THE ROLE OF MIRRORING IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION ON ENGLISH PODCAST "THERAPUSS WITH JAKE SHANE"

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Abstract

Mirroring is a behavioral phenomenon that helps foster connection and communication by prompting individuals to unconsciously mimic the words, body language, or facial expressions of their interlocutors. This study aims to examine the realization and application of NLP mirroring patterns in host and guest interactions on *Therapuss with Jake Shane*. Drawing upon the mirroring theory by Shlomo Vaknin (2008), this study utilizes a qualitative content analysis approach to identify and analyze the use of behavioral, symbolical, and exchanged match mirroring in conversations between Jake Shane (host) and Rose, Larray, and Tate (guests). According to the results, behavioral mirroring accounts for 61.22% of mirroring instances, symbolic mirroring for 30.61%, and exchanged matches for 8.16%. Behavioral mirroring is used most frequently, reflecting the repetition of words and gestures during interaction. These findings highlight the significance of mirroring in interpersonal communication, demonstrating its role in strengthening social bonds and shaping interpersonal exchanges. This study aims to contribute to a greater understanding of how NLP mirroring mechanisms are applied in digital media interactions.

Keywords: Mirroring, Interpersonal Communication, Podcast, Therapuss with Jake Shane

1. Introduction

Interpersonal communication is the process by which individuals exchange information using a shared set of signals, symbols, or actions. The article claims that it is a two-way process that requires cooperation and mutual understanding between the sender and the recipient and incorporates both verbal and nonverbal communication. (Ansari, A., 2021). An essential component of human connection is interpersonal communication, which allows people to successfully share ideas, feelings, and thoughts. It includes both spoken and unspoken components that combine to influence how well people connect. Spoken words, tone, and speech patterns make up verbal communication, whereas movements, facial expressions, body language, and even more subtle cues like posture and eye contact make up nonverbal communication. The degree of connection between people and the efficacy of communication are determined by the combination of these factors.

Both John Grinder and Richard Bandler are creators of the NLP pattern. Develop your abilities to build relationships and set an example of excellence. With another individual, this pattern creates a beneficial "second position." (Vaknin, S., 2008). This skill is key in modeling others and for becoming intuitive in understanding the internal experiences of those you model. In order to establish rapport and foster a feeling of connection, this

mirroring pattern entails quietly mimicking the body language, tone, gestures, and speech patterns of a discussion partner. While mirroring involves adopting a similar communication style, including altering speech cadence or word choice, mirroring involves mimicking posture, vocal tone, or body motions. Someone is most likely aware of NLP and mirroring if they think you are imitating them.

Podcasts are becoming a potent tool for discussion and information sharing. In order to increase audience engagement, podcasts use nonverbal clues including tone, tempo, and vocal inflections in addition to their heavy reliance on spoken information. Effective information delivery depends heavily on the interaction between podcast hosts and guests, therefore interpersonal communication is essential to their success. Nevertheless, despite podcasts' increasing popularity, not much research has been done on how matching and mirroring strategies might be applied in this medium, especially when it comes to verbal and nonverbal communication. Verbal mirroring is one idea of mirroring that may be found in the podcast Therapuss with Jake Shane. Here is the preliminary data:

The researchers consulted previous studies on mirroring, including 1) Novotny, E., Frank, M. G., & Grizzard, M. (2021). *Comparing the efficacy of verbal and nonverbal rapport-building strategies in interviews in a lab setting.* 2) Hartati, R., Meisuri, Ginting, S. A., & Ariatna. (2023). *Tertiary students' deficiency in English emphatic listening skills of NLP matching and mirroring technique.* 3) Sihombing, P. S. N., & Hartati, R. (2024). *A neuro-linguistic exploration of mirroring in talk show "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon."*

The three previous research journals above discuss how the application of mirroring or rapport building techniques, both verbally and nonverbally to students and interviewers, can affect the continuity of the communication process, and improve the quality of interaction between the speech partners. In contrast, the more qualitative study The Role of Mirroring in Improving the Quality of Interpersonal Conversation on English Podcast "Therapuss with Jake Shane" probably focuses on the use of mirroring in podcast conversation to establish intimacy with the listener. While the research on Therapuss emphasizes the function of mirroring in informal and enjoyable conversations, Novotny et al. is focused on professional interviews, such as investigative or therapeutic ones. The primary distinction is in the context.

2. Review of Literature
Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)
In the middle of the 1970s, John Grinder and Richard Blander developed the concept of neuro-linguistic programming, or NLP. Their initial goal was to look into the internal and environmental behaviors that affect therapists, and they were successful in elevating communicators over others. (El-Ashry, M. M., 2021). An intriguing method for enhancing empathy in virtual relationships is the use of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) techniques. NLP is a psychological method that seeks to comprehend and maximize the relationship between language (linguistic), thought (neuro), and experience-based behavioral patterns (programming) (Hutapea, S. N., 2024). NLP is the study of how

language patterns, behavior, and cognition interact to shape human communication. It provides several methods for enhancing interpersonal relationships, including mirroring and matching, which foster rapport, trust, and active participation in conversations. This increases the listeners' sense of involvement and connection to the discussion. NLP theory was predicated on the idea that when commonalities were replicated or synced in dyadic interactions, social interaction produced prosocial benefits (Almendarez, M., 2018).

NLP Mirroring

A behavioral things known as NLP mirroring encourages people to unconsciously imitate the words, body language, or facial expressions of their interlocutors in order to build relationships and facilitate communication (Usera, D., et all, 2024). For example, one essential component of empathic communication is listening. As part of the process of listening with empathy, one must pay close attention to the other person and attempt to comprehend how they are experiencing (Hartati, R., 2024). In addition, a variety of nonverbal communication techniques, including kinesics, haptics, proxemics, paralanguage, and silence, can transmit signals in addition to spoken words. In various situations, these actions support cultural standards, social standing, and emotional expression (Wood, T. J., 2024).

In NLP, the mirroring approach refers to using identical words, postures, rhythms, etc. Both patterns can be used, thus there is a lot of flexibility. In order to establish a feeling of resemblance and connection, mirroring is quietly mimicking the speech patterns, body language, and voice intonation of another individual. Students are more likely to feel at ease and involved when they believe that the teacher is "like them," which creates a more receptive learning environment (Churches, R., 2007). Enhancing empathy and fostering closer relationships with others are the goals. Although they could be in physically constrained settings, the use of NLP mirroring techniques can be a useful tool in the context of virtual interactions to assist students in developing their capacity to comprehend and react to the emotions of others. Mirroring was a natural adaptation to perceived embodiment alterations and aural emanations rather than precise synchronization (Almendarez, M., 2018).

There is a thin line between mirroring and mocking, according to some experts, and "people will assume you're making fun of them if you go out and try blinking when they blink, nodding when they nod, and speaking with their accent." The concept of mirroring is based on the notion that we are more comfortable with others who engage nonverbally in a similar manner to our own. In other words, we are attracted to those who exhibit similar body language to ourselves (Sihombing, P. S. N., 2024). It is crucial to identify the many types of mirroring in order to comprehend how it functions in real-world situations. There are three types of mirroring according to Shlomo Vaknin (2008):

a. Behavioral Mirroring

Behavioral mirroring is the process of matching symbolic behaviors. Most of them are subconscious. In actuality, their ability to mirror improves with their level of subconsciousness. The utilization of similar body motions conveys a

natural and reassuring masculine aspect. Gentle motions are maintained, fostering comfort and an emotional bond. Simultaneously, respiration and posture are subtly mirrored, which heightens the sense of synchronization through mutual bodily cues. In order to create a subconscious sense of comfort and connection, this type entails carefully mimicking bodily habits like posture, gestures, or breathing patterns.

    b. Symbolic Mirroring

Observe how we have incorporated objects with symbolic worth in addition to physical mirroring. The symbolic activity is frequently subconscious behavior, and this is symbolic mirroring. Additionally, we have seen that physical and metaphorical mirroring can be combined. This is an extremely potent combination of physical and symbolic mirroring. It's likely that the salesperson's attire varies significantly depending on the region of the nation he visits. transcends body language to convey symbolic components such as tone, values, or fashion sense; this is frequently combined with physical mirroring to create a stronger relationship.

    c. Exchanged Matches

Just like not all of your symbolic mirroring uses the same words, not all of your mirroring must employ the same bodily parts. According to NLP, you can mimic the rhythm of your breath with a movement, like tapping your fingers, instead of timing your own breathing. It's known as a swapped match. You are swapping bodily parts while also mimicking the rhythm or another element. involves imitating various actions or bodily parts. Instead of explicitly replicating someone's breathing, you may tap your fingers to match their rhythm.

Interpersonal Communication

One particular kind of communication is interpersonal communication. Examples of communication include books, weblogs, podcasts, discussions, periodicals, and street signs. These communication methods express concepts with symbols of some kind, such as sounds, motions, or pictures. In interpersonal communication, you communicate the complicated thoughts in your mind with symbols through writing, gesturing, or speaking (Solomon Denis, 2013). In intimate partnerships, partners progressively align meanings to exchange perspectives on matters and emotions that are significant to their relationship. When a relationship first starts, one partner may view conflict as healthy, while the other may steer clear of it (Wood, T. J., 2024). In addition to your online content, images, and videos, your body language, facial expressions, eye contact, and words used in face-to-face interactions also convey interpersonal messages. You also get interpersonal messages through your senses of touch, smell, hearing, and vision. Interpersonal messages can be conveyed even through silence (Devito, A. J., 2016).Effective communication occurs when the recipient receives and interprets the sender's message as intended, and then voluntarily takes action. If there are no barriers in the way of accomplishing these goals, this can enhance interpersonal connections (Menggo, S., 2023).

3.Methodology

The researcher used a qualitative content analysis method to examine verbal and nonverbal communication in the podcast "Therapuss with Jake Shane". This approach is based on Philipp Mayring's (2000, 2014) organized and systematic framework for Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). The primary data source consists of podcast episodes available on YouTube, where the researcher studied the host and guests' conversation, body language, posture, and facial expressions. To examine the usage of mirroring strategies, the researcher identified significant instances in the podcast, classified them using NLP mirroring principles, and assessed their impact on interaction dynamics. Furthermore, contextual and theoretical explanations were supplied to supplement the study, ensuring a thorough knowledge of mirroring as a rapport-building technique in interpersonal communication.

The conversation, body language, posture, and facial expressions of both the host and the guests in the "Therapuss with Jake Shane" podcast will serve as the primary data for this research. The data will be sourced from YouTube, using episodes of varying durations and formats. There are 3 podcast episodes that will be analyzed for each scene that features mirroring behavior.

Table 1 Title of the data

No.	Title	Duration	Published Time
1	Session 46: Rosé | Therapuss with Jake Shane	53:41	November 28, 2024
2	Session 14: Larray | Therapuss with Jake Shane	38:51	April 4, 2024
3	Session 03: Tate McRae | Therapuss with Jake Shane	44:11	January 18, 2024

The researcher will use NLP mirroring techniques to perform a content analysis of the data. This includes spotting behavioral mirroring patterns like similar speech patterns, gestures, language, and phrasing; symbolic mirroring, which includes empathy, emotional reflection, and active listening; and exchanged matches, which show a sense of unity, mutual understanding, or coordinated body language. In order to comprehend how mirroring influences interpersonal dynamics in the podcast, each of these mirroring categories will be investigated using both the transcripts and visual signals from the video recordings.

4. Result and Discussion
A. Findings

1. There are three types of mirroring in the podcast "Therapuss with Jake Shane", as the researcher has done in the analysis. There are 49 data found. There are 30 (61,22%) data as behavioral mirroring, 15 (30,61%) data as symbolic mirroring,

and 4 (8,16%) data as exchanged matches. Based on these data, the most common type is behavioral mirroring, and the least type is exchanged matches.

Table 2 Percentage of mirroring

No.	Types of mirroring	Data	Percentages (%)
1	Behavioral Mirroring	30	61,22%
2	Symbolic Mirroring	15	30,61%
3	Exchanged Matches	4	8,16%
	Total	**49**	**100%**

2. Based on the 49 data found, there were 30 behavioral mirroring scenes carried out by Jake's when interacting. 32 verbal scenes and 4 visual scenes. Imitating someone's body language, mannerisms, and even speech patterns is part of behavioural mirroring.

Table 3 Realization of behavioral mirroring

Verbal				Nonverbal
I'm so excited	Do you even think?	Are you coming?	She's the queen	Waving hand
Crazy	We're hammered	That's so awkward	Every	Clapping
Do	Em	That's really strange	I don't know	Hitting the sofa
You did well	Hybrid	Thinking about	Thing could be so much worse	Switching seats
We're good	It happens	He's obsessed	I would cry	
I'm so sorry	Craziest people	It's giving stalker	Best show	
This will be great	I've never looked good	We're doubling down	I have reasons	
Yeah	Cut them off	We always like	I prescribe	

3. Based on the 49 data found, there were 15 symbolic mirroring scenes carried out by Jake's when interacting. 19 verbal scenes and 3 visual scenes. Reflecting back the underlying emotions or themes in someone's communication is symbolic mirroring.

Table 4 Realization of symbolic mirroring

Verbal			Nonverbal
Yes, you are	Yeah	New York club but in LA	Practicing dance
But he's funny	Your dad is the best	Right	Smiling
Yes, it has!	Worst	I think so too	Gasph
Oh no	Evil	I'm impressed too.	
Excuse me	Hahhh	You are	
I guess you're right	I'll prescribe		
It's so	I'm very honored to be on your show.		

4. Based on the 49 data found, there were 4 exchanged matches scenes carried out by Jake's when interacting. 4 verbal scenes and 1 visual scenes. Exchanged matches is a technique where you mirror by offering your own experiences or insights that resonate with theirs.

Table 5 Realization of exchanged matches

Verbal	Nonverbal
Apparently = Yes, you are. What do you mean "apparently"?	Laughs = Smile, with his teeth
I want to get married so bad = Really? Let's talk about it, let's get one.	
Relaxed? = Yeah, catching up with my girly	
That's the best definition of nobec. = He's such a sweetheart	

B. Discussion

The application of mirroring (behavioral, symbolic, and exchanged matches) plays a significant role in fostering better interpersonal communication. This is because mirroring helps create a sense of connection, understanding, and solidarity between individuals. When we mirror someone's gestures (behavioral), reflecting their emotion (symbolic), or align our communication patterns (exchanged matches), we send a powerful message that we are engaged, attentive, and empathetic toward them. Here are the data from the author's analysis of 3 episodes of *Therapuss with Jake Shane*:

1/behavioral mirroring/visual/37:57

Dialogue: Jake: I'm the worst, I cut-

Rose: Really? Really, I'm so sorry haha (*got off the chair*)

Jake: I'm so sorry. (*followed Rose, and held her hand*) We're both constantly apologizing

Rose: Hahaha, are we the same people?

Jake: I think we are!

Data Analysis: In this dialogue, behavioral mirroring is clearly demonstrated through both verbal and physical synchronization between Rose and Jake. When Rose says, "Really? Really, I'm so sorry haha," Jake immediately responds with the same apology, "I'm so sorry," showing that they are matching each other's words and tone. As Rose gets off the chair, Jake mirrors her physical movement by following her and holding her hand, reinforcing their connection through shared body language. Their repeated apologies, combined with shared laughter and coordinated gestures, create a playful and empathetic atmosphere. This natural mirroring of both speech and actions helps build a warm rapport and a sense of closeness between them, making the interaction feel genuine and connected.

2/behavioral mirroring/visual/5:10
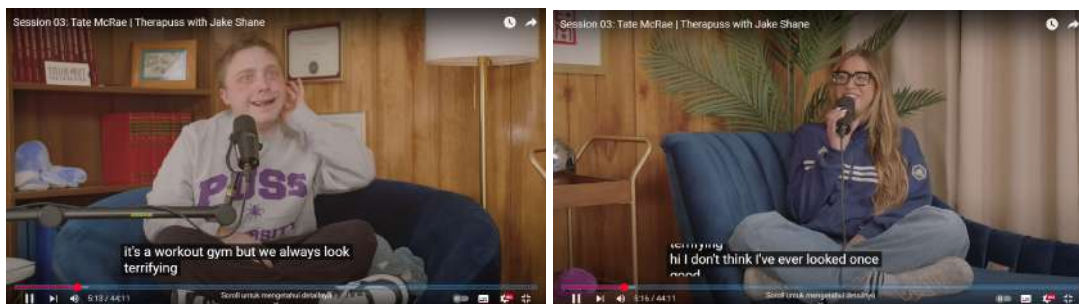
Dialogue: Tate: But we always look terrifying.

Jake: We always like, "Hii" (*tucking hair behind ear, pretending to look good*)

Tate: Hahaha, I don't think I've ever looked once good, haha.

Jake: I've never looked good.

Tate: Haha.

Jake: I've never looked good. I show up my hair is like this (*pulls hair up with both hands to mimic messy hair*)

Data Analysis: This moment clearly shows behavioral mirroring through both verbal repetition and shared physical gestures. When Tate jokes about looking "terrifying," Jake

picks up on the humor and mirrors it with an exaggerated "Hii" and a self-deprecating gesture (tucking his hair)—matching both the emotion and tone. Tate laughs and adds to the humor, which Jake echoes again by repeating "I've never looked good" and then using a dramatic gesture to demonstrate his messy hair. This playful mirroring of both words and gestures builds a casual, intimate vibe, reinforcing their comfort and shared self-deprecating humor. It's a textbook case of behavioral mirroring boosting rapport.

1/symbolic mirroring/visual/20:53

Dialogue: Larray: Angelina was so pick me.

Jake: She was the worst.

Larray: The worst.

Jake: She's evil.

Larray: She's like a natat

Data Analysis: In this brief exchange, Larray says, "Angelina was so pick me." Jake responds, "She was the worst." Larray agrees, "The worst." Jake adds, "She's evil." Larray finishes with, "She's like a natat." By repeating and agreeing on their negative opinions, such as "the worst" and "she's evil," they mirror each other's thoughts and feelings. This shared language and mutual agreement without physical gestures demonstrate symbolic mirroring, where connection happens through aligning ideas and expressions in conversation.

2/symbolic mirroring/visual/6:00

Dialogue: Jake: I think working out this week every day was really good for us.

Tate: I think so too.

Tate: I think that was our first full week.

Jake: That was our first full week in, um, the almost year we've been doing this.

Tate: Hahaha yeah wow. I'm impressed.

Jake: I'm impressed too.

Data Analysis: This conversation illustrates symbolic mirroring, where Tate and Jake reflect each other's thoughts and emotions without exact repetition. Jake initiates with a reflection on their workout consistency, and Tate validates it with "I think so too," showing alignment. As they build on the idea, they mirror each other's realizations and emotional tone—especially in the exchange "I'm impressed" / "I'm impressed too." These are shared sentiments, mirroring not just words but the meaning and emotional pride behind the experience. Their back-and-forth builds mutual acknowledgment and celebration of their progress, fostering deeper rapport through shared perspective and symbolic meaning.

1/exchanged matches/visual/50:10

Dialogue: Jake: Have you ever done a podcast before?

Rose: Oh my gosh I don't think I have

Jake: I'm so honored

Rose: Oh my, this is my first podcast? but why do I feel so...

Jake: Relaxed?

Rose: Yeah, catching up with my girly (*Jake extended his hand*), that's what it feels like (*and was reciprocated by*)

Data Analysis: In this conversation, exchange matches mirroring happens when Jake offers his hand and Rose reciprocates by taking it, showing they physically mirror each other's actions. Their matching words, Jake saying "I'm so honored" and Rose describing feeling "relaxed" and like "catching up with my girly" also reflect a shared emotional state. Exchange matches mirroring involves the back-and-forth matching of both verbal and nonverbal behaviors between people, creating a balanced, connected interaction. This kind of mirroring helps build comfort and rapport naturally.

2/exchanged matches/visual/22:40

Dialogue: Larray: I want to see you fight. I think it'll be a such Jeffree Star.

Jake: Okay (*chuckles*)

Larray: Jeffree Star and his five Pomeranians versus you.

Jake: I want to see you fight Noah back. Oh you could see (*Jake laughs*)

Larray: I think Noah would actually kill me.

Jake: Yeah I think he looks like a cinnamon roll could kill you

Larray: Looks like a cinnamon roll can kill you. That's the best definition of nobec.

(*Jake laughs*) Jesus Christ. He's such a sweetheart (*smile, with his teeth*)

Data Analysis: Instead of directly copying each other's behaviors, they respond with different but emotionally aligned reactions. For instance, when Jake laughs after a humorous comment from Larray, Larray continues the playful tone with another funny line about Noah looking like a cinnamon roll that could kill someone. Jake responds not by repeating the joke or laughing again in the same way, but by smiling (showing his teeth) and making an affectionate remark, "He's such a sweetheart." This exchange shows how each participant reacts with different expressions, laughter, witty remarks, smiles, but all within the same emotional space of humor and warmth. These behaviors are connected in intent and emotional tone, even though they're not identical.

Mirroring as a Tool for Enhancing Empathy in Interpersonal Communication

This study focuses not only on identifying the types of mirroring and their usage within conversations in Therapuss with Jake Shane, but also on understanding its role in enhancing interpersonal communication.

One important role of mirroring in interpersonal communication is its ability to foster empathy between individuals. By consciously or unconsciously reflecting another person's verbal expressions, gestures, or emotional tone, individuals demonstrate a deep understanding of not just the message being conveyed but also the emotions and intentions behind it. This empathetic engagement transforms the interaction from a simple exchange of information into a relational process, where both participants feel recognized, valued, and supported.

This phenomenon is especially visible in conversations within Therapuss with Jake Shane. The host, Jake Shane, frequently mirrors his guests' words, phrases, or even their gestures, creating a comfortable and empathetic atmosphere that helps ease social distance and foster a strong interpersonal connection. This, in turn, contributes significantly to the depth, authenticity, and overall quality of interpersonal relationships

displayed in the podcast. Importantly, this process is not one-sided; the guests Rose, Larray, and Tate also mirror Jake's expressions and attitudes. This reciprocal mirroring signals their engagement and willingness to connect, resulting in a dynamic and enjoyable dialogue where everyone feels heard, valued, and involved. Thus, interpersonal communication within Therapuss with Jake Shane is not only influenced by the host's ability to mirror but also by the collaborative way both the host and the guests align their behaviors and expressions, strengthening interpersonal bonds and making their interaction more fluent, natural, and profound.

Furthermore, from their facial expressions, viewers can see that they feel comfortable with each other, they laugh together, tease each other, and enjoy their exchanges in a way that shows there's a strong interpersonal connection. This is also supported by Jake's consideration for his guests' preferences; for instance, in one scene when Larray feels uncomfortable sitting on a particular side, Jake quickly arranges for them to switch seats (a form of behavioral mirroring) demonstrating his attentiveness and care for their ease and happiness. All these details collectively highlight how mirroring, along with kindness and consideration, contributes to creating a warm, collaborative, and empathetic interpersonal communication.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the conversation analysis from three episodes of *Therapuss with Jake Shane*, it can be concluded that the application of mirroring theory (behavioral mirroring, symbolic mirroring, and exchanged matching) helps foster closer, warmer, and more human interpersonal relationships between the speakers. Behavioral mirroring, by matching gestures and body language, creates a comfortable atmosphere and a sense of trust. Symbolic mirroring, by reflecting emotions, thoughts, and attitudes, further strengthens a positive and intimate connection. Meanwhile, exchanged matching, as shown by the way participants respond to and complete each other's statements, contributes to a feeling of understanding and affirmation. In addition, mirroring also plays a crucial role in fostering empathy during conversations. By aligning verbal and nonverbal expressions, speakers are able to convey emotional understanding and validation toward one another. This empathic engagement helps reduce social distance, builds mutual emotional support, and enhances the overall quality of interpersonal communication. Thus, the application of mirroring theory can be seen as a powerful strategy for building more harmonious, meaningful, and empathetic interpersonal relationships.

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