

# Analyzing the Influence of Social Media Engagement on English Language in Professional Communication Among Indian Professionals with Diverse Work Experience: An Interpretive Structural Modeling Analysis

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

Received: 16 Dec 2024

Revised: 02 Feb 2025

Accepted: 20 Feb 2025

Social media platforms have shifted the communication paradigm by making it tougher to set apart personal and professional conversations. With an emphasis on professionals based in India with varied job experiences, this study explores how social media usage in professional communication affects one's fluency in English. This study set out to accomplish four goals. The first step is determining which social media elements impact English-language professional communication. The second step is to create a hierarchical framework that clarifies the relationships between these elements using Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM). Third, use MICMAC analysis to categorize the driving and dependent components, differentiate their functions within the system, and finally, suggest a method for improving fluency in English in professional communication while considering social media usage. From Social Media Engagement (SME) to Language Proficiency Enhancement (LPC), the ISM model identified thirteen structured components and their respective functions as dependent or driving forces in the system. To better elucidate influential levels, MICMAC analysis has been used to apportion these components into "dependent," "independent," "linkage," and "autonomous" aspects. Eventually, techniques to enhance professional communication and language fluency were suggested.

**Keywords:** Social Media Engagement, Professional Communication, English Language Fluency, Interpretive Structural Modeling, MICMAC Analysis, Indian Professionals

## INTRODUCTION

Professional communication is evolving rapidly, and the ubiquitous influence of social media has transformed how individuals network, connect, communicate and exchange information (McFarland & Ployhart, 2015). The traditional communication landscape has been transformed by social media, creating a vibrant, worldwide, and interlinked environment where professionals can connect, work together, and excel, marking a significant shift in how people interact (Kaplan, 2015). As social media platforms advance, their influence on the professional world is expected to become even more significant (Ketter & Avraham, 2012).

Language plays a pivotal role in establishing successful interactions in various contexts, especially within the professional realm (Malyuga, Krouglov, & Tomalin, 2018) and encompasses the nuances, conventions, and cultural sensitivities that underpin successful communication (Rogerson-Revell, 2007). English has emerged as the de facto global lingua franca, particularly professionally (House, 2003). Its role extends across diverse cultures and geographies (Du-Babcock, 2006). This phenomenon is especially prominent globally, including in India (Raven, Huang, & Kim, 2007).

In India, English is often associated with upward mobility and enhanced job prospects (Asai, 2012). India's thriving IT, outsourcing, and business process management sectors require professionals who can seamlessly communicate with international clients and counterparts (Ranjan, 2019). English proficiency is a prerequisite for success in most professions (Guo, 2018). In India, English proficiency has become a valuable asset, driving academic and professional pursuits, fostering international collaborations, and contributing to the nation's role on the global stage (Patel & Jain, 2008).

Indian professionals with different levels of work experience use a dynamic combination of industry-specific jargon, cultural sensitivities, and linguistic nuances while communicating in English (Kachru, 1992). Their knowledge and usage of English, their work profile, the industry and/or business they work in, and, more importantly, the ease with which they use the English language have a bearing on their manner and style of communication (Crystal, 2003). Young professionals in the early stages of their careers tend to use an amalgamation of formal and informal language. (Kukulska-Hulme, 2015). However, executives who are advanced in their professional career paths and have years of experience usually tend to balance formal and informal communication (Chan C. S., 2019). Seasoned professionals will frequently have a higher level of proficiency in formal communication (Kumar, Prikshat, & J Irudhaya, 2020).

The advent of various social media platforms has brought about a paradigm shift in the dynamics of communication, making it tougher to differentiate between styles that are used in personal and professional conversations (Dutta & Gangopadhyay, 2019), defying preconceived ideas of how communication ought to be (Nisar, Prabhakar, & Strakova, 2019). In such a situation, experts are adept at using the English language as they consciously adjust their language according to different platforms while keeping intact their official style, professionalism and genuineness, which are vital to effective communication (Wang, 2021).

The level of association, interaction, participation, and activity people have with posts content, and other active users on social media platforms is called social media engagement (Trunfio & Rossi, 2021). There can be active or passive engagement between individuals or as part of the community (Dolan, Conduit, Frethey-Bentham, Fahy, & Goodman, 2019). In other words, measuring and understanding different metrics that quantify users' communication between themselves and/or with the content being made public across various social networking sites is the ideal way to measure social media engagement (Rahman, Suberamanian, Zanuuddin, Moghavvemi, & Md. Nasir, 2016).

The fundamental focus of this research is to probe the complex association between social media engagement and English language usage in professional communication among Indian professionals who hail from various domains with varying levels of work experience.

## BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

India, as a country is known for its diverse linguistic background. Indians are acknowledged as proficient users of evolving technology across various platforms, and this scenario makes it ideal for postulating a study which can be termed as an interplay between an individual's level of proficiency in the English language and their level of engagement on social media (Kumar N., 2014). Popularity of engagement over popular social media platforms like LinkedIn and Instagram, has transformed the style of communication that professionals use (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016).

The association between the effects of social media on the use of English is multi-dimensional, wherein diverse social media networking sites allow users to interact promptly as well as using an informal tone, encouraging a personal and casual approach while communicating in English (Waheed, Bhatti, Nijabat, & Razaq, 2021). This communication style also supports using contractions, Emojis & Emoticons, abbreviations and platform-specific jargon in the content to make the message more relevant and relatable to the users (Omar & Miah, 2013). The fluency and proficiency of language depend on professionals' work experience (Hinkel, 2012).

Working individuals at various career stages have varying levels of English language fluency and proficiency. Young digital natives tend to have a more adaptive approach to using appropriate language that blends normal and informal components (Gradman & Hanania, 1991). Juxtaposing is the formal language style that senior and seasoned professionals employ while communicating even over social media platforms (Ilyosovna, 2020). This unique spectrum creates a scope to explore the impact of social media engagement among individuals engaged in different domains and its influence across different professional trajectories.

## Research Objectives

Four objectives have been outlined in this study.

- To identify social media factors that impact English language fluency in professional communication.
- To apply Interpretive Structural Modelling to develop a hierarchical structure.
- To use MICMAC to catalogue dependent and driving factors.
- To purport strategies that could probably assist in improving and enhancing the usage of the English language in professional communication.

## METHOD

### Research Design

Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) employed in this research has a distinct ability to investigate the complex relationship among social media engagement factors, proficiency in the English language, and communication among Indian professionals who have diverse professional experiences (Menon & M Suresh, 2020).

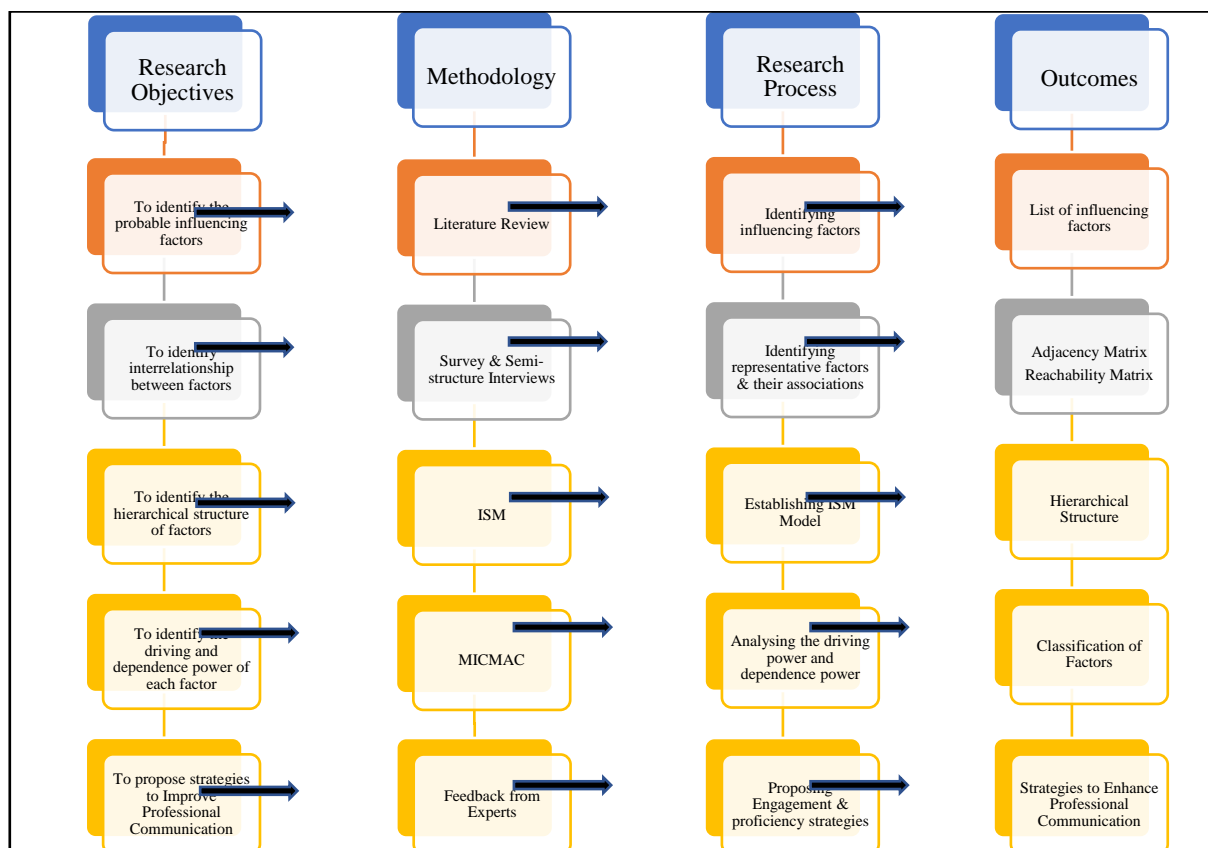


Figure 1: Conceptual Representation of Research Design

### Identification of Factors

Utilizing an in-depth literature review and previously done research, followed by exhaustive dialogues with domain experts, various factors were identified using a scrupulous process.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual representation of research design. This research was based on a thorough study of theoretical and academic research, various articles and multiple publications in domains like linguistics, social media platforms, and communication studies. Frequently ascertained factors and theses connected with professional communication, proficiency in the English language and social media engagement were identified as part of the literature review (Shrivastava & Singla, 2020). This process derived a theoretical framework to comprehend the relationship between the variables.

The understandings gathered through an in-depth literature review formed the basis of interaction with domain experts who provided insights into the research. Formal and information communication with various professionals

in different industries, academia, and language research brought out a nuanced perception of the practical effect of factors mentioned in the research, especially among Indian professionals with varied work experiences (Voorveld, 2019). The inputs given by domain experts underscore the nuances and domain-specific niche factors present in the actual professional environment (Shrivastava & Singla, 2020).

Adopting a multi-pronged methodology that combines academic research, real-life professional experience as well as practical knowledge confirmed a wide-ranging selection of factors mentioned in the study, which has formed the core of further exploration of the intricate association that exists between professional communication among Indian professionals, English language fluency and proficiency, and level of engagement on social media (Aichner, Grünfelder, Maurer, & Jegeni, 2021).

The next step was to screen and segregate all the factors identified through the processes mentioned above systematically, followed by identifying the most impactful and relevant variables. Subsequently, a rigorous approach that was based on certain criteria was used to narrow down the number of factors to be considered for the research (Yadav & Sagar, 2021) based on their conjectural importance in academic parlances, pragmatic relevance and practical pertinency from the content of professionals in India having varied professional experiences (Sengar, 2021). The scrupulous categorizing process accomplished the requirement of identifying and selecting the top thirteen (13) most relevant and significant factors, which were then integrated into the study to create a Structural Self-Interaction Matrix (SSIM) applying the ISM method.

**F1- Social Media Engagement (SME):** Engagement across various social media platforms (mentioned as SME in this research) is the first factor considered. This factor indicates a professional's interaction on social media platforms (Agarwal & Mewafarosh, 2021).

**F2 - English Language Utilization (ELU):** This comprises various facets of language usage among different levels of professionals (Vadivel, Namaziandost, & Saeedian, 2021).

**F3 - Professional Communication (PC):** All communication comprises three main aspects – verbal, non-verbal and written. (Chan M. , 2020).

**F4 - Work Experience (WE):** The fourth factor to be integrated into this research is individuals' professional experience and its different aspects which impact communication prominently. (Dang-Pham, Kautz, Pittayachawan, & Ai-Phuong, 2022).

**F5 - Cultural Context (CC):** Cultural sensitivity and the ability to adapt to a multicultural environment in an organization (O'Dowd & Dooley, 2020) impact language usage.

**F6 - Digital Literacy (DL):** Evaluating digital compatibility is the next essential factor (Sharma, Kar, Gupta, Dwivedi, & Janssen, 2022).

**F7 - Social Presence (SP):** Focusing on the emotional gratification of digital media (Farhat, Aslam, & Mokhtar, 2021).

**F8 - Professional Identity (PI):** The conscious use of a language style aligns with one's professional persona (Cartwright, Liu, & Davies, 2022).

**F9 - Communication Goals (CG):** The establishment of expected outcomes will have an impact on the way language is used (Bennetch, 2023).

**F10 - Impact on Organizational Communication (IOC):** Within an organization, this factor investigates the engagement and language used, and this includes (Cinelli, et al., 2022).

**F11 - Language Proficiency Enhancement (LPE):** The level of engagement can contribute to fluency in the English language (Al-khalidi & Khouni, 2021).

**F12 - Networking and Relationship Building (NRB):** This critical factor considers the utilization of social media for associating with others (Davis, Wolff, Forret, & Sullivan, 2020).

**F13 – Language Proficiency Deterioration (LPD):** Converse to F11, this can negatively impact language proficiency (Banerjee, 2023).

**Selection of Participants for SSIM through ISM Analysis**

Participants for this study were selected from diverse geographical, cultural and socio-professional landscapes (Ruparel, Dhir, Tandon, Puneet Kaur, & Islam, 2020). Ten industries were considered based on the key factors - advertising, traditional or print media, marketing, IT services, banking, manufacturing, higher education, research, hospitality, and travel or airline. Other criteria included moderate fluency in the English language and active social media presence.

### The Four-Option Approach

Participants were presented with four distinct response options for each pair of factors. These options elucidated their perceptions of how one factor influences another.

- F1 impacts F2 - The first factor significantly influences the second factor, which is represented as V in the matrix.
- F2 impacts F1 - The second factor substantially impacts the first, which is represented as A in the matrix.
- F1 and F2 impact each other equally - Both factors hold a mutual and balanced influence over each other, which is represented as X in the matrix.
- Neither impact the other - The two factors had minimal to no effect on one another, which is represented as O in the matrix.

This strategy assessed the bi-directional and multifaceted relationship between factors using the formula for the sum of numbers  $\{n*(n+1)/2\}$  (Stucky, 2022). The ISM analysis was created from the responses received.

### Development of ISM

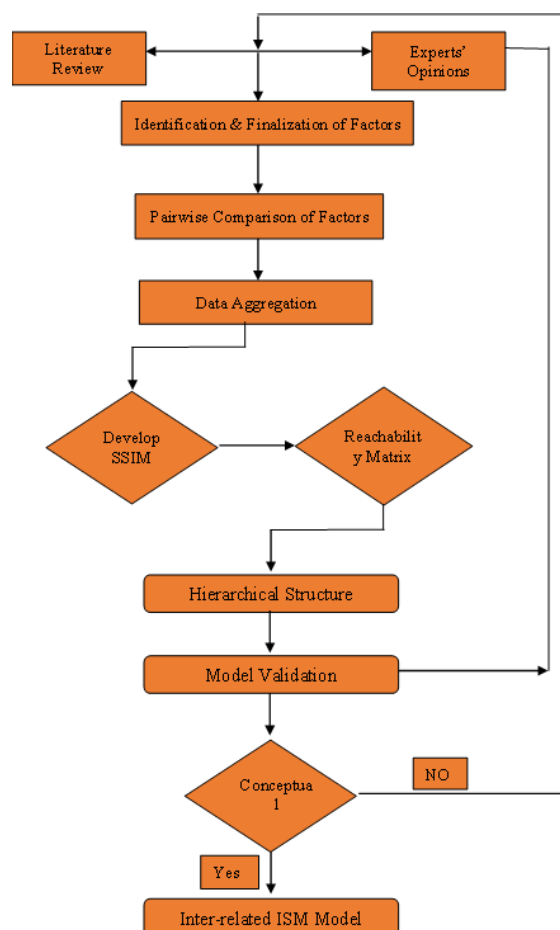


Figure 2: Flow chart for ISM

The flowchart as shown in Figure 2 illustrates the process of developing an Inter-related ISM (Interpretive Structural Modeling) Model. It starts with two parallel processes: "Literature Review" and "Experts' Opinions." These processes come together at "Identification & Finalization of Factors." The next step is "Pairwise Comparison of Factors," followed by "Data Aggregation."

### Development of Structured Self-interaction Matrix and Reachability Matrix

Table 1: Structured Self-interaction Matrix.

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13
F1	O	X	O	O	O	X	X	O	X	O	O	V	V
F2	X	O	O	X	X	O	O	V	V	V	V	V	O
F3	A	A	O	O	X	X	X	V	X	V	O	V	O
F4	O	X	A	O	V	V	O	V	V	X	V	X	O
F5	A	X	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	O
F6	X	O	X	O	O	O	V	V	X	X	X	V	O
F7	X	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	O
F8	A	V	O	O	X	O	X	O	V	X	X	V	O
F9	X	V	X	O	X	X	X	O	O	V	O	V	O
F10	O	V	O	X	O	X	X	X	O	O	O	X	O
F11	A	V	A	O	O	X	X	X	A	O	O	V	X
F12	O	V	O	X	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	O
F13	O	A	A	A	O	O	A	A	A	A	X	A	O

Table 2: Final Reachability Matrix (FRM)

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13	Driving Power	Level
F1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	7	II
F2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	9	IV
F3	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	10	V
F4	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	10	V
F5	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	8	III
F6	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	9	IV
F7	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	9	IV
F8	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	9	IV
F9	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	9	IV
F10	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	7	II
F11	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	10	V
F12	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	6	I
F13	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	VI
Dependency Power	10	10	8	4	7	7	10	10	11	9	7	12	3		

Table 1 describes a visual representation of the inter-influence among 13 factors which was organized into a comprehensive SSIM by quantifying the relative strength and weightage from the responses. Table 2 presents the Final Reachability Matrix for thirteen factors (F1 to F13) and their driving and dependency powers. The values within the table indicate the relationships between these factors, with "1" representing a direct influence and "0" indicating no direct influence.

### Establishing the Hierarchical Structure

A hierarchical construct below highlights each factor's antecedent sets and intersection sets. This explains their relative status and interdependencies.

Table 3: Antecedent & Intersection Set and Levels

Factors	Antecedent Set	Intersection Set	Derived Level
<b>F1</b>		F11, F12, F4, F5	2 Dependent
<b>F2</b>	F1, F11, F12	F3	1 Autonomous
<b>F3</b>	F1, F2		2 Dependent
<b>F4</b>	F1, F11, F12, F2, F3		2 Dependent
<b>F5</b>	F1, F2, F3, F4		2 Dependent
<b>F6</b>	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5		2 Dependent
<b>F7</b>	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6		2 Dependent
<b>F8</b>	F1, F11, F12, F2, F3, F4, F9		2 Dependent
<b>F9</b>	F1, F11, F12, F2, F3, F4		2 Dependent
<b>F10</b>	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8		2 Dependent
<b>F11</b>	F1, F2, F3, F9, F10	F12, F2, F7	2 Dependent
<b>F12</b>	F1, F2, F3, F4, F7, F9, F10	F2, F3, F7	2 Dependent
<b>F13</b>	F1,	F2	1 Autonomous

Table 3 presents the Antecedent and Intersection Sets for various factors (F1 to F13) along with their derived levels. The "Antecedent Set" lists the factors that influence each factor, while the "Intersection Set" shows common factors in multiple antecedent sets. The "Derived Level" categorizes the factors into different levels: such as dependent and autonomous levels.

A hierarchical format was reached using matrix algebra and graph theory wherein driving factors were classified from influenced factors.

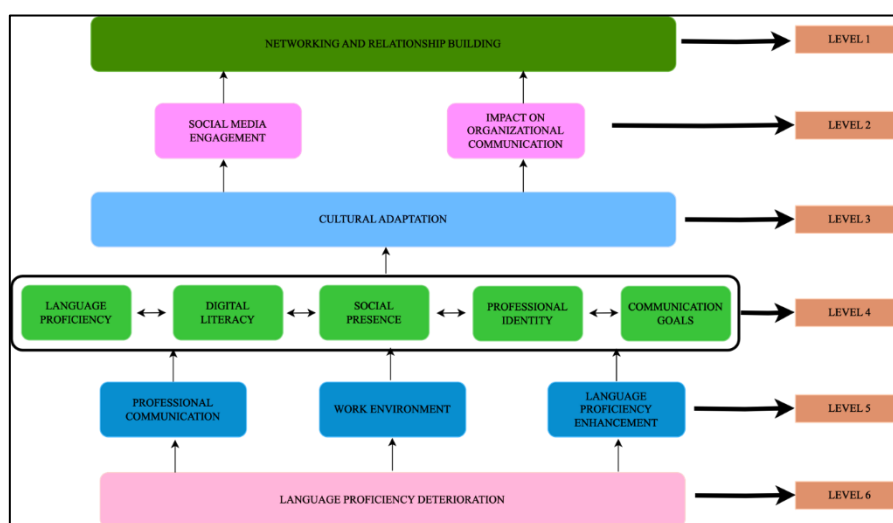


Figure 3: Interpretive Structural Model

Figure 3 illustrates the different levels and components involved in networking and relationship building, particularly in the context of organizational communication and cultural adaptation. The interpretive structural model is divided into six levels, each representing a different aspect of the process.

**MICMAC Analysis: Unveiling the Impact and Dependency Levels** - The MICMAC (Matrice impacts Croisés Multiplication Appliquée à un Classement) (Hota, 2021) analysis was applied to the 13 factors.

Table 4: The Four-fold Classification (Ahmad, Tang, Qiu, & Ahmad, 2019)

S. No.	Factors	Description
1.	Autonomous	Low inter-dependence, Low impact E.g. Digital Literacy (DL)
2.	Dependent	Drivers. Significant influence on other factors E.g. Work Experience (WE), Language Proficiency Enhancement (LPE)
3.	Linkage	High inter-dependence and high impact E.g. Network & Relationship Building (NRB)
4.	Independent	Low impact, High dependence, influenced by other factors E.g. Language Proficiency Deterioration (LPD)

Table 4 provides a Four-fold Classification of factors based on their interdependence and impact, as outlined by Ahmad, Tang, Qiu, and Ahmad (2019). The four categories include: Autonomous factors with low interdependence and low impact, such as Digital Literacy (DL); Dependent factors that act as drivers with significant influence on others, including Work Experience (WE) and Language Proficiency Enhancement (LPE); Linkage factors with high interdependence and high impact, exemplified by Network & Relationship Building (NRB); and Independent factors that have low impact but high dependence, being influenced by other factors, such as Language Proficiency Deterioration (LPD). This classification helps in understanding how different factors interact and influence each other within a given context.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

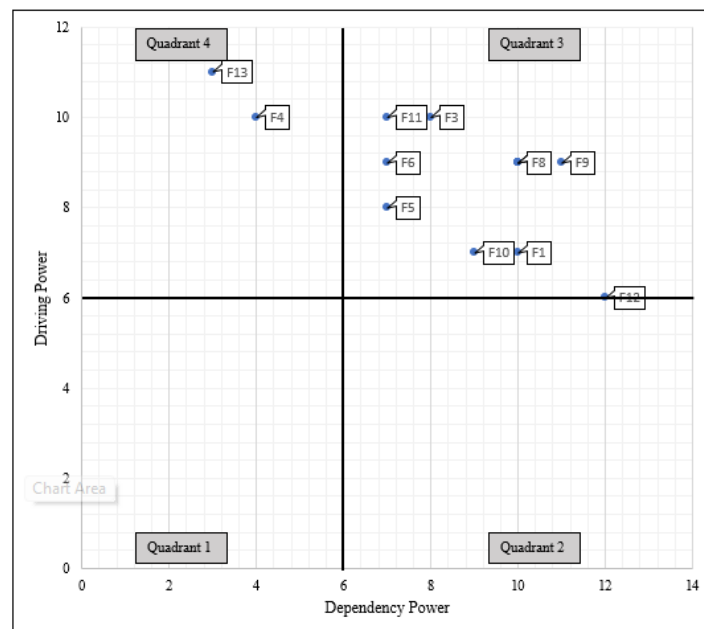


Figure 4: MICMAC Graph.

The ISM model and MICMAC Analysis unveiled the inter-relations and influence among the 13 identified factors. The MICMAC analysis graph in Figure 4, shows the driving and dependency powers of various factors. The x-axis represents Dependency Power (0-14), and the y-axis represents Driving Power (0-12). Factors in Quadrant 4 (high driving power, low dependency) like F13 and F4 are highly influential. Quadrant 3 (high driving power, high



dependency) includes factors like F11, F3, F6, F5, F8, F9, F10, F1, and F12, indicating they are both influential and dependent on each other. This analysis helps identify key driving factors and understand their interdependencies.

**Autonomous Factors Q1 (Low Driving Power, Low Dependency):** Standing independently, having minimal influence on others and negligible influence by other factors. No factors are seen in this quadrant. This denotes that all the factors chosen in this study (social media engagement, professional communication, professional profile and others) are interrelated in at least one manner.

**Dependent Factors Q2 (Low Driving Power, High Dependency):** These depict high reliance on other aspects and have a low effect on themselves, meaning they depict how professional connections happen through social media. With little influence, it relies on F1, F6 and F8. Only F12 (NRB) falls into this quadrant, implying that this is an effect of other factors rather than driving a change.

**Linkage Factors Q3 (High Driving Power, High Dependency):** Influencing and being influenced by other factors defines this category. F1 (SME), F3 (PC), F8 (PI), F9 (CG), F10 (IOC) and F11 (LPE) fit into this quadrant.

- i. As a driver as well as outcome, **activities on social media** have a two-way impact on factors like professional communication and language proficiency enhancement.
- ii. As a mediating force, **both cultural contexts and communication goals impact professional communication**. It shows a high dependency on these factors.
- iii. **Professional identity** is shaped by organizational communication and social media engagement and affects networking and language proficiency.
- iv. Though dependent on cultural factors, **communication goals** determine language usage and impact professional communication and social media engagement.
- v. Impact on **Organizational Communication** guides how language is used professionally and relies on an individual's digital literacy and cultural adaptability.
- vi. Having a reciprocal impact, **Language Proficiency Enhancement** is affected by social media engagement and professional communication and vice versa.

In this dynamic structure, these linkage factors are decisive and volatility among them can bring about unsteadiness in their impact.

**Independent Factors Q4 (High Driving Power, Low Dependency):** Characterized by its ability to influence other factors but not be significantly impacted by others. F4 (WE) and F13 (LPD) fall into this quadrant. As a primary driver of language use, **professional experience** affects one's communication style. While it influences professional communication and identity, **work experience** does not depend on other factors. Another factor not affected by work experience is language proficiency deterioration; instead, it negatively impacts language proficiency enhancement and communication goals.

Independent factors manipulate factors and can bring out changes. With increasing work experience and reducing language deterioration, there can be enhanced outcomes.

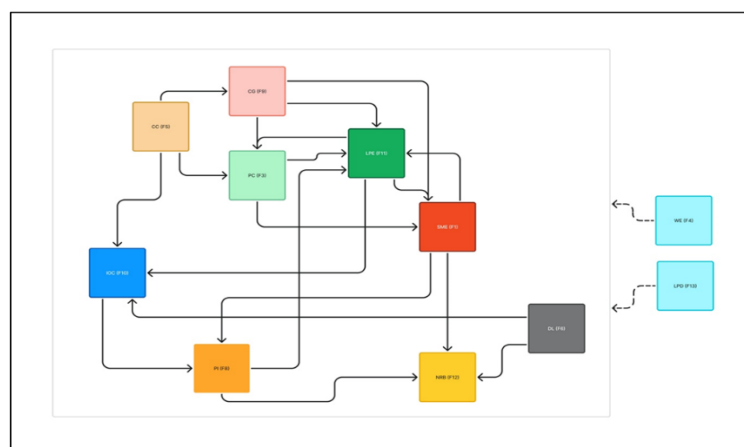


Figure 5: Graphical Representation of Interrelations of Social Media, Professional Communication, and Proficiency Factors

Figure 5 illustrates the relationships and interactions between various components, each represented by a colored box with a label. The labels include abbreviations and codes in parentheses. The arrows indicate the direction of interaction or flow between these components, showing a complex network of relationships. Components include CC (F5) in a yellow box, CG (F9) in a pink box, PC (F3) in a light green box, LPE (F11) in a green box, SME (F1) in a red box, IOC (F10) in a blue box, PI (F8) in an orange box, DL (F6) in a gray box, NRB (F12) in a yellow box, WE (F4) in a light blue box, and LPD (F13) in a light blue box, all interconnected by arrows. This visual representation helps understand the connections and dependencies between different components within the system.

## CONCLUSION

Delving into the intricate relationship between social media engagement and Indian professionals' English language fluency while communicating using Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) has revealed focused results. The interlink between thirteen key factors was derived using a hierarchical framework, and the MICMAC analysis allowed the classification of these factors into Autonomous, Dependent, Independent and Linkage categories.

Having successfully achieved the research objectives, the study divulges that, on the one hand, Social Media Engagement (SME), Professional Identity (PI), and Language Proficiency Enhancement (LPE) have a critical impact on professional communication; on the other hand, Language Proficiency Deterioration (LPD) and Cultural Context (CC) display niche influence thus underscoring two-way implications of social media on English.

The understandings stress the fact that while social media encourages flexibility as well as creative usage of language, it is imperative that well-defined strategies need to be set to ensure that formal communication paradigms are adhered to. To make this happen, precise language learning sessions, improvised social media awareness modules and comprehensible guidelines for digital communication need to be set for professionals.

## Declarations

**Ethical Approval:** Not applicable.

**Competing Interests:** The authors declare no competing interests.

**Funding:** Not applicable.

**Clinical trial number:** Not applicable.

**Author Contribution:** Vaidehi Raghava Menon conceived the study, designed the methodology, performed data analysis, and wrote the main manuscript text. Prof. Sanjay Mohan Johri, Prof. Rama Gautam, Prof. Mohd. Faisal, and Prof. Risil Chhatrala contributed to the review and revision of the manuscript. All authors reviewed the manuscript.

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