



Strathmore
UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION AND BACHELOR OF ARTS IN
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION
BAC 1201: Principles of Communication

DATE: 9th March

Time: 11:30 – 13:30

Instructions

1. This examination consists of **Four** questions.
2. Answer **Question ONE (COMPULSORY)** and any other **TWO**.

Question 1

(30 marks)

Read the article below and answer the questions that follow

Linguistics Explains Why Ending a Text With a Period Makes You Seem Like a Monster

By Cari Romm

Most people with two thumbs and a heart know that there is a right way to end a text, and there is a wrong way. Done typing all the letters you need to type? Cool, now hit send. Maybe add a question mark first if the situation calls for one, or ellipses if you want to spice things up. Just, for the love of God, do not type out a period, go-to punctuation mark of jerks everywhere.

If you must, do it with the knowledge that you're likely coming off as angry and insincere, a perception long held by most of your fellow texters and finally backed up by research earlier this year. The angry part seems somewhat intuitive — periods can convey finality in a short text message, "I'm done with this conversation" kind of way — but insincerity feels a little harder to grasp. If anything, it almost seems like the opposite: A period is deliberate in a way that the punctuation-less trail-off is not.

But in a recent post on the conversation, communications researcher Lauren Collister offered up one possibility: The period’s insincerity — which, according to the research thus far, is confined to texts — comes down to code-switching, or altering the way we talk depending on the situation. If you’re unfamiliar with the concept, consider how you speak to your boss versus your roommate versus your mom. It happens in writing, too — an email fired off to your best friend about weekend plans is likely going to look a lot different than one you send to follow up after a networking event.

More broadly, Collister noted, those two mediums — speaking and writing — have also had codes of their own, though the division has blurred somewhat in recent years. “Scholars originally investigated situational code-switching in spoken language because spoken language was used in both casual and formal settings,” she wrote, while writing had “a level of formality because it was associated with permanence in books and written documents. However, now that text messaging and social media have given their users an outlet for casual written language, differences between writing styles can be seen.”

A text that ends in a period, then, might just be a case of the wrong place at the wrong time: It rankles because it doesn’t fit the context. “It’s perceived as overly formal,” Collister argued, “just like using formal spoken language in a casual setting like a bar.” Both seem weird, off-putting, like you don’t really feel what you’re saying — which means, paradoxically, that you’re probably better off ending your text with an exclamation point, even if the enthusiasm isn’t really there.

Questions

- a. From the tone of writing, justify an argument on where such an article is likely to have been published. (3 marks)
- b. From this article and the research it has cited, describe a principle of communication violated when you put a period at the end of a text message sent by phone. (3 marks)
- c. Describe two circumstances where you would use code-switching in a short text message and in each case, justify the use of the code you have chosen. (6 marks)
- d. Explain three more differences between language used in texting or social media and formal writing that are not mentioned on this article. (6 marks)
- e. Explain briefly, six audience characteristics that would justify the use of the informal language described in this article. (12 marks)

Question 2**(15 marks)**

Read the statement below and answer the questions that follow.

Will you ship us sometime, any time during the month of October, or even November if you are rushed, for November will suit us just as well, infact a little bit better, 300 of the regular three and a half inch blue arm bands with white sewn letter in the middle.

- a. Explain the principle of communication violated by the writer. (3 marks)
- b. With the use of examples in each case, describe 3 ways in which the message could be made more effective. (6 marks)
- c. Rewrite the statement correctly. (6 marks)

Question 3**(15 marks)**

“People will forget what you said and did, but they will never forget how you made them feel.” *Maya Angelou.*

This statement implies that your communication is impotent if people do not connect with it at an emotional level. From what you have learnt in this course, describe three ‘Cs’ of communication and in each case, use valid illustrations to show how they contribute to an emotional connection between a communicator and an audience.

Question 4**(15 marks)**

Communication failure is a risk factor in most disasters, whether the event is caused by accident, intentional act or nature. The inability to share important information that is timely and accurate is a common denominator in many case studies we reviewed in group presentations made in this course.

Examine five real life case studies presented in class, and demonstrate in each case how mis-communication and non-communication led to serious undesired consequences.