

## Development of Communication Skills & Elements of Mass Media in Ancient World

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### Abstract

*Communication is the most powerful tool that helped human development to its present stage. Communication has also its own history of development. The various languages and their symbols underwent various stages of development like Petroglyphs, Pictograms, Ideograms, logograms, symbols, and letters. But the story is more interesting when analyzed from the perspective of the human race for survival and inventing new things for better livelihood. In this paper, a deep mythological presentation based on archeological evidence has been produced to give a complete systematic development of communication symbols around the world. It tries to give a clear idea about human communication development to its present stage.*

**Keywords:** Petroglyphs, Pictograms, Ideograms, Logograms, Symbols and Letters.

### Introduction

The human being's present existence and all its surroundings are a result of continuous transformation and development in its thought process, behavior, skills, methods, and technology. The credit goes to human beings' capability and adaptability to the ever-changing environment, challenges for survival, changing needs, and desire to be supreme. All this became possible with the help of communication that started with the existence of human beings in ancient times and signs of that communication not only exist in the present time but also valuable resources of knowledge, information, techniques, and literature.

As we are quite familiar with the word communication and its types as i) Intrapersonal Communication, ii) Interpersonal Communication, iii) Group Communication, iv) Organizational Communication, v) Cross-Cultural Communication and vi) Mass Communication.

All these types of communication came into existence with the human survival race and fulfill their socio-economical needs. The race begins with the origin of the human being as an ape-like creature in the early Stone Age to the Bronze, Iron Age, and Modern Ages. Various types of archeological evidence present the systematic development of human communication symbols from the early cave paintings, stone tools, agricultural innovations, trades, traditions, coins, etc. The study of all these symbols will help in understanding the existence of these

communication symbols in the present time and the origin of languages in their present form.

### Presentation of the Content

#### The Stone Age

In ancient times, all these types of communication started emerging with the development of human beings from their ancestors, Ape like creatures, who lived on trees and were frightened by every precipitate incident. When the first thought of survival on land came to the human being from that stage communication's first form-Intrapersonal communication started. Although the larynx box or the voice box was not started working properly as humans of that time could only produce gurgling and grunting sounds for communication. Different types of body posture, eye movement, pick-n-throw of objects, and fights for survival became common to convey a message from one to another and that became the first presence of interpersonal communication form. Human beings' thought processes and behavioral changes in Intrapersonal communication provided the earlier platform for Human Development and this first type of communication was very eminent as every human had the same thought, the thought of survival, around the globe. The earlier ape-man, when started to spend most of their time on land, encountered life-threatening and hazardous situations not only from the environment but also from the other creatures of that time. Human beings transformed the adaptation capability of pick-n-through objects and helped their survival on deadly earth. Developed thumb in the human hand, allowed it

to throw rock-like things for defending itself from deadly creatures and also helped in hunting. The developed hand helped him to make tools from rocks when he found that a sharp cut formed on the body of his hunt or injured himself with the sharp edges of the rocks. The stone tools that are found in different places in the world are a solid medium of research and study about the development phases of human beings, their thought process, and the enhancement of skills through communication.



Another achievement of the survival race was the innovative method of burning fire by rubbing two stones. That invention might come into existence out of an accident or with the normal thought process of the human being but its process "How to make fire with stone rubbing" got communicated through all groups spreading across the vast region, was a solid example of group communication in the ancient world. For their safety from deadly animals and arranging foods for children and elders, early humans started living in a group and started planning different tactics and methods for doing a good hunt. Sound and effective methods were developed through group communication for hunting a big animal like a mammoth which was a good source of food for a big group, skin as a supplement of warm cloth, and bones as effective tools. The human of that time sheltered in caves and his experiences of hunting were recorded by him on the walls and ceilings of caves in the form of paintings. The cave paintings are also known as parietal art and are mainly of prehistoric origin, beginning around 40,000 years ago in Eurasia. At that time, the cave paintings were not very

descriptive but a good source of communication from the past to the modern man. The painting color used by human ancestors was of fine quality that after ages these paintings are in good condition and later on the creativity of ancient humans flourished as a different type of Modern Art Painting styles.



Human beings' utmost desire to know the world took them out of the caves and tried to take shelter in open areas from where they could see through a wide area. With the help of wooden sticks and animal skin, cave-like shelters came into existence. The special type of symbols came into existence to represent the heavenly things and a special type of holistic performance came into the scenario to know about whether it would be a successful hunt or not. These types of symbols and holistic performances were been conducted by the senior member or by the group leader. All this was done at a secret place or inside inaccessible chambers of caves that other group members were not allowed to visit. Although according to some theories these cave paintings may be a form of communication. These types of sacred and holistic performances were secretly communicated from one ancestor to another. If a group leader or holistic performer's death occurred during a hunt then the next group leader was elected either by some special holistic performance or through combat. The divine communication always remained supreme for ancient humans for their day-to-day life decisions. A dramatic representation of the life-threatening incidents encountered during the hunt among the people of the group created a platform for folk media and perhaps it was the first sign of the emergence of traditional media. Firstly, spiritual songs were prepared to praise the Lord for

providing a better hunt and later people also started folk dance to enjoy the routine life. Although songs of that time didn't have proper wordings and were merely loud sounds to show their cheer. With the expansion of families and interaction with nearby groups, these open areas took the shape of an organization or society where the work processes were assigned to everyone as per their ability and capability. The old aged and ladies unable to go for hunt would rest at home and took care of the children along with other works like arranging fruits, nuts and roots, making new tools, sharpening tools, sewing new clothes with bone sew, making garlands with bones, etc. Leftover bones of the hunt after supper attracted wild animals, among these one animal 'dog' started wandering nearby humans. With few attempts of interaction, the dog became the first domestic animal that started helping during the hunt. Dog and horse might be the first two animals that helped ancient humans during the hunt as depicted in cave paintings.

At that time humans wandered from one place to another in search of animals still unaware of cultivation. After a group supper, left behind seeds of nuts and fruits when got sprouted and take the form of plants waked human's curiosity about cultivation. Humans had designed better tools with metal and started cultivation on riverside fertile land where they can easily irrigate crops. Sharp metal weapons were being also cast and these weapons increased the rate of a successful hunt by a great margin. Although cultivation was started at only far ends but got spread throughout the world through cultural communication. Domestic animals in the form of dogs, reindeer, and horses can be easily found near human society. Agriculture in terms of cultivation and domestication was started in 9000-6000 BCE. Houses in form of huts with covered roofs started to appear in the scenario and humans also developed different techniques to adjust the internal temperature to ever-changing weather. Humans also developed skills in pottery, sculpturing, cutting, casting, and molding. The pottery was immensely designed and painted and become a symbol of human creative art and it can be easily seen at the ancient civilization sites.

After the domestication of cattle and the start of the cultivation of crops in 9000–6000 BCE, both livestock and plant products were used as money.



Cultural communication came into existence during attacks of a superior group on an inferior one. When attacks had taken in the form of mass destruction, the inferior group started interacting with other known tribes to safeguard its property and people. Human race survival took humans to the far ends of the world for finding better living conditions. That human survival race not always resulted in attacks and destruction but created more efficient biological meetings among tribes to emerge new species through cross-cultural communication. With the ability to grow grains, cast weapons, potter daily usable vessels, design metal ornaments, breed good quality domestic animals, etc. human was not only in a state of sufficiency but also in a position to share their goods with others. Trade information in the form of horse rider messenger was communicated to nearby tribes from the more developed towns. The people gather at the specified place and exchange goods with each other and known as barter. Plant products and livestock were considered a good symbol of wealth or money.

Further Developments in cave paintings can be seen as a form of rock art which is known as Petroglyphs. In petroglyphs, images on the rock surface were created by engraving, digging, outlining (statuette), or eroding. Petroglyphs are also associated with prehistoric humans and petroglyph's earliest existence might be as old as 40,000 years. In Australia, discovered petroglyphs are dating back around 27,000 years. Many petroglyphs, such as Kamyana Mohyla, are estimated to date back about 10,000 to 12,000 years ago and that was the period belonging to Neolithic and Upper Paleolithic humans. New writing forms, Pictograms, and Ideograms as successors of petroglyphs, start appearing around



7000 to 9000 years ago. But petroglyphs still remained a common form of writing among some cultures for a longer period and remained undisturbed in context with the western culture of the 19th and 20th centuries.

When we analyze the use and importance of these petroglyphs we find that these were the solid medium of communication used to depict geographical maps and features of that area depicting landforms, local terrain in the form of rivers, travelers' time, and distance communication symbols, trails of herds, etc. Astronomical markers are also found on these petroglyphs which may be taken as signs for fixing pathways by travelers or communication symbols for divine messages and remained significant for their ancestors.

Petroglyphs found in Scandinavia are of Nordic Bronze Age and try to depict the territorial boundary between tribes along with things that connect these to religious performances although these were not clearly understood.

The art of carving and graving rocks for making petroglyphs resulted in the emergence of stone sculpture-making art with the help of metal tools. Archeological findings revealed different early civilizations enriched with the art of stone sculpturing which communicate about the lifestyle, animals, gods, and rituals of that time.



These symbols and methods of holistic performance were unique for each group and later on, these symbols became the identity of that group. And these symbols are known as pictograms (A pictogram (pictograph) is a symbol representing a concept, object, activity, place, or event by illustration.) which are the graphical symbols used to represent natural objects or

special symbols designed for communication. For example, a circle symbol could be used to represent 'sun' and a star symbol taken as a representation of 'heaven'. Even each group was also different from the other in terms of the way of making sounds and signals for performing various activities along with the way of covering their body parts, painting their body with colored mud, and making tools from rocks and bones. All these patterns of dissimilarity from group to group roused up the culture of that group and a unique pictogram was used to represent the presence or boundary of that group. This type of representation of a specified group in a particular area through pictograms later on which still exists in the form of clan symbols like Suryavanshi, Chandravanshi, etc., and in the form of national symbols, national flags, etc. The presence of these pictograms automatically communicates the demarcation of boundaries or the representative of a particular area. The sequential representation of pictograms in form of illustrations is used to describe the event or as a fine way of storytelling. For example, wall paintings on the Egyptian pyramid are a dramatic representation of incidents in the life of the people and king. In today's time, pictograms are used to convey a particular message or rule. For example, symbols on the roadside banners or hoardings depict the various traffic rules to be followed while driving or crossing across the road.

Over time, pictograms new form of ideograms evolved to give meaning to pictograms or it became a way of communicating the message with the help of pictures. The ideograms convey the more abstract concept, for example, the ideograms presentation of two sticks not only depicts "two legs" but also conveys the verb "to walk". So ideograms are basically used to represent the idea behind it and different groups developed similar types of ideograms and become universal ideograms because of the theme or idea behind their representation. Pictograms and ideograms were the symbols of the writing system that emerged in the early Neolithic period known as proto-writing and used to convey messages but it can't be considered a natural language. Tortoise shells excavated at Jiahu are found to date around the 7th Millennium BC with a carbon dating system. Although most archeologists declined the claim of tortoise shells have symbols of proto-

writing as these were considered only geometric designs.



Examples of the Jiahu symbols are markings found on tortoise shells, dated around 6000 BC. Most of the signs were separately inscribed on different shells.

In the current scenario, the most peculiar representation of ideograms is in form of logograms which are taken as standardization of the business arena/era. Every company or business has its own unique logogram which represents the company's identity worldwide. For example, four circles in a row marginally cutting the next one represent the world-famous car company "Audi". The basic difference between a pictogram and an ideogram is its message's universal acceptance. A pictogram message or meaning may vary from one place to another whereas an ideogram has a unique meaning universally. For example, traffic rules pictograms may have different meanings and representations in different countries whereas an ideogram of a cigarette picture crossed with red lines depicts the prohibition of smoking universally.



The invention of writing skills played a crucial role in every field and crucial phase of communication as mass communication also started with it. From its long age travel, Pictograms and ideograms patterning art placed a solid platform for the development of language symbols and later on

emerged with alphabetic systems. Initially, a sequence of pictograms in a symbolic form was used to convey the messages to mass. Writing of pictograms was not very popular among common people instead very creative, specialized, and intelligent people create and design these for civil use. Ancient civilizations like Sumerian, Egyptian, and Chinese enriched these types of pictographic symbols and developed them into logographic writing symbols. Alphabets emerged as pronunciation guides for logograms, to write grammatical inflections, and, later, to transcribe loan words and foreign names.

### The Bronze Age

Different writing styles or forms emerged in different civilizations of the world during the Bronze Age. The cuneiform writing that was developed by the Sumerian civilization was mainly used to represent the stock of commodities on clay tokens. By the end of the 4th millennium BC, Round shaped stylus imprinted into soft clay at different angles were used as a method of keeping accounts as these angles depict certain numbers. With the passage of time, Shape, pattern, and use of the stylus also gone a dramatic change as the round stylus was replaced by a sharp one which have pictographic writing to indicate what is being counted, and the sharp stylus was replaced by a wedge stylus from where the term cuneiform evolved. Wedge stylus initially had logograms but soon used to have phonetic elements by the 29th century BC.

About the 26th century BC, the Sumerian language's syllables began to represent cuneiform and were soon used for a general-purpose writing system. Logograms, syllables, and numbers were represented on cuneiforms. At the same time, Sumerian's writing script on cuneiforms was adapted by Akkadians and from Akkadians to other civilizations like Hurrian and Hittite. Ugaritic and Old Persian also had the similar appearance of scripts in their writing system.

Some other writing systems also developed independently around the world as Egyptian hieroglyph script, Mesoamerica's Olmec script, China's logographs script, etc. The Chinese script is believed to be developed around 1600 BC independently of Middle Eastern scripts. The Semitic language that was used by the Phoenicia civilization is considered to have the first true alphabetic writing system consisting of 22 letters

and is known as Phoenician alphabets. The Phoenician alphabet originated from Egyptian hieroglyphs and was one of the most widely written systems. It is believed that the merchants of Phoenicia spread it across the Mediterranean world and from there adopted it by other cultures. The Greek Alphabets, Paleo-Hebrew Alphabet, Aramaic Alphabet, Arabic Script, etc. were closely related to each other and derived from the Phoenician system. The main notable thing was the writing pattern that Phoenicians was usually written from right to left. Some text was used written from right to left and then left to right in alternate lines, boustrophedon pattern.

in ancient north-western India which is now in Pakistan. After the continuous study, we are in the state of dilemma whether it should be treated as a Proto-writing or logographic-syllabic type like other Bronze Age writing systems.



- Limestone Kish tablet from Sumer with pictographic writing; may be the earliest known writing, 3500 BC. Ashmolean Museum
- Middle Babylonian legal tablet from Alalah in its envelope

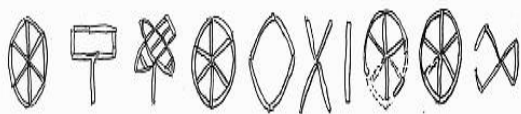


- Cippus Perusinus, Etruscan writing near Perugia, Italy, the precursor of the Latin alphabet
- Early Greek alphabet on pottery in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens

**The Middle Bronze Age**

The reserve or stock of goods was taken as a symbol of the wealth and prosperity of that region. A great need aroused to keep track of commodity stock to convey trade information. As it was always not suitable to trade in term of barter, some other common mean was required to establish long-distance trading. Trading of goods in terms of specified weight of metal provided a platform for use of metal as currency.

Over time, the metal currency became the symbol of good trade as it simplified the process of sell and purchasing although initially, these had logograms in the shape of animal images and later faces of the ruling king. Writing the name of the king on currency appeared in the scenario after the invention of alphabets Casting symbols, shapes, and writing names on the phases of currency become common and considered as proof of the identity of the region. Currency played a wide role in communication among these towns and societies as the presence of one's currency in a far existing civilization was a solid proof of trade relations and cross-cultural communication. Messages on the street walls, on the pillars, on the piece of cloth, and on the leaves of the tree were recorded for communicating the ruler's message. These messages were in the form of either special symbols or in the regional language of that area.



**The sequence of ten Indus signs discovered near the northern gate of the Indus site Dholavira**

Around 3000 BC, during the period of the Middle Bronze Age, another form of writing known as Indus Script was discovered from Harappan sites





1. Spade money from the Zhou Dynasty, c. 650–400 BCE
2. Greek drachm of Aegina. Obverse: Land turtle / Reverse: AII(INA) and dolphin. The oldest turtle coin dates 700 BCE; this coin: after 404 BCE
3. A 640 BCE one-third stater coin from Lydia, shown larger

### Conclusion

The above facts convey strongly that the trading opportunities and imperialistic ideology of rulers lead the way towards the language development phenomena. The regional and language symbols carved and painted over trading goods easily mixed up with distant regional language, so it became common that words and symbols of one language can be easily found out as it is or with slight modification with the impact of pronunciation in another language. When we read about the Development of Language then Bharopian Bhasha Parivar contains words from Roman, Greek, Latin, British, Arbi, Farsi, Urdu, Afghani, Pakhtooni and so many other languages, that happened because of mass communication in the form of trading and survival migrations.

This cross-cultural communication helped humans to be more civilized and more efficient in terms of Art & Craft, Science & Technology, Politics & Administration, Health & Education, etc. The improvisation in pronunciation of the alphabetical system and bounding the pronunciation and writing skills within certain grammatical rules helped the so-called intelligent people to present their media creations in terms of poetry, songs, ragas, etc. These mediums of entertainment provided the platform for theatre. Presentation of historical or mythological events in terms of songs or ragas appealed to the dancers to create the scene and present the theme with different body postures and facial expressions. This type of performance can be easily seen in today's time as local traditional song and dance arts. Writing skills

improvised with the utmost desire of kings to record themselves as legendary kings of legendary kingdoms with divine powers helped writers and authors to flourish and create some remarkable things for the benefit of society.

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