

Examine the nature of communication through a study of the impact of changing communication technologies.

Communication is the way in which individuals effectively pass messages to one another through a direct or indirect means. One form is technology; tools that assist in increasing effectivity of everyday life. The nature of communication is rapidly changing due to the advancements in technology. This has caused an increase in indirect communication as a decrease in face-to-face interactions.

The nature of communication is the way in which a person effectively conveys an intended message to others. This can be influenced by the sender and receiver's background, language, intended and inferred message, and barriers. Barriers prevent the sender's message from being conveyed the way it was intended to be, or can cause an incorrect interpretation. Examples of barriers include location, language, background noise, or technological interference. The complicated process of communication that can allow for skewed messages.

A significant increase in indirect communication has been shown to be the effect of the progression of technological based communication within the modern era. With the increase in use of mobile phones, laptops, and tablets, more individuals are able to communicate with one another on a global scale. This is mainly through indirect forms such as social media, for example Facebook, or messaging services such as Whatsapp or KakaoTalk. This creates globalisation of communication technologies as they are free and easy-to-use methods of sending messages, easily accessible options to many. Studies have also shown that members of the Masai Mara people in Africa use texting in order to share information about their environment and weather.

This mode of communication, however, can cause an impact of emotional and psychological stress. It leaves more to the imagination of the sender, such as the emotional response of the receiver. It also places heavy emphasis on the availability of each person, with the increase in anxiety over received messages and replies. It is also a concern with regards to anonymity as individuals become braver to make negative comments that they would not make face-to-face, whilst online and hidden behind the screen – a strong cause for the prevalent increase in cyber bullying. Due to the growth of interest in social media, cyber bullying had risen so much as 34% within the past six years. The emotional stress that indirect communication methods can come with are challenging the easy access and correct usage of services that technology provides.

With an increase in technologically based communication methods, many people face challenges when keeping in contact with others. Personal face-to-face interactions are decreasing rapidly, with a greater focus on the online self. With this comes a new language of net-speak. This includes abbreviations and terminologies, making it easier and faster to encode and decode messages. Examples of this can be seen in abbreviations 'LOL' (laugh out loud) and the use of emojis, pictures of faces or objects to convey emotions. With this, however, arises the issue of net-speak entering language which can affect the daily lives of the individuals who are socialised to use such language. With more children exposed to this language, literacy reading and writing rates have dropped by 12.2% in the past seven years since net-speak has begun to enter schoolwork.

Social exclusion and isolation is a prominent negative affect of the increased presence in the online world. By exceeding the recommended two hours of 'screen time' per day, children and teenagers associate less with others on a personal face-to-face basis, with a heavier reliance and value on messaging. This can ultimately lead to depression and other forms of mental health issues as a result of isolation from human contact. This also leads to an increase in health related issues such as obesity due to the sedentary entertainment. Programmers, however, are creating innovative ways to combat this by developing apps such as "Pokemon Go" which requires individuals to move around and walk in order to play the game. The decrease in face-to-face communication methods can cause the development of negative outcomes for technology users.

Not only is there a decrease in face-to-face interactions, but older forms of technology are becoming redundant and obsolete. An intergenerational survey has revealed that technological items such as fax machines, land line phones, and letter writing, are only used by the Silent Generation (1920's – 1945). From the baby boomers until millennials, an increase in mobile phones, tablets, and social media can be seen. This is in comparison to the typewriters which is almost, if not already, obsolete. This places pressure on developers to create the next technological item in order to keep the drive and focus around changing communication technologies, and profit from the interest and possibilities for new innovative devices.

Conclusively, the changing nature of communication is rapidly advancing towards a heavy reliance on technology. This is effective within the globalising nature of society, with quick and easy access to new information and ideas. However, it does provide risks developmental issues, and the constant need to update and continually advance the technologies, due to the desire for production and consumption.