

Communication Skills I

1º semestre (P1)

In-Class Activity

Topic: Non-Verbal Communication

Week 3 [24-27 September]

Prof. Cláudia Silva

In-Class Activity: Exploring Intonation in Communication

Objective:

To enhance students' non-verbal communication skills by practicing intonation while reading a text. The goal is to demonstrate how meaning is conveyed through tone, not just words. This is why the same text is used across all professions.

By the end of this, students will be able to:

1. **Develop Intonation Awareness:** Students will understand how different intonations can convey varied meanings and emotions beyond the literal text.
2. **Enhance Non-verbal Communication Skills:** Through the use of intonation, students will learn to communicate mood, character, and context without changing the words, improving their overall non-verbal communication abilities.
3. **Adapt Tone for Different Roles:** Students will practice adjusting their vocal tone to fit different professions/roles, gaining insight into how professionals use tone to communicate effectively in diverse situation

Instructions:

- **Form Groups:** 4 or 5 students.
- **Text Reading:** Students should read it quietly to familiarize themselves with the content.
 - **Text:** "On a sunny afternoon, the community gathered in the town square. People chatted animatedly while children ran and played. The clock tower struck six, marking the beginning of the long-awaited event."

Intonation Roles: Each group member should choose a profession/role and work on the respective intonation.

Voice Work Instructions: Each student should read the text aloud, focusing on how to embody their assigned role:

Tech CEO (e.g., Steve Jobs):

Tone: Use an engaging, visionary tone that conveys excitement about the future. Your voice should rise slightly when discussing innovations or new ideas to spark curiosity.

Pace: Maintain a steady but deliberate pace, pausing after key points to let the weight of your words sink in.

Body Language: Stand tall with a confident posture, make purposeful gestures to emphasize innovation, and maintain eye contact to draw in your audience.

Voice Dynamics: Use modulation to show enthusiasm—let your voice soften during personal reflections or challenges and become more powerful when discussing breakthroughs.

Television Journalist:

Tone: Adopt a clear, authoritative voice, ensuring you sound factual and trustworthy. Slightly lower your pitch to add seriousness and credibility.

Pace: Keep a consistent, steady pace, but slow down on important phrases to emphasize key information.

Engagement: Maintain eye contact with your imaginary audience and use slight pauses before big reveals or updates to build suspense.

Clarity: Pronounce words crisply, ensuring your audience can easily follow along, especially when delivering important or complex information.

Politician:

Tone: Use a measured, persuasive tone that reflects conviction. Vary your pitch to show both empathy and strength, emphasizing your ability to lead.

Pace: Incorporate strategic pauses to allow important messages to resonate. Slow down during key points to create impact.

Gestures: Use controlled, confident gestures to complement your speech—pointing, open-handed movements, or a raised hand during calls to action.

Voice Dynamics: Gradually build intensity in your voice, leading up to an emotional climax, to inspire and connect with your audience.

Pastor:

Tone: Embrace a calm, reflective tone, projecting warmth and reassurance. Let your voice rise gently in moments of joy or encouragement.

Pace: Speak slowly and deliberately, allowing your words to settle, so listeners have time to reflect on your message.

Pitch Variation: Use gentle pitch variation to express compassion, lowering your voice during solemn moments and raising it when offering hope or blessings.

Connection: Imagine you are speaking directly to each listener; allow pauses for thought and contemplation.

Teacher:

Tone: Use an informative, supportive tone, with clarity and encouragement. Speak with enthusiasm when explaining or highlighting important information to keep students engaged.

Pace: Speak at a moderate pace, but slow down during explanations or when introducing new concepts. Speed up slightly during more exciting parts.

Pitch and Volume: Vary your pitch to show enthusiasm, and emphasize key ideas by raising your voice slightly when explaining crucial points.

Motivational Speaker:

Tone: Adopt an energetic, passionate tone that conveys excitement and motivation. Your voice should rise and fall to express emotion and urgency.

Pace: Start at a moderate pace but gradually increase it when building up to a key point or climax. This creates a sense of momentum and excitement.

Voice Dynamics: Adjust your volume—speak louder when calling for action or inspiring confidence, and soften your voice when sharing personal or reflective moments to build intimacy.

Group Practice: Each group member will take turns reading the text in their assigned role. Experiment with different vocal qualities and expressiveness.

Group Discussion: After everyone has had a chance to read, engage in a discussion about the experience. Each member should share how adopting their specific intonation affected their delivery and the audience's potential response.

Wrap-Up: Class discussion on the importance of intonation in effective communication, exploring how it can influence the audience's perception and reception of the message. Students should consider how they can apply these skills in their future careers in computer science and beyond.

A good example of applying different intonations and the impact that they have can be seen in the following video (note: the video is in Portuguese):

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwFfDs1Q0gQ>
- Courtesy of Francisco Teixeira (CCEIC 1 student - Academic Year 2023/2024)