

## **Unveiling the Veiled: Overcoming Psychographic and Social Barriers to Communication in Shakespeare's Seven Ages with Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory; Exploring Verbal and Nonverbal Challenges**

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### **Introduction**

Human connection depends on communication, yet there are many barriers to it, such as social and psychographic issues. Shakespeare's play "As You Like It" examines the seven ages of humankind and draws attention to the different barriers that can stand in the way of clear communication (William, 1906). People encounter a variety of verbal and nonverbal barriers that impede successful communication throughout their lives. These barriers might range from linguistic barriers to social and cultural roots, and they can impact communication from infancy to old age.

Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory is examined in the research to comprehend challenges and overcome them. It gives a framework for comprehending how social and psychological growth affect communication throughout life. Using Erikson's theory of human development, the research emphasises on how people from different psychographic and sociological backgrounds may interact effectively despite obstacles.

The difficulties and resolves of the characters in "As You Like It" are made clearer by Erikson's theory. It examines the complexities of human communication and how literature might address these problems. The chronological sequence of Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development is not exactly matched by Shakespeare's Seven Ages of Man, but it provides a deeper understanding of human communication.

Erikson's first stage, Trust vs. Mistrust, can be compared to the first stage of Shakespeare's Seven Ages of Man, Infancy. The person is growing to

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trust their surroundings in both situations. The fourth stage proposed by Erikson, Industry vs. Inferiority, can be compared to the second stage, Schoolboy. Both situations include the person picking up new abilities and growing in confidence.

Erikson's sixth stage, Intimacy vs. Isolation, can be compared to the third stage, Lover. The person wants to establish personal connections with others in both situations. Erikson's fifth stage, Identity vs. Role Confusion, can be compared to the fourth stage, Soldier. The person aims to build a feeling of self and purpose in both situations.

Erikson's eighth stage (integrity vs. despair) and the fifth stage (justice) can be compared. In both situations, the person is thinking back on their life and trying to make sense of what happened to them. Old Age, the sixth stage, and Gerativity vs. Stagnation, Erikson's ninth stage, are comparable. The goal in both situations is to make a meaningful contribution to society and leave a lasting impression.

Erikson's theory of psychological development omits the last stage, death, explicitly. On the other hand, it may be viewed as the conclusion of the earlier phases, during which the person looks back on their life and looks for significance and meaning in their experiences.

According to Erikson, a person goes through a "psychosocial crisis" at each stage, which can either positively or negatively impact their personality (McLeod, 2023). For instance, if a child's basic requirements are addressed throughout the first stage, trust vs. distrust, which lasts from birth to 18 months, they will begin to feel secure and trusted. If their needs aren't addressed, though, they could grow insecure and distrustful.

A child experiences sentiment of independence in the second stage, autonomy vs. guilt and uncertainty, which lasts from 18 months to 3 years. If these feelings are supported and nurtured, they can grow into a belief in their own talents. On the other hand, people could experience guilt and uncertainty if they get harsh criticism or punishment (Knight, 2017). For instance, if someone can establish deep, meaningful connections with people, they may be able to develop intimate relationships in the sixth stage, intimacy vs. isolation, which spans from young adulthood to middle

adulthood. They could feel alone and isolated, though, if they are unable to make these relationships.

The relevance of social dynamics and the continuation of psychosocial development beyond childhood are highlighted by Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Kivnick, 2014). It is a helpful tool for comprehending how people grow and how their interactions and experiences with others mold their personalities and ways of acting.

### **Communication Challenges in Each Stage:**

#### **Stage 1- Birthmark**

The majority of communication in the early stages is nonverbal and dependent on sensory inputs. Infants convey their wants and feelings to caregivers through crying, body language, and facial expressions. As they experience with language and communication, toddlers could also start babbling and making noises. At this period, a baby may smile or coo in response to a caretaker voice or touch, cry to indicate hunger or pain, or reach out to explore and grip objects in their surroundings as examples of communication (Jean et al, 2017).

Psychographic obstacles, such as shyness or aversion to strangers, can impede an infant's capacity to establish trust and connection with their caregiver, hence potentially impacting their communicative development. When a stranger tries to interact with an infant, for instance, who has a severe fear of strangers, the infant may react negatively or withdraw. This may put up a barrier to communication since the baby might not be sensitive to the new person's verbal or nonverbal cues, which could result in misunderstandings or a complete breakdown of communication. Furthermore, if the caregiver constantly conveys negative emotions through their facial expressions or tone of voice, the newborn may start to feel afraid or uncertain about them (Ainsworth et al, 2015).

As a result, throughout this stage, most communication is nonverbal and depends on building security and trust via interactions with caregivers. Anxiety, dread, and uncertainty are psychographic hurdles that might impede the growth of security and trust (Ainsworth, 1979).

Social barriers like neglect, irregular care, or lack of attention can hinder communication between infants and their caregivers. These barriers can

hinder their ability to form a secure bond, preventing them from expressing their wants and feelings. As language skills improve, they may also start expressing themselves verbally (Cassidy and Shaver, 2018).

Erikson's psychosocial development stages are crucial for reducing social and psychographic barriers in infant communication (Lewis, 2020). Caregivers should respond promptly to signs of communication, such as crying or facial expressions, to help overcome these barriers and promote better communication (Lewis, 2020). For the infant, this builds attachment and trust. Additionally, employed are positive, loving language including soft touch, eye contact, and calming tone. By means of supporting and motivating cooing and babbling, the baby can enhance their language skills and develop confidence in their voice. Effective infant communication depends on a knowledge of Erikson's phases overall.

It is better to include fresh vocabulary words into current habits and activities. This can improve the cognitive development of the infant and enable them to pick up more language. Create also a loving environment that supports good development. Along with attending to their basic needs—feeding, sleep, and safety—this might include allowing the infant chances for play and discovery. These actions will help babies overcome social and psychological obstacles and build better attachment, communication, and trust by their carers.

#### Stage 2 – World of discipline

This stage of development is marked by short utterances, a simple vocabulary, and a rising capacity to comprehend and carry out simple commands. Children still mostly rely on nonverbal clues like body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions to convey their wants and feelings, even if they can use words to express their desires and demonstrate their independence (Hoff, 2013).

At this age, a toddler may use gestures to express their demands, use simple words to explain what they want, or say "no" to a parent's request as examples of communication. Additionally, they might babble and have rudimentary conversations, showing that they are eager to interact with people and learn new things. Youngsters can communicate their needs and wants and begin to utilize more sophisticated language. Additionally, they

begin to comprehend fundamental social conventions and standards, such as switching roles throughout a conversation (Bloom, 1993).

Psychographic hurdles, however, such as low self-esteem or a lack of confidence, could make it more difficult for them to communicate successfully. Children who receive repeated criticism for their speech or language abilities, for instance, may have feelings of shame or uncertainty about their communication skills. As a result, they may become less forceful in their communication or refrain from communicating at all (Gargiulo and Bouck, 2018).

Language or cultural obstacles are examples of social barriers that may hinder communication at this point. For instance, a youngster who doesn't speak the same language as their friends could feel alone or excluded, which could hinder their capacity to grow up to be independent and confident in their communication (West and Turner, 2010).

Children at this age could start talking more to express their needs and wishes. They could start asking questions and using words to describe their surroundings. They might, however, also run against psychographic challenges such as anxiety or dread, which would hinder their clear communication. Children who are corrected for a mistake they made during a conversation, for example, could feel guilty or hesitant and hence withdraw or show resistance in next communication activities.

A child's capacity to communicate at this age could be limited by too cautious or controlling parents who deny their children the chance to investigate their surroundings and make independent judgements. Cultural variations could also cause communication problems. The child's freedom of expression may be limited, for instance, if they come from a society that prizes conformity and respect of authority figures.

Children can work to better communicate and forge deeper connections by attempting to comprehend and accept cultural differences as a means of overcoming these obstacles. Communicate honestly and openly with parents or other authority figures, voicing their wants and worries in a courteous manner (West and Turner, 2010). People should work on being more assertive in order to get over their fear of speaking out for themselves and improve their interpersonal communication. In order to

increase communication and lessen misconceptions, they must use active listening techniques to gain a deeper knowledge of people and their views.

Building rapport with peers and teachers is crucial for a child's development. This can be achieved through extracurricular activities, school volunteering, and healthy peer relationships. Encouraging communication skills through writing, debate, and public speaking can boost self-confidence. Creating a child's identity and morals is also important. Valuing uniqueness, allowing decision-making, and encouraging interests can help. Providing support and resources can help overcome communication obstacles, such as language or learning challenges. Caregivers can enhance school-age children's development, communication, and relationships by employing strategies to overcome psychographic and social barriers.

### Stage 3 – Teenagers: Icon of Romance

Pursue of romantic relationships and the pleasures and aches of love define the third age. Communication with a love partner involves expressing feelings and desires, actively listening to and answering their partner's communication. This stage of communication involves romantic expressions, compliments, and tenderness, as well as nonverbal cues like body language, eye contact, and physical touch.

But, during the lover stage, communication can also be difficult since people may find it difficult to communicate their emotions or to understand what their partner is saying. Misunderstandings and miscommunications can occur, especially when people have different expectations or communication styles.

Generally, the goal of the lover stage of communication is to build and maintain romantic relationships. At this stage, forthrightness, integrity, empathy, and understanding of nonverbal as well as verbal clues between the partners are necessary for efficient communication (William, 1996).

The lover can express emotions nonverbally by making facial gestures like smiles, blushes, or raised eyebrows. The lover can show attention and affection by continuing to make eye contact with their spouse. A loving embrace, a kiss, or a holding hand can all express feelings of intimacy and affection (Burgoon, Manusov, & Guerrero). To show interest in their

partner, a lover may lean in, stand near to them, or assume an easygoing, open posture. One can also employ nonverbal cues like pointing, waving, or gesturing in the direction of a partner with their hands.

Psychographic barriers encompass an individual's personal attitudes, values, beliefs, and opinions that influence their self-perception and their understanding of the world (Daniel, 1947). For example, low self-esteem, insecurity, or difficulty expressing emotions can all contribute to psychographic communication hurdles in a romantic relationship. These obstacles could make it difficult for them to express their emotions to their partner or have honest conversations. At this point, people must overcome psychographic hurdles by cultivating a good self-concept and a strong sense of self-worth in order to interact with others in their intimate relationships.

Social barriers that affect how people connect with one another can include cultural differences, social standards, and society expectations (Hickman, 1968). For instance, public displays of affection could be frowned upon or unacceptable in some cultures, which could hinder couples from being honest about their feelings. Additionally, how couples speak with one another may also be influenced by society norms surrounding gender roles and conduct. According to Erikson's third stage of development, people must interact in a polite and proper manner within their social context and be conscious of cultural and societal standards in order to overcome social barriers.

#### Stage 4 – Unwarranted Rebellion

At this point, nonverbal cues like strength, bravery, and discipline can be quite important in communicating signals. Soldiers are taught to project bodily cues that demand respect and authority from both their superiors and subordinates. During this phase, a confident tone of voice, direct eye contact, forceful handshakes, and a straight posture can all be examples of nonverbal communication. Moreover, by using nonverbal signals, soldiers could establish social hierarchies and maintain discipline inside their groups. They may gently nod or make motions to show respect to controlling leaders or to show antagonism against supposed dangers. All things considered, nonverbal communication during the Soldier stage can be a quite powerful tool for fostering and maintaining unity and authority within military formations.

In terms of communication, those in this level usually have the capacity to inspire and convince others towards a shared goal. They frequently hold leadership positions in their industries and utilize their communication abilities to uplift and encourage others (Effective Communication Skills, 2012). Successful business owners are a good example of effective communication at this stage since they utilize it to inspire their workforce to work toward a common objective. Comparably, successful communication in this stage can also be exemplified by political leaders who use their communication abilities to influence and improve society.

During this phase, people frequently have a greater interest in socializing with their peers and forming relationships with people outside of their immediate family. They might begin to build strong friendships and take part in activities that let them discover their passions and pick up new abilities (McLeod, 2023).

Using technology and social media to communicate with friends, working on group projects with peers, playing team sports or other group activities, playing imaginative games with friends, and using language and communication skills to create scenarios and narratives are a few examples (Berk, 2014). During this phase of development, social skills and a sense of belonging can be developed through communication, which will be crucial in later developmental stages.

At this point, people start to understand other people's viewpoints and express themselves through language more skillfully. Additionally, they might become more adept at social interactions and take part in more sophisticated conversations like peer negotiation and problem-solving (Berk, 2014).

At this point, communication growth can be hampered by psychographic and social hurdles like low self-esteem, fear of failing, and social anxiety. Others with poor self-esteem, for instance, can be reluctant to speak out or take part in group conversations, whilst others with social anxiety might find it difficult to strike up or keep up social relationships with peers (Berk, 2014).

People in this stage could grow more eager to share their views and opinions with others, and they might look for chances to express themselves in public or through artistic or literary endeavors. Additionally, they can feel more at ease assuming leadership roles and using more assertive language while speaking with others.

On the other hand, especially in novel or unfamiliar social settings, they could also struggle with social anxiety or feel uneasy about their capacity for successful communication. Additionally, they could find it difficult to communicate clearly in romantic relationships, especially when it comes to matters of intimacy and trust.

Let the soldier recognise their own prejudices and ideas that could be influencing their interaction with others, thereby helping them to overcome psychographic and social constraints in their age group and improve communication. Encourage careful listening to help the soldier to understand the points of view and experiences of others. First of all, troops have to concentrate on understanding several civilizations, enhancing their communication abilities, and developing empathy if they are to respect the emotions and ideas of others.

As well as to pick those strategies, encourage troops to grow in their public speaking, assertiveness, active listening, and conflict-resolving techniques. Provide resources, instruction, and access to support networks such mentoring or counselling courses to help people get over communication difficulties.

Soldiers who implement these techniques will be better communicators, build stronger bonds with others, and break through social and psychological barriers—all of which will increase their chances of success in both their personal and professional life.

#### Stage 5 – Wisdom

By means of rhetorical devices such metaphor, irony, and analogy, people may express complicated ideas and emotions in a more expressive and sophisticated manner as their language skills grow. They could also show proximity and connection by gestures or physical touch; they could also convey meaning and emotion by means of advanced nonverbal cues like body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions.

Personal attitudes, values, and ideas that shape communication and self-perception define psychographic boundaries. Among a few are emotional immaturity, lack of self-awareness, or trouble precisely expressing oneself. Young people who have strong interpersonal interactions, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and solid communication skills could be able to overcome these challenges. Their good communication of needs and goals serves to prevent conflict by means of avoidance.

Early adulthood psychographic communication challenges should be overcome by people improving self-awareness, understanding their own attitudes, values, and views, consulting others, considering their experiences, and growing empathy. Especially when their opinions differ from their own, they should also be receptive to hearing and comprehending those of others. Early adulthood's communication can be improved by means of developing assertiveness, active listening, and conflict resolution, thereby removing these obstacles.

Preference or miscommunication might result from social barriers including social level, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. People from many origins could have different expectations and ways of communication. Young people can go over these challenges by means of active listening, empathy, appreciation of cultural diversity, and acquisition of cultural competency. Another good strategy is trying to see things from several points of view.

#### Stage 6 – Lucky to be Alive

Usually, introspection and sharing information with others define the major means of communication. People often find themselves more reflective and meditating at this point. As a kind of communication, they can exchange stories, coach others, or pass on their knowledge to next generations (Anna, 2014).

By this age, communication might manifest itself in numerous ways. It might be guiding younger colleagues or family members, sharing life lessons and experiences with grandchildren, or having intelligent or philosophical debates with friends. Expressions of gratitude and appreciation for the people and experiences in one's life, as well as

reflections on one's legacy and the influence they have had on others, can also be included in communication.

Mentoring and teaching are two ways that people may try to impart their knowledge and experience to the next generation; both require good communication in order to guarantee that the information is understood.

During this phase of life, a lot of people could get engaged in social causes or community organizations, which can include interacting with a variety of people and groups. As people get older, they could prioritize preserving their current connections more, which may need good communication to keep those bonds solid and fulfilling.

At this point, cultural expectations surrounding retirement and ageing, health concerns, work-family balance challenges, and financial limitations are a few examples of psychographic and social barriers to communication. These obstacles may make it more difficult for a person to interact with people in their community or in close relationships.

Reduced mental flexibility, memory loss, and cognitive decline are examples of psychographic impediments to communication. These obstacles may impair a person's capacity to absorb and process information, remember specifics, and work on challenging problems. Psychographic obstacles may also be exacerbated by age-related changes in personality and attitude, such as an increase in stubbornness (National Institute on Aging, 2019).

Social isolation, a smaller number of social networks, and less opportunities for social connection can all be social barriers to communication in old age. These obstacles may cause someone to feel disconnected and alone, which can affect their capacity for interpersonal interaction and communication (Goll, et al., 2015).

People should pay attention to the speaker, pose questions, and paraphrase what has been said in order to get beyond these obstacles. This can ensure that the message being conveyed is thoroughly understood by them. Developing close bonds with friends, family, and neighbors can offer social and emotional assistance, which can aid in overcoming feelings of isolation and loneliness.

People should engage in fulfilling activities that give them a sense of purpose, including volunteering or taking up a hobby, as these can improve their self-esteem and lessen their feelings of anxiety and sadness. By strengthening speech and hearing capacities, the use of modern technological advances, such as speech-to-text software and hearing aids, can enhance communication. Through the development of increased self-awareness and receptivity to novel concepts, reflecting on one's own mindsets and opinions can aid in overcoming psychographic hurdles. A mental health professional or communication specialist can offer personalized guidance and support when dealing with challenging psychographic or social barriers.

#### Stage 7 – Physical Frailty and Incapacity

Due to physical impairments, such as trouble speaking or hearing, communication in advanced age may be confined to vocal exchanges. Body language and facial expressions, for example, may become increasingly important in expressing wants and emotions in nonverbal communication (Anna, 2014). Certain technological or adaptive gadgets, such communication apps or hearing aids, can help make communication easier in very old age.

During this phase, verbal communication may become more difficult as people struggle to remember names and events and to find the appropriate words. Confusion and frustration may result from their inability to comprehend or absorb complex information (Beata and Borkowska). Tone of voice, body language, and facial expressions are examples of nonverbal communication that can still be very essential in communication.

Emotions and psychological aspects may also have an impact on communication in very old age. Feelings of despair, loneliness, and isolation are common among older persons, and they can have an impact on their willingness and capacity for social interaction (Erin et al., 2017). Their physical and cognitive decline may also cause them to feel bereaved or grieve, which may worsen their communication. Social obstacles can result in feelings of loneliness and fewer opportunities for social connection. Examples of these barriers include ageism, social isolation, and a lack of social support (Anna, 2014). By viewing elderly people as

weak or inept, family members and caregivers may unknowingly contribute to social barriers. This can cause older folks to feel disempowered and lose their autonomy.

Despite these challenges, elderly persons at this stage of life should have honest and open communication. Apart from strengthening communal feeling, this can improve general quality of living. Basic methods such speaking slowly and clearly, using visual aids, and allowing enough time for responses help some of the communication difficulties related with advanced age.

Older people's communication problems could result from cognitive decline, memory loss, and loneliness as well as from other things. But with the assistance of a qualified carer or speech therapist, these difficulties could be overcome head-on, therefore enhancing communication long into old life.

Older people's particular needs and problems must be met by means of resources and support including assistive devices, memory aids, and cognitive training programmes. Encouragement of social involvement, ageism education, and respectful treatment of elders with autonomy and respect is also very important in order to avoid isolation and offer a feeling of purpose and connection.

### **Conclusion**

All things considered, this study using Erikson's theory of psychological development clarifies the social and psychographic barriers to communication in *Seven Ages of Shakespeare*. This study shows a vivid image of people and their circumstances underscored the difficulties in communicating at all seasons of life. Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development will help us to understand the nuances of human communication and how social and psychological elements shape it.

Analysing the critical discourse of every level helps one to realise that communication could be affected not only by the speaker's age and developmental level but also by some social and psychological elements. The research emphasises the significance of including these components in order to facilitate good communication. It also shows how people might be able to overcome communication barriers by acting with regard, empathy,

and a readiness to listen and change in mind. These lessons are especially pertinent in the diverse and globalised society of today, when effective cross-societal and psychographic division communication is more than ever vital. As we traverse a more complicated and interdependent world, these principles will assist us to develop stronger ties and bridges across cultural borders.

## ENDNOTES

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**Abstract**

Shakespeare's play "As You Like It" and its seven stages of human communication are examined in this essay using Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory. It draws attention to the difficulties people encounter navigating different phases of life, such as the limits they confront due to social, emotional, cognitive, and physical issues. Furthermore, examined in the study is how language and communication patterns alter as people go through different phases of life and how these modifications may impact effective communication. The results imply that Erikson's theory can be a helpful instrument for resolving communication issues in the context of literature and other situations, offering suggestions for enhancing relationships and communication across the lifespan.

**Keyword:** Verbal, nonverbal, psychographic, social, barriers, communication, psychosocial development.