

communication before the training programme and the quality of communication achieved by students after completing the course. Thus, the data seem to demonstrate that the relationship between the flow and the quality of communication requires the command of communication techniques.

4. Conclusions

This article has presented the first results of our research project on an innovative training programme for communicators, which incorporates psychological strategies for the control of communication apprehension.

The data we obtained show that the idea of having to communicate to an audience, either face-to-face or through a camera, evokes an extreme degree of apprehension in a quarter of the sample of students. The data also showed that one of every three students experiences a high level of anxiety in actual communication in front of a camera.

The training programme that we are proposing has been effective in improving students' confidence on their ability to connect with the public, in teaching them to face and overcome the manifestations of anxiety to get closer to achieve the optimal mental state to communicate better, so that the communicative task is no longer perceived as something threatening and becomes a source of satisfaction and enjoyment. Finally, the training programme has also been effective in improving the credibility of future communicators.

Our data have also proved that the psychological skills (self-efficacy and anxiety management) and the mental disposition prior and during the communication act (flow) are factors that determine its effectiveness.

Two results are noteworthy in this section: firstly, that the satisfaction and enjoyment of the activity, i.e. the fact that the communicative action is motivating in itself, is a necessary condition for the concentration, clarity of objectives and anxiety-control to result in a better acceptance from the audience.

Secondly, getting close to the optimal mental state (flow) improves the quality of the communication act only after the training programme has been completed, i.e. when the speaker has developed the necessary technical skills needed to prepare and present verbal, non-verbal and vocal content.

These results highlight the need for a comprehensive training that, without neglecting the technical training, addresses the emotional literacy of the communicator.

The discovery of the mirror neurons has made it possible to understand the neural mechanisms underlying the understanding of other people's intentions, the reflection of feelings and emotions, intentional consonance and empathy.

It has been demonstrated that both feeling a certain emotion and observing the same emotion being expressed by the facial mimicry of other person activate the same areas of the brain.

When we observe a facial expression and identify an affective state, that emotion is rebuilt in our brain and understood directly through a physical simulation that produces a shared physical state with the observed person. It is not a deliberate simulation in which we voluntarily take the place of another person to try to see things from his or her perspective and to recreate his or her mental states with our imagination. In physical simulation there is no inference or introspection, but an automatic, pre-reflexive and unconscious reproduction of another person's mental states, which are directly understood and shared at the neuronal level, through what has been called "non-mediated resonance" (Gallese, Migone, Eagle, 2009).

This mechanism explains why the mental state of the communicator is crucial to achieve the acceptance of the message from the public. A technically perfect presentation can be absolutely indifferent to an audience at an emotional level if the communicator is not fully involved with the message or is insecure. On the contrary, this resonant mechanism would explain why the audience perceives the message as more credible, natural, friendly and clear when it shares a positive experience with a communicator who is convinced that he has something important or interesting to say, that he can transmit it effectively, and, therefore, enjoys the communicative act.

People often associate the spontaneous reduction of communication apprehension to the passing of time. This indeed occurs in some cases, but not in many others. Many of people, including journalists, simply avoid speaking in front of an audience, a camera or a microphone, i.e. they fail to develop this important skill. Others have no choice, they have to do it and do so, but they accumulate high doses of anxiety and feelings of personal inefficiency which in the medium or long term can lead to the appearance of the burn-out syndrome.

Journalism has many challenges (Fernández-Areal, 2010) and journalists face precarious work situations and an increasing deterioration in their working conditions (Cantalapiedra, Coca and Bezunartea, 2000). These circumstances add even more pressure to the performance of a stressful profession, which makes it even more urgent to provide training to these communicators for their emotional self-management, which will improve the quality of their communication and their own health.

It is true that there are people who do not experience a significant level of communication apprehension and are great communicators without having received specific training. This same situation also occurs in other professions. For example, there are many successful business men and women who have not received university education. However, our work aims to identify new factors that contribute to the development of a greater communicative competency and to offer that training to students, so that everyone can discover their personal expressive abilities, connect better with the public and develop a more effective communicative style.

The Internet and the social networks can increase public communication and also its plurality, as long as people develop the skills necessary to speak in front of others and share their vision of the world. Communication is an activity that generates certain degree of social-evaluation

anxiety in a high share of the population. This factor is an obstacle that limits the number of people who get actively involved and enrich the public space that increases with the social networks. Thus, despite the possibilities offered by technology for the expansion and democratisation of communication, there can remain a vertical structure in which few people are leaders and determine the content and the majority are passive followers.

In the framework of the creation process of the European Higher Education Area, we present a training project directed not only at media professionals, but also at the creative and active users of the new digital environment. The aim is to provide them with the skills needed to interact satisfactorily in the expanded public space, thus increasing individuals' autonomy and the plurality of public communication.

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