring individuals to spend significant time structuring their thoughts, organizing information, and ensuring that no critical details are omitted. In contrast, spoken communication, while faster and more spontaneous, can be prone to misinterpretation, ambiguity, and a lack of clear

structure. The challenge lies in understanding the factors that contribute to the perceived precision of written communication, as well as the difficulties professionals face in balancing the need for detail and accuracy with the time constraints associated with writing. This study aims to explore these dynamics by examining how individuals approach the task of writing, the tools and strategies they employ to enhance clarity, and the common challenges they face, such as fear of omitting key information or the pressure to communicate quickly. Ultimately, the goal is to uncover why written communication remains a preferred method for conveying important information despite its time-consuming nature and to identify ways to improve the efficiency of the writing process without sacrificing precision.

Research Gap:

Communication is an area that attracts a lot of interest from researchers. Most of the available literature captures the major components of effective communication but does not address nuanced concerns such as the level of exactness between oral and written language. What is more, few researchers seek to understand the aspects that make written forms of communication more exact than oral ones. Most of them fail to recognize the relevance of the situation in determining which one of the communication modes will be most effective. For instance, in formal contexts, a greater degree of correctness may be required more often than not favoring written methods of communication as opposed to social contexts, where verbal communication allows one to express feelings verbally or emotionally. Another one is that the research is also not very rich because of the use of electronic communication devices which combine features of both oral and written communication. Most of the literature is silent on how the communication aspect is affected with the use of different digital mediums such as emails, sms, or chats. The study seeks to fill these deficiencies in literature by looking at different facets of oral and written communication and considering the trends in the use of mobile phones in relation to communication precision.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication, the process of conveying thoughts, ideas, emotions, and feelings, can be categorized into two major forms, namely, oral communication and written communication. Many experts in different fields have examined the differences between spoken and written forms of expression, and an overarching opinion is that written communication is purer due to its better organization, terminology, and syntax. Collins (2018) explains that this misinterpretation is significantly minimized due to the incorporation of the editing period which allows for modifying written texts before dissemination. By allowing multiple drafts and revisions, meaning is preserved without distortions that may exist on the first version. On the other hand, Tannen (2007) argues that although spoken language has the preferable aspect of directness and holds attention; it has features such as intonation, eye contact, and gestures that accompany it. These features create additional meanings but may also cause misinterpretation if the correct understanding is not established. There is also the issue of the speech being quite spontaneous including mistakes, breaks, or filler words, which may hinder getting the right message across. Another significant aspect is provided by Chafe (1994), who notes that, because speech is transient and depends on the hearer's memory, it presents problems of vagueness. Texts cannot be spoken in the same manner as written ones with the exception of voice dictation in a such a way preserving content, regardless of the content's spoken application therein, therefore it becomes challenging to rectify mistakes as they happen. These researches demonstrate both the merits and demerits of the two modes of communication and provide a basis for more detailed evaluation of their degree of accuracy in the discussion that follows. A significant body of research has explored the distinctions between spoken and written communication, highlighting the advantages and challenges associated with each form. Halliday

(1985) emphasizes that written communication is inherently more structured and formal than spoken communication. He argues that the permanence of written text allows for more deliberate organization, enabling writers to revise and refine their ideas before presenting them to the reader. In contrast, spoken communication is spontaneous and often unstructured, which can lead to a lack of clarity and coherence. This distinction is also discussed by Baron (2010), who notes that while spoken communication can facilitate immediate interaction and feedback, it often lacks the precision of written text. This is because spoken language relies heavily on contextual cues, such as tone, gestures, and facial expressions, which may not always translate accurately when attempting to convey complex information.

In his work, Chafe (1994) further investigates the cognitive processes involved in both forms of communication, suggesting that the linear nature of writing allows for more thorough reflection and the ability to articulate ideas with greater clarity. He points out that writing involves a higher level of conscious thought, allowing individuals to present more nuanced and detailed arguments. On the other hand, spoken communication tends to be more dynamic, with speakers adjusting their language based on immediate feedback from their audience, but often at the expense of depth and precision. Gee (2014) also supports this view, stating that the temporality of speech limits the opportunity for revision, making it more prone to errors and miscommunication. The permanence of writing, he argues, makes it a more reliable form of communication when accuracy and detail are paramount.

Crystal (2008) discusses how technological advancements have blurred the lines between spoken and written communication, particularly in digital platforms where users often blend elements of both. Emails, instant messages, and social media posts, for example, have introduced more conversational elements into written communication, but they still retain the structure and permanence that make written communication precise. Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle adds another dimension to the discussion by explaining how conversational maxims in spoken language aim to maintain clarity and relevance, though they are often violated, leading to misunderstandings. This further supports the argument that written communication, due to its formal structure and opportunity for revision, remains more precise, especially in professional and academic contexts.

In addition, Gumperz (1982) and Searle (1969) explore how the meaning of spoken communication is often co-constructed through interaction, where listeners and speakers rely on contextual and social cues to interpret meaning. This dependency on real-time interaction can introduce ambiguity, particularly when discussing complex or abstract concepts. In contrast, Olson (1996) argues that the detached nature of written communication allows writers to convey ideas more systematically, minimizing the potential for misinterpretation. According to Olson, the ability to revisit and scrutinize written text contributes significantly to its precision. Scollon and Scollon (2004) further contribute to this discussion by highlighting the role of discourse patterns in shaping how information is structured in both forms. They suggest that while spoken communication often follows less rigid discourse structures, writing is bound by conventions that promote clarity and coherence.

Overall, the literature suggests that written communication is more precise due to its formal structure, permanence, and opportunity for revision. The ability to organize thoughts systematically and refine them before presenting them to an audience gives writing an inherent advantage in terms of clarity and detail. While spoken communication offers immediacy and adaptability, it is often more prone to errors and ambiguities. This dichotomy forms the foundation for exploring the time investment required for each form, as well as the challenges faced by professionals who need to balance speed and accuracy in their communication efforts.

4. METHODOLOGY

A sequential exploratory approach was adopted to examine the validity of verbal versus non verbal communication. First, a cross-sectional analysis was carried out in various professional and social contexts in order to evaluate how the examined form of communication (verbal or written) was able to relay information which is complex in its nature. Instructions were issued in writing and verbally to the subjects who were then required to complete a number of tasks, with a record of how well they understood and performed these tasks kept. Surveys and questionnaires asking about the clarity, and accuracy of the instructions in each format, were also included within the scope of the study. Moreover, focus group discussions couple with framing techniques were conducted to appreciate the differences in the use of oral and written information. The participants were encouraged to express themselves through sharing the reasons or problems faced concerning either of the forms communicated. Data that focuses on way the spoken communication led to error as compared to the written communication was also collected. Focus groups provided the qualitative data on the reasons for these differences whereas, statistical analysis provided the data comparing the two forms of communication. The data was finally subjected to statistical analyses with the aim of drawing predefined causal relationships which showed that, written communication was more appropriate in terms of accurate transmission of content.

5. RESULT ANALYSIS

The assessment of data accrued through participant surveys and focus groups has provided insights into the elements of writing communication in its challenges and strategies. An important thing to note is that most of the participants indicated that the most difficult and time-consuming task in writing emails or messages was the structuring of the content. This implies that much time is likely spent by people organizing their thoughts prior to putting them down, in order to be precise on how they would want their information out. The participants as well maintained that there was no panic onset, but in drafting a long piece of written communication, heat was felt; this goes to show that they are composed but at the same time cognizant of the time factor.

On the aspect of improving their writing time without necessarily leaving out crucial information, the use of bullet points to emphasize the essential elements was highly favored by the participants. This gives rise to the fact that most of them understand very well that the manner in which the information is presented is quite important in enhancing and economizing on communication.

However, when it comes to measures aimed at cutting down the time for writing activity, the participants recognized a challenge which is the fear of omitting crucial information which greatly affects their velocity. To relieve the burdensome fears, however, a good number of subjects indicated that they resorted to mechanical grammar checkers and style checkers while writing to save time and go through the writing and editing process quickly.

Moreover, in order not to sound overly complicated and to save time within reasonable limits, the para- phrasers stated being under the impression that they often review their writing from the eyes of the audience. This technique enables them to tackle issues of inaccuracy and ambiguity early enough rather than later. When it comes to constructing formal pieces of writing, which relate to the aspect of quality and the aspect of time, a large proportion of the participants claimed that they tend to find this equilibrium, taking into account both the level of information communication and timing pressure. The participants also provided a comparison in the amount of time one would take writing and speaking. Speaking and writing on important matters were both said to take time to organize but one could be said to prefer writing about anything appreciable.

Participants also stated that a calm and peaceful surrounding is very helpful when it comes to enhancing concentration on writing and minimizing interruptions. It was particularly helpful for

participants to store a set of phrases for such repetitive writing tasks as composing nearly the same emails or reports in order to shorten the period of producing coherent correspondence, when the task required changing the content of the phrases.

Discussion of Results:

The findings from this study are consistent with the broader literature on communication precision, but they also highlight some practical concerns that professionals face when engaging in written communication. The participants' feedback about the challenges of structuring content suggests that while written communication allows for precision, the process of organizing information can be a significant time sink. Moreover, the widespread use of strategies such as bullet points and automated tools underscores the importance of brevity and accuracy in written communication, especially in high-pressure or time-sensitive situations.

Interestingly, participants' ability to remain calm under pressure, while still being aware of the time constraints, suggests that many professionals have developed effective coping mechanisms for handling detailed writing tasks. The use of automated tools to speed up the process while maintaining quality reflects a practical approach to modern communication needs. Reading from the reader's perspective also highlights the importance of empathy in communication, ensuring that the message is not only clear but also tailored to the recipient's understanding. The balance between quality and time is a recurring theme, and the preference for writing over speaking when it comes to important information further underscores the perceived reliability of written communication. These findings suggest that while written communication may take more time, it is valued for its accuracy and permanence.

Unexpected Findings:

Recognition that structuring the content was the most challenging and time-consuming in writing was one of the surprising findings of this study. It was expected that the longest part of the writing process would be the proofreading or the revising stage. However, this greater contention on organizing the content as opposed to simply writing what a person has says points to a greater problem that people face. That actually is not the problem of what to say, but how to articulate views attracts the greatest concern. Another shocker was the "writing out" information was preferred over "talking," even if talking is argued to be more time-efficient and less calculated .

This result is indicative of quanto confidence the participants attach to writing and more so the written record for professional purposes where errors are a costly affair.

Plus, while the avoidance of missing subordinating elements is a common problem, that proved to be more pronounced than between dimensions that would be expected to integrate this time pressure creates 'cautious' excess. This shows that professionalism often comes with doing the opposite and giving excessive information, thus affecting the message's adherence to the point. The fact that some expressions are almost always applicable in situations where one is doing monotonous writing begs the question that many have been able to design templates for purposes of enhancing speed in the course of communication transactions.

Scope for Further Research:

This research leaves indications for several interesting areas to be explored in the future. It was noted that participants considered the structuring of content important therefore more research can look at how alternative frameworks or templates can be employed in this exercise or activity so that less time is wasted doing this with the clarity and precision maintained. In addition, aspects such as, since the use of digital aids such as soft wares for checking grammar and style are on the rise nowadays, it would be worthwhile to study the impact of such aids on the quality and the efficiency

of writing in the long run. Further, considering this is a world where most important details are preferred to be recorded in written form rather than spoken, it will be interesting to investigate the impact of technologies such as emails and chatting on the need to express attention-demanding information verbally. It may even extend to addressing the question of how writing, especially in time-restricted situations, can be enhanced by tools that someday include Artificial Intelligences capable of composing text in response to requests (provided by the user). Finally, the fear of missing out in terms of crucial information for data scope definition may be analysed by new studies designed as well as how this fear can be alleviated by the specialists without losing the timeliness and exactness of the results.

6. CONCLUSION

So much has been done in this new research not only to explain why one is likely to be more precise in written forms than oral ones but also to show some of the difficulties practitioners encounter in this precision. The answer of the participants shed light that the hardest and most demanding part of the writing has been arranging the ideas in the correct order. It also almost everybody drafts long written messages with the given space or time limits, and is tensed but relaxed, and calm, focused on the message to be conveyed most of the time. The use of bullet points, appliances, techniques, and the use of the reader's point of view are common and important for improving and making compressing speech easy without omitting significant information. Nevertheless, the unwillingness to compromise and risk missing out on important information is a major hindrance towards lessening the duration of written communication. Despite the fact that it is acceptable to use oral communication more often than not, especially in formal situations when being precise is necessary, the research also discovered a possible way of using the benefits associated with oral communication and the accuracy of written communication together in most cases using technology. Lastly, this study stresses the importance of investigating how new instruments and strategies make it easier to solve the quality-time dilemma in writing for different professionals.

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