Words Transform World: Impact of Faculty Language Patterns and Communicative Style in Tertiary Education- A Study Conducted in Higher Education Institute in National Capital Region- India

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Abstract

Words hold the power to please, hurt, heal and persuade. And they hold special significance if they come from authority figures like parents and teachers. Our subconscious starts believing what we are told repeatedly. As teachers, do we offer indictments that crush or motivational words that inspire?

A faculty should be mindful while he/she speaks. Positive or negative language used by faculty can make or destroy the self-talk among students. In this research paper, an empirical research was conducted in one private university offering engineering and management programs in NCR region, India. Self-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 249 students. Questionnaire included questions on positive/negative language patterns used by faculty and whether these impacted their own attitude of learning and academic performance. Data collected was analysed using SPSS version 20. Results showed that positive language used by faculty impacts attitude of learning among students positively i.e. it enhances their attitude towards learning. Positive language used by faculty impacts academic performance of the students too; in terms of their grade point average. It is advised that faculty should be mindful of using language with students inside or out of the class.

Key words: language patterns, higher education, correlation analysis, positive language, Neuro Linguistic Programming

Introduction

Higher education institutes in India imparting engineering and management education have been showing tough situation in terms of market conditions. Some of them (specially non-funded private players) have closed down in the past because of poor quality and severe market situations. There can be many reasons which may be held responsible for this shut-down. However, one among them could be ignored faculty-student relationship. Any relationship thrives on good rapport and good rapport can only be achieved and maintained through right usage of words and continuity in communication. While we continue communication in a professional set-up, it has to be formal always despite the length or longevity of the relationship. Saying that faculty must be vigilant of his/her language would not suffice. Faculty should always keep de-stressing himself/herself so that he/she is fresh for the next day and all the words that he/she speaks maintain professional standard. Moreover, recent research has started focussing on positive language education [1] and they focus on 'positive education' and 'language education'. National Capital Region of India invites faculty and students from all

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parts of India who differ in ethnicity and cultural norms so something which could be positive in one culture could be negative in the other culture. Hence there is a need to understand cultural sensitivity as well while faculty communicates with students [2]. This needs communicative competence of high degree. Faculty should be able to decide when they need to be distant or emotive with the students; direct or indirect with the students; imposing or non-imposing with them and it must be ensured that there should be person-orientation (no sign of family's status or financial status) while faculty communicates.

Since it is perceived that with so many ifs and buts, it is very difficult to maintain positive language. However, it is of significant value. Looking at this issue, objective of this study was to study the impact of perception of students regarding language patterns of faculty on attitude of learning among students and their performance in terms of Grade Points/Marks.

Literature Review

Key words "language patterns" on research-related portals like research gate, academia.edu didn't give many encouraging results however keywords "positive language" produced a lot of results. Among those, ten papers relevant to this study were short-listed which had theoretical as well as empirical aspects of positive language. Aim of education is for capturing employment as well as acquiring life-skills [3]. Right life-skills can be transferred among students using positive language (verbal and non-verbal). Literature is evident [4, 5] that even implicit negative feedback impacts language development of students. Positive language and communication impacts behavioural management[6]. Words are powerful; they can do harm as well as good and in turn, they impact quality of interpersonal relationship [7]. Positive language leads to hedonic happiness [8]. In literature, there's paradigm shift in just focusing on language education to focusing on positive language education [9]. It is now called an element of 21st century skill. This can be achieved through awareness of self, self-disclosure and tolerance [9]. Traces of impact of positive language leading to positive well-being can be seen in several fields including medical field too[10].

Research Methodology and Data Collection

In order to meet the objective, data from 248 students (studying in engineering and management programs) from one private university in NCR, India was collected. It was based on non-probability judgement sampling. For this, self-structured questionnaire (Annexure 1) was administered. Students were asked to report the program they were studying in. Students' perception on language patterns of the concerned faculty (positive language/negative language) was asked. Students' perception on their own attitude of learning was gathered. Students were also asked to report their grade points (GP) in the particular subject. Collected data was analysed using SPSS version 20. Correlation analysis was applied to establish correlation between language pattern of faculty and students' attitude on learning and their academic performance.

Correlation analysis is a statistical evaluation that establishes the strength of a relationship between two or more variables. Here, three variables under consideration are language patterns of faculty, attitude of learning(student perception) and grade point in that particular subject that this faculty was teaching. Correlation coefficient demonstrates the strength of the relationship at a particular level of significance. Here the level of significance is .01 (2-tailed).

Results and Discussion

Out of 248 students, 150 students were from different programs of B.Tech. and 148 students were from different programs in management(BBA/MBA). Regarding students' perception on language patterns of faculty and their perception about attitude of learning and Grade Points, data collected was put through SPSS for correlation analysis, as mentioned above.

Table 1: Results of correlation analysis between language patterns of faculty and academic performance (Grade Points) of students; correlation analysis between language patterns of faculty and students' self-perception on attitude of learning

		Student Perception on Faculty's Language Pattern	Student's Self-Perception on Own Attitude of Learning	Grade Points
Student Perception on Faculty's Language Pattern	Pearson Correlation	1	.288**	-.415**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	248	248	248
Student's self-perception on own attitude of learning	Pearson Correlation	.288**	1	-.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	248	248	248
Grade Points	Pearson Correlation	-.415**	-.657**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	248	248	248

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).In Table 1, N which is 248 shows the number of respondents. Sig.(2-tailed).000 is the P value which is a measure of occurrence of any error if such a research is repeated on this population, which further confirms the robustness of this research. The diagonal values 1 are correlation coefficients of a variable with itself. The values.288, -.415 and -.657 are the correlation coefficients(strength of correlation) between two variables viz faculty's language pattern and students' own attitude of learning, faculty's language pattern and grade points of students, students' own attitude of learning and grade points of students respectively. These will be further explained in the following interpretation.

1. Table 1 shows that students' perception on Faculty Language Pattern was found to have **weak correlation [11]** with students' self-perception on own attitude of learning. The value of Pearson correlation coefficient was found to be.288. This means that when faculty's language pattern changes from Positive(1) to Neutral(2) to Negative(3); students' self-perception on attitude to learning changes from Outstanding(1) ….to…..Average(3) ….to Inadequate(5). In simple words, positive language of faculty makes students perceive their attitude of learning outstanding and good.

2. Students' perception on Faculty Language Pattern was found to have negative correlation with Grade Points of students in the subject that this faculty was teaching. Correlation coefficient for this relationship was found to be.415 which is termed as **moderate correlation [11]**. This means that positive language patterns of faculty led to higher Grade Points but Grade Points of students reduced when language patterns of faculty moved from positive to neutral to negative.

3. Students' self-perception on own attitude of learning was found to have negative correlation with Grade Points of students. Correlation coefficient was found to be.657 which shows a **strong correlation [11]** between students' attitude of learning and their grade points. This means that with 1-outstanding self- perception of students in terms of attitude of learning, Grade Points of students was highest but with this moving to 2/3(good/average), Grade Points get lower and this moving to 4/5(requires improvement/inadequate), Grade Points get lower further.

Conclusion

This primary research concludes that language patterns/communicative style of faculty impacts students' own attitude of learning to some extent. On the other hand, language patterns of faculty impact grade points of students(academic performance) to a moderate extent and students' own attitude of learning impacts grade points of students(academic performance) to a very high extent.

From the above discussion, it is further concluded that language and communicative style of a faculty holds significant importance. It is very important that faculty uses positive language in all conditions. Faculty will end up impacting students' attitude towards learning and actual academic performance of students. Suggestions would include conducting communication skills workshops for faculty. Faculty may also be put through courses on well-being. Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a tool that helps in correcting one's thought process and internal programming. Faculty and students can go through NLP trainings. It must be kept in mind that negative words can be forgiven but never forgotten. So, minds of faculty must be trained to think positively in all conditions. Hence it is very important to focus on positive language since this ultimately leads to well-being and good mental health; which in turn, leads to high motivation of students with increased perception of attitude of learning and actual increase in academic performance which can be seen through Grade Points of students.

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ANNEXURE:

Impact of Language Patterns of Faculty on Attitude of Learning and Academic Performance of Students

(Self-structured Questionnaire)

Subject (to be filled by the Researcher) _____

Dear Student

Please fill in the following information for the subject mentioned above. Please be assured of the confidentiality of the information. This information is being taken only for research purpose.

1. Which program are you studying in? Please mention with semester_____

2. In your perception for the subject mentioned above, the language patterns of faculty can be summed up as Positive(1)/Neutral(2)/Negative(3): _____

3. How do you perceive your own attitude of learning for the subject mentioned above
    Outstanding (1)/Good(2)/Average(3)/Requires Improvement(4)/Inadequate(5):
    _____

4. Please report your Grade Point(1-10) in the above subject
    _____