



Olumuyiwa Akinrole Oludayo



OVERCOMING THE PAUCITY OF WORDS

muyiwaoludayo.com

The art of communication rides on the proper use of words. Many speakers and writers often time have a challenge conveying their deepest thoughts because of the paucity of words to express the meaning of their ideas.

"One of the hardest things in life is having words in your heart that you can't utter."- James Earl Jones

Many great writers today have confronted and conquered this seeming scarcity of the right words to become wordsmiths in the literary world.

"Colors fade, temples crumble, empires fall, but wise words endure." - Edward Thorndike

In a quest to engage an audience productively, speakers and writers require a reasonable amount of words that defines their intentions, convey their desires and expresses their expectations in the message been shared. The inability of the communicator to use sufficient quantity of words to pass a meaning across to an audience can be the difference between a response to act on his message and an immediate applause for the cause for which the speaker has advanced.



IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT WORDS

It is not enough to also possess a rich depth of words that you can draw from to convey your message, it is also important that these words are appropriate for the message you desire to convey. Whenever one uses a word that is inappropriate to convey a message, one risks confusing the audience and getting to the point where intended meaning is different from perceived meaning.

Kind words do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much.- Blaise Pascal

The words written or spoken to other people always leave them with an impression. Our words create experiences that people store in their memory. The words we choose in our interactions and conversations can build relationships or mar them depending on the value and virtue in those words. It therefore becomes very important to be equipped in expressing oneself with right set of words. Prime attention is to be given to ones choice of words and the manner in which they are transmitted to other people.

Right words are important for the following reasons:

- **The Effect of Connotation.** When we speak or write, we want to be sure that our intended meaning is perceived as such. Words can belittle, justify, compliment and change people and situations in more than one way. One has to be wary of words that carry ideas of other meanings in addition to the original meanings.

"Be mindful when it comes to your words. A string of some that don't mean much to you, may stick with someone else for a lifetime." - Rachel Wolchin



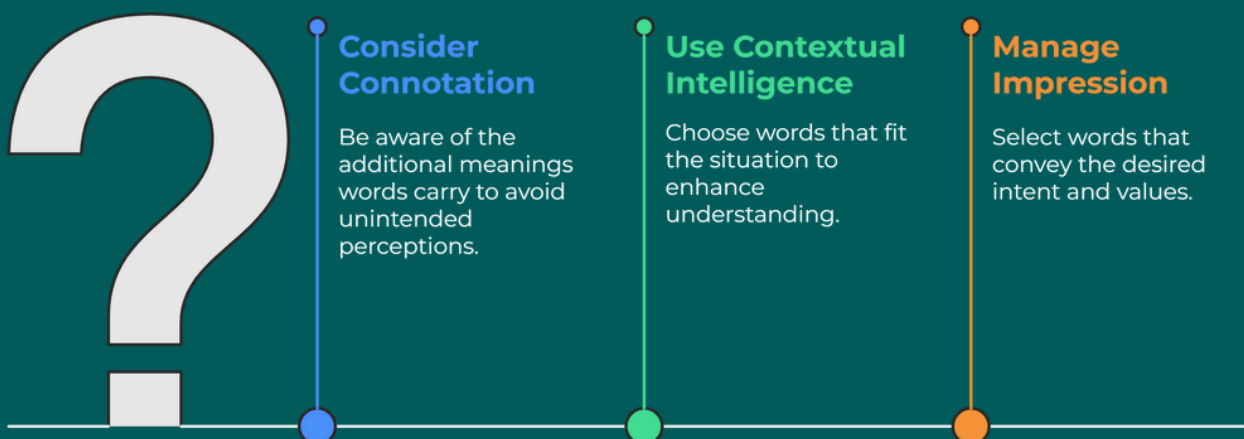
- **The Need for Contextual Intelligence:** Our words can encourage, persuade, inform, and do much more. However in its expression we must consider the context before choosing which word carries the most appropriate meaning. We choose words depending on the circumstances surrounding the conveyor per time. Contextualizing words also helps in deepening understanding of the recipients of the message. Effective communicators must possess that ability to engage their knowledge of the context in choosing the appropriate words.

"Handle them carefully, for words have more power than atom bombs." - Pearl Strachan Hurd

- **The Force of Impression:** Words are bearers of intent and purpose at all times. It becomes important for the user of words to give attention to the feelings and ideas that those words transmit to others. When words are received, without much conscious assessment of what is said, impressions are formed about the speaker or author and the values s/he bears. The way people react to a message defines what impressions the words they heard have had on them.

"Words have no power to impress the mind without the exquisite horror of their reality." - Edgar Allan Poe

How to choose the right words for effective communication?



6 WAYS TO OVERCOME THE PAUCITY OF WORDS

In this post, I have identified 6 ways to overcoming the paucity of words in expressing your intention to others. These 6 ways are not an exhaustive list of how to improve your reservoir of words rather they are vital keys that can be used to boost your usage of words whether in writing or speaking to an audience.

- **USE OTHER PEOPLES WORDS:** Those who are observant and attentive will be able to pick words from conversations and interactions. One way to overcome the poverty of words is to use words spoken by other people in your own speeches or writings. In doing this, you leverage on their quality to enhance your communication. When using other peoples words, you must ensure to cite them as the authority. As often as you do this, you will begin to stimulate your mind to say or write words fluently and with greater proficiency.
- **CREATE YOUR OWN WORDS:** Orison Marden in his book "[Hints for Young Writers](#)" said of Rudyard Kipling, "When Kipling does not find a word just suited to his meaning, he invents one, usually so expressive that it becomes a permanent addition to our language." I have come to accept that the lack of something always leads to creation of what is needed. Necessity they say is the mother of invention. The invention of words is based on the need to deepen the expression of intent. Words are by no means sufficient to express intention. However, without them, understanding of a message is grossly underrepresented.
- **BORROW WORDS FROM OTHER CONTEXTS:** There are words that belong to other professions, vocations and contexts besides yours but have the capacity to drive home your point to your audience. It does make sense to leverage on these words to convey your message to your audience particularly if they have prior knowledge and understanding of the borrowed words. For example, the word "dissect" may have originally been used in biology or anatomy but a statistician can now use it to mean "analyse".



- **EXPLORE SIMILAR WORDS:** Whenever a speaker or writer is short of appropriate words to use, he may consider other words or phrases that have similar meanings to what he intends to express. A typical example of this is "request" being a synonym for "inquire". Another way is to look at other languages and attempt a transliteration of similar meanings to the one you seek to communicate.
- **REVERSE WORDS:** Inspiration for a right word can be derived when we seek a word opposite in meaning to the one you intended to use. Rather than use the word "hot" to express enthusiasm of an individual, you can say "I received a cold welcome from ...". Language is complex and thus this may be a simple way to let the receivers of your message interpret the words used by themselves without losing the essence of your meaning.
- **PLAY WORD GAMES:** I have learnt more words since I began to play games like WordaLot from Mag Interactive. Word games help you to improve your vocabulary and the volume of words you know. These games can be very addictive but once you get a grip of the games, you will notice improvements.



How to Overcome Paucity of Words

Explore Similar Words

Find synonyms or transliterations to express intended meanings.

Borrow from Other Contexts

Use words from different fields to add depth and clarity.

Create New Words

Invent words to express unique meanings and expand language.

Use Other's Words

Leverage existing words by citing sources to enhance communication quality.

Reverse Words

Use antonyms to encourage interpretation and maintain essence.

Play Word Games

Improve vocabulary and word knowledge through games.



Final Word

Words can be sourced largely from reading, listening, observing other peoples word usage, interacting with others and engaging in conversations with others among many diverse sources. Those who read always find a word to lean on when in need. Reading biographies have proven to help people develop a rich vocabulary of overcoming incredible odds in life.





Profile for Dr. Olumuyiwa Akinrole Oludayo

Dr. Olumuyiwa Akinrole Oludayo is a transformative leader and consultant with a distinguished career across higher education, human resource management, and organisational development. His professional journey reflects an enduring commitment to influencing impactful change and advancing practices that drive growth and excellence at both individual and organisational levels.

With a strong foundation in academia, Dr. Oludayo has contributed extensively to higher education as a Member of Faculty for Human Resource Management, guiding the next generation of professionals and leaders. His roles as Dean of Students, Registrar, and Director of the African Leadership Development Centre have enabled him to influence institutional leadership and capacity-building across Africa, crafting learning environments that are centred on holistic development and resilience.

As a Research Fellow with the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria, Dr. Oludayo has made notable contributions to HR practice in Nigeria. His publications and development of frameworks have significantly shaped best practices within the industry, equipping HR professionals with contextually relevant strategies that address both contemporary and emerging challenges.

Organisations that engage Dr. Oludayo's consulting expertise benefit from a wealth of experience and a bespoke approach to people management. Through his work, he has supported a diverse range of organisations in optimising their talent strategies, enhancing leadership capacity, and creating resilient teams. His consulting work is marked by a commitment to solutions that are analytically robust and deeply aligned with an organisation's unique culture and objectives.

By partnering with Dr. Oludayo, organisations gain access to innovative approaches to talent development and organisational effectiveness. His strategic guidance encourages a culture of resilience, adaptability, and continuous improvement. His proven ability to integrate strategic insight with a people-centred approach makes him an invaluable asset for organisations striving for sustainable growth and a competitive edge.

In bridging the realms of academia, research, and practical consulting, Dr. Oludayo offers a holistic perspective that is both visionary and results-driven. His contributions go beyond enhancing performance; they cultivate lasting organisational value, enabling businesses to thrive through a stronger, more cohesive approach to human capital management.

This document and all content contained is the intellectual property of Dr. Olumuyiwa Oludayo

THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. The insights and strategies presented are designed to add value to your professional journey and organisational development. While thoroughly researched and thoughtfully crafted, this document does not constitute formal advice in legal, financial, or human resource matters. © muiyiwaoludayo 2025. All rights reserved.