

Communication in Computer Science

The message and the minority messenger

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The goal

To deliver a message
and to collect a fee.

The message (1/2)

- giving a research talk
- answering a question
- giving an elevator pitch

The message and the fee (1/2)

- giving a research talk
- answering a question
- giving an elevator pitch

The message and the fee (1/2)

- giving a research talk
and receiving the questions
- answering a question
- giving an elevator pitch

The message and the fee (1/2)

- giving a research talk
and receiving the questions
- answering a question
and seeing how your answer is received
- giving an elevator pitch

The message and the fee (1/2)

- giving a research talk
and receiving the questions
- answering a question
and seeing how your answer is received
- giving an elevator pitch
and expanding your scientific network

The message and the fee (2/2)

- PhD proposal
- PhD defense
- job interview

The message and the fee (2/2)

- PhD proposal
and seeing it accepted
- PhD defense
- job interview

The message and the fee (2/2)

- PhD proposal
and seeing it accepted
- PhD defense
and getting your PhD degree
- job interview

The message and the fee (2/2)

- PhD proposal
and seeing it accepted
- PhD defense
and getting your PhD degree
- job interview
and assessing whether you would like
to work there every day

A necessary mean for the goal

The messenger (i.e., you).

Main interference

The prejudices of the audience about

- the message (which could be unwelcome),
and/or
- the messenger.

This talk

- The messenger is from a minority.
- The audience is from the majority.

The prejudices

- They don't accept your expertise.
- Your appearance disagrees with them.

A punchline of the slides about giving a talk

You first must accept
that when you give a talk,
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that when you give a talk,
you **express who you are.**

It is then easier
to dare to **speak slowly and loudly.**

After accepting to show who you are

- You can concentrate on the message.
- You can help the audience to do the same.

Dress code

- professional
- on the strict side
- comfortable
- practical (e.g., with pockets)

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- Setting the microphone in public.
- Your accent.

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(Make supportive slides, and speak slower.)

Dealing with the prejudices

- You are being patronized
(e.g., by the session chair at the beginning).
- Your message is being undermined
(e.g., in the questions at the end).

Patronized at the beginning

You are introduced as a minority speaker,
often by someone who means well.

Countermeasures

- Just ignore.
 (“Thanks. This talk is about . . . ”),

Countermeasures

- Just ignore.
 (“Thanks. This talk is about ...”),

If it doesn't matter to you,
it shouldn't matter at all.

Undermined at the end

- A reference to your minority.
- Not a question: a correction (?!)
or even an admonishment (?!!).

Countermeasures

- See the slides about “That is the question”.
- Repeat the question
so that you can **regain control**.

Regaining control

“So that was your question?”

Regaining control

“So that was your question?”

“Yes.” [Finally!]

Regaining control

“So that was your question?”

“Yes.”

“Good.” [And then you move on.]

Body language

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- Then don't say "You are asking whether ...".
Keep saying "The question is whether ...",
or even: "So. **⟨brief pause⟩**

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Stay focused on the message.

Conclusion

- The message is more important than the messenger(s).
- Your goal is to deliver your message and then collect your fee.
- You will have many more such messages, so live another day (and many others) to deliver them, one after each other.