



WAR OF THE WORDS

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

Man uses a number of ways to articulate his thoughts and emotions. Aside from using verbal language, he uses his facial expressions, actuations, body language, verbal and written codes, and other such devices to get his message across. Despite the fact that man has a significant number of ways to get across to other people, he has managed to become literally lost in translation, forever trapped by the often tower-of-Babel proportions of miscommunication and missed communication.

Relatively few of us are able to firmly and surely get our points across because of so many considerations and distractions to the manner by which we communicate. In fact many of us have, in most likelihood, been too bombarded with too much “ambient noise” to ever find communicating worth our time and effort. The clamor for freedom to say what is in the mind is easily overturned by the desire to listen to what is being said by others, or to shut them up and out altogether.

Time was when the male of the species was especially regarded as the more communicatively restrained, but that has perhaps changed much in these modern times of free press and free speech.

A mother often has to hold her own counsel, especially when she does not wish to bother her often-tired husband with the nuances of running a household and providing much-needed discipline to their children. The problem with this kind of approach is the fact that today’s children seem to have an entirely different design, being more exposed to various kinds of media and being more outwardly communicative as they are. Children nowadays tend to speak their minds, leaving little or no room for their elders to use the ways of old in bringing them to heel. I have yet to win an argument, not necessarily political but certainly approaching it, on the home front with my own kids. Ahh, the nuances of being a mother.

On the worldwide web, you see thousands of forums and blogs, inviting followers and readers to share their thoughts about a certain person or whatever trending topic there is for the day. Social networking sites have upped the ante on personal discussions, often serving as the fighting arena in which foes exchange verbal blows, razor-sharp criticisms and rotten eggs in the form of vicious, evil-looking emoticons. Technology, it seems, has served as a fertile breeding ground for bringing verbal tussles out in open social networking pages, notwithstanding the chronological age of the gladiators.

Yes, the world has been freer in allowing communication to prosper. There’s absolutely nothing that can be kept in the rigid confines of pure and simple silence any longer. Communication has ceased to have the mystery and wonder that it used to be endowed with.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What, to you, is the ideal setting for good conversation? Why?
2. What are the various forms of communication that you use in your daily life? What distinguishes one from the other?
3. Do you think people should bring their personal arguments/fights into social networking sites? Why or why not?
4. What are your goals for learning to communicate in English? Have your goals been correctly addressed by the studies you have had?
5. What would you do if freedom of expression and speech were taken away by government? How would you find ways to express yourself nonetheless?