

Language Matters - PowerPoint

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Cross-Cultural Communication in Persuasion

- Meaning is shaped by culture + language.
- Same words can mean different things: "Let's table this" = postpone (US), begin discussion (UK).
- Non-verbal cues: Eye contact = confidence in some cultures, disrespect in others.
- Practical tip: Learn basic greetings or courtesies in your audience's language — builds instant rapport.

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Everyday Conversations as Negotiation

- Persuasion happens in daily life:
 - Convincing a roommate to share Wi-Fi costs.
 - Asking a professor for an extension.
 - Proposing a new club idea.
- Language tips:
 - Replace “I want” with “We could” to show shared benefit.
 - Use gratitude framing: “Thanks for considering this...”
- Example: Instead of “Please give us more time,” try “With an extra two days, we can ensure the lab report includes the detailed analysis you expect.”

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Funding Pitches: Language as a Selling Tool

- Persuasion formula: Problem → Solution → Benefits → Evidence → Ask.
- Speak in benefits, not just features.
- Example:
 - Feature: "Our drone can fly for 4 hours."
 - Benefit: "This drone can monitor farmland for an entire morning, giving farmers real-time data to save crops."
- Keep sentences active, short, and confident.
- Use inclusive language: "With your support, we can..." instead of "I need money for..."

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Persuasion in Presentations: Cultural Nuance

- In multicultural classrooms, examples and metaphors must be inclusive.
- Avoid idioms/slang that don't translate ("hit it out of the park" may confuse non-cricket/baseball audiences).
- For global clarity:
 - Use visuals to reinforce verbal points.
 - Summarise complex points twice — once in technical terms, once in plain language.
- Example: Explaining AI: "It's like teaching a child by showing examples until it can make decisions on its own."

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Classroom Presentations: Speaking to be Remembered

- In presentations, persuasion means making your audience care.
- Structure: Hook → Background → Main Points → Evidence → Call to Action.
- Language tools:
 - Rhetorical questions: "What if your phone never needed charging?"
 - Signposting: "Let's now move to the second challenge..."
 - Pauses to emphasise key points.
- Example: Instead of reading data directly, say: "These numbers show a 40% drop in waste — that's like removing 200 trucks of garbage from our streets every year."

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Negotiation in Job Interviews

- Negotiation is not arguing — it's aligning interests.
- What can be negotiated: salary, joining date, role responsibilities, training programs, relocation benefits.
- Language tips:
 - Express appreciation before asking: "I'm excited about the role. I was wondering if there's flexibility in the joining date to complete my current academic commitments."
 - Avoid demands — use collaborative phrasing: "Could we explore..." / "Would it be possible..."
- Cultural insight: In some cultures (e.g., US), early-stage negotiation is normal; in others (e.g., Japan), it's considered respectful to wait until final offer.

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Interview Scenario 2: Negotiation with Professional Courtesy

- Candidate has been offered a job but wants a slightly higher salary.
- Scenario Dialogue:
 - HR Manager: "We're offering ₹6.2 LPA for this position."
- Candidate:
 - "I appreciate the offer and am genuinely excited about contributing to your AI initiatives.
 - Based on my internship experience in machine learning and the market average for similar roles, I was hoping we could explore a package closer to ₹6.8 LPA.
 - I believe that would reflect the skills I bring and allow me to focus fully on delivering results from day one."
- Negotiation Elements Highlighted:
 - Opens with appreciation → shows respect.
 - Uses evidence (market average, skills) instead of emotion.
 - Positions request as beneficial to performance.
 - Tip: Negotiate with facts, not demands. Frame it as a mutual gain, not just a personal win.

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Interview Scenario 1: Persuasion in Action

Final-year engineering student interviewing for a software developer role in a multinational company.

- Scenario Dialogue:
- Interviewer: "Tell me about a time you solved a challenging technical problem."
- Candidate:
- "During my third-year IoT project, our prototype kept overheating, and the team was stuck.
- I proposed switching from a Li-ion to LiFePO₄ battery to improve thermal stability.
- I sourced data showing a 30% lower heat output, implemented the change, and it worked — we presented a fully functional model at TechFest, earning second place among 50 teams.
- I believe this experience shows I can analyse problems quickly and deliver reliable solutions, just as your role requires."

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Persuasion in Job Interviews

- Goal: Make the interviewer believe you're the best fit for the role.
- Language strategy:
 - Frame your achievements to match employer needs.
 - Use STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) storytelling to answer questions.
 - Avoid fillers ("umm...", "you know") — they reduce authority.
- Example:
 - Weak: "I worked in a team to build a project."
 - Strong: "In my second semester, I led a 4-member team to design a smart irrigation prototype. This reduced water usage by 20% in trials — a result I believe matches your company's sustainability goals."

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Why Language is a Core Engineering Skill

- In first-year engineering, most group projects, lab work, and presentations require teamwork — that means clear, respectful, persuasive communication.
- Language converts complex technical details into messages audiences can understand.
- In professional life, engineers spend up to 50% of their time communicating (emails, meetings, presentations, client calls).
- Real-life scenario: A civil engineer with a great sustainable bridge design fails to get approval because the pitch was too technical for city officials to follow.
- Takeaway: If you can't explain it, you can't sell it — and if you can't sell it, it won't happen.

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1 Language Matters: Importance of Communication Skills for Engineers

2 The Power of Persuasion & Negotiation for Engineers

- Engineers create solutions, but language determines if those solutions are accepted, funded, or remembered.
- Communication skills = the bridge between ideas and impact.
- Persuasion = influencing others through reason, emotion, and credibility.
- Negotiation = finding mutually beneficial agreements through dialogue.
- Why this matters: Technical excellence without communication skill is like having a high-performance engine without fuel.

3 Why Language is a Core Engineering Skill

4 Persuasion in the Workplace

5 Persuasion Summary: 3 Persuasion Principles

6 Persuasion Elements Highlighted

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3Why Language is a Core Engineering Skill

4Persuasion in Daily Interactions

5Persuasion Strategies: C. Persuasion in Action

6Persuasion Elements Highlighted

Language Matters: Importance of Communication Skills for Engineers

Prepared by Sudesh Manger

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